



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, October 6, 2019 at 2:00 P.M.
John Philip Sousa Band Hall
Marine Barracks Annex
Washington, DC

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Variations on “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen”
from *Die Zauberflöte*, WoO 46

SSgt Charlaine Prescott, cello
SSgt Christopher Schmitt, piano

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

String Quartet No. 3, Sz 85 (1927)

Prima parte: Moderato
Seconda parte: Allegro
Recapitulazione della prima parte: Moderato
Coda: Allegro molto

SSgt Sara Matayoshi and GySgt Sheng-Tsung Wang, violin
GySgt Sarah Hart, viola
SSgt Clayton Vaughn, cello

Rhiannon Giddens (b.1977)
arranged by Jacob Garchik

“At the Purchaser’s Option” with variations (2016)

Islam Chipsy
arranged by Jacob Garchik

“Zaghlala” (2017)

GySgt Chaerim Smith and SSgt Foster Wang, violin
GySgt Sarah Hart, viola
SSgt Caroline Bean Stute, cello

These pieces were commissioned for Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire, a project of the Kronos Performing Arts Association. The score and parts are available for free online. kronosquartet.org

INTERMISSION

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

Rhapsody No. 1 (2014)

GySgt Erika Sato, violin

Benjamin Britten (1916–76)

Six Metamorphoses after Ovid, Opus 49 (1951)

Pan

Phaeton

Niobe

Bacchus

Narcissus

Arethusia

SSgt Trevor Mowry, oboe

Paul Schoenfield (b. 1947)

Café Music (1986)

Allegro

Andante moderato

Presto

SSgt Sara Matayoshi, violin

SSgt Charlaine Prescott, cello

SSgt Christopher Schmitt, piano

The Fall Chamber Music Series will continue Sunday, Oct. 13 at 2:00 P.M. in John Philip Sousa Band Hall at the Marine Barracks Annex in Washington, D.C. The program will include works by Vaughan Williams, Gould, and Janáček.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Variations on “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen” from *Die Zauberflöte*, WoO 46

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Ludwig van Beethoven’s father hoped that his musically prodigious young son would become the next Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, so much so that he altered his son’s age for his first public recital, claiming that he was six instead of seven. Beethoven traveled to Vienna to study with the great master Mozart in 1787, but his trip was short-lived as his mother fell ill, and he returned to Bonn, Germany, to care for his family. He returned to Vienna in 1792, but Mozart had passed by then, so Beethoven began studies with another luminary and mentor of Mozart’s, Joseph Haydn. Beethoven’s relationship with Haydn was somewhat tempestuous. One famous story recounts Beethoven paying another composer to complete the plethora of exercises Haydn regularly assigned him. Nevertheless, his two years of study with Haydn did much to refine and develop his tremendous natural ability, and he revered the elder composer’s creativity and mastery of form.

Written in 1801, Variations on “Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen” is one of Beethoven’s most charming and sentimental works. The theme, whose title translates into “In men who know the feeling of love,” is a duet between Papageno and Pamina, two of the protagonists from Mozart’s opera *Die Zauberflöte*. Beethoven borrowed Mozart’s melody to create this set of seven variations for cello and piano. Within these variations, Beethoven shows playfulness, love, sorrow, resolve, peace, and many other emotions that those in romantic partnerships may share. He wrote the piece several years after he composed his Cello Sonata No. 1 in F, during a period in which he began composing for the cello as a solo instrument, as opposed to an orchestral instrument. The variations expertly straddled Beethoven’s early and middle periods, honoring the traditional Classical structure of the theme and variations style, while displaying the wide range of emotions in his creative Romantic writing.

String Quartet No. 3, Sz 85 (1927)

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Béla Bartók is considered one of the greatest Hungarian composers and is sometimes referred to as the “father of ethnomusicology.” His distinct style fused folk music, nineteenth-century form and expression, and twentieth-century tonalities and performance practice techniques. Bartók’s six string quartets are considered masterpieces, not only among his output, but also of the entire string quartet genre. The String Quartet No. 3 is the most concise of the six, with the average performance lasting about fifteen minutes.

Bartók wrote this quartet in his mid-forties, and it was during this time that his obsession with symmetry began to emerge. Though the piece is segmented into “parts,” the music is continuous and without a break. Sudden changes in tempo and character mark the beginning of each section. The Prima Parte (slow) and the Seconda Parte (fast) each have distinct characters that are revisited in the Recapitulazione and Coda movements. The Prima Parte is more introspective in nature, transforming rhythm and motifs through color, texture, and counterpoint.

The Seconda Parte is much quicker and more rhythmic, sharing similarities with a traditional stamping dance. The music from the Prima Parte returns in the Recapitulazione, but the material is almost unrecognizable. Slower and more texturally sparse, with some dramatic outbursts, this movement conveys a sense of nostalgia and loss. Finally, the Coda revives music from the Seconda Parte but in a much more frenetic state, culminating in raucous unison gestures from the ensemble.

“At the Purchaser’s Option” with variations (2016)

Rhiannon Giddens (b.1977)

arranged by Jacob Garchik

“Zaghlala” (2017)

Islam Chipsy

arranged by Jacob Garchik

The string quartet as a genre has evolved significantly from Joseph Haydn’s early quartets in the eighteenth century, shaped along the way by visionaries such as Beethoven and Bartók. Especially influential in pushing the boundaries of the string quartet in the twenty-first century has been the Kronos Quartet. The ensemble spearheaded the project *Fifty for the Future*, which aims to commission fifty new works by twenty-five male and twenty-five female composers who are devoted to contemporary approaches to the string quartet, with the ultimate goal of presenting string quartet music as a living art form.

