



Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Sunday, January 17, 2016 at 2:00 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

Titans

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Overture to *Music for the Royal Fireworks*

Leonard Bernstein (1918–90)

Serenade [after Plato's *Symposium*] (1954)

Phaedrus; Pausanias

Aristophanes

Eryximachus

Agathon

Socrates; Alcibiades

SSgt Christopher Franke, violin soloist

INTERMISSION

Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)
orchestrated by Klaus Simon

Symphony No. 1 in D

Langsam. Schleppend.

Kräftig bewegt, doch nicht zu schnell

Feierlich und gemessen, ohne zu schleppen

Stürmisch bewegt

The 2016 Chamber Music Series will begin Sunday, January 24 at 2:00 P.M. in John Philip Sousa Band Hall at the Marine Barracks Annex in Washington, DC. The program will include the works of Saint-Saëns, Ewazen, and Corea. The performance will also be streamed live on the Marine Band's website.

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PROGRAM NOTES

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) *Overture to Music for the Royal Fireworks*

George Frideric Handel was born in Halle, Germany, and moved to London in 1712 where he spent the remainder of his life and achieved unparalleled success, especially as a composer of operas and oratorios. Arguably the largest in scale of his various purely instrumental works came later in life with his *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. In October of 1748, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed, bringing an end to the War of Austrian Succession, a conflict that was mostly fought between France and England. The public largely saw the terms of the treaty as an unfavorable compromise for Great Britain, and King George II was eager to frame the resolution as a victory for England. Plans for a grand fireworks display that were unveiled on the heels of the Treaty were scrapped to give more time for expanding the spectacle and attract the largest audience possible. The eventual site chosen for the event was the upper part of St. James's Park, a fashionable locale also known as Green Park that had recently been improved at the Queen's behest.

The main pyrotechnics were housed in a huge temporary theatrical structure that came to be called the Green Park "Machine." It was designed by the Chevalier Servandoni, who had previously worked as a scene painter in the King's Theater creating sets for some of Handel's operas in the 1720s. The "Machine" was made only of canvas and wood, but whitewashed to look like stone and adorned with numerous paintings, arches, and festoons of flowers. It was some 410 feet in length and 114 feet high at its tallest point. Two Italian pyrotechnical experts loaded an estimated 10,000 rockets and other devices inside the "Machine" that were intended to burn for five hours during the celebration.

The King wished that the music to accompany the festivities be as grand as the fireworks themselves, and he was keen on an extremely large band of military instruments to provide the live soundtrack. Initial plans called for forty trumpets, twenty French horns, sixteen oboes, sixteen bassoons, eight pairs of kettledrums, twelve side drums, and a number of flutes and fifes. Handel was the obvious choice for the job; in addition to being the most reputable composer in London, there was no other that would have been as capable of composing for such an unusual occasion and ensemble. Negotiations with the composer took some time; Handel was initially concerned with the unwieldy size and nature of the proposed ensemble. Not only would it be extremely difficult to find the requisite number of professional wind musicians who could read his music, such a large ensemble would not easily be able to play together. Although he was unable to convince the King to add stringed instruments to the mix, the ensemble was eventually reduced significantly, with nine each of trumpets and horns to balance with the woodwinds. Knowing that such a specialized piece would have little life beyond the one performance, he also arranged for a second, indoor performance four weeks after the fireworks as part of a charity concert at the Foundling Hospital. For this performance, he added string parts to the original score, creating what is now the standard orchestral version of the work.

No official description of Handel's music is included in accounts of the event, but the Suite was likely performed before the start of the fireworks display as the King and his son, the Duke of Cumberland, made their way around the grounds and the "Machine." The rockets began to fire at approximately half past eight. The display went quite well for a time, but about an hour into the program one side of the "Machine" caught fire. The entire flammable structure might have burned to the ground save for a lucky structural break in part of the design, so the show continued on—slightly hampered—for eight more hours.

Handel's suite, comprised of an overture and five dance movements, borrows liberally from several of his earlier works, which was a very common practice of the composer. The Overture is by far the longest of the movements in the suite, and is among the single longest instrumental works in Handel's entire oeuvre. The memorable thematic material borrows music from two earlier concerti, both that were intended as interludes during oratorio performances, although the original music was revised and improved as he adapted it for the new Overture. The dramatic introduction includes the traditional military side drums signaling "fire" before launching into a joyous Allegro that highlights the competing choirs of trumpets and horns that were central to the grand martial flare required for the Royal spectacle.

