

JOHN STAFFORD SMITH *The Star-Spangled Banner*

John Stafford Smith (1750-1836) was an English composer, organist, and musicologist. A tune that Smith composed for the English Anacreontic Society in the 1770s was later famously adopted by Francis Scott Key to accompany his poem "Defence of Fort McHenry" during the War of 1812. Smith's tune and Key's poem eventually became known as "The Star-Spangled Banner," which was officially recognized as the U.S. national anthem by the U.S. Navy in 1889, by President Woodrow Wilson in 1916, and by a congressional resolution in 1931.

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR *Petite Suite de Concert*

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) was an English composer and conductor who was the youngest delegate at the inaugural Pan-African Conference and was received at the White House by President Roosevelt in 1904. More than 200 African American singers joined together to form the Coleridge-Taylor Choral Society in Washington, D.C. in 1901, and a Baltimore City public school is named after him. His 1911 *Petite Suite de Concert* is one of his most famous pieces and showcases Coleridge-Taylor's ability to compose particularly memorable melodies.

JONATHAN LESHNOFF *Dancing Blue Crabs!*

Baltimore-based composer Jonathan Leshnoff is quickly becoming one of the most performed living composers by American orchestras, and his works have been performed and recorded by leading ensembles around the world. His *Dancing Blue Crabs!* was commissioned by the BSO in 2015 as part of the Centenary Encore Project. With a dedication of "Happy 100, hon," the piece features the solo contrabassoon and was inspired by a humorous video of a blue crab dancing.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN *Romance No. 2 in F Major for Violin and Orchestra*

The German composer and pianist Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) is one of the most celebrated composers of Western classical music, and his works continue to be performed more frequently around the world than those of any other classical composer. Beethoven's *Romance No. 2 in F Major* was likely composed in the late 1790s when he was living in Vienna and establishing his career as a concert pianist and composer. The work is a slow tempo rondo that alternates statements of a tender refrain with contrasting dramatic musical episodes.

NKEIRU OKOYE *Voices Shouting Out*

Nkeiru Okoye is an internationally recognized composer of opera, symphonic, choral, chamber, solo piano, and vocal works. She is a 2021 Guggenheim Fellow in music composition and the inaugural recipient of the Florence Price Award for Composition. Her 2002 *Voices Shouting Out* was composed as a musical response to 9/11 and is a testament to the necessity of national optimism in a time of profound suffering.

CLAUDE DEBUSSY *Clair de lune*

Debussy was inspired by paintings and images and was not interested in following the rules established by earlier composers. His use of color and harmony was groundbreaking: *Clair de lune (Moonlight)* seems to shimmer and hover in the air, a musical picture of nocturnal serenity. This beloved piece is often found in pop culture, most famously in the final minutes of the film *Ocean's Eleven*.

GIOACHINO ROSSINI Overture to *The Barber of Seville*

Rossini was one of the most celebrated Italian composers of the 19th century and wrote 39 operas, *The Barber of Seville* being his finest and most loved. The Overture was originally written for an earlier opera and Rossini, in a rush to produce the requisite show opener, recycled his old score, which has no musical relation to the rest of the opera. It was a huge hit, the music making its way into pop culture with a Woody Woodpecker cartoon in 1944, Bugs Bunny's "The Rabbit of Seville" in 1949, and even a "Seinfeld" episode in 1993.

JOHN WILLIAMS March from *Superman*

The music of John Williams is so intimately tied to timeless blockbuster movies that it's hard to imagine *Jaws*, *Star Wars*, *E.T.*, or *Harry Potter* without the soaring melodies that we all know and love. Written early in his career in 1978, the soundtrack from *Superman* helped define the comic book superhero as a cinematic force worthy of multiple sequels and spinoffs. A trumpet fanfare and pulsing basses excitedly anticipate Superman's grand entrance before the march takes off in a rush of Hollywood nostalgia.