



Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND

Sunday, January 11, 2015 at 2:00 P.M.

Center for the Arts Concert Hall

George Mason University

Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

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**Sousa Season Opener: By Request**

John Philip Sousa\* (1854–1932)

March, “Hail to the Spirit of Liberty”

Richard Wagner (1813–83)  
transcribed by MSgt Donald Patterson\*

Overture to *Rienzi*

Herbert L. Clarke (1867–1945)

“Nereid”

*MSgt Michael Mergen, cornet soloist*

John Philip Sousa\* (1854–1932)  
edited by John R. Bourgeois\*

*Looking Upward*

By the Light of the Polar Star  
Beneath the Southern Cross  
Mars and Venus

**INTERMISSION**

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)  
transcribed by John R. Bourgeois\*

Triumphal Scene from *Aida*

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)  
arranged by Emil Mollenhauer

“My Heart at Thy Sweet Voice” from *Samson and Delilah*

*GySgt Sara Dell’Omo, mezzo-soprano*

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)  
transcribed by Mark Hindsley

*Capriccio espagnol*, Opus 34

Alborada  
Variazioni  
Alborada  
Scena e Canto Gitano  
Fandango Asturiano

John Philip Sousa\* (1854–1932)

March, “The Stars and Stripes Forever”

*GySgt Sara Dell’Omo, concert moderator*

# *Sousa Season Opener: By Request*

## **March, “Hail to the Spirit of Liberty”**

John Philip Sousa\* (1854–1932)

John Philip Sousa and his band traveled abroad to perform at the Paris Exposition in 1900. Sousa was a great patriot and relished this opportunity to represent his country at such a significant international event. This was also the very first overseas tour for the Sousa Band, and the group was welcomed with tremendous enthusiasm across Europe. During the Exposition, an impressive statue of Major General the Marquis de Lafayette was unveiled on July 4, 1900. The monument was presented “on behalf of the children of the United States” and depicted Lafayette on horseback offering his sword in support of the Americans during the Revolutionary War. For the unveiling, the statue was draped in an enormous American flag. Sousa composed “Hail to the Spirit of Liberty” specifically for the grand occasion.

## **Overture to *Rienzi***

Richard Wagner (1813–83)

transcribed by MSgt Donald Patterson\*

Richard Wagner was one of Sousa’s favorite composers, and Wagner’s works appear with great frequency on his programs. Sousa thought nothing of combining Wagner’s weighty operatic gems with marches, polkas, and waltzes, and his savvy programming introduced Wagner’s relatively new music at the time to thousands throughout America.

Wagner’s opera *Rienzi*, which premiered in 1842, had the misfortune of preceding his monumental success *Die fliegende Holländer* (*The Flying Dutchman*). *Die fliegende Holländer* clearly marks Wagner’s transition into a new and unique idiom in which music and drama equally share the stage. *Rienzi* was composed while Wagner was still searching for his true musical identity and as such, the opera is comparatively overlooked. In *Rienzi*, Wagner decided to try his hand at an opera in the Grand French style, and created a spectacle nearly seven hours long, longer than any of his other single operas. Although *Rienzi* was initially somewhat successful, Wagner resented being compared to Giacomo Meyerbeer, the master of the French grand opera, and it proved to be the catalyst for the new artistic direction of his next opera. If *Rienzi* has been marginalized, its overture certainly has not, and has been frequently heard in concert halls since the nineteenth century.

## **“Nereid”**

Herbert L. Clarke (1867–1945)

MSgt Michael Mergen, cornet soloist

Herbert L. Clarke was born in Massachusetts in 1867, the son of composer and organist William Horatio Clarke. Herbert and his two brothers also became prominent musicians: Herbert and Edwin on cornet and Ernest on trombone.

Clarke began his musical life as a violist, but according to his autobiography, was captivated by a concert by D.W. Reeves’ American Band of Providence, Rhode Island. During the performance, cornetist Bowen R. Church played a solo, and thereafter young Herbert immediately began practicing his brother’s cornet.

Clarke drifted between viola and cornet for several years, performing in opera houses on both instruments and on cornet in a variety of concert bands. In 1886, he won a solo cornet competition, and

the following year he joined the Citizen's Band of Toronto as solo cornetist. He spent the next five years playing in all the prominent bands in the area while teaching viola at the Toronto Conservatory. In the spring of 1892, Clarke successfully auditioned for the 22nd Regiment Band in New York City directed by famed bandleader Patrick Gilmore, and a year later he joined Sousa's new civilian band as cornet soloist.

