



Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND
Sunday, May 7, 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

Arioso

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)
edited by Colin Matthews

Suite in F for Military Band, Opus 28, No. 2

March
Song without Words, “I’ll love my love”
Song of the Blacksmith
Fantasia on the “Dargason”

Joseph Schwantner (b. 1943)

and the mountains rising nowhere

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
arranged by Edward Elgar
transcribed by Capt Ryan J. Nowlin*

Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 537

INTERMISSION

William Bolcom (b. 1938)
text by Arnold Weinstein
arranged by Ian Frenkel

Three Cabaret Songs

Song of Black Max (As told by the de Kooning Boys)
Waitin’
Amor

GySgt Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano

James Stephenson (b. 1969)

Symphony No. 2, *Voices* (2016)

Prelude: Of Passion
Shouts and Murmurs
Of One

*Member, U.S. Marine Band

The 2017 Chamber Music Series will continue Sunday, May 14 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 Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Golijov. The performance will be streamed live on the Marine Band’s website and www.youtube.com/usmarineband.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Suite in F for Military Band, Opus 28, No. 2

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

edited by Colin Matthews

Contrary to his enduring fame as the composer of the popular orchestral suite *The Planets*, Gustav Holst spent most of his life in relative obscurity. In fact, the attention he received for *The Planets* was quite a surprise to Holst, and an unwelcome one at that. Not only was he a shy and humble man ill-equipped to adequately handle the onslaught of reporters and admirers, he also greatly feared the pressure that popular success placed on a composer. In the midst of the activity that followed the debut of the piece, Holst wrote to a close friend, “If nobody likes your work, you have to go on for the sake of the work, and you are in no danger of letting the public repeat yourself.” Indeed, for the remainder of his professional life, Holst continued to develop his distinct compositional voice, taking care not to simply copy the successful formula of *The Planets*. Though he went on to create strikingly original music, his misgivings about fame and public approval were realized as he never again enjoyed the recognition *The Planets* brought him.

However, Holst is also fondly remembered as the composer of three of the most significant early works composed specifically for concert band (or military band, as he designated it), including two Suites and the Prelude and Scherzo, *Hammersmith*. Holst’s work was deeply influenced by English folk songs, a trait that began as early as 1905 when fellow British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams began collecting these songs from native singers throughout the English countryside. His Second Suite for Military Band is fueled by several of these songs, as well as a handful of traditional dance tunes.

The seven traditional melodies Holst sets throughout the suite are spread across the four movements. It opens with a characteristically British march that begins with a lively Morris Dance entitled “Glorishears” and moves directly into two other folk songs in succession, “Swansea Town” and “Cloudy Banks.” The movement repeats the first two tunes once more before coming to a close. The second movement, subtitled Song without Words, employs the beautiful song “I’ll love my love,” that recounts the tale of a young sailor who is sent to sea by his parents to keep him apart from his sweetheart of whom they don’t approve. The short but strong third movement, Song of the Blacksmith, features jagged syncopations and mixed meters and comes complete with anvil strikes. The last movement, Fantasia on the “Dargason,” is based on a Renaissance dance melody better known today as “The Irish Washerwoman.” After sending the tune through several instrumental variations, Holst transitions to another familiar melody, “Greensleeves.” In a stroke of compositional brilliance, the composer then weaves the two dances together before ending with a final fragmented statement of the Dargason, this time packaged in a capricious duet between the piccolo and tuba.

The Second Suite was composed in 1911, but for some unknown reason it was shelved and wasn’t performed for more than a decade. In 1921, the composer was asked to write a new work for the Military Band School, Knellar Hall and he revisited the Second Suite. After making a few revisions and altering the instrumentation to fit the military band at Knellar Hall, the première of the Suite took place on June 30, 1922, at Royal Albert Hall in London, conducted by Lt. Hector E. Adkins. Since that performance, the Suite has become a cornerstone of the band repertoire and remains one of the most often performed works by ensembles across the globe.

and the mountains rising nowhere

Joseph Schwantner (b. 1943)

