



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, October 2, 2022 at 2:00 P.M.
John Philip Sousa Band Hall
Marine Barracks Annex
Washington, DC

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Tocatta in E minor, BWV 914

Introduction
Un poco allegro
Adagio
Fuga; Allegro

MSgt Russell Wilson, harpsichord

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

Six Pieces for Piano, Opus 118

No. 1: Intermezzo in A minor: Allegro non assai, ma molto appassionato
No. 2: Intermezzo in A: Andante teneramente
No. 3: Ballade in G minor: Allegro energico
No. 4: Intermezzo in F minor: Allegretto un poco agitato
No. 5: Romance in F: Andante; Allegretto grazioso
No. 6: Intermezzo in E-flat minor: Andante, largo e mesto

MSgt Russell Wilson, piano

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Violin Sonata No. 9, Opus 47, *Kreutzer*

Adagio sostenuto; Presto
Andante con variazioni
Presto

GySgt Karen Johnson, violin
MSgt Russell Wilson, piano

www.marineband.marines.mil | (202) 433-5809 | www.facebook.com/marineband | www.twitter.com/marineband | www.instagram.com/usmarineband

PLEASE NOTE: The use of recording devices and flash photography is prohibited during the concert. In addition to works of the U.S. Government (as defined by 17 U.S.C. § 101 et seq.), this performance may also contain individuals' names and likenesses, trademarks, or other intellectual property, matter, or materials that are either covered by privacy, publicity, copyright, or other intellectual property rights licensed to the U.S. Government and owned by third parties, or are assigned to or otherwise owned by the U.S. Government. You should not assume that anything in this performance is necessarily in the Public Domain.

PROGRAM NOTES

Tocatta in E minor, BWV 914

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Toccatas were one of the first freely composed works for solo keyboard. These pioneering works highlighted the keyboard alone, without any vocal or dance element, and featured virtuosic passagework and improvisatory interludes. The earliest toccatas emerged in the fifteenth century in Germany and typically featured running scales alongside chord sequences. In the sixteenth century, toccatas grew in popularity and became more rhythmically complex. Towards the end of the Baroque period, toccatas usually incorporated other musical forms, such as variations and fugues.

In Johann Sebastian Bach's toccatas for keyboard and organ, the free-spirited nature that saturates each piece is combined with the logic and structure characteristic of a fugue. It is no wonder that Bach often used his toccatas for teaching; the ingenious combination of free and structured material demands a well-rounded interpretive sense from the performer.

This toccata was written in 1710, when Bach served as court organist for the Duke of Weimar. The toccata opens with a brief prelude that introduces a simple three-note motif, which is referenced in the double fugue that ensues. It is in the improvisatory character of the adagio where the heart of the toccata lies, with its recitative-like scale passages and broken chords that embellish the path through an imaginative variety of key areas, leading to a return to E. An animated, vivacious fugue ends the piece, featuring two themes comprised of the three-note motif from the opening. While certainly more structured than the preceding adagio, the incomplete restatements of the theme, creative intertwining of melodic lines, and virtuosic sequences reinforce the imaginative nature of the piece.

Six Pieces for Piano, Opus 118

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

The German composer and pianist, Johannes Brahms, composed works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, piano, organ, voice, and chorus during the mid-Romantic period. These pieces were composed in Brahms' autumnal season and are more introspective in nature. They were written for Clara Schumann, a fellow pianist and composer, with whom Brahms had a deep and abiding friendship.

The first piece, Intermezzo in A minor, begins with stormy, passionate surging and restless harmonic change. The second piece, Intermezzo in A major, is a tender, beautiful setting embracing Brahms' iconic three-against-two rhythms. The third piece, Ballade in G minor, is the most energetic of the six. This ballade is heroic and spirited. The fourth piece, Intermezzo in F minor, features a repeating triplet figure to create a sense of agitation before delicately transitioning to a poised middle section. The fifth piece, Romance in F major, suggests a cradle song, with graceful expressive melodies and a rocking accompaniment. The final piece, Intermezzo in E-flat minor, paints a desolate, haunting picture. It begins with a whispering single-voice theme, but the intensity of the middle section reveals the composer's triumphant spirit before concluding with an introspective final arpeggio.

These miniatures are the product of a prolific musical career and combine the serene

wisdom of life experiences with outbursts of passionate memories from youth. They embody the essence of Brahms' mature compositional style, portraying the calm assurance and extraordinary subtlety of a master of his craft.

Violin Sonata No. 9, Opus 47, *Kreutzer*

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

A looming deadline, a brilliant performance, a notorious temper, and a fickle friendship. It could be the plot of a novel, yet these are all the dramatic elements that were the genesis of what we presently know as Ludwig Van Beethoven's iconic Sonata No. 9 in A major, Opus 47 for violin and piano, nicknamed the *Kreutzer* sonata.

The origin of this piece begins when Beethoven and violin virtuoso, George Bridgetower, a renowned British musician of West Indian descent, met in Vienna in early 1803. After having impressed Beethoven with his remarkable talent, Bridgetower persuaded the composer to compose and ultimately perform with him a new sonata for piano and violin. For reasons unknown, Beethoven was unable to complete the work until the very last minute. Just hours before the start of the morning garden concert, Beethoven is said to have rushed into one of his pupil's rooms and demanded assistance in copying the music for the performance. The composition was so new that Bridgetower had only seen part of his music less than a day before and the pair had not rehearsed at all. Additionally, since the manuscript was not quite complete, he was even required to read off of the pianist's music for part of the performance. Yet despite these exceptionally rushed circumstances, the first performance was a resounding success. Beethoven, while listening to Bridgetower improvise some lines in the middle of the first movement, was so delighted that he leapt from the piano and demanded the violinist to play it again—in the middle of the performance!

The glow of success, however, dampened very quickly. Beethoven and Bridgetower, having only recently become friends, experienced a falling out over comments that Beethoven felt were disrespectful towards a mutual female acquaintance. Considering Beethoven's temper and penchant for holding grudges, it is no surprise that the friendship ended almost as swiftly as it had begun. The two were never to collaborate or meet again.

Beethoven withdrew his initial dedication of the piece to Bridgetower and instead dedicated it to another celebrated violinist, Rodolphe Kreutzer. Oddly enough, Kreutzer and Beethoven were not great friends. They had met once and knew of each other's work, and Beethoven was known to have admired Kreutzer for being "first-rate player." The new sonata was a departure from the standard practice of making the piano part entirely the dominant and virtuosic voice, while the violin part was secondary, contributing color and interest. This new sonata was a groundbreaking departure of making both voices equally virtuosic and musical partners—a compositional standard which remains to this day. Beethoven's own description on the title page describes it as such: "Sonata for the pianoforte and violin obbligato, written in a very concertato style, almost like a concerto".

In the final plot twists of its story, the Kreutzer Sonata was actually never performed by Rodolphe Kreutzer. In fact, he was known to have called the composition "outrageously unintelligible." Yet ironically, Rodolphe Kreutzer's name lives on forever because of his famous association to the one of most celebrated and regarded works of violin and piano repertoire of all time, which likely should have been nicknamed the *Bridgetower* Sonata.