

“THE PRESIDENT’S OWN”  
**MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**  
COLONEL JASON K. FETTIG, DIRECTOR

**MOTHER’S DAY MAGIC**



FEATURING GUEST SOLOIST

**MIMI STILLMAN**

SUNDAY, MAY 8, 2022 | 2 PM

RACHEL M. SCHLESINGER CONCERT HALL and ARTS CENTER, NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE



PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

Overture to *The Magic Flute*, K. 620

Zhou Tian (b. 1981)

Concerto for Flute and Orchestra (2022)

Irises  
Capriccio  
Arioso  
Toccata  
*Mimi Stillman, guest soloist*  
*world première*

INTERMISSION

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

*Mother Goose*  
Prelude  
Dance of the Spinning Wheel and Scene  
Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty  
Conversations of the Beauty and the Beast  
Tom Thumb  
Laideronette, Empress of the Pagodas  
The Fairy Garden

Astor Piazzolla (1921–92)  
arranged by SSgt Scott Nimmer\*

*Libertango* (1974)  
*Mimi Stillman, guest flute soloist*

\*Member, U.S. Marine Band

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OVERTURE TO *THE MAGIC FLUTE*, K. 620  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

The final year of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s life found him as productive as he had ever been, despite his ill health. He composed two of his greatest operas, his magnificent Clarinet Concerto, and was well into the Requiem, which he did not live to finish. *The Magic Flute* was the last opera Mozart completed. This grand and ambitious work was brought about by Mozart’s close relationship with the colorful impresario and actor Emanuel Schikaneder, who specialized in German-language comedies with impressive sets and special effects. His productions were extremely popular, though the theatre company was often on the brink of bankruptcy. Mozart was perpetually in a similar financial situation and eagerly accepted Schikaneder’s offer for a large-scale collaboration. Mozart composed *The Magic Flute* between June and September 1791 and conducted the première on September 30 at the Theatre auf der Wieden. Mozart’s spirits were buoyed by the tremendously positive reception of the opera, but his health did not recover, and within two months of those first performances, he was dead.

The Overture to *The Magic Flute* encapsulates some of the opera’s best musical elements. Mozart and Schikaneder were dedicated Freemasons, and right from the very opening, the Masonic overtones are revealed. The number three (a very important number in Freemasonry) is represented throughout the music starting with the three dramatic chords at the outset of the overture. Even the overture’s key of E-flat major contains three flats. After the solemn introduction, Mozart launches into a fleet-footed Allegro, complete with a fugue and brilliant transformation of the infectious themes. The three ominous chords return suddenly in the middle of the overture (often accompanied by a special effect in the production), and the curtain is raised on one of the most unique operas ever composed.



CONCERTO FOR FLUTE AND ORCHESTRA (2022)  
Zhou Tian (b. 1981)  
*world première*

Grammy-nominated Chinese-American composer Zhou Tian seeks inspiration from different cultures and strives to mix them seamlessly into a musically satisfying combination for performers and audience alike. His music has been described as “absolutely beautiful...utterly satisfying” (Fanfare), “stunning” (the Cincinnati Enquirer), and “a prime example of twenty first-century global multiculturalism.” *The Wall Street Journal* declared “works like...Mr. Zhou’s...accomplish two important things: They remind us of how we got from there to here, and they refine that history by paying belated tribute to contributors who might otherwise be forgotten.”

Zhou came of age in a new China marked by economic reforms, and came to the United States at age nineteen. He was trained at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, Juilliard School in New York City and University of Southern California in Los Angeles, studying with some of America’s finest composers, such as Jennifer Higdon, Christopher Rouse, and Stephen Hartke. He currently serves as associate professor of composition at Michigan State University College of Music, in East Lansing.

Zhou’s music has been performed by leading orchestras and performers in the United States and abroad, such as Jaap Van Zweden, Yuja Wang, the New York Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Dover Quartet, Chanticleer, and the Shanghai Symphony, where he served as the Artist-in-Residence for the 2019–20 season. His Concerto for Orchestra, commissioned and recorded by the Cincinnati Symphony and Music Director Louis Langrée, earned him a Grammy Award nomination for Best Contemporary Classical Composition in 2018, making him the first Chinese-born composer honored in this category. His new work “Transcend,” commissioned by thirteen American orchestras commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad’s completion, has been performed across the United States and received warm critical acclaim. In 2019, Beijing Music Festival named him “Artist of the Year.”

