



UNITED STATES MARINE BAND
Sunday, March 19, 2017 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

Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

An American Parable

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)
edited by The United States Marine Band

March, “The Liberty Bell”

Samuel Barber (1910–81)
transcribed by Frank M. Hudson

The School for Scandal Overture, Opus 5

Jonathan Leshnoff (b. 1973)
Symphonic Wind transcription
made by the composer (2016)

Clarinet Concerto, *Nekudim* (2015)

Slow

♩ : Chased, Fast

Slow

Ricardo Morales, guest soloist

INTERMISSION

Jacob Bancks (b. 1982)

Occidental Symphony (2017)

Blue border of the West

Nebraska’s cry went eastward

Gone to join the shadows

And the band played strange and stranger music

world première

*Member, U.S. Marine Band

The Marine Chamber Orchestra will perform Sunday, March 26 at 2:00 P.M. in the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center at Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria Campus. The program will include works by Copland, Hovhaness, and Sibelius.

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PROGRAM NOTES

March, “The Liberty Bell”

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)

John Philip Sousa was born in 1854 in southeast Washington, D.C., near Marine Barracks, Washington where his father Antonio played trombone in the Marine Band. Sousa studied piano and most orchestral instruments, especially excelling on the violin. When at age thirteen young Sousa was almost persuaded to join a circus band, his father intervened and enlisted him as an apprentice musician in the Marine Band. Sousa remained in the band until he was twenty, and left to embark on a civilian career as a performer, only to return five years later at the request of the Commandant to become the seventeenth director of “The President’s Own.” It was during his time as Director that he began to write the marches that would soon make him famous and known around the world as “The March King.”

Sousa left the Marine Band in 1892 to form his own civilian band and continue to compose. The following year, he penned a march in honor of a great physical symbol of the American spirit and one that would later rank among his most famous. Sousa’s gift for crafting melody was unrivaled by perhaps any other American composer of his generation, but he was also a keen judge of the melodies created by others and was not above occasionally borrowing a good tune. One such opportunity occurred when Sousa heard Marcella Lindh, one of his famed soprano soloists, whistling a tune of her own creation. Sousa couldn’t get the melody out of his head and asked his soprano if he might use it in a march. She agreed, but didn’t know where her little ditty had been used until several years later when she happened to hear a European band perform its familiar strains in Sousa’s iconic march, “The Liberty Bell.”

The Marine Band’s performances of this march often feature an actual ship’s bell from the USS John Philip Sousa, a Liberty ship built for use in World War II. The ship was scrapped in 1965, but the bell was salvaged and donated to the Marine Band by Captain Kenneth Force, Former Director of the Regimental Band of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

The School for Scandal Overture, Opus 5

Samuel Barber (1910–81)

transcribed by Frank M. Hudson

Samuel Barber was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, into a family with a rich musical heritage. Not only was his mother an accomplished pianist, his aunt Louise Homer was a well-respected contralto at The Metropolitan Opera and his uncle Sidney Homer was a successful composer of American art songs. Barber himself began composing at age seven and wrote his first operetta three years later. In a charming letter to his mother written when he was nine years old, the youngster courageously confessed his career plan:

Dear Mother: I have written this to tell you my worrying secret. Now don’t cry when you read it because it is neither yours nor my fault. I suppose I will have to tell it now without any nonsense. To begin with I was not meant to be an athlete [sic]. I was meant to be a composer, and will be I’m sure. I’ll ask you one more thing.—Don’t ask me to try to forget this unpleasant thing and go play football.—Please—Sometimes I’ve been worrying about this so much that it makes me mad (not very).

In 1924, at only age fourteen, Barber entered the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia in the very first year the auspicious institution opened its doors to aspiring young musicians. He studied voice, piano, and composition simultaneously and flourished in all three disciplines. While at Curtis, he developed a lifelong friendship with fellow student and composer Gian Carlo Menotti, who would later write the libretto to Barber’s 1958 Pulitzer Prize-winning opera *Vanessa*. By the time Barber reached his twenties, his music was quickly attracting attention and he began receiving première performances from many of the luminaries of the day, including Vladimir Horowitz, John Browning, Leontyne Price, and Francis Poulenc. In 1935, Barber continued his study abroad as a fellow at the American Academy in Rome, and in 1938, at age twenty-eight, his status as a major orchestral composer came to fruition when Arturo Toscanini performed his *Adagio for Strings* with the NBC Symphony. Barber had sent the score to Toscanini earlier in the year, and

the conductor almost immediately returned it without comment. Barber took it as a rejection from the maestro, only to learn that Toscanini had programmed the work for a radio broadcast and had returned the score because he had already committed the music to memory. The widely lauded première was a significant feather in the young composer's cap, as Toscanini rarely performed works by Americans.

