

2024 Sousa Spectacular
Lynchburg Pops Community Band
March 10, 2024

Announcer's Script

(energetic) Good evening ladies and gentlemen! On March first 1922 the internationally renowned John Philip Sousa Band gave a performance right here on this very stage. That night the Lynchburg audience thrilled to Sousa's program of light classics, soloists, popular music, and of course the marches of John Philip Sousa. In tribute to that great event, the Lynchburg Pops Community Band invites you to a special hour of musical entertainment. I am your announcer for the evening, Paul Rumrill. Will you please welcome to the stage conductor, Jim Meredith and YOUR Lynchburg Pops Community Band!

(Jim bows to the audience, steps to the podium, cues a drum roll) Please stand if you are able and sing along as YOUR Pops Band pays tribute to our great country by playing the Star-Spangled Banner!

(Band plays Star-Spangled Banner, THEN goes right into The Gallant Seventh.)

(After the applause...)

Sousa wrote The Gallant 7th while he was recuperating from a broken neck. Written for the 7th Regiment of the 107th Infantry of the New York National Guard in 1922, The Gallant Seventh is considered one of Sousa's best marches. The conductor of the famous 7th Regiment Band was Major Francis Sutherland, a former Sousa Band cornetist. Upon America's entry into World War I, Sutherland left his position with Sousa to enlist in the army; where he was made a bandmaster in the U.S. Field Artillery. Several other Sousa men then secured their release to enlist, some for service with Sutherland's band.

While Sousa's fame dominated much of the musical climate of the early twentieth century, composer and conductor, Leonard Bernstein was at the forefront of American music of the middle to latter years of the century. You may have recently seen Bradley Cooper's exquisite performance as Bernstein in the film, *Maestro*. In his lifetime Bernstein traveled the world guest conducting all of the major orchestras. As a composer, Bernstein was equally at home in Classical music, Broadway, and Jazz.

The Pops would like to offer you one of Leonard Bernstein's signature works, from his operetta, *Candide*. As a testament to Bernstein's brilliant mathematical mind, try to count the number of notes the band performs in the brief 5 minutes that it takes to perform this wonderful work. Ladies and gentlemen, *The Overture to Candide*.

(After the applause...)

Will you please welcome to the stage the associate conductor of Pops Band, Mr. Steve Williams!

(After the applause...)

So I have a question for you. *Did you find YOUR thrill on Blueberry Hill?* Don't answer that!! Steve Williams and the Pops would like to take you on a nostalgic journey of musical memories through the popular rock tunes of the 50's and early 60's Ladies and gentlemen, *Rock and Roll Explosion!*

(After the applause...)

Born in 1874, and despite the sound of his name, Gustav Holst was a leading British composer. His musical output covered all genre's. His major work for orchestra, *The Planets* quickly became standard literature of the world's great orchestras, and he was one of the first major composers to write specifically for the military band which has become the traditional concert band that you see sitting onstage. His works for concert band are among the quintessential works for band. You may recall that last year the Pops Band performed Holst's Second Suite in F. Tonight we offer you his First Suite in E flat. It's presented in three movements: The stately *Chaconne*, the spritely *Intermezzo* and concludes with a *March*. Ladies and gentlemen, *Suite in Eb*.

(After the applause...)

We welcome back to the podium Maestro Steve Williams as he conducts another Sousa march. For \$500 more, *The Liberty Bell March* probably would have been named “The Devil’s Deputy.” Sousa was composing music for an operetta of that name. Sousa asked \$1,500 for the work, but the producer offered \$1,000. When they could not come to an agreement, Sousa withdrew with his partially completed manuscript, which included this lively march, YET unnamed.

