THE PRESIDENT'S OWN

Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

MARINE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Sunday, March 3, 2019 at 2:00 P.M.
Ernst Theater
Northern Virginia Community College
Annandale Campus
Captain Bryan P. Sherlock, conducting

Musical Firsts

Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

Symphony No. 1 in D, Opus 25, *Classical*

Allegro con brio
Larghetto
Gavotte: Non troppo allegro
Molto vivace

Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837)
edited by Clark McAlister

Trumpet Concerto in E-flat

Allegro con spirit
Andante
Rondo

SSgt Brandon Eubank, soloist

INTERMISSION

Georges Bizet (1838–75)

Symphony No. 1 in C

Allegro vivo
Adagio
Allegro vivace; Trio
Allegro vivace

The U.S. Marine Band will perform Monday, March 11 at 7:30 P.M. at The Music Center at Strathmore in North Bethesda, MD. The program will feature works by Gould, Berlioz, and Shostakovich. Tickets are valid until 7:15 p.m., at which time all tickets become null and void and any remaining seats will be filled with patrons in the stand-by queue, which begins at 6:45 p.m., outside The Music Center at Strathmore.

www.marineband.marines.mil | (202) 433-4011 | www.facebook.com/marineband | www.twitter.com/marineband

PROGRAM NOTES

Symphony No. 1 in D, Opus 25, *Classical*
Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953)

By 1917, twenty-six-year-old Sergei Prokofiev had already established quite a name for himself. Many considered him to be a promising young composer, but an equal number of observers would have replaced the word "promising" with "notorious." Prokofiev was widely regarded as an incorrigible nonconformist who had squandered his valuable conservatory education at St. Petersburg, Russia, by writing what many considered to be noisy, sarcastic, and abrasive music. The stalwarts of the Russian musical establishment did not understand what Prokofiev was trying to do and anticipated that each new work by the young renegade would simply up the ante on the last. So when Prokofiev introduced his first official symphony, imagine the surprise of the traditionalists when they discovered that the piece was modeled on the work of none other than Joseph Haydn. Prokofiev later explained the inspiration for the symphony in his autobiography:

> I spent the summer of 1917 in the country near St. Petersburg all alone, reading Kant and working a great deal. I deliberately left my piano behind, as I wished to try composing without it…. I had been toying with the idea of writing an entire symphony in this manner; I believed that the orchestra would thus sound more natural…. It seemed to me that, had Haydn lived in our own day, he would have retained his own style, while accepting something of the new at the same time. That was the kind of symphony I wanted to write: a symphony in the classical style. When I saw that my idea was beginning to work, I began to call it the *Classical Symphony*—in the first place, because it was simpler, and secondly for the fun of it…and in the secret hope that I would prove to be right if the symphony really did turn out to be a "classic."

Haydn would indeed have recognized the forms Prokofiev employed in his symphony: two movements in sonata form with a central slow movement and a ternary-form dance movement. Haydn might also have appreciated the wit and mischief pervasive in most of Prokofiev's music, as well as the playful ribbing he gave to the form of the Classical symphony throughout his creative opus.

The first movement opens with a confident declaration that was very prevalent in the classical repertoire: a rapidly ascending arpeggiated device known as the Mannheim Rocket. At first blush, the music is cast in an effervescent Classical style, but surprises abound at every turn. From sudden shifts to unexpected keys to a disorienting development section where the violins quarrel with the winds over what key and on what beat the theme should be presented, Prokofiev subtly infuses his modern sensibilities into every bar. All is righted by the coda, however, and the movement ends as it began with perfect Classical symmetry. The customary slow second movement opens with a delicate, soaring violin melody that on its surface seems to suspend the antics that came just before. But underlying the lyricism is a quirky accompaniment and an ever-present sense that anything could happen at any moment. As modeled by Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the third movement of the Viennese Classical symphony form is almost always a three-part minuet: the first section is repeated again as the last section, with a

contrasting trio sandwiched in between. Prokofiev's third movement is also a three-part dance, but he dispenses with the minuet in favor of another specimen from the French Baroque, this one in duple time. The Gavotte moves through its first two sections in rather traditional form, even shifting the music from the strings to the winds for the trio as one would expect. But just when the audience thinks the composer has stuck to the script, Prokofiev tweaks the mold by dressing the original melody in different clothes upon its return. The flute unexpectedly takes the repeat away from the rest of the orchestra, and the movement gently slinks away. Haydn undoubtedly would have approved of the final rollicking Vivace, although Prokofiev picks up the pace and pushes the required virtuosity of the orchestra to its very limits. The composer's signature satirical tone saturates the music, but it is a good-natured brand of satire, and in the end the symphony leaves the impression of a loving tribute to the work of the luminaries that came before.

