



CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Thursday, May 13, 2021 at 1:00 P.M. ET
Streaming at [youtube.com/usmarineband](https://www.youtube.com/usmarineband)

Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

Joan Tower (b. 1938)

Copperwave (2006)

GySgt Robert Singer and GySgt Amy McCabe, trumpet

SSgt Cecilia Buettgen, horn

MSgt Timothy Dugan, trombone

MSgt Christopher Tiedeman, tuba

David Biedenbender (b. 1984)

Refraction (2015)

Death Metal Chicken

Kyrie!

Goat Rodeo

SSgt Trevor Mowry, oboe

SSgt Lewis Gilmore, clarinet

MSgt Steven Temme, saxophone

GySgt Shannon Kiewitt, bass clarinet

MGySgt Christopher McFarlane, bassoon

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

Piano Trio (2003)

Pale Yellow

Fiery Red

GySgt Sheng-Tsung Wang, violin

SSgt Caroline Bean Stute, cello

SSgt Christopher Schmitt, piano

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

Entr'acte (2011)

GySgt Sheng-Tsung Wang and SSgt Foster Wang, violin

MSgt Christopher Shieh, viola

SSgt Caroline Bean Stute, cello

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

Quartet (2014)

Fast

Slow

Fast

SSgt Michael Hopkins and SSgt Darren Lin, vibraphone

MSgt Russell Wilson and SSgt Christopher Schmitt, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Copperwave (2006)

Joan Tower (b. 1938)

American composer Joan Tower has received commissions from the New York Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Houston Symphony, Carnegie Hall, and Lincoln Center Chamber Society in New York, in addition to many other major ensembles. She was the first composer chosen for the Ford Made in America consortium commission of sixty-five orchestras, and the album with her resulting composition, *Made in America*, received three Grammy awards in 2008. Tower became the first woman to win the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for her composition *Silver Ladders* in 1990. Other accolades include receiving an honorary degree from the New England Conservatory in 2006, being named the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's Composer of the Year in the 2010–11 season, and receiving fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the New York State Council on the Arts. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1998 and the Academy of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University in 2004.

Copperwave was commissioned for the American Brass Quintet by the Juilliard School in New York for its centennial in 2016. Tower explained the inspirations for her work in the following note:

My father was a geologist and mining engineer, and I grew up loving everything to do with minerals and rocks. Copper is a heavy but flexible mineral that is used for many different purposes, and most brass instruments are made of copper.... The ideas in this piece move in waves, sometimes heavy ones, and at other times lighter—also in circles, turning around on the same notes. Occasionally, there is a Latin type of rhythm that appears, which is a reminder of my years growing up in South America where my father was working as a mining engineer.

Refraction (2015)

David Biedenbender (b. 1984)

David Biedenbender's music is celebrated for its stirring harmonies and rhythmic intensity. He has written for the concert stage as well as for dance and multimedia collaborations. His compositions are influenced by his diverse musical experiences in rock, jazz, and New Orleans-style brass bands as well as his study of Indian Carnatic music. Biedenbender has worked with many acclaimed performers and ensembles, including the PRISM Saxophone Quartet, Stenhammar String Quartet, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Aspen Contemporary Ensemble in Colorado, United States Navy Band, Philharmonie Baden-Baden in Germany, VocalEssence, and the Eastman Wind Ensemble in Rochester, New York. Awards for his work include the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award (in 2011 and 2012) and the 2012 Suzanne and Lee Ettelson Composers Award. Biedenbender currently serves as an assistant professor of composition at Michigan State University.

Refraction was commissioned by the Akropolis Reed Quintet. Biedenbender provided this description of his composition:

Refraction is split into three distinct movements, each inspired by different musical sources that have been bent and distorted by time, space, and my imagination, much like light is bent as it enters a medium of different density. The first movement comes from a short, ridiculous, and awesome YouTube video called “Death Metal Chicken,” which features a chicken screaming over a death metal band (of course!). The second movement is called Kyrie! and is dedicated to Guillaume de Machaut and Arvo Pärt. The third movement is called Goat Rodeo and is a strange mash-up of dubstep, funk, and musical pointillism, inspired by a goat rodeo, which is a slang term for a chaotic situation, often one that involves several people, each with a different agenda/vision/perception of what’s going on; a situation that is very difficult, despite energy and efforts, in which to instill any sense or order.

