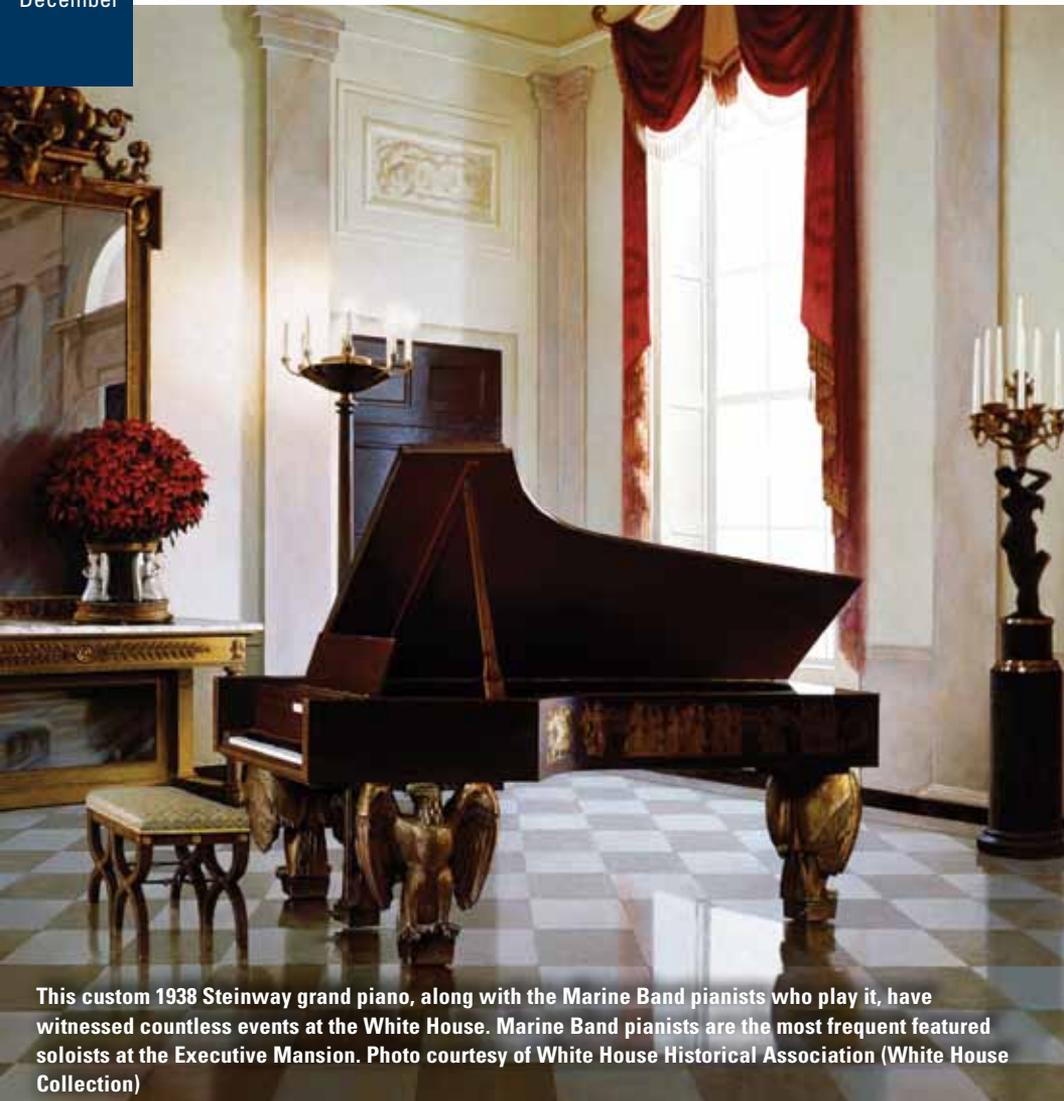


notes

November
December



This custom 1938 Steinway grand piano, along with the Marine Band pianists who play it, have witnessed countless events at the White House. Marine Band pianists are the most frequent featured soloists at the Executive Mansion. Photo courtesy of White House Historical Association (White House Collection)

