



Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Nowlin, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND

Wednesday, July 10, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

U.S. Capitol, West Terrace

Thursday, July 11, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

National Museum of the Marine Corps

First Lieutenant Jose D. Toranzo, conducting

William H. Santelmann* (1863–1932)

March, “Thomas Jefferson”

John Zdechlik (b. 1937)

Celebrations

Leonard Bernstein (1918–90)
arranged by Dave Rivello

“Some Other Time” from *On the Town*
MSGy Gregory Ridlington, saxophone soloist

Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

Fort McHenry Suite (2000)

Rockets’ Red Glare
Dimly Seen Through the Mists of the Deep
When Freeman Shall Stand

MGySgt Kevin Bennear, narrator

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)
edited by The United States Marine Band

March, “Semper Fidelis”

arranged by LtCol Ryan Nowlin*

“Amazing Grace”

MGySgt Kevin Bennear, baritone

David R. Holsinger (b. 1945)

American Faces

*Member, U.S. Marine Band

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PROGRAM NOTES

March, “Thomas Jefferson”

William H. Santelmann* (1863–1932)

Directors of the United States Marine Band often arranged, transcribed, or composed original music for the ensemble throughout its unique history. Leaders such as John Bourgeois, Jack Kline, Taylor Branson, William H. Santelmann, and especially John Philip Sousa contributed to the wind literature in this meaningful way. Frequently, their original compositions were created for specific events or celebrations. Such was the case for Santelmann’s march “Thomas Jefferson” which was composed in 1903 and dedicated to the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, an organization formed to honor our nation’s founding father and third president.

Celebrations

John Zdechlik (b. 1937)

John Zdechlik, a native of Minneapolis, Minnesota, developed an interest in composition while he was a trumpet student performing with his high school jazz band. He holds degrees in music education, composition, and theory from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. His composition instructors included Paul Fetler and Frank Bencriscutto. Zdechlik later became professor and chairman of the music department at Lakewood Community College, now Century College, in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. He has written a variety of commissioned and published works for high school and college concert bands, including Chorale and Shaker Dance, Grand Rapids Suite, Passacaglia, and Z’s Blues. He has conducted in thirty-five states, as well as in Japan, England, and Scotland, and is an active member of the American Bandmasters Association.

In 1988, Zdechlik was commissioned to compose a work commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Medalist Concert Band of Bloomington, Minnesota, conducted by Earl C. Benson. In 1996, this seventy-member community concert band was awarded the Sudler Silver Scroll, an award administered by the John Philip Sousa Foundation for community band excellence. *Celebrations* is a dynamic work that alternates between two themes. The first theme utilizes rapid ascending phrases in the woodwinds against a marked background by the brass and percussion. The second, grandiose theme is worked into the composition as if to provide a chance to reflect on past triumphs. These themes ultimately combine in a final, majestic ending.

“Some Other Time” from *On the Town*

Leonard Bernstein (1918–90)

arranged by Dave Rivello

Leonard Bernstein made an indelible mark on American music as a composer, conductor, pianist, and educator. Born in Massachusetts, Bernstein showed exceptional musical talent from

a young age, studying at Harvard University and later at the Curtis Institute of Music. His career took off when he stepped in as a last-minute conductor at the New York Philharmonic in 1943, earning widespread acclaim. Bernstein is also famous for his compositions which span many genres, including orchestral works, operas, ballets, and musical theater. His innovative approach to music, blending traditional techniques with modern jazz and popular influences, made him one of the most influential and beloved figures in 20th century music.

"Some Other Time" is a reflective and poignant song from Leonard Bernstein's musical *On the Town*. In the musical, this song is sung by two couples who meet while the men are on a brief shore leave during World War II. The lyrics, penned by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, capture the sadness and uncertainty that the couples feel as the shore leave ends and they face the reality that they may never see each other again. "Some Other Time" is wistful and reflective, showcasing Bernstein's gift for blending complex harmonies with engaging storytelling.

