



Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Nowlin, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES  
Wednesday, October 23, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
Capitol Hill  
Washington, DC  
GySgt Kristin Bowers, coordinator

Chris Rogerson (b. 1988)

*A Fish Will Rise (2016)*

*MGySgt Elisabeth Plunk, flute*

*GySgt Kristin Bowers, clarinet*

*GySgt Christopher Schmitt, piano*

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

Trio in A minor for Piano, Violin, and Cello

Modéré

Pantoum: Assez vif

Passacaille: Très large

Final: Animé

*MSgt Sheng-Tsung Wang, violin*

*SSgt Clayton Vaughn, cello*

*GySgt Christopher Schmitt, piano*

## INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

Quintet in B minor for Clarinet and Strings, Opus 115

Allegro

Adagio

Andantino, presto non assai

Con moto

*GySgt Kristin Bowers, clarinet*

*MSgt Sheng-Tsung Wang and SSgt Sara Matayoshi, violin*

*MSgt Tam Tran, viola*

*SSgt Clayton Vaughn, cello*

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# ***PROGRAM NOTES***

## ***A Fish Will Rise (2016)***

Chris Rogerson (b. 1988)

Chris Rogerson was hailed by *The New York Times* as “a confident new musical voice.” Rogerson studied at the Curtis Institute of Music, Yale School of Music, and Princeton University with Jennifer Higdon, Aaron Jay Kernis, and Steve Mackey. His music was performed at venues around the world including Carnegie Hall, Prague’s Rudolfinum, and the Musikverein in Vienna. In 2012, he co-founded Kettle Corn New Music, a new music presenting organization in New York City, and currently serves as its co-artistic director. In 2016, Rogerson joined the Musical Studies faculty at the Curtis Institute of Music, where he lives full-time.

*A Fish Will Rise* is adapted from the first movement of River Songs, Rogerson’s 2014 trio for violin, cello, and piano. The piece was inspired by the Norman Maclean novella, *A River Runs Through It*. *A Fish Will Rise* features rippling ostinati, melodies, and exciting rhythmic momentum that is seamlessly traded between the flute, clarinet and piano.

The listener can imagine the words of Maclean coming to life through Rogerson’s composition:

Like many fly fishermen in western Montana where the summer days are almost Arctic in length, I often do not start fishing until the cool of the evening. Then in the Arctic half-light of the canyon, all existence fades to a being with my soul and memories and the sounds of the Big Blackfoot River and a four-count rhythm and the hope that a fish will rise.

## **Trio in A minor for Piano, Violin, and Cello**

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)

French composer Maurice Ravel studied at the Paris Conservatory as a pianist from 1889 to 1895 and as a composer from 1897 to 1900. Despite his professional success in both fields during his studies, he never won the *Première or Deuxième Prix* in either class and therefore never received a diploma from the conservatory. He continued his composition studies with Gabriel Fauré, the director of the conservatory, as an auditor until finally leaving the conservatory in 1903. Ravel’s musical language grew out the French impressionist style of his teachers and predecessors, however his music reflects an affinity for the Classic era’s clarity of melody and forward momentum. Ravel’s interest in the musical styles and forms of the past, predates the emergence of the neoclassical movement before Stravinsky’s style-defining works of the 1920s. Ravel’s work is enriched by extended harmonies, particularly the use of ninth and eleventh chords, giving his pieces a colorful, ambiguous harmonic language. The outbreak of World War I shifted Ravel’s style from impressionism even further, utilizing a further economy of expression and means in his work.

The Piano Trio exhibits a careful and deliberate attempt to revive Classical form. Written in 1914 during the outbreak of World War I, it is generally thought of as the final work of Ravel’s early period. A major element in this composition is the influence of Spanish folk music, a kinship Ravel felt through his mother’s Basque heritage. Ravel incorporates Spanish modal scales, pentatonic scales, pandiatonicism, and dissonance throughout the trio, compositional

elements seen throughout his body of work. The second movement, *Pantoum*, takes its title from a Malay form of poetry with a specific rhyme scheme that is reflected in its scherzo and trio form. The third movement is a strict passacaglia based on a repeated eight measure bass melody. The fourth movement, *Animé*, transforms material from the opening theme in the first movement. Described by scholars as the most “orchestral” of the movements, virtuosity is required from all three musicians. Throughout the work, Ravel also uses numerous special effects for the strings, including *sul ponticello* or bowing at the bridge of the instrument and false harmonics.

### **Quintet in B minor for Clarinet and Strings, Opus 115**

Johannes Brahms (1833–97)

Johannes Brahms was born in Hamburg, Germany, on May 7, 1833. He spent most of his adult life in Vienna and composed in nearly every genre: orchestra, voice, piano, and various chamber ensembles. His music reflected the “pure” music paradigm, or music written without an explicit narrative or program which hewed more closely to the Viennese classicists before him such as Beethoven, Schubert, and Schumann. However, Brahms’s music is no less inventive than that of his contemporaries writing programmatic music like Wagner, Liszt, or Berlioz with its surprising harmonic structures and rhythmic complexity. Despite his robust health, Brahms considered his composing days over in 1890 after writing the String Quintet No. 2, Opus 111.

This decision changed when Brahms met the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld in March 1891. Trained as both a clarinetist and a violinist, Mühlfeld was appointed a violinist of the court orchestra of Saxe-Meiningen in 1873 and became principal clarinetist of the orchestra in 1891. Brahms asked Mühlfeld to play for him privately, which stimulated newfound creativity. Inspired by Mühlfeld, Brahms went on to compose several pieces for the clarinet in quick succession including a pair of sonatas; the Trio for Clarinet, Cello, and Piano, Opus 114; and the Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, Opus 115.

The Quintet was premièred in December 1891 in Berlin and was widely praised by both critics and friends. Among them was one of the performers, violinist Joseph Joachim, who quickly regarded the piece as one of his friend’s best works. Brahms’s later works are characterized by their synthesis of historical textures of the Renaissance and Baroque with forward-thinking harmonic and motivic development. This quintet exhibits these two competing streams of musical thinking with its focus on the ensemble’s beauty of tone, rather than flashy technical displays of virtuosity. The work is dominated by a reflective, autumnal mood created through its flowing melodies. Like many of his works written at the end of his life, Brahms is adventurous and flexible with his approach to harmony and form throughout. The quintet is a prime example of Brahms’s ability to meld intellect and emotion.