Serenade [after Plato's *Symposium*] (1954) Leonard Bernstein (1918–90)

Few have contributed more to American music culture than Leonard Bernstein. As a conductor, composer, pianist, and teacher, Bernstein excelled at finding a way to connect with many different audiences. As a composer, Bernstein displayed a wide range of talents, writing music not only for the concert hall but also for film, ballet, opera, and Broadway. His *West Side Story* has become one of the most successful shows and its music the most recognizable in the repertoire.

Although primarily a classical musician, he had a great fondness and respect for jazz and popular music, and these styles permeated much of his music.

Bernstein completed his *Serenade* for solo violin, strings, harp, and percussion in 1954, and it was premièred in Venice, Italy, by legendary virtuoso Isaac Stern and the Israel Philharmonic with the composer conducting. Although the *Serenade* is an early piece, many consider it to be one of his very best works. It includes virtually all of the musical styles Bernstein would utilize in his highly original compositions: beautiful, lyrical melodies, bright and sophisticated dance forms, and jazzy rhythms and harmonies. In the *Serenade* there are also bits and pieces of works to come, including musical kernels one might recognize from the score to *West Side Story*, which he composed just a few years later. The work was inspired by the characters in Plato's masterpiece, *The Symposium*, where the fathers of philosophy gather for an imaginary discussion. The day after he completed the score to the *Serenade*, Bernstein wrote the following description of the work:

There is no literal program for this *Serenade*, despite the fact that it resulted from a re-reading of Plato's charming dialogue, *The Symposium*. The music, like the dialogue, is a series of related statements in praise of love, and generally follows the Platonic form through the succession of speakers at the banquet. The relatedness of the movements does not depend on common thematic material, but rather on a system whereby each movement evolves out of elements in the preceding one.

I. **Phaedrus; Pausanias** (Lento, Allegro). Phaedrus opens the symposium with a lyrical oration in praise of Eros, the god of love. Pausanias continues by describing the duality of lover and beloved. This is expressed in a classical sonata-allegro, based on the material of the opening fugato.

II. **Aristophanes** (Allegretto). Aristophanes does not play the role of clown in this dialogue, but instead that of the bedtime storyteller, invoking the fairy-tale mythology of love.

III. **Erismachus** (Presto). The physician speaks of bodily harmony as a scientific model for the workings of love patterns. This is an extremely short fugato scherzo, born of a blend of mystery and humor.

IV. **Agathon** (Adagio). Perhaps the most moving speech of the dialogue, Agathon's panegyric embraces all aspects of love's powers, charms, and functions. This movement is a simple three-part song.

V. **Socrates; Alcibiades** (Molto tenuto; Allegro molto vivace). Socrates describes his visit to the seer Diotima, quoting her speech on the demonology of love. This is a slow introduction of greater weight than any of the preceding movements; and serves as a highly developed reprise of the middle section of the *Agathon* movement, thus suggesting a hidden sonata-form. The famous interruption by Alcibiades and his band of drunken revelers ushers in the Allegro, which is an extended Rondo ranging in spirit from agitation through jig-like dance music to joyful celebration. If there is a hint of jazz in the celebration, I hope it will not be taken as anachronistic Greek party-music, but rather the natural expression of a contemporary American composer imbued with the spirit of that timeless dinner party.

SSgt Christopher Franke, violin soloist

Violinist Staff Sergeant Christopher Franke joined "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in January 2007. Staff Sgt. Franke began his musical instruction on violin at age five. After graduating in 2002 from West Springfield High School, he earned his bachelor of music degree in violin performance from The Cleveland Institute of Music in Ohio in 2006. He also has pursued graduate studies at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. His notable instructors include Cyrus Forough from Carnegie Mellon, David Updegraff from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Lisa-Beth Lambert of the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Prior to joining "The President's Own," Staff Sgt. Franke was a freelance musician in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Washington, D.C. With the orchestra, Staff Sgt. Franke performs regularly at White House State Dinners, receptions, and other functions and appears with the Marine Chamber Orchestra in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Staff Sgt. Franke is the son of Master Gunnery Sgt. Philip Franke, USMC (ret.), a former Marine Band euphonium player, and Master Sgt. Susan Franke, USMC (ret.), a former Marine Chamber Orchestra violist. In addition, Staff Sgt. Franke's grandfather, the late Master Gunnery Sgt. David Johnson, was a retired Marine Band trumpet/cornet player. The Frankes are the first family to span three generations within "The President's Own."

Symphony No. 1 in D
Gustav Mahler (1860–1911)
orchestrated by Klaus Simon

Gustav Mahler once told fellow composer Jean Sibelius, “The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.” True to this belief, a significant portion of Mahler’s compositional energies were spent transforming the staid notion of the traditional symphony into a sound world of gargantuan proportions. Between 1889 and his premature death in 1911, Mahler completed nine numbered symphonies, all but a few of which were massive in their scope, concept, and orchestration. Few composers since have matched his grand and all-encompassing idea of the symphony as a musical vehicle.

