



Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Nowlin, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Sunday, August 22, 2026 at 2:00 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
Master Sergeant Karen Johnson, coordinating

traditional
arranged by the Danish String Quartet

V. Finale, "The Dromer" from *Nordic Suite* (2019)

Fazıl Say (b. 1970)

Chamber Symphony, Opus 62 (2015)

Introduction
Nocturne
Finale

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–93)

Andante Cantabile

SSgt Atticus Mellor-Goldman, cello soloist

Clarice Assad (b. 1978)

Impressions (2008)

Personas: Theme & Variations
Fusion: Dança Brasileira
Affection: Slow Waltz
Precision: Perpetual Motion
Unity: Coda

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PROGRAM NOTES

V. Finale, “The Dromer” from Nordic Suite (2019)

traditional

arranged by the Danish String Quartet

In its album *Last Leaf*, the Danish String Quartet set out to explore the intersection of Nordic folk tradition and contemporary classical expression, building an album that moves between centuries-old melodies and newly composed works. Rather than presenting folk material in its raw form, the quartet treats each melody as a living artifact, reshaped through inventive arrangements.

“The Dromer” has its origins as an English or Scottish dance, and it appeared in an eighteenth-century compilation of Danish tunes. The following is from the album’s program notes on “The Dromer”:

One of the most important collections of Danish tunes was assembled by the Bast brothers from 1763–1782. The two brothers, Christian Frederik and Paul Danchel, grew up on the island of Lolland in the second half of the eighteenth century. Both of them studied theology in Copenhagen, making their way through their collegiate years by playing music at parties and social occasions.

“The Dromer” is technically an English dance. In the final decades of the eighteenth century, dances from the British Isles were very much in fashion in Denmark, and naturally the Bast brothers had several English dances in their repertoire. The peculiar title of this tune is probably a misspelling of “The Drummer,” which is a fairly well-known Scottish reel that is identical to the melody notated by the Bast brothers. “The Drummer” started to appear in British tune collections around 1700, and it later morphed into the famous Scottish song “The Piper o’ Dundee,” which was used to “stir up the chiefs and their clans” during the Jacobite rising.

Chamber Symphony, Opus 62 (2015)

Fazıl Say (b. 1970)

Turkish composer and pianist Fazıl Say was born in Ankara and began piano lessons at the age of three with Mithat Fenmen. Fenmen, a student of Alfred Cortot in Paris, encouraged Say to improvise daily on any theme before practicing traditional piano studies. As a result, Say’s creative and compositional instincts developed at a very early age. His first composition, a piano sonata, was written in 1984, but his continued piano studies led him to win the International Young Concert Artists Competition in New York in 1994.

Say’s compositions are often inspired by history and jazz, and these influences are clearly heard in his Chamber Symphony, Opus 62. Say describes the work as being “entirely inspired by Turkish music,” reflecting both the “complexities of modern-day Turkey as well as a certain introspection, where I attempt to convey the story with rhythm and time signatures.” Accented rhythms, percussive effects such as *col legno* (playing with the wood of the bow), hitting the body of the instrument, snap pizzicati, and glissandi all contribute to the distinctly Turkish sound world of the piece.

The first movement, Introduction, is set in the 7/8 time signature known as *devr-i hindi*, a rhythm common in traditional Turkish music. Listeners may imagine running through the winding, bustling streets of Turkey. The slower middle section draws inspiration from “classical palace music in the *hecaz makam*” (a melodic mode in Turkish classical music), evoking “nostalgia for ‘old Istanbul.’” The movement returns to 7/8, ending with archaic, driving rhythms.

All instruments play with mutes throughout the second movement, Nocturne, creating a hushed and intimate atmosphere. An ostinato figure produces a hypnotic effect, though Say interrupts this calm with aggressive outbursts. In this movement, he aimed to “underline the need for romanticism in our age.”

The Finale is a fast-paced dance inspired by the once-thriving Roma neighborhood of Sulukule in Istanbul, incorporating the energetic elements of Turkish-Roma music. The movement opens in 9/8, but the uneven grouping of beats (2+2+2+3) creates a swinging, dance-like feel. Relentless, repeated fast notes heighten the intensity. A *meno mosso* section is followed by two celli energetically competing as if they are dueling entertainers. Near the end, the original rhythmic motif returns, finally resolving into 4/4 common time in the penultimate measure of the work.

