



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Saturday, August 18, 2018 at 7:30 P.M.
Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Campus
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767)

Suite, La Bizarre, TWV 55: G2

Ouverture
Courante
Gavotte en Rondeau
Branle
Sarabande
Fantaisie
Menuets I et II
Rossignol

Ulysses Kay (1917–95)

Six Dances for String Orchestra (1954)

Scottische
Waltz
Round Dance
Polka
Promenade
Galop

INTERMISSION

André Jolivet (1905–74)

Concertino for Trumpet (1948)

MGySgt Matthew Harding, soloist

Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936)

Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite No. 3 (1932)

Italiana
Arie di Corte
Siciliana
Passacaglia

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PROGRAM NOTES

Suite, *La Bizarre*, TWV 55: G2 Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767)

Georg Philipp Telemann was born in Magdeburg, Germany, to a family more religious than musical, and the Baroque composer would have been destined for a career in law or in the clergy were it not for his considerable musical talent. Although he studied singing with the cantor Benedikt Christiani, much of Telemann's musical abilities were self-taught. By age ten he had learned to play several instruments and was proficient on recorder and violin, and he had begun to teach himself to compose by studying the works of masters like Archangelo Corelli and Christiani. Telemann composed his first opera at age twelve, and his widowed mother became concerned that he would pursue an unprofitable career in music. In spite of his clear passion and talent, she confiscated his instruments and required him to study law at Leipzig University.

While he was studying at the university, however, Telemann continued to pursue musical activities. He founded the Leipzig Collegium Musicum, and he met Georg Frideric Handel, who became a lifelong friend. Additionally, the superintendent of the university encouraged Telemann's musical activities. While he was still a student, he was commissioned by the mayor of Leipzig to compose music for two churches in the city. Soon after, he was appointed director of the Opernhaus auf dem Brühl and organist at the Neukirche, and he went on to hold a variety of court appointments and directorships until he obtained the highly-prized position of cantor of the Hamburg Johanneum Lateinschule in 1721, a post that he would hold until his death in 1767.

Telemann was an exceptionally ambitious and successful composer. He aggressively sought out commissions and posts throughout his career and composed in all the major genres of his time. His compositions included operas, oratorios, passions, suites, and concertos. Telemann was one of the most prolific composers in history with more than 3,000 works to his credit. Among these works are more than 120 orchestral suites that were composed for court audiences during the middle Baroque period, which stand as some of the most innovative works of the time. In some of the suites, the titles of the stylized dance movements provide a special narrative, while other suites bear nicknames that described the nature of the work as a whole. Such is the case in Telemann's Suite in G minor, subtitled *La Bizarre*.

The collection of movements takes the traditional form of a Baroque suite, with an overture in the French style followed by a series of popular dances of the day, including the courante, gavotte, branle, sarabande, and minuets. However, true to the descriptive title of this particular suite, Telemann's keen sense of humor shines through as he takes several unexpected turns with the melodies, harmonies, and forms of the traditional dances. Although these musical twists may not sound unusual to the modern ear, they would have surprised and delighted the court audiences who first heard the suite.

Six Dances for String Orchestra (1954)

Ulysses Kay (1917–95)

Ulysses Kay was encouraged by his uncle, jazz legend Joe “King” Oliver, to study music as a young boy. He first learned the piano and violin, but abandoned both when he discovered his true love, the alto saxophone. Kay attended the University of Arizona, Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and finally Yale University, where he studied composition with Paul Hindemith. He served in the Navy during World War II, playing saxophone, flute, and a number of other instruments in the Navy Band stationed at Quonset Point Naval Air Station in Rhode Island. After the war he continued his composition studies at Columbia University in New York City and the American Academy in Rome, where he received the Prix de Rome twice, as well as a Fulbright Scholarship. Kay had a long and productive career as a composer, educator, and editor and retired from the faculty of Lehman College in New York City in 1968. He continued to compose until his death in Englewood, New Jersey, in 1995.

One of his landmark works written in honor of Abraham Lincoln, *Forever Free: A Lincoln Chronicle*, carried special meaning in that it was composed by an African-American composer. The piece was premièred by the United States Marine Band at the Lincoln Memorial on the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1962. This work was indicative of Kay’s thoroughly American style, a quality that also permeated his creative *Six Dances for String Orchestra*.

In the mid-1950s, Kay returned to New York after three years of study abroad and was approached by a friend to compose something light for strings to be broadcast on the CBS radio program *String Serenade*. The first two dances were written for the program, and in the following years Kay was inspired to compose the four additional movements that completed the present collection. Kay didn’t hear the entire suite performed until nearly twenty years later, when the *Six Dances* were recorded in their entirety for the first time. The Houston Ballet created an original dance work in 1983, using the music from this piece.

The *Six Dances* are inspired by traditional American dance forms from the nineteenth century, including the schottische, waltz, round dance, polka, serenade, and galop. The iconic styles are recognizable in Kay’s settings, but they are also cast in his unmistakably modern voice. The music is at once light on the surface and complex in construction, with each dance bearing a ruggedness that is characteristic of Kay and serves as an apt illustration of the unique qualities of the American spirit.

