

*Music Composed for The United States Army Band "Pershing's Own" CD release: 2012 • Program Notes by SFC David Brown, The U.S. Army Concert Band Conductor's Notes by COL Thomas H. Palmatier, 9th Leader and Commander Performance Notes by members of The U.S. Army Concert Band Edited by MSG Beverley A. Benda*

SYMPHONIC REQUIEM, Op. 135 (Seventh Symphony) Composer: James Barnes

*April 12, 2011, marked the 150th anniversary of the bombardment of Fort Sumter, South Carolina, which signaled the beginning of the American Civil War. There were no casualties in the battle of Fort Sumpter, a deceptively innocuous beginning to a war that would claim more than 600,000 American lives in only four short years of conflict. This staggering statistic still outnumbers the total battle deaths of all other of our nation's other wars combined.*

To commemorate the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, The United States Army Band "Pershing's Own" commissioned a new work from composer James Barnes. The work combines two massive structures into one: a requiem and a symphony. Combined, the two convey the heartbreak of three of the most dramatic battles of the war.

After a short prologue, the first movement characterizes the chaotic, desperate first day of the Battle of Shiloh in April 1862. After successful early advances, Confederate soldiers were brought to a standstill by Union soldiers in a horrendous killing ground that came to be known as "The Hornets' Nest." More Americans died on the first day at Shiloh Meeting House than had perished in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican War combined. Of the day's 23,746 total casualties, 3,477 were known dead and nearly 3,844 were unaccounted for.

Movement two depicts the tragedy of Marye's Heights near Fredericksburg, VA, December 13, 1862, where one of the most one-sided battles took place. At the top of this hill south of the city stood a high stone wall backed by a sunken road running first east to west, then turning to the north. Its configuration allowed Stonewall Jackson's troops and artillery to consolidate in an L-shaped bombardment. Union troops attacked this position one regiment at a time, but were slaughtered by the thousands in the face of the withering Confederate crossfire. At the end of the day, 9,000 dead and wounded lay before the stone wall of Marye's Heights.

The third movement depicts Union General Ambrose Burnside's indecision during the Battle of Fredericksburg by his refusal to arrange for a temporary truce to remove the thousands of casualties from the battlefield. Inter-mingled among the dead, the wounded lay in agony throughout the night, all the next day, and into the following night in freezing December weather before Burnside came to his senses. Many southern soldiers later recalled seeing an aurora borealis on the first night glowing in the sky (certainly a very uncommon event in Virginia). The music paints the blue clad dead and wounded Union troops giving off the eerie borealis' glow against the darkness. The movement goes directly into the work's fourth movement: Longstreet's Assault.

The Battle of Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863) was the largest battle ever fought on the North American continent. Approximately 150,000 Americans were involved in this three-day struggle. Having been halted on the first day by Union troops on the north and northeast sides of Cemetery Ridge, then unsuccessful the following day further south in desperate clashes at Devil's Den, Peach Orchard and Little Round Top, Confederate General Robert E. Lee concluded that the Union Army must be at its weakest in the center of their fortified position on "the high ground" of Cemetery Ridge. For the attack, he ordered General James Longstreet to join up with the newly arrived "Pickett's Division," a unit already reinforced by the divisions of Generals Pettigrew and Trimble. Longstreet protested this attack, begging Lee to reconsider without success. Following a lengthy but ineffective Confederate bombardment, Longstreet's men, facing the highly fortified and reinforced Fifth Corps entrenched behind a sturdy stone wall, marched almost a mile over open ground before nearing the Union center. Long range Union artillery pelted the ranks of the advancing regiments with horrendous

fire. Contemporary accounts describe entire company fronts of Confederate soldiers collapsing "like grain being harvested by a scythe." Longstreet's Assault was arguably the most disastrous bloodbath of the entire Civil War. Fewer than 5,000 of the approximately 15,000 Confederate troops making this massive assault survived. Witnesses claimed that Confederate dead and wounded lay five-deep, piled and writhing in front of the stone wall. Totals for both sides numbered approximately 50,000 dead, captured or wounded.

The final movement, Apotheosis, intends to portray the silence of peace and the sense of relief following General Lee's surrender to General Grant at the Appomattox Court House southwest of Richmond in April 1865. Sounding a bit like an old harmonium church organ, the movement begins as a simple hymn of respect, praise and reflection, offering closure and peace to those who were part of this war. The music becomes progressively more dramatic as it builds to proclaim the glory, bravery and dedication of all the Americans, Union and Confederate alike, who gave their lives during this monumental struggle.