



Colonel Jason K. Fetting, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Saturday, July 20, 2019 at 7:30 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
Captain Ryan J. Nowlin, conducting

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
arranged by Ernst Hess

Overture in C minor, D. 8

Eric Ewazen (b. 1954)

Down a River of Time (1999)

...past hopes and dreams
...and sorrows
...and memories of tomorrow

SSgt Trevor Mowry, oboe soloist

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
arranged by Sir Colin Davis

String Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Opus 131

Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo
Allegro molto vivace
Allegro moderato
Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile
Presto
Adagio quasi un poco andante
Allegro

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PROGRAM NOTES

“On the frosty porch, my Aunt Ida sees us all—the old folks, the young folks and the kids. Moving, though we can't feel the current, down a river of time.”

On Christmas Day in 1997, the above words appeared in an essay by Richard Feagler published in Cleveland's *The Plain Dealer*. In this installment of his column, Feagler reminisced about Christmas at his Aunt Ida's home, telling charming stories about Cousin Stanley the TV salesman, “woman talk” in the living room, and Aunt Ida dressed in a moth-eaten Santa Claus suit, watching everyone wistfully from the frosty front porch. Almost all of the people Aunt Ida described had passed away by then, but Feagler could still feel their presence, “those simple people who loved us and took care of us” and “left us blessings we too rarely count.”

That same Christmas Day, composer Eric Ewazen's father passed away in Cleveland. He borrowed the title of his oboe concerto, *Down a River of Time*, from Feagler's words. The music is a fitting reflection on loved ones who have passed away and on the importance of dreams and ideals.

All three pieces on tonight's program provide an opportunity to feel the depths of human experience, from the young Franz Schubert's grave and powerful overture to Ewazen's meditation on life and death to Ludwig van Beethoven's penultimate string quartet, written on a grand scale just a year before his death, with its especially meaningful dedication.

Overture in C minor, D. 8

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

arranged by Ernst Hess

As a youth, Franz Schubert played viola in his family's string quartet, along with his brothers Ferdinand and Ignaz on violin and his father on cello. Schubert had begun music lessons at age 5 with his father and elder brother but quickly learned all they could teach him, due to his prodigious musical talent.

The Schubert family was no stranger to tragedy. By the time Schubert was born, his parents had lost nine children. The family quartet included three of the five Schubert children who lived past age six. When Schubert was 15, his mother died of typhus, and he wrote the music that would evolve into this overture in the year before her death.

The Overture in C minor began its existence as a viola quintet for two violins, two violas, and cello. This combination showed special attention to Schubert's own instrument, with an extra viola part added to the traditional string quartet ensemble. Schubert later created an alternative version for string quartet by omitting some of the second viola material and absorbing other melodies into the first viola part. The orchestral version of the piece features the viola prominently, leading from within the texture and lending a gravitas and darkness to the work. It is easy to feel in this music the heartbreak that must have existed in the Schubert home, as well as the beauty of glimpses of light that seem especially sweet after opening oneself to the depths of sorrow.

Down a River of Time (1999)

Eric Ewazen (b. 1954)

Oboist Linda Strommen commissioned *Down a River of Time* as a memorial tribute to her father. She premiered the work at the Bellingham Festival of Music in Washington in August 1999, only two years after composer Eric Ewazen lost his own father. Ewazen commented that this oboe concerto felt deeply personal for him and that it percolated for years before he wrote it down. The title reflected on the importance of those who have left our lives and how everyone is carried by an inexorable rushing river of time.

Ewazen describes the piece as follows:

The first movement portrays that river of time with its ebbs and flows, hopes and dreams. The second movement portrays emotions felt during times of loss—powerful feelings running the gamut from sorrow to resignation to tenderness and peace at the remembrance of happier distant times. In the final movement, those happier memories flood the music, as feelings of strength and determination supersede all else, and the work comes to its virtuosic conclusion with a joyful intensity.

Staff Sergeant Trevor Mowry, oboe soloist

Co-principal oboe Staff Sergeant Trevor Mowry joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in June 2012. He began his musical training on piano at age 5 and oboe at age 9. Upon graduating from Glenbard West High School in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, in 2007, he attended the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester in New York where he studied with Richard Killmer and earned a bachelor’s degree in music in 2011. Staff Sgt. Mowry pursued graduate studies with Robert Atherholt at Rice University in Houston. He recently performed Jean Françaix’s *L’Horloge de Flore (Flower Clock)* with the Marine Chamber Orchestra in 2015, and he has given master classes at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Georgia State University in Atlanta, and the University of Florida in Gainesville. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” Staff Sgt. Mowry was guest principal oboe with the Houston Grand Opera, principal oboe with the Wheaton Municipal Band in Illinois, and a freelance musician. In 2010, he won the Eastman School of Music’s annual Concerto Competition.

String Quartet No. 14 in C-sharp minor, Opus 131

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

arranged by Sir Colin Davis

Ludwig van Beethoven had no biological children; his nephew Karl, born in 1806, was the only child of the three Beethoven brothers and, thus, the only heir to the Beethoven name. After Karl’s father passed away in 1815, Beethoven pursued guardianship of his nephew, resulting in complicated legal battles with his sister-in-law Johanna. The relationships were fraught and emotionally charged. Though his treatment of Karl was questionable, the composer called his nephew “beloved” and considered the boy his heir.

In the summer of 1826, Karl attempted suicide. During his recovery, Karl and his uncle decided that the discipline and structure of the military might be beneficial. Once his hair had grown long enough to cover the scar from the suicide attempt, Karl joined the military, and Field Marshal Baron Joseph von Stutterheim accepted him as a cadet in his regiment. The String Quartet No. 14, Beethoven’s self-proclaimed favorite quartet, was dedicated to Stutterheim in gratitude for his taking the composer’s heir under his wing during a vulnerable time. The work’s seven movements are performed seamlessly, with no breaks between.

The quartet was never performed in a public concert during Beethoven’s lifetime. In fact, Beethoven himself never heard it, as he was already deaf when he composed it. During that final year of Beethoven’s life, the work was performed for a few small private audiences, one of which included Franz Schubert. Upon hearing the quartet, Schubert is said to have commented: “After this, what is left to write?”