IN THIS ISSUE 1 History of the White House Piano 2 New Recording Release
4 Upcoming Events 6 Stafflines: Tubist MSgt Thomas Holtz

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TICKLING THE IVORIES OF HISTORY

BY GUNNERY SERGEANT KRISTIN Mergen

In her book “Music at the White House,” musicologist Elise K. Kirk wrote “Indeed, the White House from its earliest days resounded with musical tones and airs reflecting early America’s perennial fascination with the keyboard. ... And in the president’s mansion, the piano reigned in yet another fashion—as an elegant image of court life.”

Upon arriving at the White House to perform, the majority of musicians from “The President’s Own” carry their instruments in a case. But the three Marine Band pianists arrive for duty at the Executive Mansion empty-handed, save for a few books of music. They know their hands will be plenty busy for the next few hours while they perform for the President and his guests on the famous 1938 Steinway, a gift from the Steinway family to Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Steinway & Sons donated its 100,000th piano to the White House and Theodore Roosevelt in 1903. Deemed “The Gold Piano,” it was covered in gold leaf and decorated with the coats of arms of the thirteen original states. After years of wear and tear, it was replaced by the 300,000th piano which was presented to Franklin Delano Roosevelt on Dec. 10, 1938. Frequently mistaken for a harpsichord, the 9 foot 7 inch instrument is made of Honduran mahogany with three large gold eagles as the legs. Steinway commissioned Dunbar Beck, a muralist, to create a gold leaf decoration on the side of the case representing “five musical forms indigenous of America:” a New England barn dance; a lone cowboy playing his guitar; the Virginia reel; two African-American field hands, one clapping and one dancing; and a Native American ceremonial dance. Albert Stewart, a sculptor, executed the three gilded mahogany legs carved as American eagles.

Although the striking look of piano has taken the spotlight throughout its time in the White House, one of the first reviews by The New York Times cast a shadow of doubt about its sound: “The question remains how many pianists will bash their knuckles before realizing this piano offers no scope for the grand manner?”

Nevertheless, the Steinway endeared itself to the White House staff and residents alike. Harry Truman was reported to play the piano alone behind closed doors and, according to Kirk, “unabashedly in public. He played for world leaders, for U.S. presidents, for concert artists, for movie stars, for painters, and for some 30 million Americans during his televised tour of the newly remodeled White House in the spring of 1952. ... Perhaps ‘the fingers wouldn’t work’ on all the pieces he knew, but he would play them anyway.”

Richard Nixon’s White House entertainment featured many famous pianists, including Eugene List. List was no stranger to the Executive Mansion, having performed for Roosevelt, Truman, and John F. Kennedy, and was known for highlighting American works in his programs. During one of his recitals, Kirk noted, “List played Gottschalk’s piano duet ‘Creole Eyes’ with a talented former pupil, Harry Scaggiari, who was at that time a member of the Marine Band.” List himself recalled that, “In the middle of the piece we played the Whittier College song and really surprised the President.

... He got up after we had finished and told us why this song was so special, why it had a character very different from the usual college song. Whittier College [Nixon’s alma mater] was a Quaker school whose founders were missionaries from Hawaii. The song, in fact, was originally Hawaiian.”

More than 40 years of performances took its toll and the Steinway was slated for retirement when Rosalynn Carter suggested it should be refurbished instead. The work was completed in time for André Watts’ performance after the State Dinner for the king and queen of Jordan in 1980.

Last renovated in 1992 during the administration of George H. W. Bush, the piano remains today in the Grand Foyer of the White House. Due to its



Master Gunnery Sgt. Boguslaw performs with Wynton Marsalis in the East Room at the White House on the evening of the 2009 Presidential Inauguration. Photo courtesy of the White House.