Gregory Ridlington, saxophone soloist

Saxophonist Master Sergeant Gregory Ridlington of Spokane, Washington, joined "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in April 1999. Master Sgt. Ridlington began his musical instruction at age 10. After graduating in 1991 from Mead High School in Spokane, he attended the University of North Texas in Denton where he received a bachelor's degree in music in 1995. His instructors included Jim Riggs and Eric Nestler. In 1999, he earned a master's degree in music from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston where he studied with Kenneth Radnofsky and George Garzone. Prior to joining "The President's Own," Master Sgt. Ridlington toured with the Glenn Miller Orchestra and performed on the Royal Caribbean and Carnival Cruise Lines. Some of his notable performances include John Williams' Escapades for Alto Saxophone from *Catch Me If You Can* in 2003 as a tour soloist and during the Marine Band's 205th anniversary concert at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts with the composer conducting; *An Ellington Tribute* on tour in 2003; and the Concerto for Stan Getz with the Marine Chamber Orchestra in 2001. Master Sgt. Ridlington has also appeared with a Marine Jazz Combo at the Juneau Jazz and Classics Festival in Alaska in 2007, 2012, 2016, and 2022.

Fort McHenry Suite (2000)

Julie Giroux (b. 1961)

American composer Julie Giroux was born in Massachusetts in 1961. Her interest in composition began at age eight and she has been composing ever since. Giroux began composing commercially in 1984, working on the music for the miniseries "North and South" with composer Bill Conti. Since then, she has composed hundreds of scores for film, television, and video games. Giroux has won three Emmys for "Outstanding Individual Achievement in Music Direction." In addition to commercial composition, Giroux has an extensive catalog of art music. Her compositions for wind band are performed internationally and have been recognized with numerous awards. As a female composer, Giroux broke down many barriers. When she won her first Emmy, she was the first woman to win that award. Among other awards and recognitions, she was the first female composer inducted into the American Bandmasters Association in 2009.

Fort McHenry Suite commemorates the Battle of Baltimore in the War of 1812, and especially the role of Fort McHenry, a star-shaped fort that protects the Baltimore harbor. In September 1814, 1000 Americans defended Baltimore from the encroaching British Navy at this site. The British bombed Fort McHenry for over twenty-four hours, but those defending the fort withstood the bombardment and the British retreated. The American flag that survived the battle was the inspiration for Francis Scott Key's poem, "The Defense of Fort M'Henry." This poem was later set to music and renamed "The Star Spangled Banner," ultimately becoming our national anthem in 1931.

Giroux's *Fort McHenry Suite* draws inspiration from Francis Scott Key's poem. The title of movement one "Rockets' Red Glare," comes from the well-known first verse of the poem, but the titles of the second and third movements come from the lesser-known second and fourth verses. Giroux's compositional techniques in movement one depicts the siege with rockets, cannon blasts, and destruction. In movement two, "Dimly Seen Through the Mists of the Deep," she adds narration to invoke the pride the defenders must have felt after withstanding the bombardment. Movement three, "When Freeman Shall Stand," celebrates the patriotism of America and commends our military for the work they do to preserve freedom around the globe. This work is a listener favorite and a welcome addition to the genre of patriotic wind ensemble music.

Master Gunnery Sergeant Kevin Benneer, narrator

Baritone vocalist and concert moderator Master Gunnery 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. He began his musical instruction at age nine. After graduating in 1990 from Elk Garden High School in Elk Garden, West Virginia, he attended Potomac State College in Keyser, West Virginia, and earned a bachelor's degree in music in 1996 from West Virginia University (WVU) in Morgantown, where he studied with Peter Lightfoot. He earned a master's degree in vocal performance in 1999 from the University of Tennessee (UT), in Knoxville, where he studied with George Bitzas.

Master Gunnery Sgt. Benneer has 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.

March, "Semper Fidelis"

John Philip Sousa* (1854-1932)
edited by The United States Marine Band

It is unfortunate that President Chester A. Arthur, the man responsible for this march, did not live to hear it. In a conversation with Sousa, then leader of the U.S. Marine Band, he expressed his displeasure at the official use of the song "Hail to the Chief." When Sousa stated that it was actually an old Scottish boating song, the President suggested that he compose more appropriate music. Sousa responded with two pieces, not one. First he composed "Presidential Polonaise" (1886). Then, two years after Arthur's death, he wrote "Semper Fidelis."

