



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES
Sunday, October 21, 2018 at 2:00 P.M.
John Philip Sousa Band Hall
Marine Barracks Annex
Washington, DC

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

Blueprint (2016)

GySgt Sheng-Tsung Wang and SSgt Foster Wang, violin
SSgt Sarah Hart, viola
SSgt Caroline Bean Stute, cello

Shulamit Ran (b. 1949)

Inscriptions (1991)

GySgt Erika Sato, violin

Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979)

Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale (1941)

SSgt Lucia Disano, clarinet
MSgt Christopher Shieh, viola

Madeleine Dring (1923–77)

Trio for Flute, Oboe, and Piano (1970)

Allegro con brio
Andante semplice
Allegro giocoso

SSgt Kara Santos, flute
SSgt Tessa Vinson, oboe
GySgt AnnaMaria Mottola, piano

INTERMISSION

Joan Tower (b. 1938)

Small (2016)

GySgt Jonathan Bisesi, percussion

Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931)

Trio for Three Trumpets (1976)

SSgt Brandon Eubank, SSgt Anthony Bellino,
and GySgt Brad Weil, trumpet
GySgt Robert Singer, conducting

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

Strum (2006, rev. 2012)

GySgt Christopher Franke and GySgt Sheng-Tsung Wang, violin
MSgt Christopher Shieh, viola
SSgt Caroline Bean Stute, cello

The Fall Chamber Music Series will conclude Sunday, Oct. 28 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 Piazzolla, Ewazen, and Brahms.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Blueprint (2016)

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

“like a marble bust
stoic & grand & still
but with a little wink or some side-eye”

Rather than marking the music with a traditional instruction such as “moderato” or “serioso,” Caroline Shaw greets each of the players of *Blueprint* with the above descriptor about the character of the opening of her piece. A violinist herself, she includes “notes” to the musicians throughout the sheet music, making the composer and composition come alive for the performers with lighthearted quips such as “brunchy gossip” and “yay opus 18 partay.”

The “opus 18” Shaw references is Ludwig van Beethoven’s String Quartet Opus 18, No. 6. Beethoven’s string quartets revolutionized the genre and remain to this day a standard to which most composers aspire. Shaw has described *Blueprint* as a harmonic reduction of Beethoven’s Opus 18, No. 6, and quotes Beethoven in her quartet, weaving his themes into her own unique textures. Shaw also notes that the piece is a type of conversation between the performers, Beethoven, and Joseph Haydn.

The youngest-ever recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music, Shaw has received commissions from ensembles such as the Baltimore Symphony, Carnegie Hall’s Ensemble Connect, and the Aizuri Quartet, the group of accomplished women who commissioned *Blueprint*. The Aizuris recently won the Grand Prize at the M-Prize Chamber Arts Competition and have served in residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The group draws its name from *aizuri-e*, a style of Japanese woodblock printing that is predominantly blue. The audience is left to muse at the title *Blueprint*, which could reference the commissioners’ name, the use of Beethoven as a type of map, or perhaps both.

Inscriptions (1991)

Shulamit Ran (b. 1949)

Shulamit Ran was born in Israel and came to the United States to study composition and piano as a teenager. She has won numerous fellowships, commissions, and awards, including the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for Music for her work, *Symphony*. Ran has served as composer-in-residence with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1990–97 and with the Lyric Opera of Chicago from 1994–97. She also held the position of professor of music composition at the University of Chicago from 1973–2015. Her compositions have been performed by major orchestras and leading chamber ensembles around the world, and more than a dozen labels have released recordings of her works.