COVER IMAGE OF MIMI STILLMAN BY STEVE ANDERSON  
PHOTO OF ZHOU TIAN BY KEVIN BIRCH



The composer offers the following on his Concerto for Flute and Orchestra:

Irises. Capriccio. Arioso. Toccata. These are four moments that infuse my Flute Concerto, written for long-time musical partner Mimi Stillman and commissioned by a national consortium of orchestras. From tranquil meditations to wild rituals of rugged harmony and rhythms, the concerto is empowered by tradition while exploring the diversity of musical styles through reflection on the flute’s long and rich heritage (thus the baroque-inspired subtitles). There are hints of my musical lineage from Samuel Barber to Walter Piston to traditional Chinese music, as I sought a coexistence of clarity of form with passionate expression, exploring the richness of orchestral timbre yet always embracing purity of line. The work begins with Irises, a movement of mixed moods of long singing lines and airy dances. The flower makes me think about the flute - sensuous and yet strong. Capriccio is a scherzo in perpetual motion. The rapid, repeated notes and the concise form drew its inspiration from Baroque dance pieces. Arioso is a meditation. As the soloist joins the plush strings, dashing harp and woodwinds, the sonic color is altered frequently, masking the hinted atonality in the melody with romanticism. Toccata, the finale, is a virtuosic dance. An accumulation of materials sends the piece to a climax at the end.

I am extremely honored and grateful that Col. Jason K. Fettig and the U.S. Marine Chamber Orchestra is a commissioning partner and is giving the consortium première of this work.

### **MOTHER GOOSE** **Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)**

French composer Maurice Ravel had no children of his own, but remained connected to the world of young people throughout his life. Ravel was especially close to Mimie and Jean Godebski, the daughter and son of friend’s Cipa and Ida Godebski. The Godebski’s apartment was a common gathering place for the great artists who were active in Paris during this creative era, a group that included luminaries like Jean Cocteau, Erik Satie, and Igor Stravinsky. When he tired of adult conversation at these gatherings, Ravel often retreated to the children’s corner of the apartment, and entertained them with stories that he made up. When the composer traveled, he frequently sent them humorous postcards and gifts. His most personal gift to these beloved siblings was undoubtedly a set of piano duets inspired by the *Mother Goose* stories. He originally had hoped the duets would be premiered by Mimie and Jean, both exceptionally talented pianists. However, at the ages of six and seven, the children were not comfortable with such a public première. Instead, the suite was debuted by two older children, Geneviève Durony and Jeanne LeLeu, who were ten and eleven years old at the time of the first performance of the suite in April of 1910. The immediate popularity of the work led Ravel to enlarge the suite, and orchestrate the music to turn it into a ballet score the following year.

The collection of stories that inspired Ravel was authored by Charles Perrault and published under the title *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé avec des moralités* (*Stories or Tales of Olden Times, with Morals*). The work became best known in France as simply *Ma mère L’Oye*, or *Mother Goose*. After an enchanting Prelude that sets the stage for these magical tales, Ravel begins with “Dance of the Spinning Wheel and Scene,” where the audience is introduced to an old lady at a spinning wheel around whom a young princess is playfully dancing. When the princess trips against the wheel and pricks her finger, she falls into a deep slumber, revealing that that she is none other than Sleeping Beauty. Her deep and tragic slumber is beautifully depicted in the “Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty,” which is immediately followed in the score by “The Conversations of the Beauty and the Beast.” The tender dialogue is cleverly portrayed in the orchestra by the clarinet and contrabassoon playing the parts of the unlikely couple. They waltz together, and the beast is transformed into a handsome prince; the contrabassoon’s familiar melody is also symbolically morphed and assumed by a solo violin. In his preface to “Tom Thumb,” Ravel directly quotes Charles Perrault: “He thought he would easily find his way back, thanks to the pieces of bread he had left behind, but he was quite surprised when he couldn’t find even a crumb; birds had come along and eaten every morsel.” Tom Thumb’s wandering is evident in Ravel’s ever-changing meters, and the appearance of the mischievous birds is impossible to miss. “Laideronette, Empress of the Pagodas” was not inspired by one of Perrault’s tales, but by a story entitled *The Green Dragon* by a contemporary of Perrault, Marie Catherine

d’Aulnoy. Laideronette is cursed to be the “ugliest woman in the world” by a wicked fairy. Ravel again quotes d’Aulnoy in his preface: “[Laideronette] undresses and steps into her bath. Immediately the toy mandarins and mandarinesses around her began to sing and play instruments. Some had lutes made from walnut shells; some had viols made from almond shells; for the instruments had to be of a size appropriate to their own.” The composer evokes the tale’s exotic setting with pentatonic scales and colorful melodic percussion instruments like xylophone, glockenspiel, celesta, as well as the harp. In the suite’s final movement, Cupid leads Prince Charming into “The Fairy Garden” where he awakens his Sleeping Beauty, who has been encapsulated in her slumber since the beginning of the piece. The happy couple is blessed by The Good Fairy, and they are joined by the entire cast for a happy ending.

### **LIBERTANGO (1974)** **Astor Piazzolla (1921–92)** **arranged by SSgt Scott Ninmer**

Argentinian composer and virtuoso bandoneon player Astor Piazzolla’s original and eclectic compositions were central to the revolutionary reimagining of the legendary dance tango. He was the primary figure in the *Tango Nuevo* (new tango) movement, encouraging the evolution of the tango from the strict, traditional dance, to a more contemporary form that incorporated elements of other dances, textures, and styles from a broad spectrum of influences. Although Piazzolla is known primarily for his dance music, he studied composition with famed French muse

Nadia Boulanger, and was a gifted classical composer. For a time, he hid his tangos from his teacher, but as she had done for so many other students, Boulanger encouraged Piazzolla to follow his voice. His classically-trained background permeates his popular music, revealing a remarkably sophisticated and innovative approach in combining this expertise with his deep affinity for popular Argentine music. The mastery of form and intricacy of counterpoint in his compositions within his style set his music apart from any other composer of the twentieth century.