The march takes its title from the motto of the U.S. Marine Corps: "Semper Fidelis"—"Always Faithful." The trio is an extension of an earlier Sousa composition, "With Steady Step,"

one of eight brief trumpet and drum pieces he wrote for *The Trumpet and Drum* (1886). It was dedicated to those who inspired it—the officers and men of the U.S. Marine Corps. In Sousa’s own words: “I wrote ‘Semper Fidelis’ one night while in tears, after my comrades of the Marine Corps had sung their famous hymn at Quantico.”

For the first performance, Sousa demonstrated his flair for theatrics:

We were marching down Pennsylvania Avenue, and had turned the corner at the Treasury Building. On the reviewing stand were President Harrison, many members of the diplomatic corps, a large part of the House and Senate, and an immense number of invited guests besides. I had so timed our playing of the march that the “trumpet” theme would be heard for the first time, just as we got to the front of the reviewing stand. Suddenly, ten extra trumpets were shot in the air, and the “theme” was pealed out in unison. Nothing like it had ever been heard there before—when the great throng on the stand had recovered its surprise, it rose in a body, and led by the President himself, showed its pleasure in a mighty swell of applause. It was a proud moment for us all.

“Semper Fidelis” subsequently gained recognition as the official march of the U.S. Marine Corps. Sousa regarded it as his best march, musically speaking. It became one of his most popular marches, and he once stated that it was the favorite march of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany—before World War I, of course. It was played by the Sousa Band in many foreign countries and always received acclaim as a well-known composition. Few knew that it had been sold outright to the publisher for the unbelievably low sum of \$35.

Paul E. Bierley, *The Works of John Philip Sousa* (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 83. Used by permission.

A recording of this march, the full score and parts, and a video of the score synchronized with the audio are available in Volume 2 of [“The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa.”](#)

“Amazing Grace”

arranged by LtCol Ryan J. Nowlin*

Lieutenant Colonel Ryan Nowlin joined “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band in 2010 as a staff arranger. He spent four years in this role, composing and arranging music for various Marine Band ensembles and guest artists. In 2014, Lt. Col. Nowlin was appointed Assistant Director and commissioned as first lieutenant. In 2023, he became the 29th Director of “The President’s Own.” Lt. Col. Nowlin’s skill as a composer and arranger continues to shine. He has composed numerous original works for wind ensemble and continues to pursue his passion as an educator by writing books for band educators including *Teaching Band with Excellence* and *Excellence in Theory*.

Lt. Col. Nowlin’s setting of the well-known hymn, “Amazing Grace,” is beloved among audiences and performers alike. The setting includes three verses of the lyrics penned by British poet and clergyman John Newton and published in *Olney Hymns* in 1779. At first the lyrics were set to various hymn tunes, but in 1835 American composer William Walker set the text to the hymn tune “New Britain,” creating the beloved and familiar hymn that we know today.

Lt. Col. Nowlin’s arrangement of “Amazing Grace” incorporates original transitional material between three verses, some of which listeners will recognize as material from the Marine’s Hymn. Each verse becomes more dramatic and passionate, before the ending recedes to a simple and beautiful close.

American Faces

David R. Holsinger (b. 1945)

David Holsinger is a respected American composer and conductor known for his contributions to wind band music. Born in Hardin, Missouri, Holsinger began his musical journey by studying trombone and composition at Central Methodist University and then pursuing further education at the University of Kansas and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Holsinger has composed numerous works for concert bands, orchestras, and chamber ensembles, earning him widespread recognition and admiration in the world of contemporary wind music.

American Faces was commissioned for the 1995 Bands of America National Honor Band and celebrates the rich diversity of America. The piece is structured as a series of musical portraits, each representing a different facet of American life and culture. Through its vibrant melodies, rhythmic energy, and colorful orchestration, the composition paints a vivid picture of the American experience. About halfway through the piece, the folk tune “Simple Gifts” appears as a theme, associating the work with American folk music traditions. This vibrant and exciting celebration of America is a fitting addition to any wind ensemble program.