Concertino for Trumpet (1948)

André Jolivet (1905–74)

French composer André Jolivet began musical studies on the cello at age fourteen, but initially was encouraged by his parents to pursue a career in teaching. He obtained a degree from a teachers’ college and, after serving three years in the military, taught primary school in Paris for a time. However, a life in music continued to beckon, and with some encouragement from his own teachers, Jolivet turned his attention in earnest to composition. Initially, he was deeply influenced by musical revolutionaries Arnold Schoenberg and Edgard Varèse, and much of his early music draws inspiration from their twelve-tone and atonal techniques. Jolivet’s aesthetic underwent several notable changes through his career, but the hallmarks of his music remained,

always embodying a primal, emotionally charged and rhythmically complex texture. Additionally, he was very interested in “humanizing” music, retreating from the fashionable abstractions of the early twentieth century to “give back to music its original, ancient meaning, when it was the magical, incantatory expression of the religious beliefs of human groups.” Among Jolivet’s diverse collection of works are several concertos for solo wind and stringed instruments, written during the 1950s and 1960s, each one demanding exceptional virtuosity from the performers.

Jolivet called the brief but substantial Concertino his “ballet for trumpet,” and it has been choreographed several times since its première. The piece is among the first written by Jolivet after the Second World War, when the composer began to explore a more accessible harmonic language. Although he was still very interested in exotic sounds, his new framework incorporated a strong rhythmic drive and more prominent jazz influences. The Concertino is written for solo trumpet but has an equally prominent and difficult piano part, making for a work that is essentially a double concerto. In a span of ten minutes, it journeys through three main sections, each painting a distinct character for the soloists. The piece opens vigorously with propulsive rhythms, jazzy syncopations, and strong declarations by the solo trumpet. The music eventually subsides into a languid and misty central section, with the muted trumpet hovering over a bed of thick chords in the strings. An intense accelerando brings the music back to a lively tempo, and a piano solo ushers in the final section, where the orchestra relentlessly propels the work to a frenetic and virtuosic coda for both soloists.

Master Gunnery Sergeant Matthew Harding, trumpet soloist

Master Gunnery Sergeant Matthew Harding joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in September 1998 and was appointed solo cornet in January 2000. He began his musical instruction at age nine. A 1992 graduate of Dartmouth High School in Massachusetts, he earned his bachelor’s degree in music from the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester in Rochester, New York, in 1996, and has completed one year of master’s-level study at Rice University in Houston. He has studied with John Martin of Boston, Charles Geyer of Eastman, and the late Armando Ghitalla. Prior to joining “The President’s Own,” Master Gunnery Sgt. Harding spent a year with the New World Symphony in Miami, toured Japan with the Eastman Wind Ensemble, and performed at the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado, Chautauqua Music Center in New York, and Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. He also was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, Massachusetts.

Gunnery Sergeant Russell Wilson, piano soloist

Pianist Gunnery Sergeant Russell Wilson joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in September 2002. He began his musical instruction on piano at age seven with Gail McDonald. After graduating in 1999 from Surrattsville High School in Clinton, Maryland, he earned a bachelor’s degree in classical piano in 2004 and a master’s degree in jazz in 2007, both from the University of Maryland, College Park, studying piano with Cleveland Page and jazz with Ron Elliston.

Gunnery Sgt. Wilson is a frequent soloist on piano and accordion and has performed Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Concerto for Two Pianos in E flat, Ottorino Respighi's Concerto a Cinque, Ernest Bloch's Concerto Grosso, Camille Saint-Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*, and Richard Adinsell's Warsaw Concerto with both the Marine Band and Marine Chamber Orchestra. He also was a 2011 tour soloist, performing Edvard Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor, Opus 16. In addition to his official musical duties, he has performed for a low-income retirement home, a veterans' home, and a home for people with severe disabilities. Prior to joining "The President's Own," Gunnery Sgt. Wilson worked aboard Norwegian Cruise Lines, performing solo classical recitals and as a member of a show band.

Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite No. 3 (1932)

Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936)

Throughout the twentieth century, many composers looked to history for inspiration: Igor Stravinsky turned away from the Russian Romantic tradition to write music modeled upon the ideals of the Classical period, Aaron Copland found comfort in using nineteenth-century American folk songs, and Paul Hindemith sought to emulate the formal perfection of Johann Sebastian Bach's music. It is, therefore, not unusual that Italian composer Ottorino Respighi was greatly influenced by music from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Respighi was born in Bologna and received his early musical training there at the Liceo Musicale, where he studied violin with Federico Sarti and composition with Luigi Torchi and Giuseppe Martucci. While musicians and composers the world over have made pilgrimages to study music in Italy, Respighi sought to leave his native country. He traveled to Russia in 1900, where he played viola in the orchestra of the Imperial Theater in St. Petersburg. While there, he took lessons in composition with Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, the revered master of orchestration and tonal color. One year later, he traveled to Berlin for additional studies with Max Bruch.

Respighi has been hailed as one of the greatest composers of orchestral tone poems since Franz Liszt and his mastery of orchestral color rivaled that of his own teacher Rimsky-Korsakov. Respighi gained international recognition in 1916 with his large-scale work *The Fountains of Rome*, the first installment of three tone poems about Rome, which included *The Pines of Rome* and *Roman Festivals*. In the midst of these successes, however, he began to explore sounds that were a world away from the grand symphonic style, and composed several intimate works for smaller ensembles.

It was also during this time that he began to study Italian lute and baroque guitar music written around 1600 and discovered a tremendous wealth of inspiration for his own compositions. He chose several of these antique songs to create three separate suites of *Ancient Airs and Dances*, written in 1917, 1923, and 1932. Each suite was orchestrated for a different kind of chamber orchestra, with the third composed for strings alone. Much like Bartók did with the folk songs he collected, Respighi freely interpreted and recomposed the music. Rather than create faithful transcriptions, he fed the melodies through his compositional prism to expose new harmonic possibilities and invent a fresh and colorful perspective on this old music.