



Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fetting, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND

Wednesday, August 19, 2015 at 8:00 P.M.

U.S. Capitol, West Terrace

Thursday, August 20, 2015 at 8:00 P.M.

Sylvan Theater

First Lieutenant Ryan J. Nowlin, conducting

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)

March, “Our Flirtation”

Morton Gould (1913–96)
transcribed by Philip Lang

“American Salute”

arranged by SSgt Scott Nimmer*

Xylophone Rags of George Hamilton Green

GySgt Jonathan Bisesi, soloist

world première

John Williams (b. 1932)

Star Wars Suite

Imperial March

transcribed by Stephen Bulla*

Princess Leia’s Theme

Battle in the Forest

transcribed by Donald Hunsberger*

Main Title

transcribed by Stephen Bulla*

arranged by SSgt Scott Nimmer*

Ol’ Blue Eyes: The Hits of Frank Sinatra

MSgt Kevin Benneer, baritone

world première

George W. Warren (1828–1902)
arranged by Thomas Knox*

“God of Our Fathers”

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)

March, “The Stars and Stripes Forever”

MSgt Kevin Benneer, concert moderator

PROGRAM NOTES

March, “Our Flirtation”

John Philip Sousa (1854–1932)

John Philip Sousa was born in southeast Washington, D.C., near the Marine Barracks where his father, Antonio, was a musician in the Marine Band. Though Sousa studied piano and most orchestral instruments, his first love was the violin. He became very proficient on the instrument, and at age thirteen was almost persuaded to join a circus band. His father intervened, however, and enlisted him as an apprentice musician in the Marine Band. By age twenty, he was ready to strike out on his own and continue his music career in the civilian world as a violinist, conductor, and composer.

Although Sousa is now best known for the composition of more than 135 marches, he also wrote and arranged music in other genres, one of these being the theater. In his twenties, Sousa conducted, orchestrated, and arranged several theater productions, including the wildly popular *HMS Pinafore* by W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. After this successful production in Philadelphia, Sousa was also asked to conduct and compose incidental music for the variety show *Our Flirtations*. Included in the music that Sousa composed for *Our Flirtations* was the eponymous march. It was after the success of *Our Flirtations* that the U.S. Marine Corps decided to offer the position of 17th Director of the Marine Band to Sousa in 1880.

A recording of this march, the full score and parts, and a video of the score synchronized with the audio are available in Volume 1 of [“The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa.”](#)

“American Salute”

Morton Gould (1913–96)

transcribed by Philip Lang

“Composing is my life blood.... That is basically me, and although I have done many things in my life—conducting, playing piano, and so on—what is fundamental is my being a composer.”

—Morton Gould

Originally written for orchestra, “American Salute” has become a favorite of the concert band repertoire. Using the familiar tune “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” as the sole melodic resource, Morton Gould demonstrates his skill in thematic development, creating a brilliant fantasy on a single tune. Written in 1942 in the early days of World War II, it was composed at the request of a government radio program producer who wanted a “salute to America.” The composer insisted that he had no idea that the work was destined to become a classic: “It was years before I knew it was a classic setting. What amazes me is that critics say it is a minor masterpiece, a gem. To me, it was just a setting. I was doing a million of those things.” A million may be an exaggeration, but not by much. The pace of Gould’s schedule in those days was astounding. By his own account he composed and scored “American Salute” in less than eight hours, starting at 6 p.m. the evening before it was due (with copyists standing by), and finishing at 2 a.m. Although the ink couldn’t have been dry, the score and parts were on the stand in time for rehearsal the next morning and ready for broadcast that evening.

Xylophone Rags of George Hamilton Green

arranged by SSgt Scott Nimmer

George Hamilton Green remains one of America’s most important xylophone performers and composers. Growing up in Omaha, Nebraska, he was part of a musical family. His grandfather was a violinist, violin maker,

baritone soloist, and conductor, and his father was a successful arranger, cornet soloist, and conductor. It was in his father's local band that the twelve-year-old Green began his solo xylophone career. He quickly built his repertoire, and even as a boy could perform a collection of 300 overtures, rhapsodies, and works for both violin and piano. He moved to Chicago and then New York City to begin his recording career. From 1917 to 1940 he recorded with virtually every recording company, most importantly the big three; Victor, Columbia, and Edison. His recordings highlighted the xylophone in a wide variety of novelty ensembles performing his original works in addition to popular tunes, waltzes, and salon dances of the era. It was these original works that laid the foundation for what percussionists still use as their mallet pedagogy today.