Ran’s own program notes for *Inscriptions* are as follows:

Composing for a solo, essentially melody-line instrument such as the violin, is a challenge I have found myself drawn back to time and again over the years. *Inscriptions* for Violin follows solo works written (in reverse chronology) for flute, cello, and clarinet since 1978. The challenge for me, all the more intriguing in the context of what is generally considered non-tonal language, seems to be in creating a sense of presence, concreteness, centeredness, and direction, with just a horizontal line to work with. (In the case of a string instrument, double

notes and chords are, of course, possible, but within definite limits.) *Inscriptions*, then, may be said to be an effort to carve out, with a relatively constricted textural palette, three distinct spaces in time, employing a fairly broad range of moods as well as violin playing techniques. Perhaps the following informal subtitles will allow a glimpse into the three pieces' respective "states": Possessed by the Devil, Rondino (mostly tongue-in-cheek), Upsurge. *Inscriptions* was commissioned by and dedicated to Samuel Magad, co-concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and was composed in April 1991.

Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale (1941)

Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979)

Rebecca Clarke was a British composer and violist best known for her Sonata for Viola, though her modest compositional output also includes a number of songs, vocal-ensemble works, and other instrumental chamber pieces. Very few of her compositions were published within her lifetime, but in recent years several of her works, including Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale have been rediscovered, thanks in part to the work of the Rebecca Clarke Society.

Clarke struggled with the realities of being a female composer at a time when doing so was not widely accepted in society. When submitted anonymously for competition, her works were celebrated, and on more than one occasion assumed to be composed by better-known male contemporaries like Maurice Ravel and Ernest Bloch. Once it was discovered that these works were composed by Clarke, reporters were so incredulous that a woman could write music of such high quality that they doubted her very existence. In the composer's own words:

When I had that one little whiff of success that I've had in my life, with the Viola Sonata ... the rumor went around, I hear, that I hadn't written the stuff myself, that somebody had done it for me. And I even got one or two little bits of press clippings saying that it was impossible, that I couldn't have written it myself. And the funniest of all was that I had a clipping once which said that I didn't exist, there wasn't any such person as Rebecca Clarke, that it was a pseudonym.

In July 1939, Clarke came to the United States to visit her two brothers. What she had intended to be a summer visit turned into an extended residency, due to the onset of World War II. Once the evacuation of London (also known as Operation Pied Piper) began in September 1939, she was unable to obtain a visa to return home. Instead, she spent three years alternating between living with her two brothers. It was during this exile that she composed her Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale, which she dedicated to her brother Hans Clarke and his wife Frieda, who were amateur musicians.

Clarke composed Prelude, Allegro, and Pastorale in 1941, as the allies were forced out of Europe and shortly before the United States joined the European theater. In the outer movements of this piece, one can clearly hear the influence of the time in which the work was written. The Prelude displays Clarke's beautiful, song-like lyricism tinged with melancholy. The Allegro, which Clarke had originally titled Toccata, is a show of Clarke's skilled contrapuntal writing and a test of the performers' technical prowess. The tonal language in this upbeat, playful movement is strongly reminiscent of Stravinsky's. The Pastorale, rather than depicting the simple, cheerful side of nature found in pieces like Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, evokes a stark, unforgiving wilderness, but is no less beautiful for its anguished undertones.

Trio for Flute, Oboe, and Piano (1970)

Madeleine Dring (1923–77)

Madeleine Dring was an English composer, musician, actress, mime, and cartoonist. She began her musical studies at the Royal College of Music in London at age ten, studying violin and piano, and she later pursued composition with several teachers, including Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gordon Jacob. While working on her composition studies, she also studied mime, voice, and acting.

Dring mostly composed instrumental and vocal solo and chamber music, with the exception of a few larger-scale works. She was an admirer of Francis Poulenc, and her works often exhibit a similar sense of rhythmic humor and melodic sensibility. The Trio for Flute, Oboe, and Piano was composed for her husband, Roger Lord, who was principal oboist of the London Symphony Orchestra for thirty years. The American première of the work was performed by Lord, flutist Peter Lloyd, and pianist André Previn. The first movement is notable for its humorous use of mixed meter, while the second movement exhibits a lyrical simplicity and conversational exchange between the flute and oboe that is reminiscent of some of Poulenc's slow movements. The work concludes with an exciting finale, culminating in a double cadenza and ensemble flourish.

