



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
Saturday, June 22, 2019 at 7:30 P.M.  
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center  
Northern Virginia Community College  
Alexandria Campus  
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

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### American Perspectives

Arthur Foote (1853–1937)

Suite in E for String Orchestra, Opus 63

Praeludium  
Pizzicato  
Fuge

Robert Starer (1924–2001)

Concerto a tre (1954)

Allegro  
Andante  
Molto allegro e giocoso

*MSgt Tracey Paddock, clarinet*

*MSgt Michael Mergen, trumpet*

*MGySgt Chris Clark, trombone*

### INTERMISSION

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

Lullaby for String Orchestra (1919, rev. 1924)

Jennifer Higdon (b. 1962)

*Dance Card*

Raucous Rumpus  
Breeze Serenade  
Jumble Dance  
Celestial Blue  
Machina Rockus

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# ***PROGRAM NOTES***

## **Suite in E for String Orchestra, Opus 63**

Arthur Foote (1853–1937)

Arthur Foote was a member of the Second New England School, a group of New England composers who were responsible for the development of the American classical idiom at the turn of the twentieth century. The group, also known as the “Boston Six,” included George Whitefield Chadwick, Amy Beach, Edward MacDowell, John Knowles Paine, and Horatio Parker. Foote was one of Paine’s earliest pupils at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in 1875, he received the first master’s degree in music ever granted in the United States. Additionally, as a professional organist, Foote held a church position in Boston and served as president of the American Guild of Organists from 1909 to 1912.

In Boston, Foote had the double advantage of having many of his orchestral works performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and of being able to write specifically for that great orchestra. The orchestra gave the première of his best-known work, the Suite in E for String Orchestra, on April 16, 1909, under the direction of Max Fiedler. The suite was the first American classic for string orchestra, and thus the initial work in a category later enriched by such additions as Samuel Barber’s famous Adagio and David Diamond’s *Rounds*.

The Suite in E was composed in three movements. The first is an expansive Praeludium that identified Foote as a masterly and imaginative writer for strings. The second movement is a combination scherzo and slow movement. The opening pizzicato section serves as prelude and postlude to the fully developed slow section. The concluding Fuge dramatically sums up the suite with a strong theme and subtle rhythmic emphases to deepen the intensity of the drive toward the exhilarating conclusion.

## **Concerto a tre (1954)**

Robert Starer (1924–2001)

Composer Robert Starer was born in Vienna and began his musical studies on piano at age four. He entered the Vienna State Academy to further his education but relocated to the Jerusalem Conservatory after the 1938 Anschluss, in which Nazi Germany annexed Austria. After serving in the British Royal Air Force during World War II, he moved to the United States and entered the Juilliard School in New York, where he studied composition with the “Dean of American Composers” Aaron Copland and received a postgraduate degree in 1949. A prolific composer, Starer taught at the Juilliard School and Brooklyn College in New York, and lived in New York State until his death.

As events in Starer’s life took him away from his homeland, his writing expanded to include many of the sounds that he heard around him, from the Middle Eastern scales and rhythms to American jazz idioms. However, his earlier compositions more closely followed the model of the twentieth-century Viennese style in which he was educated. The Concerto a tre, written only five years after he left the Juilliard School, contained many of these traditional elements. The opening Allegro movement is structured similarly to a concerto grosso, with the solo trio set against the accompanying string orchestra. By contrast, the second movement Andante allows each of the solo instruments the

opportunity to shine individually. The finale, *Molto allegro e giocoso*, contains an extended cadenza for the three soloists, cheekily titled “Triologue.” Although the *Concerto a tre* was premièred in 1954, the piece reached international acclaim when renowned choreographer Martha Graham created a dance work called *Secular Games* using the existing score for Starer’s concerto.

### **Master Sergeant Tracey Paddock, clarinet**

Clarinetist Master Sergeant Tracey Paddock joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in November 1998. Master Sgt. Paddock began her musical instruction at age eight. Upon graduating in 1989 from West Potomac High School in Alexandria, she attended Indiana University in Bloomington, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in music in 1992. As a Fulbright Scholar, she earned her master’s degree in music from the Royal Academy of Music in London in 1994. She completed a doctorate in music performance from Florida State University in Tallahassee in 2011. Master Sgt. Paddock has studied clarinet with Wayne Titerence, formerly with the Air Force Band; James Campbell of Indiana University; the Royal Academy’s Keith Puddy and Angela Malsbury; and Frank Kowalsky of Florida State University.

