

SYMPHONY ON THEMES OF JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

Movement II after "The Thunderer"

IRA HEARSHEN

(b. 1948)

FOR CONCERT BAND

Instrumentation

1 Full Score	1 B \flat Tenor Saxophone	1 Trombone 3
2 Flute 1	1 E \flat Baritone Saxophone	2 Euphonium B.C. or T.C.*
3 Flute 2-Piccolo	2 B \flat Trumpet 1	5 Tuba
1 Oboe 1	2 B \flat Trumpet 2	1 String Bass
1 Oboe 2	2 B \flat Trumpet 3	1 Timpani-Chimes
1 E \flat Clarinet	2 B \flat Trumpet 4	1 Percussion 1
4 B \flat Clarinet 1	2 B \flat Trumpet 5	(Orchestra Bells, Vibraphone, Tam-Tam, Chimes)
4 B \flat Clarinet 2	1 F Horn 1	1 Percussion 2
4 B \flat Clarinet 3	1 F Horn 2	(Bass Drum, Snare Drum)
1 B \flat Bass Clarinet	1 F Horn 3	1 Percussion 3
2 Bassoon	1 F Horn 4	(Suspended Cymbal, Crash Cymbals)
1 E \flat Alto Saxophone 1	1 Trombone 1	
1 E \flat Alto Saxophone 2	1 Trombone 2	

*Printed back-to-back

Duration:

Approx. 8 mins

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About the Composer

IRA HEARSHEN received his Bachelor of Music degree in applied theory and composition from Wayne State University. In 1972, he moved to Los Angeles to study orchestration at the Grove School of Music and under the tutelage of the film composer, Albert Harris. He also studied counterpoint under Allyn Ferguson. Hearshen has many arrangements to his credit including the Detroit Symphony Pine Knob Summer Series, the Summer Pops Series for John Denver with various symphonies, the Jacksonville (FL) Symphony, and the Air Combat Heritage Band. He is currently one of the most sought-after orchestrators in Hollywood. His orchestrations include music for the television series "Beauty and the Beast," the Broadway show "Into the Light" and feature films "Guarding Tess," "Big Business," and "The Three Musketeers."

On Writing a Sousa Symphony

Stirred and fascinated by the music of John Philip Sousa since childhood, I still get a chill upon hearing the piccolo obbligato in the trio of "The Stars and Stripes Forever." While the thought of transforming popular march music into a legitimate piece for concert stage had a lot of intellectual appeal, I figured that any attempt I made to pay homage to Sousa would be misunderstood. But artistic challenge won out and I started working on what was to become the second movement of the symphony in the winter of 1990-91.

I began this piece by taking the 'trio' theme from the march, "The Thunderer," slowing it down to a tempo of 48 beats per minute and casting it in the style of the Finale of Mahler's third symphony.

From the audience reaction to the first performance of [after] "The Thunderer," I knew I was involved with something unusual in the realm of band music. The weight of the piece and its 8-minute time performance meant that the idea of a light concert suite of 4 to 6 movements as originally commissioned was out of the question. It was at this time I realized that I had the beginning of a full-scale symphony in both length and depth.

I began to envision this work as a four-movement symphony classically constructed. It would have a first movement written in 'sonata-allegro' form, a slow movement, a scherzo, and a finale. Each of the four sections would be based on a different Sousa march and the outer movements must be at least twice as long as the internal two so that the work would have integrity of true symphonic form.

There are two other problems that had to be solved: Each movement had to be playable as a separate piece, and there needed to be some unifying melodic material that could bring four different Sousa marches together. I found the solution in Sousa's scores. There was a four note melodic fragment common to virtually every tune I wanted to use, the same four notes that begin the "Dies Irae" portion of the Catholic Mass. The intervals are a minor 2nd down, a minor 2nd up, followed by a minor 3rd down. In the key of C major or A minor these notes would be C-B-C-A. This melodic motive occurs in the trios of both "Hands Across The Sea" and "Washington Post" as well as in the introduction to "Fairest of the Fair." In fact, these are the first four notes one hears in "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

I used this 4-note Sousa "signature" to introduce and end the symphony, in the construction of the scherzo, and to create the finale. The coda of the last movement became extended as a prologue to the entire symphony preceding the first movement. Thus, the symphony became a cyclical work unified in its construction, with each movement playable as a separate entity.

Sousa's melodies are all strong and of a wide variety of architectural styles. They range from complex ("Hands Across The Sea"), to simple ("Washington Post"), and all are stirring, intense, and above all, really fun to listen to. This is what makes Sousa's music "classic." I hope listeners have as much of an adventure listening to this as I did putting it together.

Mvt. II after "The Thunderer"

Ira Hearshen

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*poco accel.***13**

A bit faster

poco rit.

Faster

A Tempo

*rall.***17**Slightly faster $\text{♩} = 58-63$

Fl. 1

Fl. 2/
Picc.

Ob. 1
2

Bsn.

E♭ Cl.

B♭ Cl. 1
2
3

B. Cl.

A. Sax. 1
2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

10 11 12 **13** 14 15 16 **17** 18 19

Tpt. 1
2
3
4
5

Hn. 1
2
3
4

Tbn. 1
2
3

Euph.

Tba.

St. B.

Timp.
Ch.

Orch. Bells

Perc. 1
2
3

10100360

20 *poco rit.* **25** A Tempo 5

Fl. 1

Fl. 2/
Picc.

Ob.
1
2

Bsn.

E♭ Cl.

1

2

B♭ Cl.

3

B. Cl.

1

A. Sax.

2

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

20 21 22 23 24 **25** 26 27 28

1

2

Tpt.

3

4

5

1

2

Hn.

3

4

1

Tbn.

2

3

Euph.

Tba.

St. B.

Timp.
Ch.

1

Perc.

2

3