



UNITED STATES MARINE BAND

Sunday, January 10, 2016 at 2:00 P.M.

Center for the Arts Concert Hall

George Mason University

Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

Lieutenant Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

Sousa Season Opener

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)	March, “The Rifle Regiment”
John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)	Overture to <i>Vautour</i>
Arthur Pryor (1870–1942) arranged by Albert O. Davis	“Annie Laurie” <i>MSgt Chris Clark, trombone soloist</i>
John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)	March, “Sound Off”
John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)	Suite, <i>Cubaland</i> Under the Spanish Flag Under the American Flag Under the Cuban Flag

INTERMISSION

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932) edited by Loras Schissel	Circus Galop from <i>The Irish Dragoon</i>
Richard Strauss (1864–1949) arranged by A. A. Harding	Finale from <i>Death and Transfiguration</i>
John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)	Waltz, “La Reine de la Mer”
John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932) poem by Rudyard Kipling	“Boots” <i>MSgt Kevin Bennear, baritone</i>
John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)	Symphonic Poem, “The Ben-Hur Chariot Race”
John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)	March, “The Stars and Stripes Forever” <i>MSgt Kevin Bennear, concert moderator</i>

*Member, U.S. Marine Band

The Marine Chamber Orchestra will perform Sunday, January 17 at 2:00 P.M. in the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center at Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria Campus. The program will feature the works of Handel, Bernstein, and Mahler.

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PROGRAM NOTES

March, “The Rifle Regiment”

Composed during his sixth year as director of the U.S. Marine Band, Sousa dedicated this march to the men of the 3rd U.S. Infantry. Sousa was a great innovator of the march form throughout his long career, and it was around this time that he began to regularly employ the march form that he would use for many of his greatest works. This particular march, however, follows the more traditional formula practiced by an earlier generation of march composers that included D. W. Reeves and Claudio Grafulla. “The Rifle Regiment” is widely considered to be one of Sousa’s best efforts from the early years of his composing career. This march will appear on Volume Two of “The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa” on our website in April.

Overture to *Vautour*

Sousa wrote only a handful of overtures during his lifetime, some designed to serve as preludes to his operettas and some that were intended as stand-alone concert works. *Vautour*, or “The Vulture” was written in 1886 for a play of the same name by Adolphe Eugene Philippe D’Ennery. Although seldom performed today, this overture was a favorite of the March King’s and often programmed for Sousa Band concerts. The overture was often listed with its subtitle “The Vulture,” but also sometimes called “The Vampire.” Additionally, a foreign edition of the work published by Lafleur & Son was strangely entitled “Sans Souci.”

“Annie Laurie”

Arthur Pryor (1870–1942)
arranged by Albert O. Davis

Arthur Pryor was born in September 1870 in St. Joseph, Missouri. He began his musical training early; his father, Samuel Pryor, started teaching Arthur piano and cornet when his son was just six years old. Pryor studied many other instruments at home, and at age eleven he was billed as the “boy wonder from Missouri” when he appeared as soloist on valve trombone with the Pryor Band that was led by his father. In 1893, at age twenty-two, Pryor joined The Sousa Band on slide trombone and performed an incredible 10,000 solos during his twelve years as a member of John Philip Sousa’s famous ensemble.

Pryor is widely regarded as one of the greatest trombone virtuosos of all time due in no small part to his astounding technique and exquisite sound. As was common practice for many virtuosos of the day, Pryor wrote many of his own solos to specifically showcase his unique skills. He composed some 300 works, many set as theme and variations on well-known melodies like “Annie Laurie.” Many of Pryor’s solo compositions were written when there were very few substantial solo pieces for the trombone, and they have since entered the canon of standard solo works for the instrument.

