



Colonel Jason K. Fettig, Director

UNITED STATES MARINE BAND
Wednesday, August 31, 2022 at 7:00 P.M.
National Museum of the Marine Corps
Triangle, Virginia
Major Ryan J. Nowlin, conducting

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

March, “Semper Fidelis”

John Williams (b. 1932)
transcribed by Jay Bocook

The Cowboys Overture

Percy Grainger (1882–1961)

Irish Tune from County Derry

arranged by Maj Ryan Nowlin*

Sentimental Journey: A World War II Hit Parade

MSgt Sara Sheffield, mezzo-soprano
MGySgt Kevin Bennear, baritone

Robert Jager (b. 1939)

“Esprit de Corps”

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

March, “The Stars and Stripes Forever”

arranged by Thomas Knox* (1937–2004)

A Salute to the Armed Forces of the United States of America

*Member, U.S. Marine Band

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PROGRAM NOTES

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.”](#)

The Cowboys Overture

John Williams (b. 1932)

transcribed by Jay Bocook

One of the most popular and successful American orchestral composers of the modern age, John Williams is the winner of five Academy Awards, twenty-three GRAMMYS, four Golden Globes, three Emmys, and seven BAFTA Awards from the British Academy of Film and Television Arts. Best known for his film scores and ceremonial music, Williams is also a noted composer of concert works and a renowned conductor.

The Cowboys Overture is based on music from the 1972 film of the same name directed by Mark Rydell that starred John Wayne, Roscoe Lee Browne, Bruce Dern, Colleen Dewhurst, and Slim Pickens. The outer sections of the Overture are exuberant, with elements of the popular hoe-down and the flavor of Aaron Copland, while the central portion is more lyrical and peaceful. It is a fun-filled and rousing score brimming with American “can do” spirit and optimism.

“Irish Tune from County Derry”

Percy Grainger (1882–1961)

Although Percy Aldridge Grainger was born an Australian, he spent the majority of his professional life in England and America. After graduating from conservatory, Grainger relocated to London and began his career as a concert pianist. During this time he also composed feverishly, taking particular interest in the native folk songs of his new home. In 1905, he made the first of many trips to the English countryside to collect and document tunes sung by native residents. Grainger eventually recorded more than 700 English and Danish folk songs and arranged dozens of them for performance by various ensembles. The wind band became a favorite ensemble for Grainger, especially after his service as oboist and saxophonist with the Coast Artillery Band of the U.S. Army during World War I.

“Irish Tune from County Derry” is a folk song collected not by Grainger himself, but by Jane Ross of New Town, Limavady, County Derry, Ireland, and published under the heading “Name unknown” in the 1855 publication *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*. Grainger’s 1909 setting of the tune for band is one of his most-performed works, a simple yet powerful arrangement of the poignant melody more widely known as “Danny Boy.”

Sentimental Journey: A World War II Hit Parade

arranged by Maj. Ryan Nowlin*

Popular song has given voice to Americans’ greatest joys and deepest sorrows, their most personal longings and paralyzing fears. This has been especially true during times of war, and it was never more evident than during World War II, what some consider the golden age of American popular song. With the advent of radio and the phonograph, popular song became more readily available in the homes of the American people. These same technologies enabled members of the armed forces deployed around the world to enjoy this music as well. Almost

completely devoid of mention of the horrors of war, the popular music was uplifting and encouraging, giving voice to patriotism and longings for home and loved ones far away.

Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler originally wrote “Stormy Weather” in 1933, during the Great Depression. The song’s depiction of the pain of two lovers being separated touched Americans during the war years; the song was featured in a 1943 film by the same name. “That Old Black Magic” dates from 1942, before there was much good news coming from Europe or the South Pacific. The song seems to ignore the war completely, focusing instead on the power of love to transport us “down and down” or “round and round” when we fall under its spell. The final song, “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy”, was popularized by the Andrews sisters, a vocal trio known for singing in tight harmonies and swing rhythms. This famous World War II song was first released in 1941, before America joined the fighting. Its upbeat, happy sound and lyrics were uplifting, and the Andrews sisters were tireless performers for the troops overseas once America entered the war.