Commissioned by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the work was premièred at Carnegie Hall in New York City on April 11, 2015.

Andante Cantabile

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–93)

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky is one of the most beloved composers of the Romantic era. Born in Votkinsk, Russia, Tchaikovsky initially trained for a career in civil service before pursuing music professionally. He later studied at the St. Petersburg Conservatory and became one of the first internationally recognized Russian composers.

Today, he is best known for works such as the ballets *Swan Lake*, *The Nutcracker*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, as well as his symphonies and concertos. Throughout his career, Tchaikovsky was celebrated for his gift for memorable melodies, rich orchestration, and deeply expressive musical language. Tchaikovsky composed String Quartet No. 1, Opus 11 in 1871 while teaching at the Moscow Conservatory. The work is especially famous for its second movement, Andante Cantabile, which uses a folk tune, “Sidel Vanya na divane” (“Vanya Was Sitting on the Couch”), as the primary melody. Tchaikovsky reportedly notated the melody after hearing it sung by a house painter while visiting his sister’s estate near Kamianka, in present-day Ukraine.

One of the movement’s most memorable early performances took place at the Moscow Conservatory in 1876. Recalling the occasion nearly a decade later, Tchaikovsky wrote in his diary, “Probably never in my life have I been so moved by the pride of authorship as when Lev Tolstoy, sitting by me and listening to the Andante of my Quartet, burst into tears.” Tolstoy’s reaction remains a powerful testament to the expressive depth of this music.

Tchaikovsky arranged this movement as a standalone work for solo cello and string orchestra in 1888 for his friend, the Russian cellist Anatoly Brandukov. This version of the piece allows the cello to take on a prominent, singing role while preserving the warmth and intimacy of the original chamber work. Tchaikovsky alternates between moments of gentle

reflection, longing, and passionate intensity, a hallmark of his Romantic style. Although the piece was originally written for four players, the expanded string orchestra creates a broader range of color and sonority while maintaining the conversational character of chamber music.

Staff Sergeant Atticus Mellor-Goldman, cello soloist

Cellist Staff Sergeant Atticus Mellor-Goldman of Los Angeles, California, joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in February 2025. Staff Sgt. Mellor-Goldman began his musical training on cello at age seven. After graduating from Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, he attended Mercer University in Macon, Georgia, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in cello performance in 2019. In 2021, he earned a master’s degree in cello performance from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. His main instructors include Julie Albers, Hans Jensen, and Richard Aaron from Mercer University’s McDuffie Center for Strings and Ole Akahoshi and Paul Watkins from Yale. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” Staff Sgt. Mellor-Goldman was a cellist with the Air Force Strings from 2021-25.

***Impressions* (2008)**

Clarice Assad (b. 1978)

Born in Rio de Janeiro, Clarice Assad has built an international career as a composer, pianist, vocalist, and educator. Trained at Roosevelt University in Chicago and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, she is in-demand as a commissioned composer and performer and has held residences with a number of orchestras and ensembles. Her music draws freely from classical, Brazilian, jazz, and popular traditions to create works that are imaginative, communicative, and deeply human. Those qualities are on full display in *Impressions*, a piece that invites listeners to hear an orchestra not simply as an ensemble, but as a community of distinct voices that come together to create something greater than the sum of its parts.

When Assad first met the musicians of the New Century Chamber Orchestra, she was inspired not only by their artistry, but by their individual personalities. Commissioned by the ensemble in 2008, *Impressions* grew from those initial encounters into a vibrant musical portrait of the orchestra and the people who bring it to life.

The work unfolds in five movements, each exploring a different facet of the ensemble’s identity. The opening movement, *Personas: Theme & Variations*, introduces a cast of musical characters drawn from the orchestra itself — the technically brilliant violinists, the energy-generating cellists, a jazz-inflected bass player, and a delightfully somber viola section (a nod to a beloved orchestral tradition). A lively Brazilian dance follows (*Fusion: Dança Brasileira*), infused with the rhythmic energy and color that run throughout Assad’s music. The central movement, *Affection: Slow Waltz*, offers a more reflective moment, evoking the warmth and nostalgia of classic Hollywood film scores. *Precision: Perpetual Motion* showcases the musicians’ precision and virtuosity, and the final movement, *Unity: Coda* brings the work’s ideas together in a celebration of collective spirit.