Master Sergeant Chris Clark, trombone soloist

Trombonist Master Sergeant Chris Clark joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in August 1999. He was appointed section leader in 2008. Master Sgt. Clark began his musical instruction at age eleven under the tutelage of his father, Jimmy Clark. He graduated in 1991 from Commerce High School, where he studied with the late Dr. Neill H. Humfeld. He earned a bachelor’s degree in music from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia in 1995 where he studied with Glenn Dodson, a former member of the Marine Band and principal trombone of the Philadelphia Orchestra. In 1997, he earned a master’s degree in music from The Juilliard School in New York where he studied with Joseph Alessi, principal trombonist of the New York Philharmonic. Master Sgt. Clark earned his doctorate in musical arts from the Catholic University of America in May 2009, where he studied with David Fedderly.

March, “Sound Off”

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)

Sousa served as 17th director of the U.S. Marine Band from 1880 to 1892 and composed many marches while leading “The President’s Own.” A handful of these works were specifically written for the Marine Corps and for the unique military

environment and traditions at the home of the Marine Band, the historic Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C. “Sound Off” was composed in 1885 and was dedicated to a gentlemen viewed by Sousa as “a stern but fair officer,” General George Porter Houston, who was the barracks commanding officer from July 1883 to March 1888. The march derives its title from a military command frequently heard during parades and formations at Marine Barracks Washington, directing the band to march up and down the parade deck in order to be reviewed by the commanding officer and spectators. This march will appear on Volume Two of “The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa” on our website in April.

Suite, *Cubaland*

Although John Philip Sousa composed 136 marches throughout his career and was known around the world as the “March King,” he never restricted himself to just this one musical form. In addition to marches, Sousa wrote seventy songs, two descriptive pieces, fifteen operettas, eleven waltzes, fourteen humoresques, five overtures, and eleven concert suites. Sousa’s suites are special among his compositions written for band. Composed over a period of thirty-two years, they coincided with the years of Sousa’s most extensive travels, and the inspiration for most of them came from these travels. These extensive multi-movement works were both sophisticated in form and very evocative of their specific subject matter, often employing special instrumental effects to heighten the musical impact. Among the shorter and lighter music that often populated his programs, Sousa performed his suites to help bridge the gap between popular music of the day and serious art music.

The inspiration for *Cubaland* came during a vacation Sousa took in Havana in the winter of 1925. This suite depicts the rule of Cuba under three different governments in the years 1875, 1898, and 1925 respectively. Despite the creation of this substantial suite, Sousa never mentioned this vacation or the band’s brief 1922 visit to Cuba in his autobiography.

Each movement of the suite is founded on melodies characteristic of the ruling country. Pieces of “The Spanish Constitution” and “Andalusian Dances” are heard in the first movement. Sousa quotes from his own “International Congress” fantasy in the second movement as well as “Hot Time in the Old Town.” The Cuban traditional song “La Bayamesa” is the basis for the final movement of the suite.

Circus Galop from *The Irish Dragoon*

edited by Loras Schissel

Two nearly complete versions of the operetta *The Irish Dragoons* were discovered in the basement of Sousa’s home in Sands Point, New York, in 1965, more than thirty years after his death. One version is written in the hand of another composer who is not identified on the manuscripts, but the other is in Sousa’s hand. His daughter Helen revealed that when Sousa had purchased the libretto from Joseph Herbert, the first composer’s work was part of the package he received. Sousa evidently set this music aside and set out to compose his own. The libretto was based on Charles Lever’s novel *Charles O’Malley*. The leading role was created for Andrew Mack, and the operetta was to have been produced in October 1915. Among the songs given titles in the discovered score were “The Blarney Stone,” “The Showman’s Song,” “Their Life and Joy,” and “Whish! Hiroo!” The only other selections with titles were the overture and a lively incidental piece called Circus Galop that has since found a regular place on Sousa concert programs.