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WHITE HOUSE HIGHLIGHTS



Recent appearances by “The President’s Own” at the White House include:

- Young Elected Officials Network Reception
- Asian-American & Pacific Islander Month Reception
- MLS Cup Champion Colorado Rapids Team Visit
- WNBA Champion Seattle Storm Team Visit
- Independence Day Celebration
- Twitter Town Hall @ the White House
- Medal of Honor Presentation to SFC Leroy Petry, USA
- Health Food Financing Event
- World Series Champion San Francisco Giants Team Visit
- Meeting with AFL-CIO Executive Committee
- President Obama’s Birthday
- Obama Senate Staff Reception
- Islamic Iftar Dinner
- NFL Champion Green Bay Packers Team Visit
- Breakfast with First Responders
- Medal of Honor Presentation to Sgt Dakota Meyer, USMC

FLOURISHES AND MEDITATIONS

By Gunnery Sergeant Kristin Mergen

Director Colonel Michael J. Colburn had music educators in mind when he considered ideas for the Marine Band’s 2011 recording project. While there are few professional bands, band culture continues to flourish in high schools and colleges nationwide. Band directors are among the most enthusiastic audiences for new works and unique arrangements and transcriptions, a fact that was especially apparent at the 2010 Midwest Clinic in Chicago and the 2011 American Bandmasters Association Convention in Norfolk, Va. “The new works we performed at these events were greeted with such excitement by the music educators that I decided they should be made available through our educational recording program,” Col. Colburn said.

The 77th annual convention of the American Bandmasters Association took place in March 2011 and featured a gala performance by the Marine Band. The program included the world premiere of the band’s commission of Michael Gandolfi’s *Flourishes and Meditations on a Renaissance Theme* as well as a new band transcription of Percy Grainger’s *In a Nutshell* suite.

Col. Colburn said, “Ever since we presented the premiere performance of his *Vientos y Tangos* in 2003, we’ve been talking to Mr. Gandolfi about writing a piece for the Marine Band. It took nearly a decade to clear enough time in his busy schedule, but we are convinced it was worth the wait!” Col. Colburn included *Vientos y Tangos* on “Family Album,” his first recording as Director in 2005.

Gandolfi based *Flourishes and Meditations on a Renaissance Theme* on an anonymous melody dating from the Renaissance called “Spagnoletta,” which originated from a common air called “Españoleta” or “Little Spanish Tune.”

“I was motivated to probe this elegant tune with which I have been acquainted for four decades, with the expectation that it would prompt a wealth of ideas,” Gandolfi said.

“While composing this piece, I experienced a wealth of rich emotions, among which were great joy and deep satisfaction in writing for ‘The President’s Own’ United States Marine Band, the quintessential concert band of our time. I cannot overstate the significance of being called upon by this magnificent assembly of dedicated and supremely skilled musicians. It was also profoundly moving to connect, over several centuries, to the composer of ‘Spagnoletta,’ a kindred spirit in the love of music making,” Gandolfi said.

Percy Grainger’s *In a Nutshell* suite takes the listener from the folk music of the Spanish Renaissance to the folk music of the 20th century English countryside. Although *In a Nutshell* was published in 1916, shortly after Grainger moved to America, he had begun working on some of

CONCERTO COMPETITION APPLICATION DEADLINE:

NOV. 15, 2011

INFO: (202) 433-4011

FEATURED DOWNLOADS



NOVEMBER

March of the Month

March, “The Thunderer”
John Philip Sousa*

Featured Soloist

“Air Varie”
Arthur Pryor
SSgt Samuel Barlow, trombone

*Member, U.S. Marine Band

DECEMBER

March of the Month

March, “The Picador”
John Philip Sousa*

New Music Corner

“Dr. Sousa’s Lollapaloosa”
(A Young Person’s Guide to the Concert Band)
Stephen Bulla*/Text by Major Jason K. Fetting*
SSgt Sara Dell’Omo, mezzo-soprano

Throughout December, holiday music also will be available for download. To download selections, visit the Marine Band website, www.marineband.usmc.mil/audio_resources, and click on Web Exclusives.



