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# MARCHES

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Few instrumental forms have had as great an association with the wind band as the march. Throughout the wind band's history, marches have served as functional music during ceremonies, as well as provided entertainment at concerts. All levels of musicians play marches: school, amateur and professional wind ensembles. The genre, therefore, has been an essential part of the repertoire even though leading proponents of wind band literature have strived to increase the emphasis and number of serious and musically complex works. With marches so frequently played on concerts and social functions, one would wonder why great performances have been a relatively rare event. The inability to execute technical passages well has often been a contributing factor to many inadequate performances; however, the most egregious faults arguably have risen from poor style. There is no secret to performing marches correctly according to American euphonium legend, Arthur Lehman. He gave special emphasis to the following five points:

1. Cut the notes short
2. Use good, hard attacks
3. Observe all accents, changes in dynamics, etc.
4. Maintain a steady tempo – don't rush or drag
5. Use square rhythm – correct rhythm<sup>1</sup>

To this list superb intonation and clarity of technical passages should be added. Practicing marches correctly from the beginning stages of the preparation process instills confidence and consistency of the style. One must not forget that listening is also an excellent way to reinforce the correct march style. Any serious euphoniumist should collect recordings of highly qualified military bands and professional civilian wind ensembles. Likewise, time spent studying the score broadens one's knowledge of how the euphonium part fits in the overall plan of the work.

While marches offer technical and stylistic challenges for the aspiring euphoniumist, those unaccustomed to performing these works regularly may find the repeats, *Del Capos*, and/or *Del Signos* confusing in a sight reading situation. To ensure an uninterrupted performance during an audition, practicing the entire march is encouraged. Furthermore, because of the functional nature of the march, especially in military settings, an audition panel may issue special instructions concerning which repeats should be taken or ignored. Hence, the studious euphonium player will also include this variable in his or her practice routine.

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Lehman, "No. 9, Questions and Answers," *The Art of Euphonium Playing, Volume One*, reprinted in TUBA Press 1993, 11.

## A Step Ahead (p. 3)

Kenneth J. Alford

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If an audition panel requests this march in its entirety, the euphoniumist will be presented with stylistic and rhythmic challenges in addition to the technical test after the trio. This Alford work is sometimes played faster than his more well-known marches. Various tempi from quarter note = 120 to 132 should be practiced. Regardless of the final tempo, however, the player must demonstrate steady tempo, especially during the rests after rehearsal mark B, and during the ties on the whole notes.

1. In addition to rhythmic steadiness, strive also for rhythmic exactness. Careful placement of the eighth notes after eighth-rests and ties are essential. Furthermore, avoid crunching the quarter-rest two eighth note rhythms, e.g. in mm. 106 or 108.
2. The countermelody figures after rehearsal mark E require clarity of line, especially with the variety of articulation markings. Equally important is assuring each note responds well. Projecting well at *piano* does not equal loss of line and sound.

## Army of the Nile (p. 5)

Kenneth Alford

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In spite of its subtitle, "Quick March," this Alford March is not in the same tempo range of a circus march. Practice this work with a tempo range of quarter note = 108-112. There are many details in articulation markings that require diligent observation. Also, be aware of the *Del Signo*. The "road map" to this march is not complex, but is easy to fall into the habit of not practicing the whole march. In a performance or audition setting the euphoniumist may find it difficult to fight the habit of stopping at the D. S. Playing the entire march will also give an accurate assessment of the player's endurance.

## Colonel Bogey (p. 7)

Kenneth Alford

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Alford's march, *Colonel Bogey*, offers many opportunities for the euphonium section to sing out with beautiful countermelodies. The march is relatively long and the euphonium plays almost every measure. Therefore, endurance may be an issue for some players. Practicing the entire march three times in a row can help build mental and physical endurance. Additionally, the *obbligato* part on the repeat of the first strain makes reading the notes difficult. Repeated practice and familiarity of the part will greatly increase one's success in sight-reading situations of this piece.

# A Step Ahead

Harry L. Alford

1 *f* *ff* *mf* **A**

8 *f*

15 *f*

**B** *ff*

**C** Trio

38 *p*

44

50