The Code for the National Anthem of the United States of America

ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL ANTHEM COMMITTEE, APRIL 2, 1942

The Star-Spangled Banner will be presented only in situations, programs, and ceremonies where its message can be effectively projected.

Since the message of the music is greatly heightened by the text, it is of paramount importance that emphasis be placed upon the singing of the National Anthem.

The leader will address himself to those assembled, as an invitation for their participation. If announcement of the National Anthem is necessary, it will be stated as follows: "We shall now sing our National Anthem," or "So-and-so will lead you in singing our National Anthem.

On all occasions, in singing the National Anthem, the audience will stand facing the flag or the leader in an attitude of respectful attention. Outdoors, the men will remove hats.

Musicians playing the National Anthem in an orchestra or band will stand when convenient to do so.

Our National Anthem is customarily sung at the opening of any program, but special circumstances may warrant the placing of it elsewhere.

If only a single stanza of the National Anthem is sung, the first will be used.

In publishing the National Anthem, the melody and harmony and syllabic divisions of the Service Version of 1918 will be used. In publishing for vocal groups, the voice-parts of the Service Version will remain unchanged. (The Service Version in A-flat is reproduced on this page.)

It is inappropriate to make or use sophisticated "concert" versions of the National Anthem.

For usual mass singing of adults and for band or instrumental performance, the key of A-flat will be used. For treble voices the key of B-flat may be used.

The Star-Spangled Banner

SERVICE VERSION

[Music notation]

If an instrumental introduction is used, the last two measures are most appropriate.

When the National Anthem is sung unaccompanied, care should be taken to establish the correct pitch.

The National Anthem should be sung at a moderate rate of speed. (The metronome indications in the Service Version are crotchet 104 for the verse and crotchet 96 for the chorus.)

The slighting of note values in the playing or singing of the National Anthem will seriously impair the beauty and effectiveness of both the music and the lyric. Conductors should painstakingly rehearse both instrumental and vocal groups in the meticulous observance of correct note values.

The statements herein relate to every mode of civilian performance of our National Anthem and apply to the publication of the music for such modes of performance.

The Service Version of the National Anthem, reproduced below, was prepared in 1918 by a joint committee of twelve (see 1919 Yearbook of the M.E.N.C., p. 145, and Music Supervisors Journal, November 1918, pp. 5-33), comprising John Alden Carpenter, Frederick S. Converse, Wallace Goodrich, and Walter R. Spalding, representing the War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities; Halio E. Dine, Peter W. Dykema (chairman), and Osborne McConathy, representing the Music Educators National Conference; Clarence C. Curber, Carl Engel, William Armes Fisher, Arthur E. Johnson, and E. W. Newton, representing the music publishers.

The Service Version as reproduced below is the same as that prepared by the original poet committee, with the exception of the transcription to the key of A-flat, in order to make it more singable by audiences, and a few minor changes in punctuation and wording, in order to make it more authentic.

The code here printed was adopted by the 1942 National Anthem Committee at the Milwaukee Conference with the assistance of its two representatives from the War Department, Major Howard C. Brown, Music Officer in the Special Services Branch, and Major Harold V. Kent, Education Liaison Officer in the Radio Branch of the Bureau of Public Relations. Messrs. Dykema and McConathy represent the original committee on the 1942 Committee, which includes representatives of all principal music organizations.

[Reprints of this page may be obtained from M.E.N.C. headquarters, 64 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, for $1.00 each, postpaid.]