Prokofiev's symphony was an instant success and remains one of his best-loved pieces. The work was undeniable proof that the young rebel was indeed capable of embracing the revered traditions and models of the past, but it was also crystal clear that he was going to accept them on his own terms.

Trumpet Concerto in E-flat

Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778–1837)
edited by Clark McAlister

Johann Nepomuk Hummel was born in Pressburg, Hungary. He was a child prodigy on par with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, of whom he was an early student. Hummel benefited from Mozart's support, but he belonged to a group of composers working squarely in the shadow of Ludwig van Beethoven at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Hummel achieved more success than many of his contemporaries. He first came to prominence as one of Europe's finest pianists and later followed in Joseph Haydn's footsteps at the Esterházy Court before relocating to Stuttgart and Weimar, where he earned accolades as a notable composer. He wrote in virtually every genre except for the symphony (perhaps deferring to the monumental symphonic presence of Beethoven), and he amassed a good deal of fame and wealth in the process. However, history was not as kind to Hummel, lumping him in, perhaps unfairly, with a host of forgettable composers of his era who never achieved the staying power of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven.

Within his diverse oeuvre, Hummel wrote several works for the keyed trumpet, an instrument that typically employed five keys rather than valves and had a smoother, more clarion tone than the modern trumpet. The first keyed trumpet was likely made in Dresden, Germany, around 1770, but it was the Viennese court trumpeter Anton Weidinger who brought the instrument to prominence until it was supplanted by the modern valve trumpet in the 1840s. Two of the most substantial concerti in the modern trumpet repertoire were originally written for Weidinger and his keyed instrument: Haydn's Concerto in E-flat, Hob. VIIe:1 and this Hummel Concerto, originally written in the key of E. Both works were designed to showcase the increased chromatic capabilities of the unique keyed trumpet as compared to other brass instruments of the time. Hummel finished his manuscript on December 8, 1803, and Weidinger performed it three weeks later for a New Year's *tafelmusik* (dinner music) at the imperial court in Vienna and kept it in his repertoire for many years after.

After the keyed trumpet became obsolete, its repertoire, which included the Hummel concerto, also fell into obscurity. It was a century and a half before this concerto was rediscovered in 1958 by a Yale University student searching for a unique recital piece. Today, the concerto is usually played on a modern trumpet and transposed down a semitone to E-flat major to facilitate its performance.

The concerto offers an unmistakable nod to Viennese Classicism and particularly the influence of Mozart and Haydn. The first movement is cast in a standard sonata form with the added interest of a double-exposition, in which the orchestra states both main themes completely before they are repeated by the soloist. The melody at the opening of the concerto is strongly reminiscent of Mozart's famed Symphony No. 35 in D, nicknamed *Haffner,* and the jaunty dotted rhythms of the secondary theme offer a tip of the cap to the composer's predecessor at the Esterházy Court. The Andante second movement is a rather serious and even dramatic aria over triplet accompaniment, showing off the instrument's melodic qualities with flowing runs and extended trills. The Finale is the most light-hearted of the three movements, a rondo that contains a quoted march melody by Luigi Cherubini that would have been well known in Hummel's time, though the gesture is lost on most modern audiences. Here the virtuosic characteristics and flourishes in a wide variety of keys show off the capabilities of both the contemporary instrument and its dedicatee.

Staff Sergeant Brandon Eubank, soloist

Trumpeter/cornetist Staff Sergeant Brandon Eubank joined "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in July 2008. Staff Sgt. Eubank began his musical instruction on piano at age five and trumpet at age ten. After graduating from Victor J. Andrew High School in Tinley Park in 2004, he earned his bachelor's degree in trumpet performance in 2008 from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, where he studied with Barbara Butler, Charles Geyer, and Christopher Martin, principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Prior to joining "The President's Own," Staff Sgt. Eubank performed at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California, and the Lucerne Festival Academy in Switzerland under Pierre Boulez. He also has performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; the Civic Orchestra of Chicago; the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, Florida; the Walt Disney World Collegiate All-Star Band in Orlando, Florida; and the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra in South Korea.