Staff Sgt. McCabe performed the challenging cornet solo for the recording of William Bolcom's First Symphony for Band.

the movements as early as 1906 while he was still living in England. As the term "suite" indicates, the movements are unrelated, and each represents a different facet of Grainger's complex musical imagination. The movements are unified, however, by the brilliant sense of orchestration Grainger had developed by the time he refined and assembled these selections. One of the most recognizable aspects of Grainger's scoring technique is his affinity for "tuneful percussion," a proclivity that gives his music a distinct sheen. Much of his orchestration has been retained in this new setting for band created by Marine Band music production chief/staff arranger Master Sergeant Donald Patterson.

The next two selections propel listeners into the 21st century. At the 2010 Midwest Clinic last December, the Marine Band premiered Scott Lindroth's *Passage* and presented a special workshop performance of William Bolcom's First Symphony for Band. "Both of these substantial new works were very well received," Col. Colburn said.

Assistant Director Captain Michelle A. Rakers conducted the Midwest performance of *Passage*. This sophisticated and complex work was commissioned by the American Bandmasters Association. Captain Rakers first became familiar with Lindroth's work when the Marine Band recorded his "Spin Cycle" for the "Family Album" educational recording.

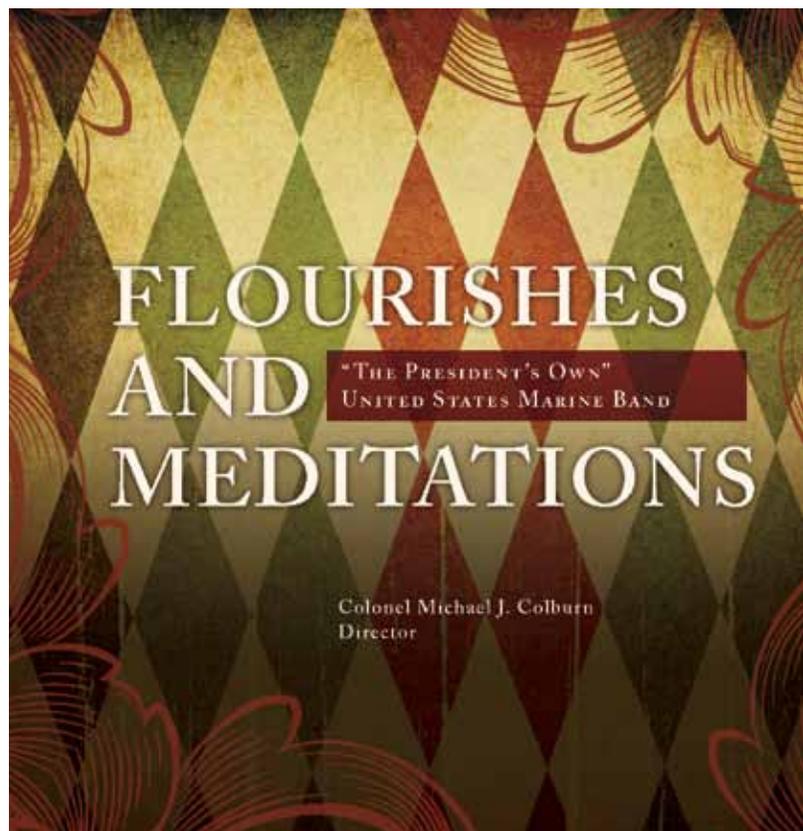
With *Passage*, "Scott really takes the listener on a journey," Capt. Rakers said, "one that begins and ends with great subtlety, builds in tension and conflict, and ultimately reaches a sort of heroic state before resolving peacefully but with a bit of a question mark at the end. He was wonderful to work with; he is very generous and kind and willing to accept feedback," she said.