Mahler’s iconic symphony cycle began in 1888 at age twenty-eight. While already largely occupied with his successful conducting career that year, he completed a “symphonic poem in two parts” inspired by two people who shared a common name. Mahler had long admired the writings of Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, whose penname was Jean Paul. His other inspiration for the work very likely came from his deep affection for the lyric soprano Johanna Richter, whom Mahler met in 1883 while he was music director of the Royal and Imperial Theater of Kassel, Germany. Mahler quickly became infatuated with Richter and toward the end of 1884 wrote a series of love poems to her that repeatedly used the phrase “fahrende Gesell.” This became as the title of the collection of poems, and Mahler went on to set four of them to music, his famous song cycle entitled “Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen.” Mahler’s prolific collection of songs was a constant source of inspiration for his large symphonic works, and indeed two of the songs dedicated to Richter became the basis for the outer movements of Mahler’s new ‘symphonic poem,’ which in turn would eventually become his first symphony.

Jean Paul’s influence on the work was readily apparent to all who knew the composer. When the original “symphonic poem in two parts” and cast in five movements premiered on November 19, 1889, there was a strong and specific program suggested in the music. Mahler subtitled the entire work *Titan*, which seemed a clear reference to his favorite novel of the same name by Jean Paul. The novel details the life of a romantic young man who, after a couple of false starts, finds the love of his life. The five movements were intended to depict springtime, happy daydreams, a wedding procession, a funeral march for the hero poet’s illusions, and a grand trip toward spiritual victory. Despite what seems to be a clear reference, Mahler consistently denied the connection to Jean Paul’s novel, perhaps out of a concern that the author’s relative obscurity would hurt the reception of his new work. Mahler claimed that the “Titan” of the symphonic poem referred simply to “a strong heroic man, his life and sufferings, his battles and defeat at the hands of Fate.”

Whether or not the work was directly inspired by Johann or Johanna, the connection was most certainly palpable in 1889, and the program of the symphonic poem was made clear in the reviews of its premiere. In the Hungarian *Pester Lloyd* newspaper review that appeared the day after the performance, August Beer wrote, “The first movement is a poetically conceived forest idyll, which catches our interest by the delicate, hazy colours in which it is painted. Hunting horns ring out, the voices of birds, characteristically imitated by flutes and oboes, become louder, and a warm violin melody, breathing delight and good will, enters exultantly.... The serenade that follows is a heartfelt, rapturous trumpet melody that alternates with melancholy song on the oboe; it is not hard to recognize the lovers exchanging their tender feelings in the stillness of night.”

Despite the colorful review, critical reception to the premiere was lukewarm at best. Mahler shelved the work and then revised it several times in the following years, and during the process, renamed the movements. The serenade with the “rapturous trumpet melody” referenced in the review of the premiere was the second movement of the original version of the work. Mahler subsequently gave the title “Blumine” (“Flowers”) to the movement, a likely reference to a collection of Jean Paul’s essays entitled “Herbst-Blumine.” Not coincidentally, the lyrical trumpet melody of the movement bore a striking resemblance to a piece of incidental music Mahler had written in 1884 while still at the theater in Kassel and fully ensconced in his newfound love for Johanna Richter. Mahler left Kassel in 1885 and never saw Johanna Richter again. Perhaps due in part to criticism Mahler received in the wake of the first performances of the symphonic poem, eventually he removed the title *Titan* and all references to the program entirely. In the process of creating what was now simply known as Symphony No. 1 in D, he also removed the “Blumine” movement altogether. In a letter from 1900 between Natalie Bauer-Lechner and Ludwig Karpath, a clue to Mahler’s motivation may be found: “Here...a sentimental and rapturous piece was originally inserted, a love scene that Mahler jokingly called his hero’s ‘blunder of youth’ and that he later eliminated.”

The symphony was published in 1898 with its four remaining movements and the only remaining descriptive words from the composer at the head of the score: “like the sound of nature.” This new “Hamburg version” of the symphony started to gain public favor during Mahler’s lifetime and he conducted the revised work several times, including the American premiere in 1909 when he assumed music directorship of the New York Philharmonic. In the intervening years since Mahler’s death in 1911, his first symphony has become one of the most celebrated works in the entire repertoire and a gem among his nine substantial symphonies. Like most of his orchestral works, the original symphony was composed for an ensemble of monumental proportions. The substantial elements of the work were creatively distilled down to the instrumentation of a modest chamber orchestra in the present arrangement by Klaus Simon, completed in 2006.