



The March – A Quick Reference Guide

An Overview of Interpretation, Performance Guide and Historical Practices

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TYPES OF MILITARY MARCHING

- Funeral March ♩ = 72
- Slow/Ordinary March ♩ = 60-80
- Quick March ♩ = 116-120
- Double Quick March

MARCH MUSIC TYPES

- Military Marches ♩ = 112-144
- Circus Marches ♩ = 140-170
- Gallops can reach ♩ = 240
- Funeral Marches ♩ = 60-72
- Patrols (*simulate the sound of a band marching past a listener, coming and going*)

MARCH STYLE (*with much credit to John Whitwell*)

- Heart of the March – bass line, tuba, bass drum, horns, percussion
- “Lilt” – 1₂1₂ (this alone will transform the style and feel of your march)
- Tempo – choose a tempo appropriate for the style of march you are performing
- Rhythm – master common rhythm figures and sustain notes for their duration
- Accentuation – accentuation can improve the interpretation and effectiveness of a march
- Dynamics – not too loud in the percussion section
- Musicality – shape and balance the heart, melody, counter melody, and obbligato

MARCH EDITIONS

Many editions of marches were published in street or flip folder (music lyre) size. These are generally printed in tutti with all members are playing at all times. This was done to conserve printing space and so any sized group, from small circus bands, military parade bands, or large symphonic bands, might use them. Many concert marches, particularly those in large-page editions, are scored in a way to give adequate expression and tonal color when played strictly how they are printed. Current editions of the earlier street size marches may or may not include tonal variety and revoicing. Other edits in these editions can include the editors’ interpretation of accents, dynamics, phrasing, etc. Many original publications are listed under “marching band” in music catalogues.

WHAT YOU CAN CHANGE IN A MARCH

Change dynamics in entire strains or parts of strains in addition to octave registration. Add accents to agree with your own aural perception of how you want to hear it played. Sing through the march then mark it for style, accentuation, and phrasing. Alter percussion parts if necessary, keeping in mind that most march composers were not percussionists. Flutes, for example, can transition to piccolo in different parts of a strain or bells could be added to a melody. Add or delete voices to change colors and to bring out unique textures. Brass players can and should rest more often. Include a separate pair of cymbals to accentuate special accents in the music. Have students memorize parts of a strain and stand up, e.g. the final strain of the march. Try using a field drum rather than a snare for a more historically accurate performance.

WHAT YOU CANNOT CHANGE IN A MARCH

While having a unique interpretation is recommended, a detached style is necessary. Legato playing, if opportunistic, can be used in the trio section. Do not play the entire march in a legato or tenuto style; always detached. Maintain a steady tempo throughout and remain true to the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic aspects of the march.

EUROPEAN MARCHES

- British ♩ = 108
- German ♩ = 104-112
- Spanish *paso doble* ♩ = 108
- Italian ♩ = 116
- French ♩ = 126

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A MARCH

- Tone Quality
- Technical Accuracy
- Tempo
- Interpretation

INTERPRETATION

March manuscripts rarely contain the interpretations of the composer and composers often assumed bandmasters knew *march style* and did not bother with stylistic markings, dynamics, revoicings or registral alterations. Additionally, many composers rehearsed and performed their own music and as Henry Fillmore stated, "I didn't know how I wanted it to sound until I got in front of the band." There is no one way to play any march and you should arrive at a convincing interpretation on your own. Dr. Harry Begian perhaps summed it up best in a presentation at the Midwest Clinic in 1999,

We should not think of marches as musical items that are sacrosanct and that there is only one 'true' style or interpretation of any march! If symphony orchestra conductors don't all COPY one another and perform the great symphonic literature with a prescribed style, tempo and nuances then why should band conductors not figure things out for themselves and come up with their own musical convictions as to how they want to play a march! I can truthfully say that those band-conductor colleagues whom I consider great march-stylists reflect their personal musical tastes to any march they perform and never copy someone else's interpretation. I think it truly unfortunate that there are too many band conductors who either don't arrive at musical convictions regarding style, tempo or nuances or must always rely on some else's way of playing a piece of music. One of the greatest challenges to conductors is to be able to study a score diligently and to come up with an interpretation of that score that is convincing, not only to him, but to his players and audiences as well. I think that is the true test of the quality of a conductor, certainly NOT how well he can copy another conductor's interpretation!

GENERAL DYNAMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH STRAIN

Avoid dull performances by changing dynamics on repeated strains, particularly in second and break strains.