Both of the *Fifty for the Future* pieces on today’s program had less formal origins and were written for more casual ensembles. Rhiannon Giddens, a folk singer-songwriter, wrote “At the Purchaser’s Option” for banjo and vocals after being struck by a chilling notice in a nineteenth-century book advertising a “remarkably smart, healthy Negro wench, about 22 years of age...she has a child about 9 months old, which will be at the purchaser’s option.” Giddens’ eclectic musical background includes opera training at the Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio. She spoke of her work on this short piece as a huge hurdle for her, because it was her first commission and has since opened the door for several larger-scale works for opera and ballet.

The words of her original song imagine the voice of the woman advertised for purchase:

I have a babe but shall I keep him
Twill come the day when I’ll be weepin’
But how can I love him any less
This little babe upon my breast
You can take my body
You can take my bones
You can take my blood
But not my soul

Similar to Giddens’ composition, “Zaghlala” was first performed by composer Islam Chipsy’s own trio EEK, with the composer on the keyboard. Chipsy’s group, which is part of Egypt’s thriving underground music scene, combines elements of traditional Arabic wedding music with electronic instruments. “Zaghlala” was arranged for strings by Jacob Garchik, who preserved the relentless momentum of a Cairo nightclub by transforming one of the quartet members into a percussionist.

Rhapsody No. 1 (2014)
Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

Jessie Montgomery is a violinist and award-winning American composer whose works have been performed by prominent musical establishments around the world. Her compositions blend classical music with traditional idioms and improvisation, infused with a commitment to social justice that Montgomery strives to bring to concert halls and other classical venues. Rhapsody No. 1 was written as a solo piece for herself and marked the first in a series of six unaccompanied rhapsodies composed in honor of Johann Sebastian Bach's sonatas and partitas for solo violin.

Writing about the cycle as a whole, Montgomery said, "In paying tribute to this archetypal tradition, I have chosen to elaborate by writing for a variety of solo voices across instrument families—violin, viola, flute, bassoon, and double bass—so that the final rhapsody in the cycle is a five-part chamber work for all of the instruments in the collection." Rhapsody No. 1 is a fleeting yet gorgeously passionate ride. The opening contemplative and sparse statement unfolds, leading the listener into faster fiery passages. These develop as the performer plays *bariolage*, a bowing technique that uses alternating open strings. The climax of the piece is Montgomery's nod to Bach's Chaconne from the Partita No. 2 in D minor. This section showcases furious bowing across all strings before returning to meditative variations on the opening theme.

Six Metamorphoses after Ovid, Opus 49 (1951)
Benjamin Britten (1916–76)

English conductor and composer Benjamin Britten got an early start in music when his father, an amateur musician, arranged for him to have private composition lessons with the renowned British composer Frank Bridge. Britten entered the Royal College of Music in London in 1930, but he left the establishment due to fundamental differences with the school's approach. Despite his negative experiences at college, his compositional career flourished, and Britten explored the gamut of the genres available to him, from full-scale operas to intimate chamber works.

Six Metamorphoses after Ovid was conceived as a programmatic solo piece for oboe, based on the writings of the Roman poet Ovid's narrative poem *Metamorphoses*, which translates into *Transformations*. In his work, Britten used the plaintive sonorities of the unaccompanied instrument to depict episodes of transformation and change from Ovid's verses. Each movement was named after a character from Roman mythology, and Britten included the following descriptive subtitles:

Pan, "who played upon the reed pipe which was Syrinx, his beloved."

Phaeton, "who rode upon the chariot of the sun for one day and was hurled into the river Padus by a thunderbolt."

Niobe, "who, lamenting the death of her fourteen children, was turned into a mountain."

Bacchus, "at whose feasts is heard the noise of gaggling women's tattling tongues and shouting out of boys."

Narcissus, "who fell in love with his own image and became a flower."

Arethusa, "who, flying from the love of Alpheus the river god, was turned into a fountain."

There is a high degree of contrast in the structure and style of the music from one movement to the next. The soloist must by turns embody the free-spiritedness of Pan, the racing chariot of Phaeton, and both Narcissus and his reflection simultaneously. Britten's modern yet accessible presentation of these classical myths has resulted in the piece remaining a staple of the oboe literature since its composition.

***Café Music* (1986)**

Paul Schoenfield (b. 1947)

Pianist, composer, and dedicated scholar of the Talmud and mathematics, Paul Schoenfield composes in a style that mirrors his diverse interests. His composition *Café Music* similarly brings together a wide variety of musical genres, including American jazz, Broadway, Viennese Classicism, and Hasidic traditional music. Joel Sachs, professor of music history and conductor of the New Juilliard Ensemble at the Juilliard School in New York City, describes Schoenfield's work as combining "exuberance and seriousness, familiarity and originality, lightness and depth...above all, he has achieved the rare fusion of an extremely complex and rigorous compositional mind with an instinct for accessibility and a reveling in sound that sometimes borders on the manic."

Schoenfield's inspiration for writing *Café Music* came after sitting in as the pianist of a house ensemble at Murray's Restaurant in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The restaurant regularly employed a piano trio to perform a wide variety of styles for the dinner hour. Schoenfield wanted to write something that was "a kind of high-class dinner music...[music that] might also (just barely) find its way into a concert hall." The piece was commissioned by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra in Minnesota and was premiered in January 1987. Over the past thirty-two years, it has become a standard work in the piano trio literature and is frequently performed around the world.