***Small* (2016)**

Joan Tower (b. 1938)

Joan Tower is an iconic American composer. She has received commissions from the New York Philharmonic, the St. Louis, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Houston Symphonies, Carnegie Hall, and the Lincoln Center Chamber Society, among many other major ensembles. She was the first composer chosen for the Ford Made in America consortium commission of sixty-five orchestras, and the album with her resulting composition, *Made in America*, received three Grammy awards in 2008. Tower became the first woman to win the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for her composition *Silver Ladders* in 1990. Other accolades include receiving an honorary degree from the New England Conservatory in 2006, being named the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's Composer of the Year in the 2010–11 season, and receiving fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the New York State Council on the Arts. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1998 and the Academy of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University in 2004.

Small was written for percussionist Evelyn Glennie and utilizes a small setup of small percussion instruments being struck by small mallets of different materials. Instruments specifically called for by the composer range from wooden sounds, such as a wooden bowl, piccolo wood block and a wooden spoon, to metal sounds such as a Tibetan Prayer Bowl, two glockenspiel pitches, and a tiny bell. Sustaining instruments such as maracas, small sleigh bells, and a Mexican Caxixi, fill in the overlapping textures, most especially at the beginning and end of the work. The middle section is faster and active *moto perpetuo* lines run across all of the instruments. The result is a wonderful display of the texture and pitch relationship of these small instruments, which shows how powerful they can actually be when grouped together.

Trio for Three Trumpets (1976)

Sofia Gubaidulina (b. 1931)

Soviet composer Sofia Gubaidulina was born in Chistopol, a small town on the Volga River in the Tartar Republic of the former Soviet Union. After graduating from the Moscow Conservatory in 1963, she earned her living writing scores for Soviet documentary films. Greatly influenced by Soviet composers Edison Denisov and Alfred Schnittke, she explored alternative tunings, human transcendence, and abstract spiritual dimensions.

Gubaidulina's *Trio for Three Trumpets* was written at the same time as all four of her chamber pieces for trumpet. The harmonies contain few tonal centers, relying instead on chord clusters and dissonant counterpoint. The piece travels through several mystic and chaotic episodes before speeding to a wild finale.

***Strum* (2006, rev. 2012)**

Jessie Montgomery (b. 1981)

New York City native Jessie Montgomery embodies the role of today's multidimensional musician, combining roles as a violinist, educator, advocate, and composer. Montgomery began her violin studies at age four and was composing by age eleven. She went on to earn a violin performance degree from the Juilliard School in New York City and a master's degree from New York University in film scoring and multimedia. She has been a violinist with the acclaimed Catalyst Quartet since 2012, touring regularly in the United States and abroad. She is affiliated with the Sphinx Organization, which supports the professional development of young African-American and Latino classical musicians. Recent and upcoming commissions include works for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Albany Symphony, Dance Theatre of Harlem, the Muir Quartet, and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Strum underwent final revisions in 2012 for a performance with the Catalyst Quartet. Montgomery wrote:

Within *Strum* I utilized "texture motives," layers of rhythmic or harmonic ostinati that string together to form a bed of sound for melodies to weave in and out. The strumming pizzicato serves as a "texture motive" and the primary driving rhythmic underpinning of the piece. Drawing on American folk idioms and the spirit of dance and movement, the piece has a kind of narrative that begins with fleeting nostalgia and transforms into ecstatic celebration.

Indeed, the work's folk music-infused spirit is infectious, and its pizzicato sections evoke the sound of a banjo or guitar, requiring some extended techniques from the violin players. *Strum* was featured by the Marine String Quartet as the closing piece on its 2018 Music in the High Schools series. The musicians encouraged students to take in the piece's driving rhythms, novel sounds, and nostalgic images, and create their own storyline, something listeners of any age can do.