Lindroth also had music educators in mind when he composed *Passage*. "Retrospection arises from composing for wind symphony in the first place. My most formative and inspiring musical experiences as a teenager were playing in public school bands and jazz ensembles directed by men who offered mentorship, instruction, and priceless opportunities to discover myself as a composer and musician. And so it is with gratitude that I dedicate this piece to Robert C. Shirek, Calvin D. Moely, and Raymond C. Wifler, three American Bandmasters who revealed to me what it could mean to live a life in music."

Bolcom's First Symphony for Band provided the Marine Band with a completely different pallet of musical ideas and textures and required intense preparation. The second movement of the Symphony features an extended cornet solo, performed on this recording by Staff Sgt. Amy McCabe (pictured left). "Bolcom has used several words to describe the melody from this solo, from 'shadowy' to 'dysfunctional,' 'sarcastic,' and 'uncomfortable,' and I think I experienced all of those aspects of self while preparing for this solo," McCabe said. "However, I think as humans and especially as musicians, we experience joy in rising to the challenges that composers have set for us."

One of these challenges was performing the solo on a remote part of the stage, away from the rest of the section, as requested by the composer. The other challenge involved the sheer mechanics of the solo. "Bolcom's composing genius in this movement comes from writing the melody in such a way

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UPCOMING EVENTS

CELEBRATING JOHN PHILIP SOUSA'S BIRTHDAY

12 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 6

"The President's Own" will pay homage to its 17th Director John Philip Sousa at Congressional Cemetery located at 1801 E Street, SE, in Washington, D.C., on the 157th anniversary of his birth. Conducted by Major Jason K. Fettig, this annual musical tribute will include Sousa's marches "The Stars and Stripes Forever" and "Semper Fidelis." The gravesite ceremony and traditional wreath-laying are free and open to the public.

MEMORIAL CEREMONY COMMEMORATING THE 236TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

10 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 10

Marine Band Drum Major Master Gunnery Sergeant William L. Browne will lead "The President's Own" at the memorial ceremony commemorating the 236th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va.

The band will perform along with "The Commandant's Own" The United States Marine Drum and Bugle Corps, the Silent Drill Platoon, and Marine Barracks Washington ceremonial marchers.

Commandant of the Marine Corps General James F. Amos will speak at the birthday celebration and lay a wreath in honor of all Marines who have given their lives in service of our country since 1775. The event is free, open to the public and Metro accessible.

U.S. MARINE CORPS WORSHIP SERVICE

3:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 13

A brass and percussion ensemble from "The President's Own" will perform for the annual U.S. Marine Corps Worship Service at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. Conducted by Major Jason K.

Fettig, the prelude will begin at 3:30 p.m. and the worship service will follow at 4 p.m.

The Marine Corps' annual worship service offers civilians, service members, and their families the chance to pause in prayer and pay tribute to Marines who have given the ultimate sacrifice to their country.

The Washington National Cathedral is located at the intersection of Wisconsin and Massachusetts Avenues in northwest Washington, D.C., and is easily reached by Metro. For detailed directions and parking information, please call (202) 537-6200 or visit www.nationalcathedral.org.

ANNUAL HOLIDAY SING-A-LONG AT WOLF TRAP

4 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 4

The Marine Band will perform at Wolf Trap's Annual Holiday Sing-A-Long at the Filene Center at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts in Vienna, Va. Conducted by Major Jason K. Fettig, the Marine Band—with Marine Band vocalists Gunnery Sgt. Kevin Benneer and Staff Sgt. Sara Dell'Omo—will lead the audience in traditional Christmas carols and Hanukkah songs such as "Joy to the World," "Feliz Navidad," "Jingle Bells," "Silent Night," and The Dreidel Song. Gates to the Filene Center will open at 3 p.m., and free parking is available. The Metro shuttle bus will not run for this event. Attendees are encouraged to arrive early. The event is free and tickets are not required. For directions and parking, visit www.wolftrap.org or call (703) 255-1900.

