



Colonel Michael J. Colburn, Director

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UNITED STATES MARINE BAND  
Wednesday, June 11, 2014 at 8:00 P.M.  
U.S. Capitol, West Terrace  
Thursday, June 12, 2014 at 8:00 P.M.  
U.S. Capitol, West Terrace  
Captain Michelle A. Rakers, conducting

SSgt Ryan Nowlin\*

“Let Freedom Ring”

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

*English Folk Song Suite*

March, “Seventeen Come Sunday”  
Intermezzo, “My Bonny Boy”  
March, “Folk Songs from Somerset”

Amilcare Ponchielli (1834–86)  
transcribed by Carlton Lind

Clarinet Duet, “Il Convegno”

*MGySgt Charles Willett and GySgt Tracey Paddock, soloists*

Leonard B. Smith (1915–2002)

March, “The March King”

Leonard Bernstein (1918–90)  
arranged by W. J. Duthoit

Selections from *West Side Story*

John Philip Sousa\* (1854–1932)

March, “The Washington Post”

*GySgt Sara Dell’Omo, concert moderator*

## *June 11/12 webnotes*

### **“Let Freedom Ring”**

SSgt Ryan Nowlin\*

Before “The Star-Spangled Banner” officially became the national anthem in 1931, there were many popular hymns that served as de facto anthems for the United States, including “My Country ‘tis of Thee.” The lyrics of this patriotic American song were written by Samuel F. Smith and set to the melody of “God Save the Queen,” the anthem of the United Kingdom. “Let Freedom Ring,” an arrangement of “My Country ‘tis of Thee,” was penned by staff arranger SSgt Ryan Nowlin and was performed by the U.S. Marine Band on January 21, 2013, at the second inaugural of President Barack Obama. Drawing his inspiration for this piece directly from Smith’s patriotic words, Nowlin says his “simplistic treatment of the theme is to portray a deep reverence.” Shining through the texture on numerous occasions, great emphasis is placed on the lyrics, “land where my fathers died,” a strong reminder that America would not be what it is were it not for the sacrifices of those who have gone before us.

### ***English Folk Song Suite***

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Ralph Vaughan Williams was one of the greatest British composers of his generation. The son of a clergyman, in his youth Vaughan Williams studied viola and organ. He attended the Charterhouse School, Cambridge University, and the Royal College of Music, eventually earning a doctorate at Cambridge in 1901. His formal training, while extensive, did not satisfy an inner urge to find his own musical voice. Though he studied abroad with Max Bruch in Germany in 1897 and with Maurice Ravel in Paris in 1908, the distinctive rhythms and harmonies of English folk songs proved to be a more significant influence. Vaughan Williams collected more than 800 folk songs, many of which appeared in his works the rest of his life. Having embraced his role as a nationalist, Vaughan Williams once commented to an interviewer, “Every composer cannot expect to have a worldwide message, but may reasonably expect to have a special message for his own people, and many young composers make the mistake of imagining that they can be universal without first having been local.” Vaughan Williams managed to retain the local flavor of the British Isles while transcending any national boundaries.

The *English Folk Song Suite* dates from 1923 and is Vaughan Williams’ first composition for wind band. The circumstances of its composition are not known, but Vaughan Williams may have seen this as an ideal vehicle for several favorite songs. He used themes found in a collection titled, “English Country Songs,” and several from notebooks compiled by fellow composer and song collector Cecil Strong. The folk song sources are as follows: first movement—“Pretty Caroline,” second movement—“Green Bushes,” and third movement—“Blow Away the Morning Dew,” “High Germany,” “The Tree so High,” and “John Barleycorn.” This suite has remained one of Vaughan Williams’ perennially popular works.

### **Clarinet Duet, “Il Convegno”**

Amilcare Ponchielli (1834–86)

transcribed by Carlton Lind

*MGySgt Charles Willett and GySgt Tracey Paddock, soloists*

Amilcare Ponchielli is best known today as an opera composer, particularly for his signal achievement, *La Gioconda*. However, his early efforts in the genre from 1856 to 1876 were beset with

disappointments as one production after another either ended prematurely or proved commercially unviable. It was during these years that he established his other legacy as a *capo-banda*, or bandmaster, in Piacenza, Italy, and later in Cremona, producing at least eighty-two original compositions and 120 arrangements for band. His pupil Giovanni Tebaldini lauded his work from this period, saying, “He did not bring the band into the orchestra, but rather, the orchestra into the band.”

