



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, October 14, 2018 at 2:00 P.M.
John Philip Sousa Band Hall
Marine Barracks Annex
Washington, DC

Witold Lutosławski (1913–94)

Mini Overture (1982)

SSgt Anthony Bellino and SSgt Brandon Eubank, trumpet
SSgt Joseph Cradler, horn
SSgt Russell Sharp, trombone
GySgt Christopher Tiedeman, tuba

Pēteris Vasks (b. 1946)

Castillo Interior (2013)

GySgt Chaerim Smith, violin
SSgt Caroline Bean Stute, cello

William Albright (1944–98)

Pit Band (1993)

MSgt Gregory Ridlington, alto saxophone
SSgt Shannon Kiewitt, bass clarinet
GySgt Russell Wilson, piano

INTERMISSION

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

Nagoya Marimbas (1994)

GySgt Gerald Novak and GySgt Michael Metzger, marimba

Paul Bowles (1910–99)

Music for a Farce (1938)

Allegro rigoroso
Presto: Tempo di Tarantella
Allegretto: Tempo di Quickstep
Allegro
Lento: Tempo di Valse
Allegro: Tempo di Marcia
Presto
Allegretto

SSgt Shannon Kiewitt, clarinet
MGySgt Christian Ferrari, trumpet
GySgt Gerald Novak, percussion
GySgt Russell Wilson, piano

Bernard Herrmann (1911–75)

Echoes for String Quartet (1965)

GySgt Chaerim Smith and GySgt Christopher Franke, violin
SSgt Sarah Hart, viola
SSgt Charlaune Prescott, cello

The Fall Chamber Music Series will continue Sunday, Oct. 21 at 2:00 P.M. in John Philip Sousa Band Hall at the Marine Barracks Annex in Washington, D.C. The program will include works by Tower, Gubaidulina, and Montgomery.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Mini Overture (1982)

Witold Lutosławski (1913–94)

Witold Lutosławski was born in Warsaw, Poland, and received diplomas in piano performance and composition from the Warsaw Conservatory. He planned to continue his studies in Paris before the outbreak of World War II, but the presence of the German occupying forces made it impossible to hold concerts. As a result, many of Lutosławski's compositions and transcriptions were premiered in cafés. After the war, his music was censored by Russian authorities; his first symphony was banned, as was all modern-sounding music, for being too “nonconformist.” His earlier works were heavily influenced by Polish folk music, but as he matured and developed his own style, his compositions became more complex. While many of his contemporaries were writing music based on twelve-tone rows, Lutosławski built his melodies and harmonies around specific intervals and incorporated aleatoric processes to create thick musical textures. Just a few weeks before his death, he was awarded the Order of the White Eagle, Poland's highest honor.

Mini Overture was dedicated to Walter Strebi, who was president of the Lucerne Music Festival in Switzerland for many years. Strebi commissioned the work for his daughter Ursula's fiftieth birthday. The brass quintet setting seemed appropriate, as Ursula was married to Philip Jones, founder of the London-based Philip Jones Brass Ensemble. Lutosławski understood the artistic and technical capabilities of the ensemble and enthusiastically composed this tour de force. The work consists of three segments played through without pause: a very fast opening, a slightly slower and contrasting section, and finally a longer development of the first two sections. Despite the chromaticism, dissonant harmonies, and rough rhythmic edges, the evocative modernism of Lutosławski's writing is particularly accessible to a variety of audiences. Mini Overture was premiered on March 11, 1982, at the Lucerne Festival to great acclaim. It has remained a cornerstone in the brass quintet repertoire ever since.

Castillo Interior (2013)

Pēteris Vasks (b. 1946)

Pēteris Vasks is one of Latvia's most recognized composers, and over the past four decades, his music has become known for its capacity to reflect the experience of the Latvian people. Coming of age as the son of a Baptist pastor in Soviet-controlled Latvia, Vasks withstood a variety of ideological pressures in order to sustain his belief that “a composer should be the conscience of his people.” He stated that his foremost goal as a composer was to forge a direct emotional connection with listeners, drawing audiences out of the repressive Soviet fog and into a more enlightened state of being. Even after Latvia's re-emergence as an independent nation, Vasks continued to create vivid images and connections through his unique sound world.

