# AMERICAN MEDLEY

# Arranged by Steven L. Rosenhaus

# Developing String Orchestra Series

#### **INSTRUMENTATION**

2-Full Score 5-Viola

8-1st Violin 5-Cello

8-2<sup>nd</sup> Violin 5- Double bass

2-Snare Drum

Duration: Approx. 3 min. 9 sec. Grade: 2 ½ (Medium-Easy)

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#### ABOUT THE ARRANGER

**Steven L. Rosenhaus** is a composer, arranger, conductor, author, educator, and performer. His concert music has been called "clever, deftly constructed and likable" by *The New York Times*; the *Sächsiche Zeitung* (Dresden, Germany) declares it "expressive....It's song-like melodic sequences and balladic aspects give it a lyrical beauty, within a newer soundworld."

His original works and arrangements are performed by such musicians as the New York Philharmonic, pianist Laura Leon, violinist Florian Mayer, the Dresden Sinfonietta, the Sheboygan Symphony (WI), the New York Repertory Orchestra, the Meridian String Quartet, and several U.S. military ensembles including the U.S. Navy Band (Washington, DC), as well as educational ensembles across the U.S.

Dr. Rosenhaus holds a Ph.D. from New York University where he serves as Adjunct Assistant Professor of Composition. He has over 150 original works and arrangements in print with Print Music Source and other publishers. Dr. Rosenhaus is a frequent guest conductor of service, professional, community, and educational groups at all levels.

Steven L. Rosenhaus is the author of *The Concertgoer's Guide to the Symphony Orchestra* (The Music Gifts Company) and co-author with Allen Cohen of *Writing Musical Theater* (Palgrave Macmillan).

#### **PROGRAM NOTES**

An American Medley is a sort of time capsule; the selections span United States history from revolutionary days to the first part of the 20th century.

The medley begins with Yankee Doodle, originally a British march with lyrics that taunted the Colonies but was later taken on (with some pointed lyric changes) by the Americans. The defiance and ironic humor in doing so left us with a jaunty tune that almost defines American nature as a whole.

This steadfast defiance continues in the patriotic hymn *Chester*, composed by church musician William Billings and first published in 1770. The first few lines are clear in intent: "Let tyrants shake their iron rod, and Slavery clank her galling chains; we fear them not." The music is stirring, even when heard without the lyrics.

Next we jump to 1904, when songwriter George M. Cohan premiered the song (*I'm a*) Yankee Doodle Dandy (aka The Yankee Doodle Boy) in his Broadway show Little Johnny Jones. Cohan's show, patriotic bordering on the jingoistic, was about an American jockey who rides the horse named Yankee Doodle at the British Derby.

The last song, America the Beautiful, has long been proposed as an alternative to The Star-Spangled Banner as a national anthem. (Irving Berlin's God Bless America is another candidate.) The gorgeous melody by Samuel A. Ward (another church musician) perfectly fits the lyrics by Katherine Lee Bates. Yet music and lyrics were written separately in the late 1800s and not put together until 1910.

#### PERFORMANCE NOTES

Tempos are approximate and should be adjusted according to the needs of the ensemble and the acoustic environment. Once set, however, the tempo should sound lively and remain consistent until measure 91, when the music broadens and becomes more majestic.

Articulations and bowings are deliberately kept to a minimum, although succesive eighth notes in measures 5–34 can be played *staccato* if desired. The comma cut-off at measure 54 should be brief.

The arrangement of *Chester* is based on Billings' original, complete with most of the tune in the middle voices from mm. **39–46**. Be sure to bring out the melody.

The optional snare drum part may be played by multiple players as long as they do not overpower the rest of the ensemble. The part is written for the same level player, perhaps slightly more advanced, as for the strings.

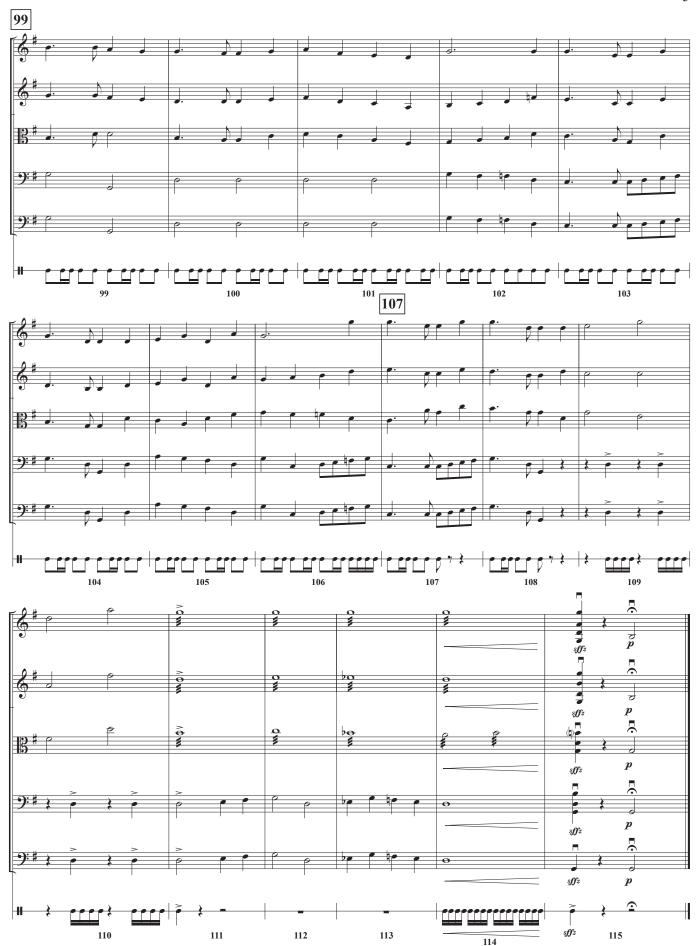
In the opening 12 measures seated players are asked to "march" in place. This is optional but makes for an interesting effect with the bass line and snare drum.











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