



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Saturday, August 20, 2022 at 7:30 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

George Antheil (1900–59)

A Jazz Symphony (1925, rev. 1955)

Joseph Turrin (b. 1947)

O Earth, O Sky, you are mine to roam
In memory of Bram Tovey
world première

Emmanuel Séjourné (b. 1961)

Concerto for Marimba and Strings (2006)
I. Tempo souple
II. Rythmique, énergique

MSgt Jonathan Bisesi, soloist

INTERMISSION

Aaron Copland (1900–90)

Music for Movies (1942)
New England Countryside
Barley Wagons
Sunday Traffic
Grovers Corners
Threshing Machines

Alan Williams (b. 1965)

Ronin 3: A Heroes Tribute (2022)
I. Valor
II. Brothers
III. Honor
world première

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PROGRAM NOTES

A Jazz Symphony (1925, rev. 1955)

George Antheil (1900–59)

Self-described as “The Bad Boy of Music” from the title of his autobiography, George Antheil was born in Trenton, New Jersey. He studied composition with Constantin von Sternberg and Ernest Bloch before moving to Berlin in 1922. There, Antheil made a name for himself as a modernist by incorporating jazz, noise, and ostinato into his otherwise “classical” music. Like many composers, he began by writing sonatas for solo piano and later for violin and piano. Antheil then moved to Paris where he composed his famous *Ballet mécanique* (1925) for multiple pianos and percussion, as well as electric bells and propellers. Later he would try his hand at neo-classic writing and then opera. In 1936, he returned to the United States and settled in Los Angeles, where he composed symphonies, operas, vocal, chamber and piano music, all of which were considered more conventional than his early writing. Antheil revisited many of his early works and published several revisions during his final years.

A Jazz Symphony was composed for Paul Whiteman’s second “Experiment in Modern Music,” a year and half after the first ‘experiment’ which featured the première of George Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue. Clearly inspired by Gershwin’s fusion of the classical and jazz idioms, Antheil’s work also featured solo piano with jazz orchestra. Unfortunately, for reasons unknown, the première of a Jazz Symphony did not occur on Whiteman’s program in December 1925. That performance would take place a year and a half later with the W. C. Handy Orchestra and Antheil as the piano soloist. The work features quotes from composers such as Scott Joplin and Igor Stravinsky as well as an unidentified Viennese waltz that Antheil instructs be played “mit schwung.” Antheil revised the work in 1955 for a chamber wind ensemble with minimal strings and a piano part considerably reduced from the original solo part. The title page to this manuscript revision has the following history in Antheil’s hand, dated November 7, 1955:

[A Jazz Symphony] was first played together with the Ballet Mécanique in Carnegie Hall, New York, on April 10, 1927. Post-dating “Rhapsodie In Blue” only slightly, it is one of the very first symphonic expressions which attempted to synthesize [sic] American jazz as a legitimate artistic expression; and, if for no other reason, is historically (perhaps) interesting on that account. It was played, on this occasion, by an all [Black] orchestra assembled by Handy, and received an ovation at its première—a fact usually forgotten because of the scandal of the Ballet Mécanique which followed it.

Energy and joie de vivre abound from start to finish in A Jazz Symphony, with whiplash-inducing shifts in time, tempo and texture. And while it is relatively brief by symphonic standards, Antheil manages to fit an astonishing amount of thematic material into a wonderfully frenetic musical collage, within which both the listeners and performers are simultaneously challenged and entertained.

O Earth, O Sky, you are mine to roam (2022)

In memory of Bram Tovey

Joseph Turrin (b. 1947)

world première

Joseph Turrin's music has been commissioned and performed by some of the world's leading orchestras, chamber ensembles, and soloists. His work encompasses many varied forms, including film, theater, opera, orchestral, chamber, jazz, electronic, and dance. Several of his films and recording projects have been nominated for Emmy and Grammy Awards.

His works have been recorded on RCA, EMI, Teldec, Naxos, Summit, Klavier, Cala Records, Albany, Crystal, and others. He is a recipient of several commissions from the New York Philharmonic, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Live from Lincoln Center, and the National Endowment on the Arts. His works have been championed by noted musicians as Kurt Masur, Zubin Mehta, Erich Leinsdorf, Bram Tovey, Wynton Marsalis, Yo-Yo Ma, Canadian Brass, Renee Fleming, and others. In 2006 he was awarded an honorary degree from the Eastman School of Music and the University of Rochester.