MARINE BAND BRASS QUINTET RECITAL

2 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 18

A Marine Band brass quintet will perform a varied program including several holiday tunes, Anders Hillborg's contemporary Brass Quintet (1998), Gioachino Rossini's well-known Overture to *La gazza ladra* (*The Thieving Magpie*), and Frédéric Chopin's Minute Waltz arranged by Robert Elkjer. The free concert will take place at John Philip

Sousa Band Hall at the Marine Barracks Annex in southeast Washington, D.C. For additional program information, visit www.marineband.usmc.mil or call (202) 433-4011.

MARINE BAND OFFERS BIRTHDAY BALL MUSIC ONLINE

This November Marines all over the world will recognize the Marine Corps' 236th birthday, with celebrations that have become one of the Corps' proudest traditions. A formal Marine Corps birthday ball traditionally includes both dinner and dancing, but the highlight of the event is the official ceremony.

Music plays a critical role in a formal birthday ball ceremony. A bugle call starts the ceremony followed by the march-on to the official party to the strains of John Philip Sousa's "Semper Fidelis." The brass sound honors for the commanders and guests of honor, and the band marches on the colors and performs The National Anthem. The procession of the traditional birthday cake is accompanied by The Marines' Hymn, and the cake is cut to the sounds of "Auld Lang Syne."

When a live musical ensemble is not available for a birthday ball, recorded music is a viable alternative. Event organizers and Marines across the globe can utilize appropriate ceremonial music by downloading MP3s from the Audio Resources section of the Marine Band's website. "The President's Own" offers the bugle calls, marches, and other selections required for a birthday ball ceremony as well as many martial pieces available for other military functions. To download birthday ball music and patriotic favorites, visit www.marineband.usmc.mil/audio_resources/ceremonial_music/index.htm.





President Obama greets Master Gunnery Sgt. Boguslaw during the Super Bowl game viewing, 2010. Photo courtesy of the White House.

was alternating with Wynton Marsalis' Quintet and got to play four or five songs with Wynton and his group, (pictured on page 1)" he said.

At another event much earlier in his career, Boguslaw was approached by President Bill Clinton to talk about his love of the music of George Gershwin. "Shortly after that conversation Renee Fleming came over to the piano and at the President's request sang 'Someone To Watch Over Me' as I accompanied her," Boguslaw recalled.

Boguslaw has performed countless times at the White House since he joined "The President's Own" in 1991. He typically plays the Steinway before and during events or dinners after which guest artists perform for the President and his guests. "I know John Lewis of the Modern Jazz Quartet and Lang Lang have played the piano," Boguslaw said. "I heard Herbie Hancock play a Valentine's Day event for President George W. Bush and I had a brief conversation with Kennedy Center honoree Leon Fleisher about the piano."

In his nine years with the Marine Band, Gunnery Sgt. Russell Wilson has also had

Yo-Yo Ma joins "The President's Own" at the White House, Nov. 2002. The late Master Gunnery Sgt. Charles Corrado, a staple at the White House since the Kennedy Administration, is at the piano. Photo credit: Senator Patrick Leahy



Piano continued from page 1

size and weight (it takes at least four men to move it), the piano generally remains in place except for special events in the East Room. The lid itself is so heavy and long that it requires extra support at the end opposite the keys in the form of a two-inch clear plastic stick.

From the piano bench Master Gunnery Sgt. Robert Boguslaw and Gunnery Sergeants Russell Wilson and AnnaMaria Mottola have an ideal "fly on a wall" perspective from the Steinway's piano bench of events large and small, official and otherwise, but they inevitably must be prepared to become a featured part of the event at a moment's notice.

"On President Barack Obama's inauguration night, the Steinway was moved into the East Room and President Obama approached me and shook hands, thanked me for coming, and told me he didn't know the Marine Band played jazz," Boguslaw said. "I welcomed the president to the White House and told him that the Marine Band plays all kinds of music!