Sousa and George Frederick Hinton, one of the band’s managers, were in Chicago witnessing a spectacle called *America* when a backdrop, with a huge painting of the Liberty Bell, was lowered. Hinton suggested that “The Liberty Bell” would be a good title for the new march. By coincidence, the next morning Sousa received a letter from his wife in which she told how their son had marched in his first parade in Philadelphia—a parade honoring the return of the Liberty Bell, which had been on tour. The new march was then christened “The Liberty Bell.” It was one of the first marches Sousa sold to the John Church Company and was the first composition to bring Sousa a substantial financial reward. Ladies and gentlemen, *The Liberty Bell March*.

(After the applause...)

Randall Standridge has become one of the band world’s most popular composers. He came to fame with energetic power-driven pieces like his very popular *Adrenalin Engines*. But arrangements like we’re going to play for you next show the depth of his musical skill to take a tender simple melody and expand it into musical drama. Based on the hymn, ‘*Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus*, we offer you Randall Standridge’s *A Simple Faith*.

(After the applause...)

You may not know the name of composer Irving Gordon. Born in 1917 Gordon was a popular lyricist for composers like Duke Ellington, and performers like Patti Page, Perry Como, and many others. The great crooner, Nat King Cole made Irving Gordon's *Unforgettable* truly unforgettable. Gordon finally won a Grammy for this beautiful ballad when his daughter, Natalie Cole asked Gordon to re-arrange it as a duet featuring her father from the original work, while adding her exquisite voice to the mix. Tonight we invite to the stage one of our band members, Steve Aiello to sing for you, *Unforgettable*.

(After the applause...Steve Aiello will say a few words about the band.)

In 1964 Walt Disney released his most successful film of all time, Mary Poppins. Based on P. J. Travers' immortal children's book, the film grossed \$103 million dollars worldwide, received 13 Academy Award nominations, and won for Julie Andrews her one and only Oscar for Best Actress. The songs, written by brothers, Richard and Robert Sherman are timeless. Steve Williams returns to the podium to take you on a musical journey through, Mary Poppins Highlights.

(After the applause...)

We've enjoyed two Sousa marches this evening but the next Sousa offering is a bit little different. Sousa had a humorous side and displays it well in this arrangement which is not a march, but a violinist's *reel* based upon the folk song *Turkey in the Straw*. The woodwinds and the trumpets really shine in this piece which is flavored with some Percy Grainger-style scoring. Ladies and gentlemen we know you will enjoy John Philip Sousa's arrangement of *Turkey in the Straw*.

(After the applause...)

For the remainder of the program we are going to celebrate our country. It is not mentioned in the program but *God Bless America* was written by America's greatest songwriter, Irving Berlin. He wrote it during the first World War. Writing it for a local review, he later felt that it didn't fit the theme of that review, so he sat on it for several years. With the rise of Nazi Germany, Irving Berlin revived it in the 1930's as a song for peace. It was recorded by Kate Smith and became her signature song. Ladies and gentlemen will you welcome to the stage the *Lynchburg Pops Singers*.

(Drum roll! Singers enter stage! 30 foot flag drops from the back!)

Band plays "God Bless America"

(After the applause...)

The Lynchburg Pops Community Band thanks you for coming tonight! Put it on your calendar that our next concert will be on May 30th right here. *(Paul- feel free to make any comments at this time that you'd like to make.)*

If there are any veterans or service men and women currently serving in the armed forces we want to recognize you at this time. Douglas Wagner's *United States Armed Forces Salute* has become a tradition with the Pops Band. If you are a veteran, or currently serving, or your spouse or parent served, when you hear the song of YOUR branch of the armed forces please stand and let us say *Thank you* for the freedom you have guaranteed us. Ladies and gentlemen, this is the *United States Armed Forces Salute!*

(After the applause...)

ENCORE: It would not be a Sousa concert without *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. The greatness of this march cannot be over-stated. It has become so famous all over the world that in 1987 the United States Congress declared it our *National March*. But are you aware that Sousa actually wrote lyrics? Tonight you will hear those lyrics right along with the famous feature by the piccolos. Ladies and gentlemen, The Star and Stripes Forever!