### **Master Sergeant Michael Mergen, trumpet**

Trumpeter/cornetist Master Sergeant Michael Mergen joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in May 1999. Master Sgt. Mergen began his musical instruction at age nine. Upon graduating in 1992 from Voorhees High School in Glen Gardner, New Jersey, he attended the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in music performance and education in 1996. In 1998, he earned a master’s degree in music performance from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and in 2008, he earned a doctorate in trumpet performance from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. His instructors included the late Armando Ghitalla, Charles Daval, and Charles Geyer. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” Master Sgt. Mergen performed with the Singapore Symphony in the Republic of Singapore, the Harrisburg Symphony in Pennsylvania, and was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts.

### **Master Gunnery Sergeant Chris Clark, trombone**

Trombonist Master Gunnery Sergeant Chris Clark joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in August 1999. He was appointed section leader in 2008. Master Gunnery Sgt. Clark began his musical instruction at age eleven under the tutelage of his father, Jimmy Clark. He graduated in 1991 from Commerce High School, where he studied with the late Dr. Neill H. Humfeld. He earned a bachelor’s degree in music in 1995 from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he studied with Glenn Dodson, a former member of the Marine Band and principal trombone of the Philadelphia Orchestra. In 1997, he earned a master’s degree in music from The Juilliard School in New York, where he studied with Joseph Alessi, principal trombonist of the New York Philharmonic. Master Gunnery Sgt. Clark earned his doctorate in musical arts from The Catholic University of America in May 2009, where he studied with David Fedderly. Prior to joining the band, Master Gunnery Sgt. Clark was a freelance trombonist in New York.

## **Lullaby for String Orchestra (1919, rev. 1924)**

George Gershwin (1898–1937)

Before George Gershwin's meteoric ascent to fame following his 1924 composition *Rhapsody in Blue*, he worked in New York City as a "song plugger" for a Tin Pan Alley music publishing firm. He had always maintained a desire for formal training in composition, so in 1919, he began studying harmony and orchestration with the violinist and composer Edward Kilenyi. As part of his training, Gershwin wrote a compositional exercise called Lullaby for string quartet. Though it was never published during his lifetime, the short piece enjoyed immediate success in the intimate venue of chamber parties, where his friends played it before or after reading more substantial quartet works by classical and romantic masters.

Gershwin eventually published some of the material used in Lullaby in 1922, not as a string quartet, but as part of an aria for the one-act jazz opera *Blue Monday*. The opera itself was unsuccessful, but its conductor, Paul Whiteman, took interest in the young composer's use of jazz elements in the classical style and asked him to write a symphonic jazz piece. The collaboration resulted in Gershwin's pivotal work *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Lullaby was finally published posthumously as a string quartet in 1968, and it was brought to public attention by the Juilliard String Quartet. Lullaby was Gershwin's only work written for strings alone, and the simple, bluesy melody repeats several times in different settings, at times nestled densely in warm harmonies and other times floating over baseline pizzicato. The tune is interrupted by solo instrument outbursts but recovers itself and ultimately fades away into harmonics and tremolo, leaving the listener lulled into Gershwin's sweet world of melody.

## ***Dance Card***

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 eighteen. Although she did not begin writing her own music until age twenty-one, Higdon has since achieved unparalleled 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 is anchored by many of the most significant ensembles throughout the world, including 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 received the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her Violin Concerto and has also received awards from the Serge Koussevitzky Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Academy of Arts and Letters (two awards), the Pew Fellowship in the Arts, Meet-the-Composer, the National Endowment for the Arts, and ASCAP. She has been a featured composer at festivals including Tanglewood, Vail, Cabrillo, Grand Teton, Norfolk, and Winnipeg and has served as composer-in-residence with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, and Fort Worth Symphony. Her first opera, based on Charles Frazier's 1997 novel *Cold Mountain* and a libretto by Gene Sheer, was written for the Santa Fe Opera and Opera Philadelphia and premièred in 2015. She currently holds the Milton L. Rock chair in composition studies at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

*Dance Card* was commissioned by the New Century Chamber Orchestra in San Francisco, the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra in Houston, and the Chicago Sinfonietta and is dedicated to Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, director of the New Century Chamber Orchestra. Of the composition, Higdon writes:

*Dance Card* is a celebration of the joy, lyricism, and passion of a group of strings playing together! This piece is made up of five movements, each of which is designed so that it can also be played as a separate work. From a string fanfare, through gentle serenades, and actual wild dances, the musicians get a chance to highlight their soloistic and ensemble playing. This work reflects the deep commitment that string players bring to their music-making, not only in the many years of learning to play their instruments, but also in the dedication manifested in gorgeous music-making as an ensemble. When we attend as audience members, we in effect, fill our dance card with that shared experience