“Esprit de Corps”

Robert E. Jager (b. 1939)

Robert E. Jager was born into a musical family in Binghamton, New York. His early experience playing trumpet duets in church with his father, using his mother’s trumpet, helped set the stage for a career in music. Jager studied music at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor for two years before enlisting in the United States Navy and serving as instructor of basic music theory at the Navy School of Music in Washington, D.C. In 1964, when the Navy School moved to Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and included students from the Army and Marine Corps, Jager was promoted to staff arranger, a position he held until he left the Navy in 1966. With the aid of the Montgomery G. I. Bill, he returned to the University of Michigan and received undergraduate and master’s degrees from the school of music. Jager taught composition and theory at Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville for thirty years until his retirement in 2001.

The United States Marine Band, under former director Colonel John R. Bourgeois, commissioned Jager in 1984 to write “Esprit de Corps” and premiered it at the National Band Association convention in Knoxville, Tennessee, later that year. In just more than five minutes of music, Jager lends his unique treatment to The Marines’ Hymn. From colonial fifes and drums to modern force protection in air, on land, and over the sea, Jager takes the listener on a musical journey through the history and worldly experience of Marines. In a tribute to the Marine Band and its former director, printed on the music, he instructs the conductor to lead the ensemble through “Esprit de Corps” at a spirited “Tempo di Bourgeois.”

March, “The Stars and Stripes Forever”

John Philip Sousa* (1854–1932)

edited by The United States Marine Band

After spending twelve years as the seventeenth director of “The President’s Own” from 1880 to 1892, John Philip Sousa went on to form his own civilian band at the urging of concert promoter David Blakely. Sousa enjoyed tremendous success with his Sousa Band, traveling extensively throughout the continental United States and abroad. It was during his time with the

Marine Band and in the early years of leading his civilian band that Sousa wrote some of his most famous marches, earning him the title “The March King.”

Since its première in Philadelphia on May 14, 1897, “The Stars and Stripes Forever” has easily secured its place as the most popular and widely recognized march of all time. For more than a century, it has captured the spirit of American patriotism perhaps better than any other composition. During the heyday of the Sousa Band, the march was performed as an encore at the end of nearly every concert. Audiences expected, and sometimes even demanded to hear the piece and eventually began to stand upon recognizing its opening bars as if it were the national anthem. By Act of Congress, “The Stars and Stripes Forever” became America’s national march in 1987.

Sousa was a staunch patriot, and he often insisted that the impetus for “The Stars and Stripes Forever” was born of both his love for country and divine inspiration. The following is taken from a Sousa Band program from the early part of the century: “Someone asked, ‘Who influenced you to compose “The Stars and Stripes Forever,’” and before the question was hardly asked, Sousa replied, ‘God—and I say this in all reverence! I was in Europe and I got a cablegram that my manager was dead. I rushed...to Paris and then to England and sailed for America. On board the steamer as I walked miles up and down the deck, back and forth, a mental band was playing “Stars and Stripes Forever.” Day after day as I walked it persisted in crashing into my very soul. I wrote it on Christmas day, 1896.’”

Sousa later added that some of the initial melodic material was conceived while he was still in Europe and it was then that the image of the American flag came to the forefront of the homesick composer’s mind. In an interview, Sousa said, “In a kind of dreamy way I used to think over the old days at Washington when I was leader of the Marine Band...when we played at all public official functions, and I could see the Stars and Stripes flying from the flagstaff on the grounds of the White House.... [T]o my imagination it seemed to be the biggest, grandest flag in the world, and I could not get back under it quick enough.”

A recording of this march, the full score and parts, and a video of the score synchronized with the audio are available in Volume 3 of [“The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa.”](#)

A Salute to the Armed Forces of the United States of America arranged by Thomas Knox

Since our earliest days, America was both formed and protected by many brave men and women who were willing to stand up for what they believed. The Marine Band often salutes all members of the armed forces throughout America’s 230-year history with a special concert medley. It is because of their courage and sacrifice that our country has survived so many hardships and continues to flourish today. And with your help, too, America’s story will continue to be written for many years to come.