That same night I



Gunnery Sgt. Wilson performs for a holiday reception in the Grand Foyer, 2010. Photo courtesy of the White House.

memorable experiences with the Steinway. During

a dinner for the Thelonius Monk Jazz Institute he decided to play as many tunes by Monk as possible. "One of my favorite jazz pianists, Danilo Perez, stood a few steps away with his wife and listened to me, and we got to talk briefly," Wilson said. "At another point during the evening, I started a new tune, looked up, and saw that Herbie Hancock was smiling at me, nodding with approval. That night was a memorable one for me."

On another occasion, he was summoned to perform for the Obamas in the private residence where there is a smaller Steinway. There, he found an intermediate-level classical piano book on the music rack. When the President and Mrs. Obama greeted him before the guests arrived he asked about the book. "They told me that Malia has been taking lessons so I played

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WHITE HOUSE PIANO

Piano continued from page 5

the rest of the night entirely from that book just for the fun of it," Wilson said.

The pianists are especially busy in December during the bustling holiday reception season. Wilson said the song most requested by the guests is "Charlie Brown" which is actually called "Linus and Lucy" by Vince Guaraldi. One particular holiday reception stands out from the others—President George W. Bush received and spoke with wounded war heroes and their families in the Blue Room while Wilson provided Christmas music and cheer for the entire six hour reception.

Kirk called the piano "the centerpiece of family musical life," therefore identifying the Steinway as the musical heart and soul at the White House since 1938. The Marine Band pianists enjoy the honor of providing the music for these events on one of the most venerable instruments in America. 🎹



Gunnery Sgt. Alan Prather, Master Sgt. Aaron Clay, and Gunnery Sgt. Wilson perform in the Grand Foyer. Photo courtesy of the White House.

STAFF LINES



MSgt Thomas Holtz
Tuba Player

BIRTHDAY
Oct. 26, 1968

HOMETOWN
Geneseo, Ill.

FAMILY
Wife: Becky
Children: Alex, 11;
Doug, 9; J.J., 7

JOINED THE BAND
1991

PETS
Two cats named Motor and Junior

PET PEEVES
Not having fun playing your axe, folks who type without capital letters and punctuation, and the lack of PAC-12 football broadcasts on the East Coast

WALTER MITTY FANTASY
On stage with the sousaphone throwing down bass lines for Earth, Wind, & Fire in front of 100,000 screaming fans.

BOOKS AT BEDSIDE
Frank Herbert's "Dune," Tony Hillerman's "Coyote Waits," and Neal Stephenson's "Snow Crash"

SELF-PORTRAIT
Earnest, dedicated, and loyal

FAVORITE MOVIE
"The Blues Brothers"

WHO WOULD PLAY YOU IN A MOVIE
Anthony Michael Hall

FAVORITE SAYING
"It's all good!"

BEST-KEPT SECRET
Well, I think it needs to stay a secret until after I retire!

FAVORITE FOODS
Prime rib, medium-rare; pizza with everything on it; Dairy Queen's classic Peanut Buster Parfait

HOBBIES
Arranging music for brass quintet and marching band, tinkering with computers, and maintaining my ongoing love affair with Legos

BAD HABITS
Talking too much, not paying enough attention to details, postponing exercise

PLACE YOU'D MOST LIKE TO BE STRANDED
A quiet beach house somewhere between Santa Barbara and San Jose, Calif.

THREE THINGS ALWAYS FOUND IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR

Danish Havarti cheese, Granny Smith apples, Diet Pepsi

MOST INFLUENTIAL TEACHER
Dan Perantoni from Arizona State University

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE BEFORE THE BAND
Disneyland All-American College Band, 1988; freelance tuba player in the Phoenix area

INSPIRATIONS
Jim Henson, Mel Tormé, Louis Armstrong, and the beautiful marathon runner I married 15 years ago

LUXURY DEFINED
Dozing off on the sofa on a lazy Saturday

FAVORITE PIECE OF MUSIC
I'll never pick a favorite. Off the top of my head: Antonín Dvorák's "Carnival Overture"; Hoagy Carmichael's "Georgia Cabin"; Rush's "Tom Sawyer"

LAST WORDS
"Um, what time is departure?"

MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT IN THE BAND
Leonard Slatkin's downbeat at the Kennedy Center Honors in 2004: THAT is how the first chord of "Star Wars" is supposed to sound.

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT
Getting people to smile, clap, and dance by making low, booming sounds on big hunks of shiny plumbing

Recording continued from page 3

that it hangs in the upper register of the instrument and uses large interval leaps, which can inherently sound a bit awkward," McCabe said. "Also [being] physically removed from the rest of the section on stage adds a level of discomfort since we're accustomed to being surrounded by other musicians while playing challenging exposed passages."

"Band players seem now to be mostly of college age; there are very few professional non-university bands today, nothing analogous to the Sousa and Goldman outfits of my youth," Bolcom explained. "I think this is why more and more composers of art music are turning to the band—... the fact that band people work hard and long on a new piece. They will spend weeks in rehearsal perfecting and internalizing it. And there is something infectious about the youthful enthusiasm a good college band will put into a performance."

"Infectious youthful enthusiasm" may be what Gustav Holst had intended when he wrote *The Perfect Fool*; however, the audience's reaction was to avoid it like the plague. Holst wrote his comic opera *The Perfect Fool* between 1918 and 1922, immediately after composing *The Planets*. The music of the opera is consistent with some of the composer's finest efforts, but the libretto was clumsy, incoherent, and not nearly as funny to general audiences as it was to the composer. Holst had intended to lampoon many of the traditions and conventions of Germanic and Italian opera, but most of his references and allusions were too obscure. The opera impressed neither the critics nor general audiences, and closed after just a few nights. The only music to survive is the twelve-minute ballet sequence that begins the opera, Dance of the Spirits. This transcription for band was done by former Marine Band Director Lieutenant Col. Dale Harpham in 1971. Col. Colburn selected *The Perfect Fool* for this recording because, "Every time I've programmed the work, I've been inundated with inquiries from band directors. I decided it was time to share this wonderful arrangement with a wider audience."

The Marine Band's 27th educational recording is titled "Flourishes and Meditations" and will be distributed free of charge to educational institutions, public libraries, and radio stations. Because appropriated funds are used, the CDs may not be distributed for private use and are not for sale. Educators, librarians, and station managers may request that their educational institution, library, or radio station be added to the CD mailing list by writing on official letterhead to: Head, Marine Band Branch, Division of Public Affairs (PAB), Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 3000 Marine Corps Pentagon, Washington, DC 20350-3000.



William Bolcom, right, and Michael Haithcock, University of Michigan Director of Bands and Professor of Music, listen as the Marine Band performs Bolcom's First Symphony for Band at the 2010 Midwest Clinic in Chicago.

BAND MEMBER NEWS

VACANCIES

"The President's Own" announces auditions for:

Tuba: Dec. 19-20

Oboe: March 5-6

For information contact:

U.S. Marine Band Operations Officer

Marine Barracks

8th & I Streets, SE

Washington, DC 20390-5000

(202) 433-5714

marineband.operations@usmc.mil

PROMOTIONS

To Corporal: Stage crewman Michael Pray II of Hyattsville, Md.

To Lance Corporal: Stage crewman Trevor McNeill of Marietta, Ga., and supply clerk Marvin Sanchez of Houston

MARINE BAND CONTACT INFORMATION

Marine Band Public Affairs Office

Marine Barracks

8th & I Streets, SE

Washington, DC 20390-5000

office: (202) 433-5809

concert information: (202) 433-4011

email: marineband.publicaffairs@usmc.mil

www.marineband.usmc.mil

Editor: Gunnery Sergeant Amanda Simmons



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