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The Star-Spangled Music Foundation Kicks Off “Banner Year”
“The Star-Spangled Banner” is 200 in September, New CD Details Its History

Ann Arbor, MI, February 13, 2014—America's best-known and most-performed song is turning 200 this year. Despite its prominence, the story behind "The Star-Spangled Banner" and its evolution are little known. Its vast musical journey is brought to life in *Poets & Patriots*, a new double-CD set being released to commemorate the bicentennial. The song was written after a dramatic battle during the War of 1812—often called America's second War of Independence—the morning of September 14, 1814. That “the star-spangled banner” still waved, signaling U.S. victory, inspired Francis Scott Key to write the lyrics that later became our national anthem.

Poets & Patriots: a Tuneful History of "The Star-Spangled Banner" was created by University of Michigan musicology professor Mark Clague, PhD. Its 37 audio tracks tell a tale of shifting social influences, an evolving melody, and a songwriter inspired by an epic battle. “Bringing the melody's original source tune and so many early Banner arrangements to life in performance has been a fascinating experience for me,” said Clague. “There are patriotic, temperance, abolitionist, and campaign song lyrics, all written for this same melody. Key, himself, also wrote an earlier song using that melody, which we've included. The project has both artistic and historical impact and The Banner's extensive history will surprise many,” Clague concluded.

Poets & Patriots is available for download on iTunes, Amazon, mp3, Spotify, Google Play, and other popular online outlets. The souvenir box set includes a 24-page booklet and is available for \$20 at starspangledmusic.org, with discounts for quantity purchases by service groups, educators, museums and other non-profit organizations.

In addition to the CD, the Star Spangled Music Foundation (SSMF) is collaborating with organizations around the country, including the Universities of Michigan and Maryland and the Grammy Museum, on national celebrations of this important anniversary. Next summer a National Endowment for the Humanities-funded institute will bring thirty K-12 teachers to the DC area for a month-long exploration of the role of the song in American life.

“By providing free curricular resources, sheet music, and videos we're encouraging educators, service organizations and the public at large to create their own Star-Spangled celebrations in their communities.” said Susan Key, PhD, SSMF executive director. “We are so excited to be working with so many great partners to bring heightened visibility to the Banner bicentennial,” Key stated. “We want to let everyone know about the release of this important CD set, kicking off our Banner Year and to invite them to visit our website for ideas to involve their own communities for this momentous occasion.”

For a review copy of the *Poets & Patriots* CD, or more information about local celebrations and other community and national programs, go to the SSMF website at starspangledmusic.org or email info@starspangledmusic.org.

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“The Star-Spangled Banner” 1814 – 2014

www.starspangledmusic.org • info@starspangledmusic.org

The Star-Spangled Music Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code, Federal Identification Number 27-4000812.