

STAR SPANGLED MUSIC *Editions*

The Star-Spangled Banner

Service Version of the U.S. Military

1918



Words by Francis Scott Key

Original Music by John Stafford Smith



(B-flat Major • Medium Voice & Group Singing)

Edited by Mark Clague and Andrew Kuster

STAR SPANGLED MUSIC
Foundation



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The Star-Spangled Banner (Service Version), 1918

Lyric by Francis Scott Key (1779–1843); Music by John Stafford Smith (1750–1836)

Arranged by a “Committee of Twelve”

Historical Note

Because of its ceremonial interactions with other nations in both times of peace and war, the United States military had special need for clarity in terms of an official song that would represent the nation. U.S. Navy vessels, for example, often traveled with brass bands to foreign ports of call and their musicians needed to know whether to play “Hail Columbia” or “The Star-Spangled Banner” when greeting local dignitaries at the docks.

Clarity finally arrived on January 8, 1917 when the War Department amended Army Regulations to provide that “the composition consisting of the words and music known as ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ is designated the national anthem of the United States of America.” Naval Regulations were updated similarly. Legally this recognition only applied to the Army and Navy, but as the nation’s entry into World War I loomed, the military’s example proved influential.

For decades there had also been confusion over the official arrangement of Francis Scott Key’s song. Because time and tradition had shifted the its melody and form away from what its lyricist had known, the original 1814 imprint ironically was never considered “traditional.” Instead, the version arranged in 1879 by John Philip Sousa, at the time the leader of the U.S. Marine Band, received favor.

In response to the new military regulations, however, two separate committees were formed to create a sanctioned version of Key’s song. One, representing the Bureau of Education and including Sousa, New York Symphony conductor Walter Damrosch, and musicologist Oscar Sonneck among others, devised a “Standardized Version” that was published by Schirmer in 1918. The second group, known as the Committee of Twelve and including composers John Alden Carpenter and Frederick Converse, offered the so-called “Service Version,” endorsed by both the Music Supervisors’ National Conference (now NAfME) and sanctioned for official use by the military.

The two versions created by these competing committees differ only in details of rhythm and harmony and, in fact, they accomplished the same task by defining the soon-to-be “traditional” sound of the anthem. These versions also have three verses instead of four. Because the United States was now an ally of

Great Britain, they delete Key’s third verse, which characterizes our 1814 British enemy so negatively.

In 1942, a National Anthem Committee identified the Service Version as the preferred form of the nation’s song and recommended that it be rendered in A-flat major for mass singing of adults and in B-flat for treble voices (presumably, women and children).

Performance Suggestions

As it attempts to establish a unified tradition of performance at a time when Key’s song was realized in a variety of ways, the Service Version contains detailed and explicit dynamic and tempo markings. These indications work well when performing just the first verse. When performing all three (or four), it is helpful to use a faster tempo and to avoid slowing dramatically at the end of each verse, until the last. A nice effect is to slow the final verse dramatically after the word “motto” as we did spontaneously when recording the Service Version for *Poets & Patriots: A Tuneful History of “The Star-Spangled Banner*.

Sources

The Solo / Duet version is based on the 1918 edition published by Oliver Ditson Company. The SATB alternative uses an all-but identical harmonization published in 1916 by H. W. Gray of New York in *The New Hymnal*. Committee of Twelve member Wallace Goodrich also served on the editorial board of this publication. It appears to be the first-ever published SATB arrangement of “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

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The Star-Spangled Banner

Solo or duet, with SATB refrain.

Words

Francis Scott Key
(1779–1843)

Service Version

For the Army and Navy, and for School and Community singing.
1917

Music

Anacreon in Heaven
John Stafford Smith
(1750–1836)

With spirit (♩ = 104)

1. O — say can you see — by the dawn's ear - ly light What so
2. *On the shore dim - ly seen — through the mists of the deep, Where the*
3. O — thus be it ev - er when — free - men shall stand Be -

5

proud - ly we hail'd at the twi - light's last gleam - ing, Whose broad stripes and bright
foe's haugh - ty host in dread si - lence re - pos - es, What is that which the
- tween their lov'd home and the war's des - o - la - tion! Blest with vic - t'ry and

10

stars through the per - il - ous fight O'er the ram - parts we watch'd were so
breeze, o'er the tow - er - ing steep, As it fit - ful - ly blows, half con -
peace may the heav'n res - cued land Praise the pow'r that hath made and pre -

The Star-Spangled Banner

15 *mf*

gal - lant - ly stream - ing? And the rock - ets' red glare, the bombs burst - ing in
 - ceals, half dis - clos - es? Now it catch - es the gleam of the morn - ing's first
 - serv'd us a na - tion! Then — con - quer we must when our cause it is

20

air Gave — proof through the night — that our flag was still
 beam, In full glo - - - ry re - flect - ed now — shines in the
 just, And — this be our mot - to: "In — God is our

24 $(\text{♩} = 96)$ *f*

there. O — say does that — star - span - gled ban - ner — yet —
 stream, 'Tis the star - span - gled — ban - ner, O long may — it —
 trust, And the star - span - gled — ban - ner in tri - umph — shall —

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28

broaden *ff*

wave — O'er the land — of the free and the home of the brave?

wave — O'er the land — of the free and the home of the brave!

wave — O'er the land — of the free and the home of the brave.

ff

ff