- *Introduction* – usually loud, forte or fortissimo.
- *First Strain* – less loud, mezzo forte, usually played as written.
- *Second Strain* – usually the loudest strain in a march. Vary dynamics in this strain, softer the first time and louder on the repeat. Try eliminating brass the first time.
- *Trio Strain* – softest strain of the march, piano to mezzo forte. Play legato if stylized that way.
- *Break Strain* – loud and technically involved, usually played as written.
- *Repeated Trio Strain* – loud and played out. Trio tune is played softly with emphasis and forte volume on the countermelody and/or obbligato.
- *Stinger* – in the style and volume of the last strain.

HENRY FILLMORE MARCHES AND SMEARS (*We are the Fillmore Wind Band after all...*)

Fillmore generally liked his marches performed much faster than a traditional military march. He stated, "my marches sit well at $\downarrow = 160$ and the smears at $\downarrow = 120$." He composed under several pseudonyms and each represents a difficulty level. Marches by *Harold Bennett* are non-progressive and great for middle school bands. If you can play one, you can play them all. *Al Hayes* and *Will Huff* marches are a little more difficult and same in difficulty level. *Henry Fillmore* marches can be the easiest or the most difficult. Fillmore typically wrote two percussion parts, one for concert settings and one for marching.

TYPICAL COMMENTS AT ASSESSMENTS REGARDING MARCHES

- The march selected has no special character.
- There is a lack of care in preparation. The march did not have the same meticulous attention to detail as other concert selections.
- Rhythms are not clearly defined.
- Eighth notes in triple time are played too close together with a space between each grouping of three notes – this causes a 'hopping' effect.
- Accompaniment figures in triple time sound like they are in duple time.
- Accompaniment figures in duple time sound like they are in triple time.
- Harmony parts are not confident and clear.
- Preserve the balance of the band at all dynamic levels.
- Keep the tone under control at all dynamic levels.
- Do not depend on upper clarinets for fortissimo effects.
- Paying more attention to accents can liven up the march.
- Make a musical sound on the stinger rather than a noise.
- **It is the space between notes, which makes a march lively and spirited rather than the rate of speed it is being performed.**
- You cannot attack one tone before releasing the one preceding it.
- There is little variation in the intensity of the beat from the bass drum to conform to the spirit of others in the band.
- Do not allow the band to rush away with the tempo.
- *Grandioso* means a change in style, not a change in tempo.

SELECTED MARCH LIST OF HARRY BEGIAN AND WILLIAM REVELLI

AMERICAN

Americans We H. Fillmore
 Barnum and Bailey's F. K. King
 Battle of Shiloh C. Barnhouse
 Battle of the Winds C. Duple
 Battle Royal F. Jewell
 Boys of the Old Brigade C. Smit
 Bravura C. Duple
 Brighton Beach March W. Latham
 The British Eighth Z. Elliot
 The Caravan Club K. King
 Chicago Tribune P. Chambers
 Chimes of Liberty E.F. Goldman
 The Circus Bee H. Fillmore
 The Circus King C. Duple
 Colossus of Columbia R. Alexander
 The Director General F. Jewell
 El Capitan J.P. Sousa
 Emblem of Freedom K. King
 E. Pluribus Unum F. Jewell
 The Free Lance J.P. Sousa
 From Topic to Topic R. Alexander
 Gentry's Triumphal F. Jewell
 Golden Friendships H. Fillmore
 Golden Jubilee J.P. Sousa
 The Goldman Band K. King
 Hands Across the Sea J.P. Sousa
 His Honor H. Fillmore
 Honey Boys on Parade E. Cupero
 Independentia R.B. Hall
 In Storm and Sunshine J.C. Heed
 Joyce's 71 N.Y. Regiment T. Boyer
 The Klaxon H. Fillmore
 Military Escort H. Bennett
 National Emblem E. Begley
 Olympia Hippodrome R. Alexander
 On the Mall E.F. Goldman
 The Outlook F. Jewell
 The Purple Carnival H. Alford
 Quality Plus F. Jewell
 Ringling Bros. Grand Entry A. Sweet
 Robinson Grand Entrée K. King
 Rolling Thunder H. Fillmore
 Revelation P. Chambers
 The Royal Decree W. English
 Sarasota K. King
 The Southerner R. Alexander
 Tenth Regiment R.B. Hall
 Washington Grays C.S. Grafulla

