



Marine Band | Marine Chamber Orchestra | Marine Chamber Ensembles

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## MARINE BAND

For more than two centuries, the United States Marine Band has been part of the events that have shaped the nation. As “The President’s Own,” its omnipresent role has made it an important thread in the fabric of American life.

Established by an Act of Congress in 1798, the Marine Band is America’s oldest continuously active professional musical organization. Its primary mission is unique—to provide music for the President of the United States and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

President John Adams invited the Marine Band to make its White House debut on New Year’s Day, 1801, in the then-unfinished Executive Mansion. In March of that year, the band performed for Thomas Jefferson’s inauguration and has performed for every presidential inaugural since. In Jefferson, the band found its most visionary advocate. An accomplished musician himself, Jefferson recognized the unique relationship between the band and the Chief Executive and is credited with giving the Marine Band the title “The President’s Own.”

Whether performing for South Lawn arrival ceremonies, State Dinners, or receptions, Marine Band musicians appear at the White House more than 200 times each year. These performances range from a solo harpist or chamber orchestra to a dance band or full concert band, making versatility an important requirement for band members.

Additionally, the band participates in more than 500 public and official performances annually, including concerts and ceremonies throughout the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Each fall, the Marine Band travels throughout a region of the United States during its concert tour, a century-old tradition initiated by “The March King” John Philip Sousa, the band’s legendary 17th director. The Marine Band’s musical reach has extended beyond America’s borders with performances in England, Norway, Ireland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Singapore, and the former Soviet Union.

As director from 1880-92, Sousa brought “The President’s Own” to an unprecedented level of excellence and shaped the band into a world-famous musical organization. During his tenure, the Marine Band was one of the first musical ensembles to make sound recordings. By 1897, more than 200 different titles were available for sale, placing Sousa’s marches among the first and most popular pieces ever recorded.

“The President’s Own” continues to maintain the standard of excellence established by Sousa. Musicians are selected at auditions much like those of major symphony orchestras, and they enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps for duty with the Marine Band only. Most of today’s members are graduates of the nation’s finest music schools, and nearly 60 percent hold advanced degrees in music.

### **PLAYING AMERICA’S MUSIC SINCE 1798**

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