



Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, May 22, 2016 at 2:00 P.M.
John Philip Sousa Band Hall
Marine Barracks Annex
Washington, DC

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

Fratres (1977; 1980)

GySgt Erika Sato, violin
SSgt Christopher Schmitt, piano

Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951)

Verklärte Nacht, Opus 4

Sehr langsam
Etwas bewegter
Schwer betont
Sehr breit und langsam
Sehr ruhig

SSgt Karen Johnson and SSgt Chaerim Smith, violin
MSgt Christopher Shieh and SSgt Sarah Hart, viola
SSgt Charlaine Prescott and MGySgt Marcio Botelho, cello

INTERMISSION

Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840)

Caprice No. 1 in E, Opus 1

SSgt Christopher Franke, violin

Robert Schumann (1810–56)

Quintet in E-flat for Piano and Strings, Opus 44

Allegro brillante
In modo d'una Marcia: Un poco largamente
Scherzo: Molto vivace
Allegro, ma non troppo

MSgt Regino Madrid and SSgt Sheng-Tsung Wang, violin
GySgt Tam Tran, viola
SSgt Caroline Bean Stute, cello
SSgt Christopher Schmitt, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Fratres (1977; 1980)

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935)

Although Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Johann Sebastian Bach are the most performed composers according to classical music event finder Bachtrack, Arvo Pärt continues to be the most performed living classical composer in the world. A native of Estonia, his early compositions employ the neo-classical elements found in the music of Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev but he would later expand his style using Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone system. Several of his works during this time period were very successful but they were not well received by the Soviet censors. With the threat of his works being banned, Pärt began the first of a series of artistic withdrawals. During this period, he questioned the direction of his music and immersed himself in the study of medieval and renaissance music. When Pärt emerged from this hiatus, the compositional style of tintinnabuli was created. In Pärt's words:

Tintinnabulation is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers-in my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning...Tintinnabulation is like this. Here I am alone with silence. I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me. I work with very few elements-with one voice, with two voices. I build with the most primitive materials-with the triad, with one specific tonality. The three notes of the triad are like bells. And that is why I called it tintinnabulation.

Tintinnabuli is a Latin term meaning bells. Pärt often describes his musical aesthetic as the sound that bells make after they have been rung. A well-tuned bell has the interesting acoustical property of producing many different pitches of a triad simultaneously and his work *Fratres* features the triadic characteristics of this tintinnabuli compositional style. Pärt has reworked *Fratres* for eighteen different chamber and solo instrumental settings since its original version in 1977. In the violin and piano arrangement, the violin begins with string crossings outlining the harmonies of the triad. The piano continues the hymn-like harmony with a sequence of eight or nine major/minor chords played repeatedly at a very slow tempo while the violin weaves virtuosic variations throughout.

Verklärte Nacht, Opus 4

Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951)

Arnold Schoenberg wrote *Verklärte Nacht (Transfigured Night)* for string sextet in 1899, at the age of twenty-five. He was greatly inspired by the poetry of Richard Dehmel and wrote this work in response to Dehmel's 1896 poem "Zwei Menschen" ("Two People") from *Weib und Welt (Woman and World)*. Although this composition is now among Schoenberg's most popular works, the first performance in Vienna literally ended in a riot. From a modern perspective, its harmonies and romantic themes represent a natural step in the progression of the musical language of the time, continuing the path of Richard Wagner, Richard Strauss, and in some ways Johannes Brahms. However, to most listeners at the time, it seemed like a grotesque distortion of this music. In the following years, Schoenberg's writing branched out in far more adventurous and challenging ways, and he maintained that these developments were definitely just as natural an outgrowth of what had come before. Gustav Mahler was one of Schoenberg's few admirers. Upon hearing a rehearsal of *Verklärte Nacht*, Mahler recognized the significance of what Schoenberg was doing and immediately became a lifelong friend and supporter. *Verklärte Nacht* is innovative, partly because it was one of the first truly programmatic pieces of chamber music. The music can be divided into five sections that correspond to the five stanzas of the poem. Although there are clear changes of mood and themes between the sections, there are no breaks in sound. While some specific correlations can certainly be made between the music and the poem, it is much more important for the listener to follow the emotional progression from despair to forgiveness to transfiguring love and joy.