His works have been performed by the New York Philharmonic, Nashville, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh Symphonies, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Saint Martin in the Fields Chamber Orchestra, United States Air Force Band, United States Marine Band, United States Military Academy Band at West Point, United States Navy Band, United States Army Band, Notre Dame University Band, Eastman Wind Ensemble, Cathedral of Saint John the Devine, English Chamber Orchestra, and the BBC Concert Orchestra. He has also scored several feature films for Paramount Pictures, New Line Cinema, Canon Films, Kino International, and PBS/Channel 13 in New York and orchestrated the 1992 Barcelona Summer Olympics Opening Fanfare.

He is currently on the music faculty of Rutgers University and Montclair State University. He is also the author of *Music in Film: Settling the Score* published by Cognella Press in San Diego, CA. Conductor Kurt Masur said about Turrin's music: "I have always liked composers who are reflecting upon the musical sound of their country. Joseph Turrin does it in a very convincing way. I have taken great delight from getting to know his scores, which I have conducted in New York, in Europe, and in Asia." The composer writes the following program note as a preface to this work:

This piece is dedicated to the memory of Bram Tovey who passed away on July 12, 2022. Bram was not only a wonderfully talented musician but also a good friend. Saddened by this tragic loss I found myself walking over to my back window the day after his passing and was surprised to see the most beautiful black butterfly hovering in and out of the garden every so often making its presence known by flying consistently in circles in front of my window. I immediately thought of the wonderful folklore about the butterfly and the cultures that believe they are the spirit of the dead returning once more. I couldn't help thinking that maybe Bram was saying his last goodbye, there on this sultry summer afternoon. The piece is scored for strings, woodwinds and harp and I couldn't resist using the flute in all its ethereal beauty as representing that butterfly. *O Earth, O Sky, you are mine to roam*

Concerto for Marimba and Strings (2006)

Emmanuel Séjourné (b. 1961)

An unlikely word to describe most marimba concertos is “romantic.” However, upon listening to Emmanuel Séjourné’s Concerto for Marimba and Strings, it might indeed be the word of choice. Perhaps as a result of this unique characteristic, the work has become overwhelmingly popular in recent years, having now received over 600 orchestral performances worldwide. The original two-movement version of the Concerto was commissioned by and dedicated to the Romanian marimba virtuoso Bogdan Băcanu.

The first movement, *tempo souple* (flexible tempo), begins delicately with a beautiful C-minor melody in the first violins that would not be out of place in the late-Romantic period. The marimba’s entrance marks the first of several unaccompanied cadenzas with which Séjourné is able to highlight the instrument’s technical and lyrical range. He deftly employs four-mallet tremolo techniques in order to increase the instrument’s expressivity, allowing it to crescendo and decrescendo with the strings. The second movement is marked *Rythmique, énergique*, and those two words perfectly encapsulate its impact. It begins with a dramatic question and answer between ensemble and soloist, as the strings provide a rhythmic springboard for acrobatic marimba figures. This introductory material (revisited twice more later on) gives way to a hypnotic ostinato marimba passage, setting the stage for the primary rhythmic feel: a complex lilt in 11/8 time signature. It is remarkable how at times the soloist is able to seemingly float on top of the accompaniment, with beautiful rubato lines reminiscent of Spanish flamenco guitar or Argentinian bandoneón. As the work comes to a close, Séjourné releases rhythmic tension created by the odd-metered material with a switch to more familiar 12/8 and 2/4 time.

Composer, percussionist, and educator Emmanuel Séjourné was born in Limoges, France, and has become one of the leading figures in contemporary percussion music. His career spans multiple genres, from classical to world music and jazz. As a composer, his music has been played by ensembles around the globe, including Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, Osaka Philharmonic, Sinfonia Toronto, and the Luxembourg Philharmonic. As a performer, he works both as a soloist and with the Accroche-Note ensemble, and has premièred over one hundred new works from composers. Séjourné is currently the head of the percussion department at the Strasbourg Superior Academy of Music & Arts and an associate professor at the Haute École de Musique in Lausanne.

Master Sergeant Jonathan Bisesi, percussion soloist

Percussionist Master Sergeant Jonathan Bisesi of Orchard Park, New York, joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in May 2004. Master Sgt. Bisesi began his musical training at age eight. After graduating in 1996 from Orchard Park High School, he earned a bachelor’s degree in music from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) in 2000, and in 2002 received a master’s degree in music from Boston University (BU). His percussion instructors include Allen Otte of CCM and Timothy Genis of BU. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” he was a teaching associate in percussion at BU and a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts.

Master Sgt. Bisesi performs with the Marine Band and Marine Chamber Orchestra at the White House, in the Washington, D.C., area, and across the country during the band’s annual concert tour. Notable solos with the Marine Band include the “Xylophone Rags of George Hamilton Green” on tour in 2017, and at the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts in 2016; Pablo de Sarasate’s *Zigeunerweisen*, Opus 20, on tour and at Wolf Trap in 2011; and *The Golden Age of the Xylophone* arranged by Floyd E. Werle and Randy Eyles in 2006. He also performed at the 2008 Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Austin, Texas, as a member of the Marine Band percussion quartet.