Symphony No. 1 in C

Georges Bizet (1838–75)

French composer Georges Bizet has enjoyed much greater success and recognition over the past century than he ever achieved during his lifetime. His musical career began with tremendous promise; he was somewhat of a child prodigy, entering the Paris Conservatoire at age nine and winning the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1857 at the conclusion of his nine years of study. He was only twenty-two when he received his first opera commission for *Les pêcheurs de perles* on the heels of a three-year stay in Italy. Despite this extremely promising start and his early emergence as a talented opera composer, several of his works failed to gain traction, and his professional life was plagued by a series of disappointments. Bizet was thirty-six years old

when his seminal opera *Carmen* opened in Paris, and he was elated with what he hoped would be his crowning compositional achievement. He was completely unprepared for the negative public reaction to the opera, which was due primarily to its rather unsavory subject matter in the eyes of the bourgeois Parisians of the day. On the night of the première, the final curtain was greeted with complete silence, a reaction that would prove to be a devastating blow to the composer. A few months later Bizet had a heart attack, followed by a second one the next day. He died just as *Carmen* was ending its thirty-first performance at the Opéra-Comique theater in Paris, believing that his opera was a complete failure. The passage of time has obviously proved otherwise, and *Carmen* has become one of the most popular and enduring works in the operatic repertoire.

The posthumous recognition of Bizet's musical contributions took another turn in 1933, when the manuscript to a full-scale symphony dated from 1855 was discovered among the composer's papers at the library of the Paris Conservatoire. The score was dusted off and forwarded to the conductor Felix Weingartner, who brought it to life for the first time since its composition nearly eighty years prior. Likely written as a student assignment at the conservatory when Bizet was just seventeen, the Symphony in C seems to have been immediately set aside upon completion with no intention to pursue a performance or publication. At the time, Bizet was under the tutelage of the great French composer Charles Gounod, and the student revered his mentor. Gounod had recently completed his own Symphony No. 1 in D, and the work received several successful performances in Paris shortly thereafter. Bizet often assisted his teacher with transcriptions of his works in order to earn some income. He set about to create a piano four-hands reduction of Gounod's symphony in 1855, and Bizet's own symphony dates from October and November of that same year. The commonalities between the two symphonies are numerous and striking, perhaps due to the composer's intimate familiarity with the Gounod opus. Bizet may have recognized that the shared qualities would be immediately apparent to all and, fearful that he would appear to be merely copying the best features of Gounod's work, suppressed the symphony from going any further than his desk.

The melodic, harmonic, and structural similarities between the Gounod and Bizet symphonies add to the likelihood that Bizet was emulating his teacher. Later in life, Bizet wrote to Gounod, "You were the beginning of my life as an artist. I spring from you. You are the cause, I am the consequence." Indeed, all four movements of Bizet's symphony mimic devices found in Gounod's work and even directly quote or parody several of the elder composer's themes. His reconstitution of many of Gounod's techniques is likely the reason that Bizet's symphony is so skillfully constructed and orchestrated for an inexperienced composer's first foray into a fully-drawn symphonic work. Both symphonies are even scored for the exact same sized orchestra.

Although there is no mention of the symphony in any of Bizet's correspondence, several of the work's individual themes appear in his later operas and stage works. He may have seen the symphony simply as a student exercise, from which to mine material for his more mature works. The actual motive for Bizet's abandonment of the original may never be known, but it is clear that the symphony was never performed during his lifetime. After its long awaited première and publication in 1935, the work was cheerfully accepted into the repertoire, and there it has remained. Ironically, Bizet's Symphony No. 1 in C is widely considered a much more inventive and polished example of the form than the work that served as its inspiration, and it has since eclipsed the popularity of the Gounod symphony. It is a vibrant and masterful achievement by a young prodigy that overflows with moments that foreshadow the timeless themes of *Carmen* and reveals glimpses of what other brilliant music might have followed had Bizet lived beyond his thirties.