



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND
Wednesday, August 25, 2021 at 7:00 P.M.
National Harbor, Maryland

Thursday, August 26, 2021 at 7:30 P.M.
Streamed live at www.youtube.com/usmarineband
Colonel Jason K. Fettig, conducting

Modest Mussorgsky (1839–81)
transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

“Procession of Princes and Priests” from *Mlada*

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)
transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

Ballet Music from *Otello*

Edward Gregson (b. 1945)

Allegro deciso from Tuba Concerto
SSgt Landres Bryant, soloist

Edward MacDowell (1860–1908)
transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

“In a Haunted Forest” from Suite No. 1, Opus 42

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)
transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

Scherzo

Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934)
transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

“Nimrod” from
Variations on an Original Theme, Opus 36, *Enigma*

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)
transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

Overture to *La forza del destino*
MGySgt Donald Patterson, conducting

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

March, “Comrades of the Legion”

*Member, U.S. Marine Band

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PROGRAM NOTES

“Procession of Princes and Priests” from *Mlada*

Modest Mussorgsky (1839–81)

transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

Modest Mussorgsky was an important figure in the Russian nationalist movement in music. In the wake of fellow Russian composer Mikhail Glinka’s legacy, Mussorgsky banded together with composers Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Mily Balakirev, César Cui, and Alexander Borodin—later known as “The Mighty Five”—to forge a style that was distinctly Russian, incorporating the sounds and harmonies of their country’s folk music. The group’s innovations influenced the following generation of Russian composers, among them Sergei Prokofiev, Igor Stravinsky, and Dmitri Shostakovich.

In 1872, the director of the Imperial Theater in St. Petersburg commissioned a team of six composers, including Mussorgsky, to jointly write a grand opera-ballet titled *Mlada*. Based on both fantastical and real-life themes from Slavic folklore, the *Mlada* project eventually fell through for lack of funding. (Incidentally, Rimsky-Korsakov later completed an opera-ballet of the same name.) However, individual pieces from the abandoned collaboration survive, including this processional segment that Mussorgsky salvaged. He reworked the piece in 1880 for an event celebrating the reign of Czar Alexander II, which also fell through, but later that year, the Russian Music Society finally performed the “Procession of Princes and Priests” publicly. The piece is also known by alternate names such as Festive March and “The Capture of Kars” because of its subsequent uses following *Mlada*.

The procession opens with a trumpet fanfare and then moves to the main theme, a folk song written in the style of a stately march. The middle section contrasts the grandiose opening and features the woodwinds. Though it shifts to the minor mode, this section maintains a driving, energetic feel that eventually leads back to the noble fanfare and main theme heard at the opening.

Ballet Music from *Otello*

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

Giuseppe Verdi’s 1887 opera *Otello* saw its first performance sixteen years after the première of his preceding opera, *Aida*—a point at which the composer had intended to retire from the theater. However, Verdi’s publisher in Milan, Giulio Ricordi, enticed him to begin work on a new opera, convinced that Verdi’s genius was not yet expended (and also concerned his profits would suffer without a new work from the preeminent composer). Subsequent obstacles notwithstanding, Verdi embarked on a partnership with librettist Arrigo Boito and in 1884 set down the first notes of *Otello*, a work that is considered by many to be his greatest opera. Based on the play of the same name, it is not the first of William Shakespeare’s stage works to be adapted by Verdi; he also set *Macbeth* in 1847.

The enormously successful première of *Otello* at La Scala was followed first by other productions within Italy, before receiving performances in New York (1888), London (1889), and finally Paris (1894). In keeping with nineteenth-century French tradition, Verdi added a ballet scene for the Parisian production of the opera. This dance music appears at the start of Act III, as the

Venetian ambassadors enter the stage. While the ballet music appears on some recordings of the opera, it is rarely performed during modern productions.

Listening to the ballet scene, it is easy to envision the whirling Parisian dancers, regal costumes, and overall spectacle that enveloped the French première. The music is full of character, and begins in a celebratory spirit, brimming with lilting energy. A more somber second theme gives way to a frenzied section in 6/8 meter. Finally, the celebratory opening character returns and the music ends on a victorious note, seemingly oblivious to the tragedy that defines the rest of the opera.

Allegro deciso from Tuba Concerto

Edward Gregson (b. 1945)

Edward Gregson is an English composer who studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London. He served as the principal professor of music at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England, from 1996 to 2008, when he retired from his academic career to focus on composing. Gregson has been commissioned to write works for several major orchestras, including the BBC Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, and Bournemouth Symphony. In addition to his orchestral compositions, he has written music for the theater, film, and television. Gregson is also a conductor, well known for premièring works of other living English composers.