American composer Joseph Schwantner was born in Chicago in 1943. Much of his early performance background was as a guitarist, with experiences in both the classical and jazz idioms. He received his doctorate in music composition from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois in 1968,

and has served on the composition faculties of Yale University in New Haven, Conn., and the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester in New York. He is also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Schwantner's compositional career has been marked by many awards, grants, and fellowships, including the Pulitzer Prize in 1979 for his orchestral composition *Aftertones of Infinity* and several Grammy nominations. Among his many commissions is his Percussion Concerto, written for the 150th anniversary season of the New York Philharmonic which has become one of the most performed concert works of the past several decades. Christopher Lamb, soloist for the Percussion Concerto on the recent Naxos recording of Schwantner's music by the Nashville Symphony Orchestra received the 2012 Grammy Award for "Best Classical Instrumental Solo."

Schwantner has composed several major works for wind ensembles and bands, all of which have entered the regular repertoire of both professional and university ensembles. His first work for the medium was composed in 1977 and would become a seminal work in the wind ensemble repertoire and one that forever changed the landscape of what would be possible to achieve with this unique collection of instruments. *and the mountains rising nowhere* was the result of a commission from the famed Eastman Wind Ensemble and their then-director, Donald Hunsberger, and was funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts. The work was premiered that same year by the Eastman Wind Ensemble at the College Band Directors National Association national conference in College Park, Maryland. It is dedicated to the children's author Carol Adler, whose poem *arioso* is excerpted in the score and provided the inspiration for the piece:

arioso *bells*
sepia
moonbeams
an afternoon sun blanked by rain
and the mountains rising nowhere
the sound returns
the sound and the silence *chimes*

and the mountains rising nowhere is scored for an augmented orchestral wind ensemble that mimics the wind, brass, and percussion sections of a symphony orchestra (but omits the strings) and is generally performed with only one instrument on each part. Schwantner's opus was remarkably innovative for the time of its composition and is unique in many ways; it calls for six percussion players who play forty-six different instruments through the course of the piece and an amplified piano is also featured prominently. The incredible colors achieved with the piano and percussion section are augmented by several special effects performed by the other players; in addition to performing on their conventional instruments in both specifically notated and freely interpreted aleatoric passages, the musicians are also called upon to sing, whistle, and play tuned crystal glasses at different points in the work. The soundscape that is achieved through these extended techniques continues to be unlike that of any other piece in the wind repertoire.

The passage of the poem *arioso* that inspired *and the mountains rising nowhere* has seven lines, and there are many elements of Schwantner's work that are structured in groups of sevens, including the opening seven notes first sounded and sustained by the crystal glasses and later played as a quick arpeggio in the piano and tuned percussion. This note grouping serves as a foundation for the work. Adler's poem also alternates images of light and darkness and many sections of Schwantner's work can be seen as expressing this idea musically. The piece has many brutal moments that alternate with more tender sections and the percussion instruments in particular bring this dichotomy to fruition, with high pitched metal instruments like bells, chimes, cymbals, and triangle often providing the "light" only to repeatedly be overtaken by the non-pitched drums that usher in the "darkness." The composer commented, "While the work is not specifically programmatic, the poem nevertheless acted as the creative impetus for the composition and provided for me an enigmatic, complex, and powerful imagery creating a wellspring of musical ideas and feelings in sympathetic resonance with the poem."

Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 537

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

arranged by Edward Elgar

transcribed by Capt Ryan J. Nowlin*

The many great organ works of Johann Sebastian Bach have been transcribed for countless instrumental ensembles in the two and a half centuries since his death. The legendary conductor Leopold Stokowski brought this practice to perhaps its zenith with his many powerful adaptations of Bach's keyboard work for full symphony orchestra. The most famous of these is his transcription of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor, which was featured in the classic 1940 Disney film *Fantasia* and has since become ubiquitous in both the classical repertoire and in many different streams of popular culture worldwide. Some of the transcriptions made of Bach's works by other composers and conductors have sought to evoke the sonorities of the organ utilizing the combined forces of a large symphonic ensemble (such as the setting of the Toccata and Fugue arranged for the Marine Band by Assistant Director Captain Ryan Nowlin in 2012) while others seek to re-imagine the notes by employing the fullest range of colors available through the instruments of the ensemble. Stokowski's approach was decidedly in the latter category, as was that of British luminary Edward Elgar when he set upon transcribing Bach's Fantasia and Fugue in C minor for orchestra in 1922.