Although Barber began composing much earlier than most, he was by no means prolific, and was known to be a harsh self-critic who withdrew and destroyed works that did not meet his approval. However, nearly every one of his remaining published works has since entered the standard repertoire and he is one of only three composers to win the Pulitzer Prize twice, earning another award in 1963 for his Piano Concerto No. 1, Opus 38.

Much of Barber's music was directly or indirectly inspired by works of literature, as was the case for the piece that first put him on the map as a composer. The *School for Scandal Overture* was written when Barber was only twenty-one and still completing his studies at Curtis. It is composed in a traditional form but highlights Barber's very special neo-Romantic language and gift for creating memorable themes. The work was inspired by a reading of the 1777 comedy of the same name by Irish playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Clarinet Concerto, *Nekudim* (2015)

Jonathan Leshnoff (b. 1973)

Symphonic wind transcription made by the composer (2016)

Praised by the Washington Post as one of the "gifted young composers" of this generation, Jonathan Leshnoff is described by The New York Times as "a leader of contemporary American lyricism." His compositions have earned international acclaim for their striking harmonies, structural complexity, and powerful themes.

The Baltimore-based composer's works have been performed by more than 50 orchestras worldwide in hundreds of orchestral concerts. He has received commissions from Carnegie Hall and orchestras including the Atlanta, Baltimore, Dallas, Kansas City, and Nashville Symphonies, the Buffalo Philharmonic, and the IRIS and Philadelphia Orchestras. Leshnoff's compositions have been performed by classical music's most celebrated stars, such as Gil and Orli Shaham, Roberto Díaz, and Manuel Barrueco, and have been conducted and embraced by esteemed music directors including Marin Alsop, Giancarlo Guerrero, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Robert Spano, and Michael Stern.

Named by the Baltimore Symphony as one of the top ten most performed living composers in the 2015-16 orchestral season, Leshnoff looks forward to the fruitful activity of upcoming seasons. In 2016-17, Leshnoff's works will be performed by numerous ensembles, including the Atlanta, Baltimore, Kalamazoo, Nashville, New World, and Santa Barbara Symphonies, the National Philharmonic, the Baltimore Choral Arts Society, and the United States Marine and Navy Bands. The 2017-18 season promises to be active with performances and several commissions, including the premiere of Leshnoff's Symphony No. 4 and Violin Concerto No. 2.

Leshnoff has released three albums to date, all on the Naxos American Classics label. The recording of his Violin Concerto No. 1, performed by Charles Wetherbee with the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, was selected among Naxos' Top 40 CDs of 2009. Other Naxos releases feature his Symphony No. 1, conducted by Michael Stern with the IRIS Chamber Orchestra, along with Leshnoff's chamber music. Leshnoff's Symphony No. 2 and oratorio *Zohar* are currently being recorded with the Atlanta Symphony and will be released in November 2016.

Celebrated by *Fanfare* magazine as "the real thing," Leshnoff's music has been lauded by *Strings* magazine as "distinct from anything else that's out there" and by the *Baltimore Sun* as "remarkably assured, cohesively constructed and radiantly lyrical." Leshnoff's catalog is vast, including several symphonies and oratorios in addition to numerous concerti, solo, and chamber works. Leshnoff is a Professor of Music at Towson University.

Regarding his new Concerto for Clarinet, Leshnoff writes:

This concerto is subtitled "*Nekudim*," which translates roughly from Hebrew as "points." Though *Nekudim* has a deeper connotation, in a grammatical context, "*nekudos*" refer to the vowels in the Hebrew language, notated by lines and dots underneath each letter. The majority of Hebrew letters are consonants, such as "vav" which, when pronounced without any vowel, sounds "v." It is only the vowels that give the "v" vocal direction, such as "vee" or "voo," etc. In a metaphysical context, the letters are lifeless "bodies" that are animated with the "soul" of a vowel.

To me, a woodwind instrument - and the clarinet in particular - is a musical illustration of this concept. A string instrument or piano resides outside of the player's physical body; the musician uses

his/her exterior limbs (hands) to make the instrument sound. But the clarinet is attached to the player's mouth - the clarinetist literally breathes life into the notes on the page. So much nuance and tenacity of line in the first and last movements of my concerto is dependent upon the clarinetist's interpretation, their own inner essence, that the player must delve deep to unearth the inner meaning of the lines in his or her own way. This is the meaning of "Nekudim."