Clarke left and rejoined Sousa's band several times during the next twenty-five years, with stints leading his own band and performing trumpet with the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera. He was one of Sousa's most prolific cornet soloists at the height of the Sousa Band's popularity and success. Clarke finally resigned for good in 1917 because he was determined not to play past his prime, and spent his remaining years as a bandleader and teacher, playing only on rare occasions. He died in 1945, and his ashes are interred not far from Sousa's final resting place in Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.

Clarke composed many of his own solos, and his music comprises a good portion of the classic solo cornet repertoire. He was known for his beautiful tone and expressive playing, as well as incredible technique that often included extended triple tongued passages. "Nereid" is a relatively obscure solo among Clarke's oeuvre and the parts are dated 11/11/1918 – Armistice Day. The only known record of Clarke's performance of the solo came in 1923 during his very first concert as director of the band in Long Beach, California. The term "Nereid" refers to the sea nymphs of Greek mythology who accompanied Poseidon. They provided aid and comfort to sailors in distress or who were battling storms on the high seas, in distinct contrast to the Sirens who lured the sailors to their doom with their beautiful songs.

### ***Looking Upward***

John Philip Sousa\* (1854–1932)  
edited by John R. Bourgeois\*

Sousa was exceptionally proud of his eleven concert suites and they were prominently featured in his band concerts. They are not as well known or as popular as his marches today, but the suites served an important place in Sousa's unique programs as a middle ground between the heavier classics he often featured and the many lighter pieces he included as "musical sorbets."

For most of Sousa's suites, inspiration came from something he experienced or read. *Looking Upward* was among his favorites, and he often recounted the inspiration for the work to news reporters. The first movement had been inspired while looking into the darkening sky one crisp evening while riding a train through South Dakota; the second movement was suggested by an advertisement for the steamship the Southern Cross; and the third came simply by "... gazing into the heavens...." The suite contains largely original music throughout, although Sousa did borrow two brief themes from his operetta *Chris and the Wonderful Lamp*. Sousa was a master of musical effects, and one of the distinguishing features of *Looking Upward* is a pair of drum rolls in the third movement, Mars and Venus, which begin as whispers and slowly swell into thunderous roars before diminishing once again.

In The Sousa Band concert programs, the printed notes were usually as follows:

#### **BY THE LIGHT OF THE POLAR STAR**

"Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way,

Oh what fun it is to ride

In a one-horse open sleigh."

—Old song.

## UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

Above the slim minaret, Two stars of twilight glow, The lute and bright castanet  
Sound in the dusk below.

Look from thy lattice, Gulnare, Gulnare. Stars of twilight glow,  
Now through the nearing night

Four stars in glory rise—

“Two the pale heavens light.

Two arc thy shining eyes.”

—Macdonough

## MARS AND VENUS

“He was a soldier off to war. She was a sweet young soul.

She sang of love and he of glory,

And together they told the same old story.

After the drummer’s roll, my lad.

After the drummer’s roll.”

—Old, old song

## Triumphal Scene from *Aida*

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

transcribed by John R. Bourgeois\*

Giuseppe Verdi’s grand opera *Aida* was completed and premièred in 1871. Fittingly, this unique and colorful work set in Old Kingdom Egypt was commissioned by the Khedive of Egypt, Isma’il Pasha, and first performed at the Khedivial Opera House in Cairo. It was premièred in Europe at Milan’s La Scala Opera House in February of the following year to tremendous and lasting acclaim.

The plot centers on a forbidden love between an Egyptian commander named Ramses and the slave girl Aida. The opera opens with Ramses leading a war with Ethiopia while secretly harboring feelings for the Ethiopian Princess Aida who has been enslaved. The Pharaoh’s daughter, Amneris, also loves Ramses, but fears his heart already belongs to another. Despite victory over Ethiopia and Ramses’ loyalty to the Pharaoh, he cannot deny his love for Aida. The love triangle bursts and Ramses is eventually brought to trial for his declaration of love to a slave. Amneris tries to implore Ramses to deny it to save his life, but he refuses, believing that Aida has safely escaped to her country. He is condemned to be buried alive, and the end of the opera reveals that Aida has hidden herself in his cell in the temple so they might perish together while Amneris weeps and prays over Ramses’ fate in the temple above.

Several instrumental scenes from the opera have become staples on the concert stage, among them the famous Hymn and Triumphal March. Musical potpourri from the opera were found on many of Sousa’s programs, and this particular collection of significant themes from the opera was assembled by the 25<sup>th</sup> Director of the Marine Band, Colonel John R. Bourgeois.