Zwei Menschen (Two People)

translated by Lionel Salter

Two people are walking through the bare, cold grove;
the moon accompanies them, they gaze at it.
The moon courses above the high oaks;
not a cloud obscures the light of heaven,
into which the black treetops reach.
A woman's voice speaks:

I am carrying a child, and not of yours;
I walk in sin beside you.
I have deeply transgressed against myself.
I no longer believed in happiness
and yet had a great yearning
for purposeful life, for the happiness
and responsibility of motherhood; so I dared
and, shuddering, let my body
be embraced by a strange man,
and from it have become pregnant.
Now life has taken its revenge,
now that I have met you.

She walks with awkward step.
She looks up: the moon accompanies with light.
A man's voice speaks:

Let the child you have conceived
be no burden on your soul.
O see, how brightly the universe gleams!
There is a radiance on everything;
you drift with me on a cold sea,
but a special warmth flickers
from you to me, from me to you.
This will transfigure the other's child;
you will bear it for me, from me;
you have made me a child myself.
He clasps her round her strong hips.
Their breath mingles in the breeze.
Two people walk through the high, clear night.

Caprice No. 1 in E, Opus 1

Niccolò Paganini (1782–1840)

The name Niccolò Paganini will forever be synonymous with virtuosity. Regarded as the greatest violinist of all time, his influence extends far beyond the violin. Even today, musicians of all instruments strive to be dubbed the “Paganini” of their medium whether it's the “Paganini” of the steel drum or the “Paganini” of the electric guitar. He combined flashy showmanship on stage with a “rock star” lifestyle and was notorious for heavy drinking, gambling, and womanizing. His virtuosity was considered so extraordinary that it was rumored he had made a pact with the devil.

Written between 1802 and 1817, Paganini's set of twenty-four Caprices for solo violin was his first published and best known work. The first Caprice, nicknamed “Arpeggione,” is in E Major. It uses a technique called *balzato*, or leaping, to accentuate the individual notes of each rapidly changing arpeggio. While this technique was used by musicians long before Paganini, it was Paganini's technical flair that set him apart from all previous composers. His mesmerizing performing prowess coupled with his virtuosic compositions not only captivated the audiences of his day, but many of the Caprices have inspired keyboard and symphonic works by famous composers including Robert Schumann, Franz Liszt, Johannes Brahms, and Sergei Rachmaninoff.

Quintet in E-Flat for Piano and Strings, Opus 44

Robert Schumann (1810–56)

Robert Schumann yearned to join the ranks of the great musical virtuosos of his time like Paganini, Frederic Chopin, and Franz Liszt. Encouraged by his piano teacher, Friedrich Wieck, Schumann abandoned his law studies to become a concert pianist. Eager to speed his progress, it has been said that Schumann constructed a mechanical contraption that would strengthen and develop the independence of each of his fingers which, ultimately, resulted in a permanent injury to his right hand. Unable to pursue the career of a touring concert pianist, he devoted his energies to composing.

In one especially creative year, 1842, Schumann composed all of his principal chamber works: three string quartets, a piano quartet, and a piano quintet. Completed in less than six weeks, the Quintet in E-Flat for Piano and Strings, Opus 44, was immensely popular and immediately received critical acclaim. Today, it is still considered one of Schumann's best-known works and is regarded by many music scholars as one of the greatest masterpieces in Western music. For the performers, there are technical and musical challenges that are intellectually and artistically rewarding. For critics and composers, Schumann demonstrates his command of form, lyrical lines, and contrapuntal writing. In fact, the Quintet left such a strong impression in the music world, that many composers including Johannes Brahms, Antonin Dvořák, Cesar Franck, Gabriel Fauré, and Dmitri Shostakovich created works with the same instrumentation.

While Schumann's work made a significant impact on musicians, composers, and music critics, the Quintet, above all else, represents an expression of Robert's love for his wife, the noted piano virtuoso Clara Wieck. Clara was the daughter of Schumann's teacher, Friedrich, and was considered one of the foremost pianists of her day. The prominence and difficulty of the piano part in the Quintet is a testament to Clara's prowess at the keyboard.