

documentation is accurate as far as it goes, but it lacks detail—needlessly so, since the folded jacket has plenty of white space. Those wanting fuller particulars should order the back issue of the *Journal* while it's still available.

All in all, then, this recording is a most important historic reissue, worthily if not quite perfectly done. Highly recommended. *Reviewed by John W. N. Francis*

**“From Fife and Drum . . .” (Marine Band Recordings 1890-1988). No date.** No issue number. Released in CD and Cassette formats by the United States Marine Band for public affairs use.

This recording (the CD format is reviewed here) was issued by the United States Marine Band (USMB) to celebrate the 190th anniversary of the USMB, “The President’s Own.” Selections range from the earliest cylinder recordings of the band to digital recordings made in 1988.

The first selection, “Washington Post,” which dates from the 1890s, is listed in the liner notes as a Columbia cylinder record conducted by John Phillip Sousa prior to October 1890 and “the earliest known recording of the USMB.” Yet James Smart’s 1970 discography of Sousa states that the earliest catalog supporting data “lead to the inevitable conclusion that [Sousa] conducted no recordings by the Marine Band or by the Sousa Band before 1906.” Sousa disdained studio recordings, coining the term “canned music” and testifying before congressional hearings in 1906 on copyrights of musical performances. The chronology of USMB directorships implies that this is Sousa conducting, but if this fact is not certain, it should be mentioned. Otherwise, the myth that Sousa conducted all the Sousa Band recordings will be perpetuated. The recording transfer of this and the other cylinder selection, as engineered by James R. Wilkins, does not have the quality of early discs transferred by Tom Owen. It would have been nice if Owen could have worked his “audio magic” on these selections.

The second selection, “The Thunderer,” also is taken from a Columbia cylinder. Sousa’s successor, Francesco Fanciulli, is listed as conductor even though he is never mentioned in Smart’s book, which states that recordings were conducted by either Arthur Pryor or Henry Higgins, who shared the assistant conductorship at that time. Perhaps the Marine Band has better sources than the Library of Congress where Smart did his research. The program notes should have clarified whether Fanciulli, as USMB Director, was actually the conductor of this selection.

Next comes “Creanonian Polka” with a cornet solo, taken from a 12 -inch Victor of 1909, along with two 12 -inch Victors from 1914. The final commercial recording is an early electrically recorded Victor from 1927.

The remaining music includes a radio broadcast from “Dream Hour” (a show for shut-ins), a rehearsal from 1969, and live recordings made as recently as 1988. Selections run from two-minute cylinders (actually almost 2 1/2 minutes) to the full nine minutes of Liszt’s *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 14*. Included as a historical document for this 1988 release is a brief message from President Ronald Reagan. The CD ends where it began, with “Washington Post,” this time recorded in July 1988.

The sound quality of this CD is excellent, revealing the evolution of recording techniques. The liner notes contain a fine history of the band and details of the recordings. Except for the misconception about Sousa conducting the first cylinder, they appear to be accurate.

Contributions to this project were made by record collector and researcher, Fred Williams, who is a living military band encyclopedia and has promoted band recordings. This valuable document should be obtained for school and library archives. Perhaps someday it will be commercially available. Until then, ask your local library to get a copy from the USMB.

Marine Band recordings are produced for public affairs use and are distributed free of charge to radio stations, libraries, and educational institutions. Because federally appropriated funds were used in the production of these recordings, they may not be distributed solely for personal use. Representatives of groups listed above may have their radio stations, libraries, or educational institutions added to the Marine Band recording mailing list by sending their name, title, and address of the institution and their choice of format (CD or cassette) to:

Head, Marine Band Branch

Division of Public Affairs (PAB)

Headquarters, United States Marine Corps

Washington, DC 20380-0001

*Reviewed by Steven I. Ramm* 