Finale from *Death and Transfiguration*

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

arranged by A. A. Harding

Composer and conductor Richard Strauss received his initial musical training from his father who was a professional French horn player with the Munich Opera in Germany. He then studied piano and violin privately, and his father notated his earliest compositions from the time the young Strauss was only six years old. He eventually entered Munich University in 1882 and while there began to receive successful performances of his works, the first being a Dresden première of his Serenade in E-flat for thirteen wind instruments. Not long after, in 1885, Strauss was offered the position of assistant conductor of the Meiningen Court Orchestra under the direction of Hans von Bulow. He became head conductor in 1886 and just three years later premièred his tone poem *Don Juan*. It was through Strauss’s brilliant operas and his many tone poems that he found enduring success as a composer, both during his lifetime and beyond.

Death and Transfiguration was completed in 1889 and musically depicts the thoughts of a frail artist at the end of his days. Through fits of intermittent pain, the artist recalls the joys and sorrows of his life before succumbing to death and experiencing a dramatic and heroic “transfiguration” to the afterlife. Sousa maintained great admiration for the work of his contemporary Richard Strauss and programmed transcriptions of several of Strauss’s works with his bands. This was truly contemporary music of the day, and in many cases, American audiences heard the music of the famous German for the very first time during Sousa’s concerts. Sousa considered it his responsibility to expose the public to great works in the serious

classical repertoire and raise the overall level of artistic appreciation. That said, he was also a shrewd businessman and well aware of the limits of his public's tolerance for this initiative. His solution was to present these longer works on his programs with significant cuts, skipping through to the most essential and dramatic parts. As the band travelled deeper into parts of the country with less exposure to the arts, the cuts became more substantial. A typical performance of *Death and Transfiguration* in its entirety lasted about twenty-five minutes. As the omissions in Sousa's performances of the work grew in number, the members of the Sousa Band would joke that they had the artist depicted in Strauss's masterpiece "dead and buried in less than eight minutes!"

Waltz, "La Reine de la Mer"

In addition to his many marches, Sousa often composed dances in numerous forms from foxtrots and gavottes to tangos and waltzes. He had a particular affinity for the music of Johann Strauss Jr. and his frequent use of the waltz form. Sousa composed several waltz collections of his own, in addition to incorporating waltzes into some of his operettas. "La Reine de la Mer" ("The Queen of the Sea") was composed in 1886, during his tenure as director of the Marine Band, and was inspired by and dedicated to the wife of William C. Whitney, who was the wife of the Secretary of the Navy at the time. These waltzes were also chosen as one of the selections performed during Sousa's farewell concert with the U.S. Marine Band in 1892. He subsequently often programmed the work with his own Sousa Band, indicating that this was probably one of his favorites among his many waltzes.

"Boots"

poem by Rudyard Kipling

Sousa composed more than seventy songs during his long career, and he was especially proud of this extensive collection. He was inspired by texts from a wide variety of sources and authors and was especially moved by poems and stories related to the military and war. Sousa was a great patriot and long after his service in the Marine Corps in the 1880s, sought to rejoin the armed forces during World War I. He was commissioned by the U.S. Navy to help train its musicians at Great Lakes Naval Training Station. The intensity and martial vigor of Rudyard Kipling's poem about the hard experience of a soldier serving in the War appealed to Sousa on many levels. He set the poem to music in 1916 and the song was performed for a short time by the Sousa Band during and after the War. It remained a respected and special addition to Sousa's song collection, however, and many of the alumni of the Sousa Band continued to program it with their own bands well after Sousa's death.

MSgt Kevin Benneer, baritone

Baritone vocalist and concert moderator Master Sergeant Kevin Benneer joined "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in January 2000, becoming the third featured vocal soloist since the position was established in 1955. Master Sgt. Benneer began his musical instruction at age nine. After graduating in 1990 from Elk Garden High School in West Virginia, he attended Potomac State College in Keyser and earned a bachelor's degree in music in 1996 from West Virginia University (WVU) in Morgantown, where he studied with Peter Lightfoot. In 1999, he earned a master's degree in vocal performance from the University of Tennessee (UT), in Knoxville, where he studied with George Bitzas. Prior to joining "The President's Own," he performed with the UT Opera Theater, WVU Opera Theater, Theatre West Virginia, and the Knoxville Opera Company, where he played the role of Sharpless in Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* with noted soprano Stella Zimbalis of the Metropolitan Opera. He also taught voice as a graduate teaching assistant at UT.