Castillo Interior is a meditative work named in honor of the great sixteenth-century mystic and saint Teresa of Ávila. To achieve the dramatic quality so emblematic of his works, Vasks pits two opposing extramusical forces against one another. He depicts purity in the long, hymn-like phrases that evoke the sound of a choir singing in the distance. The unhurried quality of the musical line seems to defy time and space, perhaps evoking the spirit of the saint herself becoming lost in devout contemplation. Twice during the piece, however, a sudden onset of aggressive, rapid-fire sixteenth notes interrupts the calm. The chaos portrayed in these dissonant and energetic passages reminds the listener of the fast-paced outside world.

Fittingly, *Castillo Interior* was premièred in a cloister chapel in the northern German town of Bordesholm, as a part of the renowned Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival. The 2014 performance featured cellist Sol Gabetta, who has become a champion and dedicatee of many new works by Vasks.

Pit Band (1993)

William Albright (1944–98)

William Albright was perhaps best known for his numerous keyboard works and his definitive performances of the rags of James P. Johnson and Scott Joplin. He did, however, write extensively for other instruments. His catalog contains many imaginative and demanding works for saxophone and clarinet, which display Albright's sense of humor and his fondness for the formative styles of jazz piano: Harlem Stride, ragtime, and boogie-woogie.

Pit Band was commissioned by faculty chamber players at Western Oregon State College and was completed in 1993. Albright's notes from the score include this description: "This work, with its unusual ensemble of three haphazard instruments—a pick-up band—attempts to digest an evening-long musical comedy in a few minutes. The program is as follows: Tune-up and Introduction, Overture, Opening Number, Vamps and Screams ("Nessun dorma"), Love Song, Waltz, Alla Marcia, Fox-trot with Shimmies, and Finale." What Albright fails to mention in his too-brief description is that the often comical manner in which he has written this piece acts as a tongue-in-cheek commentary on the unpolished nature of some pit bands. In his piece, events frequently happen out of sequence and overlap in inappropriate places. Beats are added and then subsequently dropped. Tempos get alternately faster and slower, seemingly without reason, and gestures are often exaggerated beyond the conventions of good taste.

The work begins with a haphazard tuning sequence, which is abruptly interrupted by three bells signaling to the audience that the show is about to begin. Tuning continues and soon gives way to the "funky" Overture section. The villain's theme is briefly introduced towards the end of the overture to a quotation of the song "Love Potion No. 9," which transitions into the perky Opening Number. This section quickly bogs down, however, as none of the players seem able to agree on an appropriate mood.

Albright must have known of the famous aria "Nessun dorma" from Puccini's opera *Turandot*, but it would appear from the next spooky segment of the piece that he is likely referencing the Italian translation, "no one sleeps." The Vamps and Screams section dissolves into the Love Song, which, despite its deliberate sappiness, cannot seem to fully unite the two musicians performing the duet. A corny Waltz follows but quickly gives way to the off-kilter Alla Marcia. The Fox-trot is the section that most clearly displays Albright's love of early jazz

piano style. This fast-slow-fast ballroom dance-step, which first appeared in the mid-1910s, was borne out of the idea that people who were dancing the fox-trot couldn't keep up with the frantic pace of the music for long. Here, Albright has fun with the notion that these marginal pit band musicians wouldn't be able to keep up either. A "drum solo" (created by using muted strings in the lower register of the piano) and shout chorus wrap up the section, which ultimately crashes into the Finale, featuring another, more sensual appearance of "Love Potion No. 9." The brief section that immediately follows is marked "sultry, sexy" by Albright. As the piece fox-trots and shimmies to its conclusion, the listener is left to wonder, "Did the heroine *really* end up with the bad guy?"

Nagoya Marimbas (1994)

Steve Reich (b. 1936)

Steve Reich was born in New York City and raised both there and in California. He graduated with a degree in philosophy from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, in 1957. Over the next few years, he studied composition independently with Hall Overton and at the Juilliard School with William Bergsma and Vincent Persichetti. Reich received his master's degree in music in 1963 from Mills College in Oakland, California, where he worked with Luciano Berio and Darius Milhaud.