During his lifetime, Bach was not regarded as highly for his compositions as he was for his unmatched skill as an organist. He was an astounding improviser and a widely respected interpreter of the great works of the era. His own secular organ works are now counted among the best ever composed for the instrument, and he often performed his own music at the keyboard. Bach likely composed the Fantasia and Fugue in C minor during one of his two tenures as organist in the small town of Weimar in what is now present-day Germany. Bach first arrived there in 1709 at the behest of Duke Wilhelm Ernst and quickly impressed both the Duke and the residents of the town with his prodigious skills as an organist. The encouragement he received to showcase his abilities as a performer led to the composition of many of his most substantial works for organ, including the Toccata and Fugue in D minor. The composition of the Fantasia and Fugue possibly came toward the end of Bach's tenure in Weimar, but recent scholarship also leaves open the possibility that it was composed a bit later, in 1723, around the time of his completion of the famous keyboard cycle *The Well-Tempered Klavier*.

As a young composer, Edward Elgar made many transcriptions for various ensembles of the music of the master composers with which he was well-acquainted, including Bach, Beethoven, Handel, Mozart and many others. These arrangements, usually abridged, were created for specific occasions and concerts given by friends and colleagues and helped his own maturation as a composer. He eventually turned all of his energies to the composition of his own original works, but kept many of his sketchbooks of these settings. When his wife died in 1920, Elgar's inspiration began to dry up, and he once again returned to his sketchbooks and arranging the music of other composers. That same year, Elgar met with German composer Richard Strauss to talk about working to heal the international rift caused by the First World War. The two composers had been casual friends for many years, and discussed an idea to collaborate on a new transcription of Bach's Fantasia and Fugue in C minor for orchestra; Strauss would set the Fantasia and Elgar the Fugue. Elgar completed his portion the following year, but Strauss did not follow through with his part of the project. Rather than discard his work, Elgar completed the Fantasia himself, and the new arrangement was premièred with great fanfare in 1922 at the Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester.

Elgar's treatment of Bach's work was decidedly a contemporary approach, as he described in a letter to his friend and organist Ivor Atkins dated June 5, 1921, "I have orchestrated a Bach fugue in modern way—largish orchestra—you may not approve.... Many [arrangements] have been made of Bach on the 'pretty' scale & I wanted to show how gorgeous & great & brilliant he would have made himself sound if he had had our means." Captain Nowlin has taken Elgar's colorful and dramatic treatment for orchestra as the starting point for this arrangement for band, crafted specifically for "The President's Own."

Three Cabaret Songs

William Bolcom (b. 1938)

text by Arnold Weinstein

arranged by Ian Frenkel

Born in Seattle, Washington, William Bolcom began studying composition privately at an early age with George Frederick McKay and John Verrall at the University of Washington. He continued work toward his master of arts degree at Mills College in Oakland, California, with Darius Milhaud, and his doctor of musical arts degree at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, with Leland Smith. From 1973 to 2008 Bolcom taught composition at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and served as chairman of the composition department from 1998 to 2003. Bolcom was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for music in 1988 for his *Twelve New Etudes for Piano*, four Grammy Awards in 2005, and the National Medal of Arts in 2006.

In addition to writing eight symphonies, three operas, solo concerti, vocal and chamber music, and a symphony for band, Bolcom composed four volumes of cabaret songs. For many years, Bolcom has performed as a pianist and recorded alongside his wife, mezzo-soprano Joan Morris. Together they perform music from the ragtime era to the end of the twentieth century. The text for his charming and clever “Three Cabaret Songs” was written by American poet, playwright, and librettist Arnold Weinstein (1927–2005). The arrangement for band was completed by the former pianist and arranger of the United States Coast Guard Band, Ian Frenkel.

