



Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Saturday, August 20, 2016 at 7:30 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
Major Michelle A. Rakers, conducting

John Ireland (1879–1962)
arranged by the composer and Geoffrey Bush

A Downland Suite (1932)

Prelude
Elegy
Minuet
Rondo

James Cohn (b. 1928)

Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in A, Opus 62 (1986)

Allegretto
Andante pastorale
Allegro con fuoco

MSgt Frederick Vare, soloist

INTERMISSION

Sir Hubert H. Parry (1848–1918)

An English Suite

Prelude
In Minuet Style
Saraband
Caprice
Pastoral
Air
Frolic

The United States Marine Band performs Wednesdays at 8 P.M. on the lower west terrace of the U.S. Capitol and Thursdays at 8 P.M. at the Sylvan Theater on the grounds of the Washington Monument through September 1, 2016.

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PROGRAM NOTES

A Downland Suite (1932)

John Ireland (1879–1962)

arranged by the composer and Geoffrey Bush

Although seldom heard in today's concert halls, John Ireland was in fact one of the most widely performed British composers during his lifetime. Born at Bowden, Cheshire, into a cultured family of Scottish descent, Ireland had a difficult childhood which undoubtedly contributed to his self-critical and introspective nature. His mother passed when he was fourteen, around the same time he moved to London where he would live for most of his life. His father died the year after, leaving him as an orphan at the age of fifteen. Ireland began piano studies at the Royal College of Music in London (RCM) in 1893 and later continued his study in composition with fellow peers Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst. Although his main compositional instruction derived from Sir Charles Villiers Stanford there is little doubt that he was also greatly influenced by Sir Hubert Parry who was the director of the RCM at the time. Ireland favored writing in small forms and is mainly remembered for his songs and chamber music, yet his Piano Concerto is considered one of his best works. He did not venture into the realm of symphonies or opera but he did create one film score dating back to 1946 for the Australian film *The Overlanders* which conductor Charles Mackerras reworked posthumously into an orchestral suite. Some of his other popular pieces include *A Downland Suite* and *Themes from Julius Caesar*, both of which were completed or re-transcribed after his death by his student Geoffrey Bush. Ireland joined the compositional teaching staff of RCM in 1923, a position he would hold for many years with his most notable pupil being Benjamin Britten.

Ireland was intensely critical of his own work and destroyed any of his compositions dated prior to 1903. Much of his inspiration was derived from the beautiful British landscapes and in particular his love of the South Downs, which inspired both his symphonic rhapsody *Mai-Dun*, and *A Downland Suite*. The latter was composed originally for brass band, written in 1932 for the national Brass Band Championship of Great Britain as a contest piece. Ireland himself freely adapted the middle movements, *Elegy* and *Minuet*, for string orchestra but the work was left incomplete. After Ireland's death, The John Ireland Trust requested that Geoffrey Bush complete the transcription of the suite for strings. Bush followed Ireland's example of reconceiving the music as a composition for string orchestra as opposed to making a literal transcription of the brass band version. The string setting is remarkably fitting and is representative of the great British string sound of the early 20th Century that so many have come to know and love.

Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in A, Opus 62 (1986)

James Cohn (b. 1928)

American composer James Cohn was born in Newark, New Jersey and studied composition at The Juilliard School in New York City. He graduated in 1950 after completing studies with Roy Harris, Wayne Barlow, and Bernard Wagenaar. His musical output consists of eight symphonies in addition to other symphonic works, numerous concerti to include his unique Concerto for Concertina (1966), one opera, chamber music, and works for choir and solo piano. Cohn's Symphony No. 2 (1949), premièred in Brussels, earned him the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium Prize, and his opera, *The Fall of the City* (1952) won an Ohio University Opera Award. His recent attention has been drawn to musical theater with his latest work *KATrina – The Enchanted Cat* (2012).

Cohn was inspired to compose his Concerto No. 1 upon hearing American clarinetist Jon Manasse perform the clarinet quintets of Carl Maria von Weber and Johannes Brahms. After some discussion,

Manasse asked Cohn to write a clarinet quintet but Cohn had something larger in mind, and so was born his Opus 62. The composer describes the work as “a short classical concerto that allows the soloist to display both his technical prowess and his inimitable way of handling melody. It contains not only fireworks and humor but also some very lyrical moments.”

Master Sergeant Frederick Vare, clarinet soloist

Clarinetist Master Sergeant Frederick Vare joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in June 1993. Master Sgt. Vare began his musical instruction at age nine and in 1989 graduated from Liverpool High School in Liverpool, N.Y. In 1993 he earned a bachelor’s degree in music education and clarinet performance from Ithaca College in N.Y., where he studied clarinet with Robert Schmidt. His instructors included James Spadafore and Ralph D’Mello of Liverpool, N.Y., John Flaver Jr. of Syracuse, N.Y., Ronald Caravan of Syracuse University, Ray McClellan of University of Georgia in Athens, and the late David Weber, former professor of clarinet at The Juilliard School of Music in New York.

Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” he was principal clarinet with the Ithaca College orchestra and a freelance musician.

An English Suite

Sir Hubert H. Parry (1848–1918)

As a member of an influential family and betrothed to a wealthy woman, there was no real need for Sir Hubert Parry to concern himself with earning his own income. Nevertheless, upon the urging of his father and his future wife’s family, he accepted a job as an underwriter for Lloyd’s of London after completing his education at Exeter College, Oxford where his focus was largely law and modern history. Up until that point he had received very little formal musical training. It would be during his first few years at Lloyd’s that Parry would embark on his musical quest, a journey that ultimately led to his being a contributor for George Grove’s *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* for which he offered more than 100 entries. Then in 1883, Grove, who was the head of the Royal College of Music in London (RCM), offered Parry a professorship at the college. Later, upon Grove resigning as the director of the RCM, Parry was appointed director in 1894 and would hold that position until his death.

Parry was exceptionally open-minded in terms of compositional styles and he worked to foster an appreciation of the music of both Richard Wagner and Johannes Brahms at a time when most critics were choosing sides between the two. He had a profound influence on generations of composers over his years of service at the RCM, with pupils including Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Gerald Finzi, and John Ireland. But his influence carried beyond the RCM to Edward Elgar as well, who greatly admired Parry’s work as a composer and his scholarly contributions. Parry’s output includes five symphonies, a symphonic suite, a piano concerto, chamber music, opera, an oratorio, and numerous works for chorus and orchestra. During the middle period of his compositional output Parry became known for several works that have been termed “ethical oratorios,” containing texts from the Bible along with his own writings about humanitarian beliefs, but he had more success when he returned to the poetry of esteemed authors. His best known composition was one of his last, his setting of William Blake’s poem *Jerusalem* (1916).

An English Suite was composed over the course of several years and was posthumously compiled into a suite by one of his pupils, Dr. Emily Daymond, at the request of the Parry Estate. Parry had composed these movements for Daymond who conducted her own string orchestra, and Daymond placed them in their current order and offered titles to two of the movements. Regardless, these seven movements fit together well as a set and display the charm and grace that would influence many of the great British composers of the 20th Century.