The Clarinet Concerto was commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra and co-commissioned by the Santa Barbara Symphony. It was premièred by the Philadelphia Orchestra in April of 2016 with Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor, and Ricardo Morales, clarinet. The symphonic wind version was made by the composer in the summer of 2016. The transcription was co-commissioned by the University of Miami, Robert M. Carnochan, Conductor, The United States Navy Band, Captain Kenneth Collins, Conductor, "The President's Own" United States Marine Band, Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fetting, Conductor, The United States Air Force Band, Colonel Larry H. Lang, Conductor, Rowan University, Joseph E. Higgins, Conductor, and Towson University, Christopher M. Cicconi, Conductor.

Ricardo Morales, guest soloist

Ricardo Morales is one of the most sought after clarinetists of today. He joined The Philadelphia Orchestra as principal clarinet in 2003. Prior to this he was principal clarinet of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, a position he assumed at the age of 21, under the direction of James Levine. His virtuosity and artistry as a soloist, chamber, and orchestral musician has been hailed and recognized in concert halls around the world. He has been asked to perform as principal clarinet with the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, and at the invitation of Sir Simon Rattle, performed as guest principal clarinet with the Berlin Philharmonic. He also performs as principal clarinet with the Saito Kinen Festival Orchestra, at the invitation of Seiji Ozawa.

A native of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Mr. Morales began his studies at the Escuela Libre de Musica along with his five siblings, who are all distinguished musicians. He continued his studies at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and Indiana University, where he received his Artist Diploma.

Mr. Morales has been a featured soloist with many orchestras, including the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Seoul Philharmonic, and the Flemish Radio Symphony. During his tenure with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra he soloed under the baton of Mr. Levine in Carnegie Hall and on two European tours. He made his solo debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 2004 with Charles Dutoit and has since performed as soloist on numerous occasions.

An active chamber musician, Mr. Morales has performed in the MET Chamber Ensemble series at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall with Mr. Levine at the piano; at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Seattle Chamber Music Summer Festival, and the Saratoga Chamber Music Festival; on NBC's *The Today Show*; and with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has performed with many distinguished ensembles, such as the Juilliard Quartet, the Pacifica Quartet, the Miró Quartet, the Leipzig Quartet, and the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio. He has also collaborated with Christoph Eschenbach, André Watts, Emanuel Ax, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, James Ehnes, Gil Shaham, and Kathleen Battle. Mr. Morales is highly sought after for his recitals and master classes, which have taken him throughout North America and Europe. In addition, he currently serves on the faculties of Temple University and the Curtis Institute of Music.

Mr. Morales's performances have been met with critical acclaim. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* hailed his appointment to The Philadelphia Orchestra, stating that it "... in fact, may represent the most salutary personnel event of the orchestra's last decade." He was praised by the *New York Times* as having "... fleet technique, utterly natural musical grace, and the lyricism and breath control of a fine opera singer." Mr. Morales was also singled out in the *New York Times* review of the Metropolitan Opera's production of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, describing his playing as "exquisite" and declaring that he "deserved a place onstage during curtain calls."

Mr. Morales's debut solo recording, *French Portraits*, is available on the Boston Records label. His recent recordings include performances with the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio and with the Pacifica Quartet, which was nominated for a Latin Grammy Award. Mr. Morales has joined forces with internationally recognized master acoustician and instrument maker Morrie Backun to create MoBa, a company of top-of-the line clarinets and clarinet accessories, including mouthpieces, bells, and barrels.

Occidental Symphony (2017)

Jacob Bancks (b. 1982)

Praised as “colorfully orchestrated, invitingly lyrical” (The New York Times) and “highly caffeinated” (The Boston Globe), the music of composer Jacob Bancks engages and inspires musicians and audiences around the world.

At the core of his output are works for orchestra, with performances by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Nashville Symphony, the Sarajevo Philharmonic, the Annapolis Symphony, the South Dakota Symphony, the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony, and the New York Youth Symphony. Other ensembles that have performed his work include eighth blackbird, Pacifica Quartet, American Modern Ensemble, Schola Antiqua of Chicago, Cantori New York, Eastman Wind Ensemble, OSSIA New Music, Kobe City Philharmonic Chorus in Japan, Kyoto Gewandhaus Chor, and Spektral Quartet. Among his most significant projects are repeat and close collaborations with marimbist Makoto Nakura, mezzo-soprano Julia Bentley, pianist Kuang-Hao Huang, the Quad City Symphony, and the United States Marine Band.

