

## **WOLF TRAP**

### ***HOLIDAY SING-A-LONG FROM HOME***

#### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

##### **“THE PRESIDENT’S OWN” UNITED STATES MARINE BAND**

Established by an Act of Congress in 1798, the **United States Marine Band** is America’s oldest continuously active professional musical organization. Its mission is unique—to provide music for the President of the United States and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

President John Adams invited the Marine Band to make its White House debut on New Year’s Day, 1801, in the then-unfinished Executive Mansion. In March of that year, the band performed for Thomas Jefferson’s inauguration and it is believed that it has performed for every presidential inaugural since. In Jefferson, the band found its most visionary advocate. An accomplished musician himself, Jefferson recognized the unique relationship between the band and the Chief Executive and he is credited with giving the Marine Band its title, “The President’s Own.”

##### **COLONEL JASON K. FETTIG, *director***

**Colonel Jason K. Fettig** is the 28<sup>th</sup> director of “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band. He joined in 1997 as a clarinetist and assumed leadership of the Marine Band in July of 2014. He was promoted to his present rank in August 2017 by President Donald J. Trump, becoming the third director of “The President’s Own” to be promoted to colonel in a White House ceremony.

As director, Col. Fettig is the music adviser to the White House and regularly conducts the Marine Band and Marine Chamber Orchestra at the Executive Mansion and at all Presidential Inaugurations. He also serves as music director of Washington, D.C.’s historic Gridiron Club, a position held by every Marine Band Director since John Philip Sousa. Col. Fettig has led the band for numerous major national events both at the White House and throughout the country. He conducted national broadcast performances for the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Star Spangled Banner at Ft. McHenry in Baltimore, a special Veterans Day performance with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in Salt Lake City, and an appearance on *The David Letterman Show* at the invitation of Michelle Obama in New York. He leads frequent concerts throughout the Washington, D.C., area and across the country during the band’s annual national tour. In May 2019, Col. Fettig led the Marine Band on its first international tour since 1992 with multiple performances throughout Japan. Also in May 2019, Col. Fettig and the Marine Band, in partnership with the All-Star Orchestra conducted by Gerard Schwarz, won an Emmy at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual New York Emmy Awards for “New England Spirit,” a program featuring William Schuman’s iconic New England Tryptich.

Col. Fettig is a fervent advocate for both traditional and contemporary American music, and live performances by the Marine Band under his direction are often heard on National Public Radio. In 2014, he was elected as a member of the prestigious American Bandmasters Association.

Throughout his career with the Marine Band, Col. Fettig has been deeply committed to music education. He began a Young People's Concert series in 2006 and authored, hosted, and conducted this popular annual event until 2015. He has also made it a priority to maintain a significant presence in schools throughout the nation during the band's national concert tours, and since 2014 he has led an ambitious project to re-record all of the marches of John Philip Sousa and provide free performance and educational materials online to schools throughout the world.

**MASTER GUNNERY SERGEANT KEVIN BENNEAR, *baritone vocalist***

Baritone vocalist and concert moderator **Master Gunnery Sergeant Kevin Bennear** joined "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in January 2000, becoming the third featured vocal soloist since the position was established in 1955. Master Gunnery Sgt. Bennear began his musical instruction at the age of nine. After graduating in 1990 from Elk Garden High School in Elk Garden, WV, he attended Potomac State College in Keyser, WV., and earned a bachelor's degree in music in 1996 from West Virginia University (WVU) in Morgantown, where he studied with Peter Lightfoot. In 1999, he earned a master's degree in vocal performance from the University of Tennessee (UT), in Knoxville, where he studied with George Bitzas. Master Gunnery Sgt. Bennear has performed with the UT Opera Theater, WVU Opera Theater, Theatre West Virginia, and the Knoxville Opera Company, where he played the role of Sharpless in Giacomo Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* with noted soprano Stella Zimbalis of the Metropolitan Opera. He also taught voice as a graduate teaching assistant at UT.

**GUNNERY SERGEANT SARA SHEFFIELD, *mezzo-soprano vocalist***

Mezzo-soprano vocalist and concert moderator **Gunnery Sergeant Sara Sheffield** joined "The President's Own" United States Marine Band in May 2005, becoming the first featured female vocal soloist in Marine Band history. Gunnery Sgt. Sheffield began her musical instruction on piano at the age of nine and voice at age 16. After graduating from Jacksonville High School in 1997, she attended the University of North Texas in Denton and earned a bachelor's degree in vocal performance in 2001. In 2008 she was named a regional finalist in the Mid-Atlantic Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. She earned an executive master's in business administration from George Mason University in 2016 in Fairfax, VA. Prior to joining "The President's Own," Gunnery Sgt. Sheffield was a member of the U.S. Army Band's Army Chorale at Fort Myer in Arlington, VA.