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## An American Tapestry Spring Concert, 2010

**Narrator:**

*"For the common things of every day,  
God gave man speech in the common way.  
For the deeper things men think and feel,  
God gave the poet words to reveal.  
For the heights and depths no word can reach,  
God gave man music, the soul's own speech."*

Our theme for tonight is An American Tapestry. In the strictest sense, a tapestry is a picture comprised of a set of two interlaced threads woven together. For us tonight, it is also the picture of a nation woven together with myriad lives interlaced. Tonight, the choir and band invite you to enjoy an American Tapestry of music and song. Truly, *"It's a grand night for singing, The moon is flying high, And somewhere a bird Who is bound he'll be heard Is throwing his heart at the sky!"*

### **It's a Grand Night For Singing – Choir and Band**

**Narrator:** *"To be ignorant of what happened before you were born is to be ever a child. For what is man's lifetime unless the memory of past events is woven with those of earlier times?"* Marcus Tullius Cicero

An excerpt from "Ode to Common Things" by Pablo Neruda

*"I love  
all  
things,  
not because they are  
passionate  
or sweet-smelling  
but because,  
I don't know,  
because  
this ocean is yours,  
and mine;  
these buttons  
and wheels  
and little*

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*forgotten  
treasures,  
fans upon  
whose feathers  
love has scattered  
its blossoms  
glasses, knives and  
scissors -  
all bear  
the trace  
of someone's fingers  
on their handle or surface,  
the trace of a distant hand  
lost  
in the depths of forgetfulness."*

### **They, the Builders of the Nation - Choir**

### **Home on the Range - Choir**

**Narrator:** What would a remembrance of our forefathers be without a bit of fun? A colorful bit of thread comes in Henry Fillmore's trombone rag "Lassus" and in the "Klaxon march". Henry Fillmore was the eldest of 5 children. In his youth he mastered piano, guitar, violin, and flute -- as well as the slide trombone, which at first he played in secret, as his conservative religious father believed it an uncouth and sinful instrument.

### **The Klaxon March and Lassus Trombone - Band**

**Narrator:** Our tapestry is rich in color and texture, and yet it is not without sorrow woven in. Sullivan Ballou was raised by his widowed mother in absolute poverty, yet he managed to get an education and became a successful lawyer. He was elected to the Rhode Island House of Representatives and twice served as Speaker of the House. In June, 1861, married to Sarah Hart Shumway and with a young family of two boys, Edgar and Willie, Sullivan joined the Union Army. Two weeks before the first battle of Bull Run, he wrote this letter to his beloved wife. He did not survive the battle. Sarah never remarried.

Dear Sarah:

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days - perhaps tomorrow.

**Sullivan and or Sarah (Begin after the salutation and speak at the same time as the narrator):**

The indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days – perhaps tomorrow. And lest I should not be able to write you again, I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eye when I am no more.

I have no misgivings about or lack of confidence in the cause in which I am engaged and how great a debt we owe to those who went before us. And, I am willing – perfectly willing – to lay down all my joys in this life, to help maintain this government and to pay that debt.

Sarah, my love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me with mighty cables that nothing can break and yet the love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me irresistibly with all those chains to the battlefield. How hard it is for me to give up and burn to ashes the hopes and future years, when, God willing, we might still have lived and loved together and see our boys grown up to honorable manhood around us.

If I do not return, my dear Sarah, never forget how much I loved you and when my last breath escapes me on the battle field, it will whisper your name.

But, oh Sarah, if the dead can come back to this earth and flit unseen around those they love, I shall always be with you in the brightest day and the darkest night.

Sarah, do not mourn me dead; think I am gone and wait for me, for we shall meet again.

### **Ashokan Farewell – Choir**

### **Bring Him Home – Choir**

**Narrator:** **When Johnny Comes Marching Home** was written by Irish American bandleader Patrick Gilmore under the pseudonym of Louis Lambert for his sister Annie. The Johnny so longed for in the song is Patrick Gilmore's future brother-in-law a Union Light Artillery Captain named John O'Rourke. The song was written to express the emotions of Annie as she longed for the safe return of her fiancé from the Civil War.

