

Excerpts from Program Notes by G. Haas

“Radetzky” March, Op. 228

Johann Strauss, Sr. (1804-1849)

The senior Strauss, father of the more famous waltz-king Johann Strauss, Jr., was commissioned to compose a piece to commemorate the victory of the Austrian Field Marshal Joseph Radetzky von Radetz at the Battle of Custoza. The resulting piece, performed later that year in Vienna, was an immediate favorite, becoming wildly popular among marching infantry men and achieving the status of Austria's unofficial national anthem, a distinction it shares with Strauss Jr.'s “Blue Danube” Waltz. The March's upbeat and infectious rhythm routinely results in the audience clapping along, a tradition that started with the spontaneous reaction upon the work's first hearing by Austrian army officers, and which has continued whenever the work is performed.

“Pizzicato” Polka

Josef Strauss (1827-1870) & Johann Strauss II (1825-1899)

References to Strauss are often assumed to be to the “Waltz King,” Johann Strauss II. Much lesser known is his younger brother, Josef, who also wrote many dances - 283 in all - consisting of waltzes, polkas and quadrilles. When Johann was unable to conduct, Josef would step on to the podium in his place. Unlike his famous brother, Josef was trained as an engineer and worked for the City of Vienna as an engineer and designer. Johann, with his brother Josef, composed the “Pizzicato” Polka in 1869. It is scored for strings and glockenspiel, and as the title makes clear, the strings exclusively play pizzicato.

“Méditation” from *Thaïs*

Jules Massenet (1849-1912)

France's opera giant, Massenet, was taught the piano by his mother. At age eleven he was accepted for music study at the Paris Conservatory and by age twenty-one he won the Grand Prix de Rome which provided three years of music and art education at the Villa de Medici. His first opera was successfully produced at the Opera Comique in 1867 in Paris. During the next twenty-five years he composed theatrical incidental music and more than twenty-five operas. France regarded him as the master of the lyric theatre. Several of his operas remain in the repertoire including *Thaïs* (1894).

The “Méditation” is not a violin version of an aria from the opera. It is a violin solo intermezzo in the middle of Act II at the point where the title character, Thaïs, makes the decision to leave her life as a courtesan and go forward to a new life in a convent. The exquisite “Méditation” describes in melody the promptings of the heavenly impulse, heard in the opening and closing phrases, as opposed to the temptations of carnal nature, heard in the snarling voice and lower register of the violin.

Hymn and Triumphal March from *Aida*

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)

First the Italians invented opera, then they bore Verdi, who then created *Aida*. This ultimate merger of music, drama, ancient history and spectacle is what gives meaning to the words “grand opera.” The work premiered in Cairo in 1871 and has been performed world-wide ever since. The setting for the Hymn and March is ancient Thebes, whose peoples sing “Glory to Egypt ... to Isis,” and whose trumpeters intone the regal entrance of the victorious Captain Radames. While the performers on stage are dressed in Egyptian fashion, the music is purely

Italian, with a renaissance trumpet fanfare that leads into a “Gloria” reminiscent of a Latin Mass. Verdi’s music transcends both Egypt and Italy with accomplishment and unrestrained pomp.

“The Shadow of Your Smile” Johnny Mandel (1925-2020), Arranged by Charles Sayre

Mandel from New York, was a successful popular composer and arranger of songs, film music and jazz. His songs have been performed by many American singers including Barbara Streisand and Frank Sinatra. “The Shadow of Your Smile,” with music by Mandel and lyrics by Paul Francis Webster, won the 1965 Academy Award for Best Original Song in the film *The Sandpiper*. The song's winsome melody perfectly matches the lyric's resigned remembrance of fleeting love.

Pirates of the Caribbean, Selections Klaus Badelt (1967), Arranged by Ted Ricketts

Klaus Badelt, the German composer now living in California, is internationally known for his composition of film scores. His credits include the scores for *The Prince of Egypt*, *Gladiator* and *The Time Machine*. His score for the film, *Pirates of the Caribbean, the Curse of the Black Pearl*, was nominated for several awards, winning the ASCAP Film and Television Music Award for Top Box Office Films. The selections heard in this performance are “Fog Bound,” “The Medallion Calls,” “The Pirates Cave,” “The Black Pearl,” “One Last Shot,” and “He’s a Pirate.”

From America’s Legacy - Songs for Eternity

Bobby Caldwell (1951)

Bobby’s remarkable vocal delivery and stage presence have earned him acclaim from both critics and fans. He was born in Manhattan to parents who were hosts of a variety television show *Supertime*, Bobby took up piano and guitar at an early age. He formed his own band by age seventeen. His singing expanded to include ballads, soul, smooth jazz and classical big band favorites. Today Bobby performs with both large jazz bands and orchestras, while he continues to grace the intimate stages of music clubs. This performance features two songs from America’s Legacy - Songs for Eternity selected for this video concert: Harold Arlen’s “Come Rain Or Come Shine” and Cole Porter’s “From This Moment On.”

A Tribute to Henry Mancini Henry Mancini (1924-1994), Arranged by Calvin Custer

Henry Mancini, the American composer, conductor and arranger, is best remembered for his film and television scores. He is often cited as one of the greatest composers in the history of film; his work was nominated for seventy-two Grammy Awards, of which he won twenty, and eighteen Academy Awards, of which he won four. The long list of well-known films with music by Mancini includes *The Glenn Miller Story*, *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, *Days of Wine and Roses*, *Charade*, *Victor Victoria* and the *Pink Panther* series. The selections heard in the Tribute are “Baby Elephant Walk,” “Charade,” “The Pink Panther,” “Days of Wine and Roses,” and “Peter Gunn.”

“The Stars and Stripes Forever”

John Phillip Sousa (1854-1932)

Sousa, known as the “American March King,” (in order to distinguish him from Kenneth Alford, the British “March King,”) was, as the composer of the official marches of the US Marine Corps, “Semper Fidelis,” and of the United States, “The Stars and Stripes Forever,” properly born in the nation’s capital, Washington D.C. He first studied the violin but, as his father was a trombonist in

the Marine Band, young Sousa was destined to join that group. He learned to play every wind instrument (while he continued to study the violin). As the head of the Marine Corps Band, Sousa went on to compose 136 marches. Upon its first performance in 1897, the public immediately greeted "The Stars and Stripes Forever," with unreserved enthusiasm and, ninety years later, by an act of Congress, the march was declared the National March of the United States of America.