Music for Movies (1942)

Aaron Copland (1900–90)

In 1937, Aaron Copland visited Hollywood, in order to break into the world of film composing, a business that was unfriendly to “serious” composers at the time. Fellow composer George Antheil warned Copland that “Hollywood was a ‘closed corporation,’ one where no one should attempt to come out unless he can write ‘piano scores’ at the rate of fifteen to thirty pages a day. Speed is still one of the main requisites of the picture business.” During that 1937 visit, Copland learned the movie studios were interested in his music, but were afraid he would not be fast and flexible enough to work in the film industry. Although it would take another two years before any Hollywood studio was willing to give Copland a chance to score for film, Lewis Milestone’s 1939 adaptation of John Steinbeck’s novel *Of Mice and Men* could not have been a more perfect vehicle for Copland’s music. Milestone quickly realized how integral Copland’s music was to his film, and at one point actually added four seconds of footage in order to accommodate Copland’s score. At this time in Hollywood, this type of acquiescence from a director was unfathomable and, it can be argued, this episode marked the beginning of a significant shift in the role and status of American film composers. Copland went on to write several highly successful and memorable film scores. By 1942 he was able to survey his cinematic output and construct a concert suite that would:

“...mirror in musical terms the wide range of American scenes in the three films for which I had written music, *The City*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *Our Town*. None of this music was transcribed literally from the films. The greatest modifications come in the opening and closing sections. All were re-orchestrated from full orchestra to small ensemble. ‘New England Countryside’ is based largely on the title music of *The City*; ‘Barley Wagons’ originally accompanied an outdoor landscape in *Of Mice and Men*; ‘Sunday Traffic,’ also derived from *The City*, serves the purpose of a scherzo in the suite; ‘The Story of Grover’s Corners’ was developed from *Our Town*—it was a kind of theme song in the film; and ‘Threshing Machines’ was compiled from several dramatic scenes in Steinbeck’s story.”

The first performance of *Music for Movies* was given at Town Hall in New York City. It reflects two distinct facets of American life: the pastoral/rural and the industrial/urban. Indeed, this dichotomy was something that Copland grappled with in his own life. In 1947, after many years as a Manhattan resident, he decided to leave the city and eventually settled in a converted barn, Shady Land Farm, in Ossining, New York, where he lived for nine years.

Ronin 3: A Heroes Tribute

Alan Williams (b. 1965)

world première

Alan Williams is an award-winning composer and conductor with more than 100 motion picture and television credits, including scores for the Academy Award nominated IMAX film, *Amazon*, and Sony Pictures Classics’ *Mark Twain’s America in 3D*. His musical training began on the piano at age seven, and by age fifteen, after studying both classical and jazz piano, he knew that he wanted to compose for film. This led him to pursue composition at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, where he received a bachelor’s of music in composition. He continued with graduate work at the University of Southern California, where he studied film and television composition with David Raksin, Bruce Broughton, Buddy Baker, Bill Conti, and Jerry Goldsmith, among others. Alan enjoys a successful career as a film and television composer, having received nineteen Global Music Awards and a Prestige Film Gold Award for his score to “Cowgirls n’ Angels.” He has collaborated with Academy Award, Golden Globe, and Emmy Award winners and nominees Barbra Streisand,

Anne Bancroft, Naomi Watts, Haley Joel Osment, Debbie Reynolds, Mary Tyler Moore, James Earl Jones, and Burt Reynolds. Williams wrote the following regarding this première:

Ronin 3: A Heroes Tribute is a three movement concert work based on the upcoming three-part documentary film *Ronin 3: The Battle for Sangin*. This suite encapsulates the themes of valor, brotherhood, and honor for the real-life story of the Ronin 3 unit, part of the 3rd Battalion 5th Marines, “Darkhorse.” Composing the suite prior to beginning work on the film score provided me the opportunity to explore the emotional moments of the war in Sangin, known as the “bloodiest battleground of Afghanistan.”

I. Valor opens with solo trumpet, sounding the theme of Valor for the Marines of Ronin 3. The music moves into actions of battle, closing with a stately reprise of the Valor theme. *II. Brothers* heralds the brotherhood of these Marines. Together on the battlefield their story of tragedy and heroism are forever intertwined. *III. Honor* calls to arms the Marines of Ronin 3. The ostinato pulse in the music intensifies as the conflict escalates. Giving the Marines renewed hope, the stoic theme of Honor is unfurled and crescendos to strains of triumph, celebrating the patriotism of Ronin 3.