Symphony No. 2, Voices (2016)

James Stephenson (b. 1969)

James Stephenson has quickly emerged as one of the most sought-after composers working today. Leading American orchestras, wind ensembles and instrumentalists around the world have performed the “straightforward, unabashedly beautiful sounds,” (*Boston Herald*) found in his music and he has been engaged by numerous major ensembles and prominent soloists in recent years. His extensive catalog for band, orchestra and chamber ensembles includes concertos and sonatas for nearly every instrument, earning him the moniker “The Concerto King” from Chicago Symphony clarinetist John Yeh. He recently composed two new violin concertos; one for the Minnesota Orchestra and soloist Jennifer Frautschi and a second for the Rhode Island Philharmonic and soloist Alex Kerr. Current projects also include two new bass trombone concertos; one that will receive its première from the St. Louis Symphony conducted by David Robertson in the 2017–18 season and one at the request of Charles Vernon, bass trombonist of the Chicago Symphony, which will be premièred by the orchestra during the 2018–19 season under the direction of Riccardo Muti. Other upcoming premières include a works for the Minnesota Orchestra and the Montreal Symphony, and a cantata for the McGill Chamber Orchestra. Additionally, he has been recently commissioned by thirty bands to commemorate the Lutheran 500th anniversary with a new work to be debuted in the fall of 2017.

Stephenson’s landmark young audience work *Compose Yourself!* has been performed more than 300 times since its creation in 2002, engaging children as far away as New Zealand as well as is Canada and across the U.S. His music is represented on more than thirty CD recordings and he is also a highly sought-after arranger, educator, and conductor. His arrangements have been performed, recorded, and broadcast by virtually every major orchestra in the country, including the Boston Pops, Cincinnati Pops, and New York Pops. Stephenson has also served as composer-in-residence with the Lake Forest Symphony in Illinois for six years and regularly conducts the orchestra.

Prior to his substantial success as a composer, Stephenson served as a trumpet player with the Naples Philharmonic in Florida for seventeen seasons. After concurrently pursuing composition projects alongside his numerous playing and conducting engagements, Stephenson and his family returned to their native Chicago, Illinois, in 2007 to focus on composing in earnest. His relationship with “The President’s Own” began in 2011 when the ensemble premiered his multi-oboe concerto *Duels and Dances* at the American Bandmasters Association (ABA) convention with soloist Alex Klein of the Chicago Symphony.

Since that time, the Marine Band has performed six of his works in as many years and presented the world première of Symphony No. 2, *Voices* on December 14, 2016 at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago.

The inspiration for the new symphony for wind ensemble was detailed by the composer:

Recently, I was awaiting an international flight when I heard the distinct sound of laughter coming from behind me. Because I could not see the people laughing, it occurred to me that it was a universal language of happiness; one which cannot evoke any judgment based on racial, religious, gender, social, or any other type of prejudice. I decided to not turn around, but rather to enjoy the laughter for what it was. It was this decidedly delightful sound of the human voice that inspired my Symphony No. 2 for wind ensemble.

Voices. They come in so many forms; some high, some low; extremely loud or extremely soft. Some are menacing, or angelic. A voice is completely unique to each individual, and instantly recognizable to a close friend or relative. As a verb, it is used to express or vocalize an opinion. Used together, voices can express opposition, or unification. It occurred to me that all of these and more can be represented within the scope of a wind ensemble. This symphony is an exploration of as many voices as I could formalize, resulting in a kind of concerto for wind ensemble. The culmination of the symphony is one of a unified voice, bringing together all of the different “cultures” and “individual voices” of the wind ensemble to express an amassed vision of hope and love; a vision I believe to be shared throughout all the world, yet disrupted continually by misguided and empowered individuals. I could think of no better messenger for such a work than the “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band - the commissioners of the work - who not only stand among the best musicians of the world, but also represent a country based on the principles of all-inclusiveness and celebrated diversity. It is because of this that no text is used for the mezzo-soprano voice heard in this symphony. Instead, the singing voice is another instrument in the ensemble, joining in, or emerging from, the surrounding textures.

I would like to personally thank Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig for his invitation to compose such a significant work, and also the members of the band--many of whom I’m honored to call friends-- for their remarkable musical gifts and dedication to our country.

-James Stephenson, September, 2016