The Tuba Concerto was commissioned by Besses O'Th'Barn Band and is dedicated to John Fletcher, who premièred the work with Gregson conducting. The first movement features two contrasting themes, the first rhythmic and the second lyrical. The composer includes a brief reference to the opening theme of another cornerstone of the tuba repertoire: the Tuba Concerto in F minor by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Staff Sergeant Landres Bryant, tuba

Tuba player Staff Sergeant Landres Bryant of West Palm Beach, Florida, joined "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in June 2012. Staff Sgt. Bryant began his musical training at age ten. Upon graduating from Alexander W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts in West Palm Beach in 2006, he attended the University of Michigan (U-M) in Ann Arbor, where he earned a bachelor's degree in music in 2010. In 2012, he earned a master's degree in music from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. His teachers included Fritz Kaenzig of U-M, Mike Roylance of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Jay Bertolet of the Florida Philharmonic in Fort Lauderdale. Prior to joining "The President's Own," Staff Sgt. Bryant was a Tanglewood Music Center fellow in Lenox, Massachusetts; a Schleswig-Holstein Academy Orchestra fellow in Germany; a Music Academy of the West fellow in Santa Barbara, California; and a member of the Disneyland Resort All-American College Band in Anaheim, California.

"In a Haunted Forest" from Suite No. 1, Opus 42

Edward MacDowell (1860–1908)

transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

Edward MacDowell was an American composer and contemporary of John Philip Sousa. Although born and raised in New York, MacDowell received his advanced training in piano and composition in Europe. He spent nearly a decade in France and Germany and, while there, became closely acquainted with Franz Liszt, who became a strong and vocal supporter of MacDowell's

music. MacDowell returned to the United States in 1888, and his European “stamp of approval” gave him considerable stature in an American musical culture that was still relatively young and insecure. Perhaps best known for his piano miniatures, short works with poetic and evocative titles, he was also an accomplished orchestral composer, as demonstrated by his Suite No. 1, Opus 42, from which “In a Haunted Forest” was extracted. MacDowell’s means of establishing mood and atmosphere was similar to those of the French Impressionist composers such as Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel. It is not difficult to ascertain the mood MacDowell sought to establish in this brief work, which begins quietly, against a recurring heartbeat that increases in speed as the woods come alive with the shrieking spirits and malevolent forces one would expect to find in any good nineteenth-century ghost story.

Scherzo

Gustav Holst (1874–1934)

transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

Gustav Holst is one of England’s most revered and original composers. Although he is best known for his orchestral work *The Planets*, he composed works across a range of genres, including music for band and chorus, as well as operas. His interest in British folk song—part of an ongoing revival in Victorian-era England—resulted in his adapting many songs into original settings.

Holst began writing the first movement of his second symphony, a scherzo, in July of 1933. He completed the draft in August and, despite bouts of illness, succeeded in orchestrating the movement. Unfortunately, he never commenced work on the symphony’s subsequent movements and died in May of the following year. The Scherzo was first performed as a stand-alone work in 1935 by the BBC Symphony Orchestra. The conductor, Adrian Boult, suggested that it should have been performed twice in the concert: “It is fiendishly difficult to play and I imagine not too easy to listen to, and so I think a case for immediate repetition might be made.” A review in the *Musical Times* protested, “As it stands, it sounds too inconclusive, but it is characteristically angular, rather chilly in temperature and European rather than national in style...as if [Paul] Hindemith had taken a hand in a scherzo by [Ralph] Vaughan Williams.”

Thickly orchestrated and rhythmically complex, the Scherzo is indeed an achievement of the Holst’s late style. A vivacious opening tempo in 6/8 meter features cross-rhythms, syncopations, and unexpected accents, lending a chaotic edge to the music’s natural flow. A lyrical and stately middle section contrasts the ferocity of the opening and allows solo instruments to take the spotlight. The thematic material here is reminiscent of a folk song or hymn, only slightly off-kilter in its feel because of the uneven 5/4 meter. Undulating accompanimental figures begin gently and then intensify, leading back to a return of the quick 6/8 tempo of the opening. A final upward, defiant gesture ends the movement.

A highly trained trombonist, Holst featured wind instruments extensively in the original orchestral version of this piece. The Scherzo is thus particularly well suited to this new transcription for band by Marine Band Chief Arranger Master Gunnery Sgt. Donald Patterson, heard for the first time in concert.

“Nimrod” from Variations on an Original Theme, Opus 36, *Enigma*

Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

Occasionally a composer will create a work within a well-established form that is unlike anything that precedes it, serving as a reminder of the incredible creative possibilities that exist all around. This is exactly what the British composer Sir Edward Elgar did with his Variations on an Original Theme, a work better known by its informal title, *Enigma* Variations. A lifelong fan of puzzles, riddles, and codes, the composer had the unique opportunity in this composition to combine his favorite hobby with his passion for music. The work is a mystery on several levels.

