AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

Words by Katharine Lee Bates

Music by Samuel Augustus Ward



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Key of C

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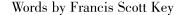
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The origins of the melody are obscure. In mid-eighteenth-century London, there was a club of bon vivants called The Anacreontic Society named after the ancient Greek poet, Anacreon, who had a philosophy that today might be called "let the good times roll." The Society often featured musical entertainment, and in about 1750, the tune, then called "To Anacreon in Heaven," made its appearance as a drinking song. The earliest printing lists John Stafford Smith as the arranger, but it is unclear whether he actually composed the melody or, as some musicologists have alleged, adapted an old hunting call.

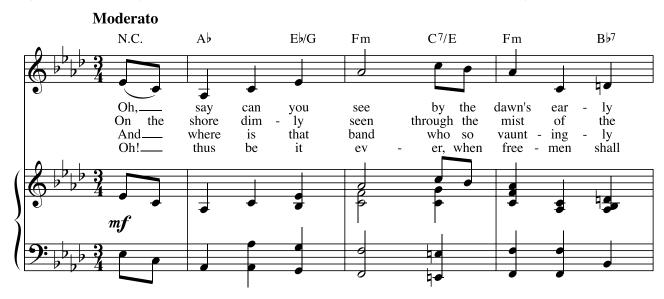
Since the first phrase can be played on a horn without using valves, this supposition is entirely possible. The printed arrangement was for a choral group with the melody divided between low and high voices. This explains why the vocal range of the song is so large (an octave plus a perfect fifth), something which has caused major problems for many a singer.

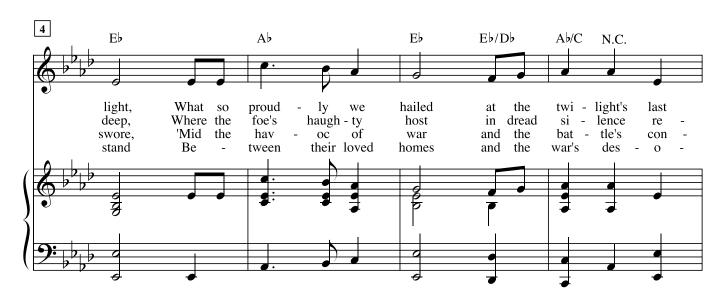
Nevertheless, Key's song achieved immediate and lasting success. Finally, by an act of Congress in 1931, "The Star-Spangled Banner" was declared the official national anthem of the United States of America.

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER



Music by John Stafford Smith





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THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

Words by Francis Scott Key

Music by John Stafford Smith