### **When Johnny Comes Marching Home – Choir**

**Narrator:** Many of our tapestry threads stem from the masses of immigrants Lady Liberty and New York welcomed to our nation from distant lands. In 1920, Helen Cohen arrived from Poland when she was 20 years old. *"I said, I wish one day I'll be*



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in America. I was dreaming to come to America . . . And I was dreaming, and my dream came true. When I came here, I was in a different world. It was so peaceful. It was quiet. You were not afraid to go out in the middle of the night . . . I'm free. I'm just like a bird. You can fly and land on any tree and you're free." That freedom Helen Cohen felt is a thread that runs through all our lives. We see it in a neighborhood BBQ, taking our children to the library, or playing a game of baseball.

## **Take Me Out to the Ball Game/Coney Island Baby - Barbershop Ensemble**

**Narrator:** Although Frederick Wetherly, the writer of **Danny Boy**, was an Englishman, it is often considered by many Irish Americans and Irish Canadians to be their unofficial signature song. Danny Boy was first written to a different tune in 1910. It languished. His sister in America sent him a second tune, "A Londonderry Air" and he rewrote the song to fit this new tune in 1913. This second **Danny Boy**, a tender song of a lass pining for her laddie who has gone to war, was a hit.

*Oh Danny boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling  
From glen to glen, and down the mountain side  
The summer's gone, and all the roses falling  
'Tis you, 'tis you must go and I must bide.  
But first,  
I've got fidgety feet, fidgety feet, fidgety feet!  
Oh, what fidgety feet, fidgety feet, fidgety feet!  
Say, mate, come and be my sway mate;  
How can anyone resist that rhythmical beat?*

## **Fidgety Feet - Band**

## **Danny Boy - Band**

**Narrator:**

*"There's a feeling comes a-stealing,  
And it sets my brain a-reeling,  
When I'm listening to the music of a military band.  
Any tune like "Yankee Doodle"  
Simply sets me off my noodle,  
It's that patriotic something that no one can understand."*

On June 29, 1936, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt presented George M. Cohan with The Congressional Gold Medal for his contributions to World War I morale, in particular the songs "You're a Grand Old Flag" and "Over There". Cohan was the first

person in any artistic field selected for this honor, which previously had gone only to military and political leaders, philanthropists, scientists, inventors, and explorers.

### **George M. Cohan Patriotic Fantasy – Choir**

**Narrator:** Irving Berlin came to the United States at 5 years old as Israel Baline a Russian Jew escaping the pogroms. Like many thousands, he and his family looked for Lady Liberty as they entered New York Harbor. Irving Berlin wrote music to "reach the heart of the average American" whom he saw as the "real soul of the country."

Composer Douglas Moore calls him a "great American minstrel" – someone who has "caught and immortalized in his songs what we say, what we think about, and what we believe."

### **Irving Berlin's America – Choir and Band**

**Narrator:** In speaking about America, Jimmy Carter once said, "We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams."

### **Georgia on My Mind - Band**

**Narrator:** What would our tapestry be without a bit of nostalgia from the early days of radio and television. The next selection is recognizable by a familiar tune and a few words: "*A fiery horse with the speed of light, a cloud of dust and a hearty Hi-Ho-Silver!*"

### **William Tell Overture - Band**

**Narrator:**

*O happy day, that fixed my choice  
On Thee, my Savior and my God!  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad.  
Happy day, happy day, when  
Jesus washed my sins away!*

The next selection comes originally from a hymn published in 1755 and used for christenings and baptisms. The verses were dropped and a focus on the chorus gives us the tune you will enjoy tonight.

### **O Happy Day – Choir**

**Narrator:** We are grateful for your attendance today. Immediately after the last piece we finish with a closing prayer by \_\_\_\_\_. As is traditional, the band will then send us out with that old favorite, **Stars N Stripes Forever**.

Robert F. Kennedy said, *"Ultimately, America's answer to the intolerant man is diversity, the very diversity which our heritage of religious freedom has inspired."*

**Sandra Day O'Connor** said, *"We don't accomplish anything in this world alone... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads form one to another that creates something."*

### **You Raise Me Up/Be Still My Soul – Choir and Band**

Closing Prayer by: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Stars n' Stripes**

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