First, each of the variations is a musical portrait of a friend or loved one represented by a series of initials or a nickname at the beginning of the variation. This was a puzzle easily solved by anyone familiar with Elgar’s family and friends, and Elgar himself provided the answers in a piano roll version of the music that was published in 1929. The second puzzling element of the work is the unique nature of the melodic fragments that appear to constitute the theme. These fragments are indeed heard at the beginning of the piece, the traditional position of a theme, and it is clearly this material that is developed in the subsequent variations. But Elgar did not label this introduction as the “theme,” instead affixing the term “enigma.” Adding to the mystery was the following statement from the composer:

The Enigma I will not explain—its “dark saying” must be left unguessed, and I warn you that the connection between the Variations and the Theme is often of the slightest texture; further, through and over the whole set another and larger theme “goes,” but is not played...so the principal theme never appears, even as in some recent dramas...the chief character is never on the stage.

Perhaps the best known of the variations is the ninth, which bears the title “Nimrod.” This title was a subtle nod to Elgar’s dear friend August Jaeger—Nimrod being the “mighty hunter” from the Book of Genesis, and “Jaeger” being the German word for “hunter”—who had supported the composer in his career and during periods of mental health difficulties. Jaeger passed away in 1909, and when Elgar wrote the *Enigma* variations years later, he specifically tried to depict, “the record of a long summer evening talk” with his confidante. Since the composition of the *Enigma* Variations, “Nimrod” has become popular as a standalone work, used as a commemorative musical tribute during memorial services and other somber occasions.

Overture to *La forza del destino*

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson*

From the first brassy notes of this overture—three monolithic blocks of sound, evocative of fate knocking on the door—it is clear that this music is about destiny. It should come as no surprise, then, to learn that the opera itself was reputedly cursed. The stories of strange happenings associated with productions of *La forza del destino* began soon after its première and continue to the present day. While most tales involve mysterious power outages and scenery accidents, the story of American baritone Leonard Warren is much more convincing. In 1960, as the forty-eight-year-old baritone was about to sing “Morir, tremenda cosa” (“To die, a momentous thing”), he pitched forward on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera in New York and died of a cerebral hemorrhage. While many singers have dismissed the curse and happily taken a role in the opera, others such as the superstitious tenor Luciano Pavarotti have avoided it entirely.

This beloved overture was not part of the original 1862 production. While Verdi's first attempt at an overture used some of the same melodies and techniques as this 1869 version, it was essentially a prelude and, as such, was more concise and less dramatic. The later version of the overture has become a staple of concert halls around the world, both in its original instrumentation as well as a number of transcriptions, including this one by Marine Band Chief Arranger Master Gunnery Sgt. Donald Patterson.

March, "Comrades of the Legion"

John Philip Sousa* (1854-1932)

edited by The United States Marine Band

Captain Edwin B. Hesser of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces (CEF) wrote to John Philip Sousa on May 16, 1916, and asked him to compose a march recognizing Canada's entry into World War I. He wrote on behalf of the 97th, 211th, 212th, and 213th CEF pointing out that both Canada and the United States upheld the sacred principles of liberty. He stated that if the greatest of all American composers were to write The American Legion March, it would aid the cause.

At the time, Sousa was unable to honor the request exactly as made, but he did honor it indirectly with compositions such as "Flags of Freedom" during the World War I era. The march for The American Legion was written in 1920. On one manuscript, Sousa used the title suggested by Captain Hesser in 1916, but when the march was published, it was entitled "Comrades of the Legion."

Sousa was very much in sympathy with one of the stated purposes of the American Legion: "To promote 100% Americanism." Financially, this march was rewarding. A recording by the Victor Talking Machine Company gained immediate popularity. In fact, a half million copies were sold before the record was even pressed, and "Comrades of the Legion" became the featured march of the Sousa Band's 1920 tour.

Master Gunnery Sergeant Donald Patterson, chief arranger

Chief Arranger Master Gunnery Sgt. Donald Patterson of Galena Park, Texas, joined "The President's Own" United States Marine Band as a trombonist in August 1991. He joined the music production staff in 2003 and retires in 2021, after thirty years of service with the Marine Band. Master Gunnery Sgt. Patterson began his musical training at age twelve. After graduating in 1979 from Galena Park High School, he earned a bachelor's degree in music education at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, where he studied with Henry Howey. Master Gunnery Sgt. Patterson is responsible for the production of music that encompasses many styles and instrumental combinations, many of which are performed at the White House, in the Washington, D.C., area, and across the country during the band's annual concert tour. His transcriptions of Divertimento by Leonard Bernstein, Suite from *The Gadfly* by Dmitri Shostakovich, and Finale from Symphony No. 3 by Aaron Copland have been featured on Marine Band educational recordings. Other recent arrangements and transcriptions of note include Lemminkäinen's Return from *Lemminkäinen Suite* by Jean Sibelius, Suite from *Romeo and Juliet* by Sergei Prokofiev, Made in America by Joan Tower, and the complete ballet music from *The Three-Cornered Hat* by Manuel de Falla.