

PROGRAM NOTES

QUINCY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Compiled by Madalyn Pridemore

The prominent American composer, John Williams, rose to fame following his collaboration with Steven Spielberg for his deceptively simple, yet instantly recognizable two-note theme for the 1975 thriller “Jaws.” This iconic theme and movie score soon became intertwined with Williams’ signature musical style, displaying the Romantic and Impressionistic influences on his music to enhance the dramatic musical accompaniment in his numerous Academy Award-winning film scores. Williams’ characteristic use of motifs enhances the narrative direction portrayed in his cinematic collaborations with famous filmmakers such as Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, and Alfred Hitchcock. The musical gestures intertwine across a monumental ensemble, mixing a vastly diverse palette of resonating colors by passing themes and motifs through the various sections of the orchestra.

Olympic Spirit, composed for NBC’s broadcast of the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, South Korea, begins the program with celebratory fanfare across the brass. Bright, major chords welcome an inspirational melody to commemorate the games. Both the featured brass melody and the persistent pulse of the percussion drive the piece to its final majestic cadence.

The 1989 Oscar-nominated score *Born on the Fourth of July* opens with a lone trumpet soloist echoing through the concert hall. Williams adds a layer of tension to the piece as the strings enter with their pained, yet hopeful melody that pays tribute to the fallen soldiers. As the work balances between moments of full instrumentation and gossamer-thin textures, Williams utilizes the orchestra to the full extent of its Romantic standard.

In *Adventures on Earth*, from the blockbuster movie “E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial,” Williams uses modes, rather than tonal music, to reflect the otherworldly storyline of the film. He builds this aesthetic through additional layers of varied instrumentation, focusing on instruments with unique colors and timbres, like harp, celesta, and various percussion instruments to alter the sound world to better reflect the themes on-screen.

Hymn to the Fallen, selected for the closing credits of “Saving Private Ryan”, provides a contrast to Williams’ other works through its flowing, sorrowful melody. The addition of military drums throughout the work provides a direct connection to its subject matter, and creates a distinctive tone against the warmth of the large string sections. Since its release in 1998, the work has been played on radio stations across the nation during both Memorial Day and Veterans Day to honor fallen military members.

Williams' *Star Wars*, arguably his most iconic soundtrack, builds upon a large set of motifs used throughout all the films to characterize each piece in the suite. While each character's music relies on a full brass section, Williams alters the sound of the instruments, evoking imagery specific to Princess Leia and Darth Vader, as well as the galactic storyline in both the opening theme and "Throne Room" tracks. Utilizing a distinct set of musical ideas reinforced cohesion across the soundtrack as various characters or thematic elements were first introduced during the film. The culmination of the soundtrack, "Throne Room & End Title", reassembles many of these musical themes into a triumphant climax, closing the movie with the variety of musical colors and styles introduced individually over the span of the story.

The *Harry Potter Symphonic Suite* places a series of themes from the film into direct succession, beginning with "Hedwig's Theme," employing the magical sound of the celesta before the strings enter in a rapid whirlwind. As the work progresses, portions of the soundtrack used to accompany Quidditch games (a magical sport played on flying broomsticks) and the triumphant wins following the matches, alter the whimsical mood of the earlier themes into stately phrases. Flashes of a folksy violin solo reflect the casual atmosphere of the fictional Diagon Alley, are followed by a celebratory conclusion.

Raiders March, colloquially known as "The Indiana Jones Theme," was composed for the 1981 film "Raiders of the Lost Ark." This work opens with a powerful brass fanfare, with the woodwinds adding to the march character. As the strings join, the march becomes warmer, eventually leading to a quieter, more expressive melody led by the lower strings. By the final iteration of the opening theme, Williams thickens the instrumentation, adding additional layers of color to dramatize the finale of the work.

Alessandro Marcello's *Concerto for Oboe in C minor* has become a centerpiece of the oboe repertoire, as well as a solo keyboard work, as arranged by J.S. Bach. Following this arrangement of Marcello's concerto, the piece was mistakenly credited to both Vivaldi and Marcello's own brother Benedetto, before being correctly attributed to Marcello himself in the late 20th century. The second movement, a flowing Adagio, begins with a meditative accompaniment of eighth-notes across the orchestra that persists throughout the movement. The oboe floats gracefully above the strings, providing ornamentation and flourishes to the steady underlying support. In his Allegro, Marcello closes the work with a customary fast-paced movement in triple meter, representing the Christian trinity. He crafts a musical conversation between the strings and oboist, providing intricate technical passages for the soloist until the end of the movement.