This arrangement is comprised of original pieces by Green for xylophone and piano. In this world première, staff arranger SSgt Scott Ninmer has arranged several of Green's compositions for xylophone soloist and concert band. Soloist GySgt Jonathan Bisesi will have the opportunity to improvise on these standard tunes while performing, a skill that Green perfected more than a hundred years ago.

Star Wars Suite

John Williams (b. 1932)

"Imperial March" and "Main Title" transcribed by Stephen Bulla*

"Princess Leia's Theme" and "Battle in the Forest" transcribed by Donald Hunsberger*

John Williams began his musical training on the piano at age eight. By the time he was in his early twenties, he was already part of the Hollywood studio music world, working as a pianist and composer/arranger of music for television. Throughout the 1960s, Williams's career continued to advance while he broke in to the world of movie music, composing for ever more popular movies and directors. The 1970s brought his collaboration with Steven Spielberg on movies such as *Jaws* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. In 1977, a new collaboration was born when Williams composed the music for George Lucas's *Star Wars*.

The *Star Wars* Suite includes four selections from the movie *Star Wars*: Darth Vader's "Imperial March," the romantic and lyrical "Princess Leia's Theme," the music depicting the battle between the Storm Troopers and Ewoks called "Battle in the Forest," and the dramatic and unforgettable "Main Title" theme. With this music, John Williams not only earned renown for himself as a composer, he also invigorated the world of movie music, bringing back the importance of the symphonic film score.

Ol' Blue Eyes: The Hits of Frank Sinatra

arranged by SSgt Scott Ninmer*

MSgt Kevin Benneer, baritone

Frank Sinatra was born in 1915 to Italian immigrant parents living in Hoboken, New Jersey. His parents introduced him to the Italian *bel canto* tradition of singing at an early age. Though he was never formally trained in music, he found his way to the Tommy Dorsey band and was wildly popular as a singer with this group in the early 1940s. His career stalled until film roles in the early 1950s put Sinatra back on the map. He signed with Capitol Records in 1953. During this contract, he found his niche by combining jazz big band, popular music tradition, and Italian *bel canto* style to create his unique, relaxed sound. Sinatra is one of the early examples of a popular star. He was equally well known for his acting and singing, dominating popular culture in both mediums.

Among the selections heard in the première of this arrangement for vocalist and band is "Come Fly with Me," the title track from a 1958 album that spent seventy-one weeks on the Billboard charts, reaching number one. Also heard in this medley is "For Once in my Life," "I've Got the World on a String," and "All the Way." These songs have become part of the American canon of music, inextricably tied to the unique voice and styling of the untrained singer from Hoboken.

“God of Our Fathers”

George W. Warren (1828–1902)

arranged by Thomas Knox*

President Ronald Reagan’s first inauguration in 1981 included a world première of a new work for the Marine Band. Chief arranger MGySgt Thomas Knox was tasked to create a new setting of the well known hymn “God of Our Fathers” for the Inaugural ceremony. The ink on the new arrangement was barely dry on January 20, 1981, when the Marine Band performed the dramatic music between the oaths taken by the new Vice President and President. Knox’s inventive setting of the moving hymn was so brilliantly crafted that the work soon became a staple in the Marine Band’s repertoire and has been used for numerous significant national events over the past three decades, including the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982 and the Congressional Prayer Vigil held in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda the day after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

March, “The Stars and Stripes Forever”

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)

Perhaps more than anyone else, John Philip Sousa is responsible for bringing the United States Marine Band to the level of excellence upheld today. As a composer, he wrote the best known and most loved marches in the repertoire; as Director, he was an innovator who shaped the future of the Marine Band.

This march was inspired by homesickness as Sousa returned from a European tour by ship in 1896. In his autobiography he states that, as he paced the deck, this melody would reappear in his mind throughout the entire voyage. It was not until he reached the shores of the United States that he set this great music to paper. It became his most popular march, and in December 1987, it was named our national march by an act of Congress signed by President Ronald Reagan.