Piano Trio (2003)

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Jennifer Higdon started late in music, teaching herself to play flute at age fifteen and only beginning formal musical studies at age eighteen. Although she did not begin writing her own music until age twenty-one, Higdon has since achieved success as one of the most-performed composers of her generation and has been hailed as “a savvy, sensitive composer with a keen ear, an innate sense of form, and a generous dash of pure esprit” (*The Washington Post*). Her extensive list of commissioners and performing organizations includes the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Luzern Sinfonieorchester, Hague Philharmonic, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo String Quartet, and “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band.

Higdon’s Piano Trio was commissioned in 2003 by the Bravo! Vail Valley Music Festival in Colorado. “Can music reflect colors, and can colors be reflected in music?” These questions inspired Higdon to compose this piece, whose two movements bear the titles Pale Yellow and Fiery Red. The composer wrote in the introduction to the work:

I have always been fascinated with the connection between painting and music. In my composing, I often picture colors as if I were spreading them on a canvas, except I do so with melodies, harmonies, and through the instruments themselves. The colors that I have chosen in both of the movement titles and in the music itself reflect very different moods and energy levels, which I find fascinating, as it begs the question, can colors actually convey a mood?

Entr’acte (2011)

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

Caroline Shaw is a New York-based vocalist, violinist, composer, and producer who performs in solo and collaborative projects. She was the youngest recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2013 for *Partita for Eight Voices*, written for the Grammy-winning ensemble *Roomful of Teeth*, of which she is a member. Recent commissions include new works for Renée Fleming with Inon Barnatan, as well as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and others. Shaw studied at Rice University in Houston, Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut,

and Princeton University in New Jersey, and she currently teaches at New York University and is a creative associate at the Juilliard School. She has held residencies at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., the Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, and the Vail Dance Festival in Colorado.

Shaw composed *Entr'acte* in 2011 after hearing the Brentano Quartet play Haydn's String Quartet Opus 77, No. 2. She was struck by their "spare and soulful shift to the D-flat major trio in the minuet." In her composer's note to the score, she explained that the piece was "structured like a minuet and trio, riffing on that classical form but taking it a little further. I love the way some music (like the minuets of Opus 77) suddenly takes you to the other side of Alice's looking glass, in a kind of absurd, subtle, technicolor transition." *Entr'acte* is indeed full of sudden shifts and contrasts: it juxtaposes classical harmony with haunting dissonance, switches between structured rhythms and improvisational sections, and showcases seamless transitions between full-bodied tone and surreal, but expressive, strings-centric sound effects. For example, Shaw included the following instructions in the cello part: "Notes with fall-off gesture are basically that. Slide down from the written pitch (which does not have to be absolutely exact, except where tenutos are marked), maybe a half or whole step, with a slight coming away. Like a little sigh."

Quartet (2014)

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

American composer Steve Reich experimented with twelve-tone composition before moving to the minimalist style for which he became recognized, with his first major composition *It's Gonna Rain* in 1965. Since then, he has composed works such as the Grammy Award-winning *Different Trains* (1988), *Music for Eighteen Musicians* (1990), and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Double Sextet* (2009). Reich's unique compositional voice draws inspiration from modal jazz, Ghanaian drumming, Balinese gamelan music, and Hebrew chant. He has received commissions from major institutions such as the Barbican Centre in London, the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York, and the Rothko Chapel in Houston, and his music has been performed by world-renowned ensembles including the San Francisco Symphony and the Ensemble Intercontemporain.

Reich's *Quartet* utilizes the rare instrumentation of two vibraphones and two pianos. It was co-commissioned by the Southbank Centre in London, Carnegie Hall, the Juilliard School in New York, Cité de la Musique in Paris, and Kölner Philharmonie/KölnMusik in Germany, and was premiered by the Colin Currie Group in 2014. The composer explained his composition in the following words:

The piece is one of the more complex I have composed. It frequently changes key and often breaks off continuity to pause or take up new material. Though the parts are not unduly difficult, it calls for a high level of ensemble virtuosity. The form is one familiar throughout history: fast, slow, fast, played without pause. The slow movement introduces harmonies not usually found in my music.