In addition to his frequent performance of his own compositions on bandoneon, Piazzolla routinely introduced new instruments, sounds, and inventive rhythmic concepts that put his music in constant evolution during his lifetime. Piazzolla’s influence on other composers and other artists across multiple genres has extended well beyond his reimagining of the tango. His work continues to brilliantly bridge the gap between popular, folk, and jazz styles and the more formal environment of the concert hall.

Piazzolla’s *Libertango* is among his most iconic compositions. It was first recorded by the composer and published in Milan, Italy. The title merges *libertad* (Spanish for liberty) with tango as a nod to the composer’s “liberation” of the dance from its traditional confines. The work has been arranged, adapted, and recorded by hundreds of artists, ranging from Grace Jones to Yo-Yo Ma, and it is among the most recognizable *Tango Nuevo* works in the world. This brand-new setting for flute and orchestra of Piazzolla’s masterpiece was prepared especially for Mimi Stillman and this performance in collaboration with the Marine Band’s own arranger, Staff Sergeant Scott Ninmer.



PHOTO BY PETE CHECCHIA



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# MIMI STILLMAN

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Flutist Mimi Stillman is an internationally acclaimed solo, chamber, and recording artist hailed by the *New York Times* as “not only a consummate and charismatic performer, but also a scholar. Her programs tend to activate ear, heart, and brain.” Praised for her “exquisite purity of sound and depth of emotion” (*Diario de Yucatán*), she has appeared as a soloist with major orchestras and as recitalist and chamber musician at prestigious venues throughout the United States and internationally. Renowned for her virtuosity, insightful interpretation, and adventurous programming, she has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Bach Collegium Stuttgart, and Orquesta Sinfónica de Yucatán; and at venues including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Symphony Space, Philadelphia Museum of Art, National Sawdust, Roulette, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, La Jolla Music Society, Verbier Festival (Switzerland), Kol HaMusica (Israel), on Curtis On Tour’s virtual Latin American tour of 2021 in Mexico, Chile, Colombia, and Peru.

Stillman is the founding artistic director of the popular Dolce Suono Ensemble (DSE), performing Baroque to new music in Philadelphia and on tour, in programs with high intellectual content setting music in its broadest cultural context. Some of DSE’s outstanding projects include Mahler 100/Schoenberg 60; Women Pioneers of American Music; and A Place and a Name: Remembering the Holocaust. “All programs should have this much to say, and say it so well.” (*Philadelphia Inquirer*). A Spanish speaker, Stillman created DSE’s award-winning Música en tus Manos (Music in Your Hands) project to engage Philadelphia’s Latino communities in the chamber and popular music of Latin America. DSE has been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, William Penn Foundation, Aaron Copland Fund for Music, and other prestigious institutions, and enjoys a partnership with the Washington National Opera at the invitation of Plácido Domingo.

Stillman’s artistic diversity makes a unique mark on the music world—winning the Bärenreiter Prize for Best Historical Performance, engaging Latino communities through her Música en tus Manos project, and reaching a global audience as masterclass teacher and Livestream and media host. She is the host of “Tea with Mimi,” her live-stream series initiated early in the COVID-19 pandemic. A leader in the new music field contributing important new works to the repertoire for her instrument, Stillman has given sixty world premières in seventeen seasons with Dolce Suono Ensemble.

Stillman has won numerous competitions and awards including Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Astral Artists Auditions, and the Philadelphia Women in the Arts Award. A Yamaha Performing Artist and Clinician, she has taught masterclasses and done residencies for universities throughout the United States and internationally, including at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), École normale de Musique de Paris, Teatro Municipal de Santiago (Chile), and conservatories in Milan, Puerto Rico, Buenos Aires, and Bogotá. She is on faculty at Temple University and Music for All National Festival.

Stillman made the leap from child prodigy to inimitable artist. At age twelve, she was the youngest wind player ever admitted to the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with the legendary Julius Baker and Jeffrey Khaner and earned her bachelor of music degree. She holds a master of arts degree in history from the University of Pennsylvania, and has written on music and history for publications including the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World* and the *Journal of the Mozart Society of America*.

*From Mimi:*

*Special thanks to Director, Col. Jason Fettig, for inviting me as soloist and for his artistic vision in programming the world première of Zhou Tian’s Concerto for Flute and Orchestra, and to Staff Sgt. Scott Ninmer for creating this new arrangement of Piazzolla’s Libertango for me. I am tremendously inspired and honored to perform with the Marine Chamber Orchestra and Col. Fettig. As the United States Marine Band approaches its 225th anniversary, it is deeply meaningful to contemplate the ensemble’s rich history and extraordinary contribution to American musical life since 1798. Here’s to many more centuries of marvelous music-making from “The President’s Own.” God Bless America!*





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