



MARINE BAND INAUGURATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who programs the music for Inauguration?

The music programming is a collaboration between the Joint Task Force National Capitol Region Inauguration Committee and the Presidential Inaugural Committee. The Marine Band Director, Col. Jason K. Fettig, programs the pre-ceremony music. Ceremonial music played during the swearing-in ceremony is dictated by military protocol.

What time will the Marine Band begin playing?

The band's musical involvement in the ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. with prelude music. The color guard marches on at 11 a.m., the formal program commences at 11:30 with the swearing in of the Vice President and the Oath of Office is administered to the President-elect at noon after which the band will play "Hail to the Chief."

Where will the Marine Band be during the inauguration swearing-in ceremony?

The band will be seated directly beneath the inauguration platform where the swearing-in ceremony takes place.

How does the band know what and when to play?

The inaugural ceremony follows a specifically timed script which is dictated from a command post that overlooks the platform at the U.S. Capitol. Marine Band Operations Officer Capt. Bryan P. Sherlock, who sits to the right of the conductor's podium at the base of the platform, receives cues from the command post via headset which he relays to Marine Band Director Col. Jason K. Fettig. These cues include when the band should play during the prelude, when to march on the color guard, and when to perform selected music for the arrival of former presidents and other dignitaries. Other requests from the command post may include on-the-fly adjustments to the script when the band needs to play additional music, shorten a particular musical selection, and/or fill time.

What will the Marine Band play during the prelude and ceremony?

Please visit our Inauguration Resources page for the complete programs.

Does the band play anything special to announce specific arrivals?

Yes. As part of the official ceremony, the band plays a march called "Hail Columbia" for the incoming Vice President then "Hail to the Chief" for the President.

What if it rains? Will the Marine Band still play?

All inaugural events will go rain or shine and will include Marine Band support.

Has the Marine Band always performed at Inauguration?

On March 4, 1801, Thomas Jefferson became the first to be sworn in as President in Washington, D.C., and it is believed that the Marine Band was present for this event. In one way or another, the Marine Band has since participated in a mix of swearing-in ceremonies, inaugural parades, balls, and concerts.



How many members of the Marine Band will perform at the ceremony?

Fifty-nine musicians and one director will perform as part of the inaugural ceremony.

Will there be a parade?

Due to COVID-19, the inaugural parade will not take place as it has in the past. The Marine Band will not be part of a parade this year. In previous parades, the Marine Band led the second division. Ninety-nine musicians marched in the formation, led by the Drum Major, Assistant Drum Major, and the unique assemblage of five Marine Band officers. Typically, the band would play John Philip Sousa's marches, "Semper Fidelis" and "The Thunderer" on the march. In front of the presidential reviewing stand, the band would play Four Ruffles and Flourishes and The Marines' Hymn. John Philip Sousa was the Marine Band's 17th Director who served from 1880-92.

Will the Marine Band play at any Inaugural Balls?

There will be no inaugural balls in 2021.