Symphonic Poem, "The Ben-Hur Chariot Race"

In 1880 Lew Wallace published *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*, one of the most successful novels in American history. The author cleverly weaves together characters from the Old Testament and Roman history in a tale that somehow manages to be both pious and swashbuckling. Although it never earned the respect of critics, the novel was a runaway hit with the American public and quickly surpassed Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as the best-selling novel of its time. According to noted Sousa biographer Paul Bierley, Sousa first got the idea to create a musical depiction of Ben-Hur's climactic chariot race from his friend Hannah Harris, a Philadelphia educator. In the days before television, movies, and even radio,

musical scenarios representing important literary scenes were a common feature of band concerts, and Harris had seen some of Sousa's other work in this genre at Marine Band concerts in Philadelphia. She knew that the novel's popularity would almost guarantee that his depiction would be received well, and the immediate success of the work proved her right. Sousa included it on his very first tour with the Marine Band in 1891 with the following description in the program:

"The trumpeters blew a call at which the absentees rushed back to their places. * * * *

'What shall they do with the balls and fishes, O sheik?' asked Balthasar.

'Hast thou never attended a race?'

'Never before;' * * * * for all the time the trampling of eager horses and the voices of the drivers scarcely less eager, were heard behind the stalls, so that one might not look away an instant from the gaping doors.

The trumpets sounded short and sharp; whereupon the starters, one for each chariot, leaped down from behind the pillars of the goal, ready to give assistance if any of the fours proved unmanageable.

Again the trumpets blew, and simultaneously the gate-keepers threw the stalls open.

First appeared the mounted attendants of the charioters, five in all, Ben-Hur having rejected the service.

Forth from each stall, like missiles [sic] in a volley from so many great guns, rushed the six fours * * * * the fours neared the rope together. Then the trumpeter by the editor's side blew a signal vigorously.

There was a crash, a scream of rage and fear, and the unfortunate Cleanthes fell under the hoofs of his own steeds. * * * *
* On swept the Corinthian, on the Byzantine, on the Sidonian. * * * * Ben-Hur, unhurt, was to the front, coursing freely forward along with the Roman. * * * * Along the home-stretch—sixth round—Messala leading, next him Ben-Hur, and so close it was the old story:

'First flew Eumelus on Pheretian steeds;
With those of Nos bold Diomed succeeds;
Close on Eumelus' back they puff the wind,
And seem just mounting on his car behind;
Full on his neck he feels the sultry breeze,
And, hovering o'er their stretching shadow sees!'

Above the noises of the race there was but one voice, and that was Ben-Hur's. In the old Aramaic as the sheik himself, he called to the Arabs.—

'On, Atair! On, Rigel! What, Antares! dost thou linger now?' Good horse-oho, Aldebaran! I hear them singing in the tents. I hear the children singing and the women—singing of the stars, of Atair, Antares, Rigel, Aldebaran, victory! *and the song will never end.*

We have overthrown the proud! * * * * Down on its right side toppled the bed of the Roman's chariot. There was a rebound as of the axle hitting the hard earth; another and another; then the car went to pieces; and Messala, entangled in the reins, pitched forward headlong. * * * * Presently, out of the turmoil, the fighting of horses, the resound of blows, the murky cloud of dust and sand, he crawled, in time to see the Corinthian and Byzantine go on down the course after Ben-Hur, who had not been an instant delayed. When the Byzantine and Corinthian were half-way down the course, Ben-Hur turned the first goal.

AND THE RACE WAS WON.

March, "The Stars and Stripes Forever"

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 Sousa 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 homesick from 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 popularity 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.