“Il Convegno,” or “The Meeting,” was Ponchielli’s only composition which he reworked for three different media—an original version for clarinet duo and piano, and later transcriptions for clarinets with band and orchestra (the latter of which was perhaps never performed in his lifetime). One of the remaining original scores for band prescribes an accompaniment of eighteen parts, leaving out percussion altogether, although some use of light percussion would likely represent authentic performance practice.

### **March, “The March King”**

Leonard B. Smith (1915–2002)

Leonard B. Smith of Poughkeepsie, New York, began studying cornet at age eight. He later won a scholarship to the New York Military Academy and attended summer band camp at the Ernest S. Williams School of Music in Saugerties, New York, where he expanded his musical abilities into the areas of composition, arranging, and conducting. Smith went on to become cornet soloist of the famed Goldman Band and principal trumpet in the Detroit Symphony. In the golden days of radio, it was Smith’s trumpet playing that opened weekly radio broadcasts of the popular “Lone Ranger” broadcasts for many years.

During World War II, Smith enlisted and served with the U. S. Navy Band in Washington, D.C., where he continued to perform as a soloist on many Navy Band broadcasts and concerts. At the conclusion of the war, Smith returned to Detroit to form his own concert band, best remembered today as the Detroit Concert Band. The ensemble performed for thirty-five years and recorded thirty-one albums, including the complete published marches of John Philip Sousa, and became the pre-eminent civilian concert band of its time. Smith passed away on July 23, 2002, in Scottsdale, Arizona.

“The March King” was the winning entry in a march composition contest sponsored by the Sousa Band Fraternal Society to coincide with the centennial of John Philip Sousa’s birth in 1954. The other entries included *March Nonpareil* by Charles O’Neill, *Sousa Band Fraternal March* by Peter Buys, and *John Philip Sousa Centennial March* by William Fletcher. Smith’s winning march includes a little nod to Sousa’s “Riders for the Flag” march in the trio, with the tubas bubbling away, and was included on Volume Ten of the Detroit Concert Band’s *Gems of the Concert Band* album collection. Many consider it Smith’s finest march.

### **Selections from *West Side Story***

Leonard Bernstein (1918–90)

arranged by W. J. Duthoit

Neither an opera nor a musical, audiences were at first somewhat unsure what to make of Leonard Bernstein’s groundbreaking *West Side Story* when it opened on Broadway in 1957. Pushing the boundaries of musical theater was not a new idea for Bernstein, who had been blurring the lines between its various forms from his earliest work for the stage, the ballet *Fancy Free* (1944). Some of Bernstein’s experiments were more successful than others. His musical *On the Town* (1944) was a popular hit that

was eventually made into a successful movie while more serious works such as *Trouble in Tahiti* (1952) and *Candide* (1956) languished after opening to decidedly mixed reviews and lukewarm popular response. In *West Side Story*, however, Bernstein perfected his formula, astutely balancing elements of the Broadway musical, opera, ballet, and popular musical idioms.

Despite its unusual identity, *West Side Story* enjoyed popular and critical success with an initial run of 732 performances on Broadway and a Tony award nomination. It is ironic that this innovative musical, a work that forever changed the course of musical theater and was defined by its focus on twentieth century urban issues, was bested for the 1958 Tony award by Meredith Willson's *The Music Man*, a charming but nostalgic work that looks longingly back to nineteenth century rural America. *West Side Story* would soon have its turn. In 1961, the Broadway hit was adapted into a feature-length film starring Natalie Wood as Maria, Richard Beymer as Tony, and Rita Moreno as Anita. The film was a monumental success and earned ten Academy Awards including Best Motion Picture.

### **March, "The Washington Post"**

John Philip Sousa\* (1854–1932)

As an attempt to compete for business and appeal to the public in the 1880s, *The Washington Post* newspaper sponsored an essay contest for school children. The owners of the paper asked John Philip Sousa to create a march for the award ceremony to be held on the grounds of the Smithsonian in June of 1889. "The Washington Post" march was played by the Marine Band 125 years ago this month under Sousa's baton and was received as a spectacular success. Suited to the two-step dance, the march became extremely popular throughout the United States and Europe. Sousa's march identified so strongly with the dance that two-steps eventually came to be known as "Washington Posts."