



MARINE BAND INAUGURATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who programs the music for Inauguration?

The music programming is a collaboration between the Joint Task Force-National Capital Region Inauguration Committee and the Presidential Inaugural Committee. The Marine Band Director, Lt. Col. Ryan Nowlin, 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 9:30 a.m. with a musical prelude. The formal ceremony begins at 11:15 a.m. The Oath of Office is administered to the President-elect at 11:45 a.m. after which the band will play "Hail to the Chief." Times subject to change.

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 Lt. Col. Douglas R. Burian, 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 Lt. Col. Ryan Nowlin. 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 "Hail Columbia" for the incoming Vice President and "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 prayer services.



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

Almost 90 musicians and one director will perform as part of the inaugural ceremony.

How many members of the Marine Band will perform in the parade?

The Marine Band Drum Major Master Gunnery Sergeant Duane F. King leads the 99-piece band in the inaugural parade. He uses a mace to provide concise commands throughout the inaugural parade to include signals to start and stop music, “forward march,” “mark time,” “halt,” and left or right turn. The 35-inch mace weighs 3.5 pounds and is adorned with a double braided gold chain. It is built of Malacca cane with a gold plated ball and a gold plated ferrule. The ball is engraved with the unit’s title as well as the major battles and campaigns of the United States Marine Corps. It is also topped by a fiberglass gold painted replica of the National Capitol Dome and an Afghanistan Battle Streamer. On the bottom half of the ball are the United States and Marine Corps emblems.

Where will the Marine Band be in the parade?

The Marine Band will lead the second division.

What will the Marine Band perform during the inauguration parade?

The band will play John Philip Sousa’s marches “Semper Fidelis” and “The Thunderer” on the march. In front of the presidential reviewing stand, the band will 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?

Yes, the Commander in Chief Inaugural Ball.

For information on attending, directions, etc., visit the Joint Task Force-National Capital Region Inauguration Committee’s [website](#).