Nagoya Marimbas was commissioned for the opening of Shirakawa Hall at the Nagoya College of Music in Japan. An evocative pentatonic motive opens the piece and is gradually transformed over a series of close canons between the two instruments.

The composer supplied the following notes for the work:

Nagoya Marimbas is somewhat similar to my pieces from the 1960s and '70s in that there are repeating patterns played on both marimbas, one or more beats out of phase, creating a series of two-part unison canons. However, these patterns are more melodically developed, change frequently, and each is usually repeated no more than three times, similar to my more recent work. The piece is also considerably more difficult to play than my earlier ones and requires two virtuosic performers.

Music for a Farce (1938)

Paul Bowles (1910–99)

American-born expatriate Paul Bowles represents the rare instance of a composer who successfully turned to writing fiction. Although best known today as the author of evocative and mysterious literary works, such as the novel *The Sheltering Sky* and the remarkable collection of short stories *The Delicate Prey and Other Stories*, he was also a prolific composer of art songs, operas, and instrumental pieces. After studying composition with Aaron Copland, Virgil Thompson, and Nadia Boulanger, Bowles established a reputation in the 1930s for writing sophisticated incidental music and soundtracks to accompany the works of such playwrights as

William Saroyan and Tennessee Williams. A free-spirited globetrotter, Bowles' travels took him first to Europe and ultimately to Northern Africa, where his music became influenced by myriad styles, including American jazz, Latin American dance, and Moroccan rhythms. His love of Moroccan culture influenced his music and his literary pursuits, and in 1947 he renounced his American citizenship, remaining in Tangier until his death.

Music for a Farce was completed just before the onset of World War II. Bowles had written incidental music for Orson Welles' silent film adaptation of William Gillette's successful stage play, *Too Much Johnson*, but Bowles' score was discarded, and Marc Blitzstein's music accompanied the finished film. *Music for a Farce* is a collection of eight short movements that use the abandoned Welles score as its source material. The playful work includes representations of the comical, melodramatic, and an array of styles and harmonies that continually shift in timbre. For Bowles, short simple pieces were the most pleasing. He was never interested in the idea of creating a large-scale work such as a symphony. His intention was to write small pieces with only as many notes as necessary. The pieces, which could be listened to many times over, were meant simply to be fun and pleasing to hear. It was Bowles' belief that music should engage the attention, making one more aware of the effect sound can have on the listener, and thus connecting to the unconscious.

Echoes for String Quartet (1965)

Bernard Herrmann (1911–75)

A prolific and versatile film composer, Bernard Herrmann is perhaps best known for his collaborations with Alfred Hitchcock, which included *Vertigo*, *Psycho*, *Rear Window*, *The Birds*, and *North by Northwest*. Although it was this lengthy partnership that launched Herrmann to superstardom, he had already established a reputation in Hollywood that had lasted for more than three decades, from his first score for Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* in 1941 to his final score for Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* in 1976. Despite the popularity and staying power of these films and their accompanying scores, Herrmann received his sole Academy Award in 1941 for the relatively obscure film *The Devil and Daniel Webster*.

Echoes is one of the last works that Herrmann wrote that was not meant to accompany a film. Some of the themes of this string quartet sound familiar, because they appeared in Herrmann's scores for Hitchcock. As the historian Steven C. Smith shares, "While many of [*Echoes*'] memories remain private, others can be guessed by allusions to past works ... the plucked signature of its opening is *Psycho*'s violent prelude, the crying violin harmonics of its coda, *Vertigo*'s lost Madeleine." The nostalgia permeating this work has been attributed to two sources: the dissolution of Herrmann's marriage to his second wife Lucy Anderson and the looming end of his career as a film composer. Others have theorized that this composition is reminiscent of his film-music style, where themes are repeated to remind viewers of events, emotions, and characters' states from previous points in the film. As Herrmann himself explained in the inscription of the score, "The term 'echoes' is meant to imply a series of nostalgic emotional remembrances."