## “My Heart at Thy Sweet Voice” from *Samson and Delilah*

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835–1921)

arranged by Emil Mollenhauer

GySgt Sara Dell’Omo, mezzo-soprano

Vocal solos were an integral part of many “Golden Age” band concerts, and Sousa frequently featured a female singer on his concerts throughout his entire career. One such soloist, Marjorie Moody, sang on

more than 2,500 Sousa Band concerts between 1917 and 1930. Operatic arias were by far the most common fare for Sousa's singers, and "Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix" ("My Heart at Thy Sweet Voice") from Camille Saint-Saëns' *Samson and Delilah* was one of the most popular. For many of Sousa's tour audiences, hearing a soloist render an aria with his band was as close as they would ever get to the opera house. In his brilliant programming style, Sousa often balanced the experience of hearing opera by pairing these arias with lighter encores of more popular songs.

### ***Capriccio espagnol, Opus 34***

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908)  
transcribed by Mark Hindsley

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov was one of the more fascinating of the great Russian romantic composers. As a teenager he was taken under the wing of Mily Balakirev along with the aspiring young composers Modest Mussorgsky and César Cui. Rimsky-Korsakov's musical studies were initially encouraged, but then discontinued by his much older brother Voin, who pushed Nicolai toward a military career. Rimsky-Korsakov's musical tendencies could not be suppressed, however, and he went on to compose an impressive collection of works including ballets, operas, and symphonic works and became an important teacher to many influential composers. He was also a pioneer in the collecting and setting of hundreds of traditional Russian folk songs. These melodies provided him with source material for many of his original works and were very influential to subsequent generations of Russian composers including one of his pupils, Igor Stravinsky. He was also highly regarded by his peers for his revisions, editions, and orchestrations of works by Mussorgsky and Alexander Borodin.

Although Rimsky-Korsakov revered Russian folk music, he was also very interested in the music of other countries. He had been to Spain only once early in his life, yet he was hypnotized by the music. His *Capriccio espagnol* is an exuberant representation of a musical culture that he clearly adored. Written in 1887, the work met with immediate success; upon its first reading, the orchestra burst into enthusiastic applause and the audience at the première commanded an encore performance. Rimsky-Korsakov originally conceived the work as a virtuoso showpiece for violin and orchestra based on gypsy-flavored themes. A solo violin is indeed prominent at times in the final version of the work, but many other instruments are also featured throughout. Rimsky-Korsakov later wrote of the enduringly popular work, "According to my plans, the *Capriccio* was to glitter with dazzling orchestral color and, manifestly, I had not been wrong."

Even with the absence of the violin, the brilliant colors in *Capriccio espagnol* translate beautifully for concert band. Sousa programmed the work many times throughout his long career.

### **March, "The Stars and Stripes Forever"**

John Philip Sousa\* (1854–1932)

John Philip Sousa actively composed over a span of nearly sixty years but it was during his time as leader of the Marine Band followed by the early years of his leadership of his civilian band that he wrote some of his most famous marches, those that earned him the title "The March King." His most famous composition was written during this time, conceived while he was abroad and the product of homesickness caused by his nearly constant travel.

Since its première in Philadelphia on May 14, 1897, "The Stars and Stripes Forever" has secured its place as the most popular and widely recognized march of all time. It has captured the spirit of American patriotism perhaps better than any other composition for more than a century. Former Sousa

Band members testified that, during the heyday of the Sousa Band, “The Stars and Stripes Forever” was performed on every concert. Audiences expected, and sometimes even demanded, to hear the march and eventually began to stand upon recognizing its opening bars as if it were the national anthem. It didn’t succeed in becoming the national anthem but, in 1987, President Ronald Reagan signed an act of Congress designating “The Stars and Stripes Forever” the national march of the United States.

Sousa was a staunch patriot and he often insisted that the impetus for “The Stars and Stripes Forever” was born of both his love for country and divine inspiration. The following is taken from a Sousa Band program from the early part of the century:

Someone asked, “Who influenced you to compose ‘The Stars and Stripes Forever,’” and before the question was hardly asked, Sousa replied, “God—and I say this in all reverence! I was in Europe and I got a cablegram that my manager was dead. I rushed . . . to Paris and then to England and sailed for America. On board the steamer as I walked miles up and down the deck, back and forth, a mental band was playing ‘Stars and Stripes Forever.’ Day after day as I walked it persisted in crashing into my very soul. I wrote it on Christmas day, 1896.

Sousa later added that some of the initial melodic material was conceived while he was still in Europe and it was then that the image of the American flag came to the forefront of the homesick composer’s mind. In an interview, Sousa said:

In a kind of dreamy way I used to think over the old days at Washington when I was leader of the Marine Band . . . when we played at all public official functions, and I could see the Stars and Stripes flying from the flagstaff on the grounds of the White House. . . . To my imagination it seemed to be the biggest, grandest flag in the world, and I could not get back under it quick enough.