SPANISH

Corazon Gitano M. Domingo
 El Abanico A. Javaloyes
 El Relicario J. Padilla
 Espana Cani P. Marquina
 Flores de Espana P. Chovi
 Gallito S. Lope
 Gerona S. Lope
 The Golden Ear M. San Miguel
 La Calesera F. Alonso
 La Sorella C. Borel-Clerc
 Lola Flores T. Tucci
 Pepita Greus P. Chovi
 Sol y Sombra G. Gates

ENGLISH

Army and Marine W. Zehle
 Army of the Nile K. Alford
 B.B. and C.F. J. Ord Hume
 The Contemptible L. Stanley
 Dunedin K. Alford
 The Elephant J. Ord Hume
 The Middy K. Alford
 Pentland Hills J. Howe
 Punchinello W. Rimmer
 Sons of the Brave T. Bidgood
 Trafalgar W. Zehle
 The Vanished Army K. Alford

GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN

Action Front H. Blankenburg
 Alte Kameraden C. Teike
 The Conqueror C. Teike
 Duetschmeister D. Ertl
 Entry of the Gladiators J. Fucik
 Florentiner J. Fucik
 In Treue Fest C. Teike
 Nibelungen G. Sonntag
 Radetzky J. Strauss
 Die Regimentskinder J. Fucik
 Thrill of Victory F. Fuhrer
 Under the Double Eagle J. Wagner
 Wien Bleibt Wien J. Schrammel

OTHER NON-AMERICAN MARCHES

Athletic Festival S. Prokofiev
 March of the Belgian Paratr. P. Leemans
 Corrida D. Savino
 March Electric G. Creatore
 Inglesina D. DellaCese
 Le Regiment de R. Planquette
 Sambre et Muse
 Laurentian L. Ganne
 Le Grognard G. Pares
 March Lorraine L. Ganne
 Pere de la Victoire L. Ganne
 Sambre et Meuse R. Planquette
 Symphonic March E. Rivela
 Symphonic March G. Bonelli
 Valdres J. Hanseen

CONCERT MARCHES

Crusade for Freedom J. Richards
 The Dam Busters E. Coates
 The Golden Bear J. Richards
 Hail Miami J. Richards
 Hail to the Fleet R. Maltby
 Marche Hongroise H. Berlioz
 Montmarte H. Wood
 The Sinfonians C. Williams
 Stars and Bars R. Jager
 March Symphonic
 Metamorphosis P. Hindemith
 Vilabella M. Williams
 World is Waiting
 for the Sunrise H. Alford
 American Salute M. Gould
 Children's March P. Grainger
 Golden Cockerel N. R-Korsakov

STREET MARCHES

The Billboard J. Klohr
 Black Jack F. Huffer
 Dallas R.B. Hall
 Kiefer's Special W. Kiefer
 Men of Ohio H. Fillmore
 Officer of the Day R.B. Hall
 On the Square L. Panella
 Punjab C. Payne
 Show-boy W. Huff
 Salutation R. Seitz
 St. Julien A.W. Hughes
 Them Basses G. Huffine
 The Trombone King K. King
 United Services J. Ord-Hume

RECOMMEND RECORDINGS

William Revelli with the University of Michigan Symphony Band
H. Robert Reynolds with the University of Michigan Symphonic Band
Harry Begian with the University of Illinois Symphonic Band
Military Bands

PUBLISHED RESOURCES

Bachman, Harold. "Henry Fillmore: A Tribute to a Bandman."
Begian, Harry. "Behold the Lowly March."
Bierley, Paul E. *Hallelujah Trombone!*
Bierley, Paul E. *The Incredible Band of John Philip Sousa.*
Chevallard, Philip C. *Teaching Music through Performing Marches.* Edited by Richard B. Miles.
Goldman, Edwin Franko. *Band Betterment; Suggestions and Advice to Bands, Bandmasters, and Band-players.*
Hansen, Richard K. *The American Wind Band: A Cultural History.*
Pryor, Arthur. "How To Play A March."
Ryder, Donald Dean. "The March Compositions of the Goldman Library." DMA Diss.
Smith, Norman. *March Music Melodies.*
Smith, Norman. *March Music Notes.*
Smith, Norman. *Program Notes for Band.*
Sousa, John Philip. *Marching Along.*

ONLINE RESOURCES

"The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa." "The President's Own" Marine Band.
www.marineband.marines.mil
Brian, Keith. "Sousa's Marches, As He Conducted Them."
www.newsousaband.com
Daughters, Jim. "Quick Reference Guide to Marches."
www.fillmorewindband.org