Passionate about connecting with and developing audiences for concert music, Bancks is a frequent commentator on WVIK public radio and serves as program annotator for the Quad City Symphony. Recordings of his music have been released by American Modern Recordings and broadcast on BBC Radio 3, American Public Media’s Performance Today, and WFMT-Chicago Classical Radio. He has earned awards, honors, and commissions from the Minnesota Commissioning Club, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, BMI, the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, the U.S. Department of Education, Sigma Alpha Iota international music fraternity, Soli Deo Gloria, the International Double Reed Society, the Hanson Institute for American Music, and the Commission Project.

Bancks is a student of Shulamit Ran, Marta Ptaszynska, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Ricardo Zohn-Muldoon, and Augusta Read Thomas, and has also participated in masterclasses with Luca Francesconi and Louis Andreissen. His other mentors include Cliff Colnot, Daniel Horn, and Ray and Sue Sidoti. He holds degrees from the University of Chicago, Eastman School of Music, and Wheaton College in Illinois and serves as assistant professor of music theory and composition at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL.

Bancks previously composed a work specifically for the U.S. Marine Band entitled “The Information Age,” which was premiered in March 2013. The Occidental Symphony represents his second collaboration with “The President’s Own” and today’s performance is the world premiere of the work. The composer offers the following in regards to the inspiration for this substantial addition to the repertoire:

Just over 120 years ago, John Philip Sousa was on a ship somewhere over the Atlantic, returning from a European vacation with his wife. Musing on the recent death of Sousa Band manager David Blakely, the composer was inspired to write out the piano score for a new march, finishing it at sea on Christmas Day. This new work (you’ve heard of it?) was The Stars and Stripes Forever, which became 1896’s most enduring piece of Americana.

By contrast, almost everything else about that tumultuous election year is more or less forgotten. The election’s most polarizing slogan -- “Free and unlimited coinage of silver!” -- is unlikely to excite much passion today. Even the winner has faded to near-obscurity: in 2015, the Alaskan mountain named in honor of President William McKinley was officially renamed Denali, its original Native American name. “Gone to join the shadows, with the pomps of that time,” wrote poet Vachel Lindsay of McKinley, “and the flames of that summer’s prairie rose.”

These lines are from Lindsay’s expansive 1919 poem *Bryan, Bryan, Bryan, Bryan*, a text which provided much of the inspiration for Occidental Symphony. Writing from his own experience as a sixteen-year-old who passionately supported McKinley’s opponent William Jennings Bryan, Lindsay portrays the 1896 election not simply as a dispute over currency, but as a battle in the war between the vigorous, unrefined, optimistic West (“prairie schooner children/Born beneath the stars”) and the decadent, self-interested East (“plutocrats in miles/With dollar signs upon their coats”). The poem’s climax recalls a recitation of the notable Cross of Gold speech which Lindsay heard Bryan give on a campaign stop in Lindsay’s hometown of Springfield, Illinois. Recognizing the speech as a work of a fellow poet, Lindsay quotes Bryan’s most memorable lines directly: “You shall not crucify mankind/Upon a cross of gold.” When Bryan loses the general election handily, to the disillusioned Lindsay it means the “Defeat of the aspen groves of Colorado valleys,/The blue bells of the Rockies,/And blue bonnets of old Texas, by the Pittsburg alleys.” Even more devastatingly, it was the “Defeat of my boyhood, defeat of my dream.”

Just as Lindsay used the story of the rancorous 1896 election to illuminate deeper realities (“There were truths eternal in the gap and tittle-tattle...”), I have tried to use his poem as an inspirational

starting point from which to wander freely, rather than a dramatic narrative to be followed strictly; this is a symphony, after all, not a symphonic poem. The movement titles, drawn from the poem, should give the listener some idea of the themes I have taken from Lindsay: a panoramic view of the Mississippi and the western United States (“Blue border of the West”), the enduring conflict between insiders and outsiders (“Nebraska’s cry went eastward”), the ephemeral, transitory nature of once-important civic heroes and villains (“Gone to join the shadows”), and the intoxicating power of political speech (“And the bands played strange and stranger music”). The symphony’s conclusion is also haunted by my impressions of Lindsay’s untimely death: at the height of the Great Depression, the poet took his own life, immediately above the room in which he was born and steps from where he had heard Bryan speak three decades prior.

I have never had so great an opportunity like the one afforded me here by LtCol Fettig and the USMB, to write so large a work for so outstanding an ensemble. My special thanks go to Marine Band engraver MGySgt Donald Patterson, who fashioned my frantic scribblings into gorgeously engraved score and parts. I am deeply grateful for the enormous privilege of working with such outstanding and generous musicians.

Jacob Bancks
February 2017