**1 January 1881** The United States Marine Band makes its first public appearance under its new leader, John Philip Sousa (26), at a reception at the White House.

**4 January 1881** Nikolay Andreyevich Roslavets is born in Dushatin in the Chernihiv Region of Russia (Bryansk, Ukraine), the son of rural peasants. (This could be 5 January)

*Academic Festival Overture* by Johannes Brahms (47) is performed for the first time, in Breslau (Wroclaw) conducted by the composer.

**6 January 1881** Antonín Dvorák’s (39) orchestral work *For Prague Students*, is performed for the first time, in Prague.

*Menuetto a Scherzo* for clarinet and piano by Leos Janácek (26) is performed for the first time, in Brünn (Brno).

**7 January 1881** *Schön München*, a symphonic waltz by George Whitefield Chadwick (26), is performed for the first time, in the Music Hall, Boston.

**11 January 1881** String Quartet no.1 by Alyeksandr Borodin (47) is performed for the first time.

**13 January 1881** Chilean forces capture Chorrillos, twelve km south of Lima.

**15 January 1881** At a meeting of the Brno Beseda (choral society) committee, their director, Leos Janácek (26) hears complaints that he programs too much of his own music, to the detriment of other works. He calls this a lie and promptly resigns.

While President de Pi´rola of Peru and Chilean General Baquedano are engaged in a peace conference at Miraflores, shooting breaks out all along the front. Peruvian forces are defeated. The President flees as Peruvian troops ransack the capital.

**16 January 1881** Peruvian troops remaining in Lima surrender to the Chileans.

*Rapsodia cubana* for piano by Isaac Albéniz (20) is performed for the first time, in Teatro Avellandeda, Havana by the composer.

**17 January 1881** Chilean troops enter Lima and restore order.

**18 January 1881** Louis Pasteur announces his discovery of the pneumococcus bacterium which causes pneumonia, at a meeting of the Académie de Médecine, Paris. Although he is the first to make the announcement, Pasteur discovered the bacterium last December, three months after the US physician George Miller Sternberg made the same discovery.

Chilean forces enter Callao, Peru.

**20 January 1881** Franz Liszt (69) moves in to his new apartment at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest.

**21 January 1881** Camille Saint-Saëns (45) is elected to fill the seat vacated by the death of Henri Reber at the French Institute.

**22 January 1881** The 3,500-year-old Egyptian Obelisk known colloquially as Cleopatra’s Needle is erected in Central Park, New York.

*Poème d’un jour* op.21, a song for voice and piano by Gabriel Fauré (35) to words of Grandmougin, is performed for the first time, by the Société National de Musique, Paris.

**23 January 1881** *Yevgeny Onyegin*, lyric scenes by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (38) to words of Shilovsky and the composer after Pushkin, is performed by professionals for the first time, at the Bolshoy Theatre, Moscow by students of Moscow Conservatory. See 29 March 1879.

*Spitzentuch-Quadrille* op.392 by Johann Strauss (55) is performed for the first time, in the Musikverein, Vienna.

*Une nuit à Lisbonne* op.63, a barcarolle for orchestra by Camille Saint-Saëns (45) is performed for the first time, at the Cirque d’hiver, Paris.

**24 January 1881** After a siege of over a month, Russians detonate explosives under the wall of the Turkmen fortress of Geok Tepe. They rush in and kill 6,500 people, including all the male residents who have not fled. A further 8,000 are killed by pursuing Russians as they attempt escape across the desert.

The trial of Charles Stewart Parnell and other leaders of the Irish Land League ends in a hung jury.

In the case of *Springer v. United States*, the US Supreme Court rules that the federal government has the right to tax incomes.

**27 January 1881** *Souvenez-vous, Vierge Marie: Prière de St. Bernard* for solo voices, chorus, orchestra, and organ by Jules Massenet (38) to words of Boyer is performed for the first time, in the Cirque d’Hiver, Paris.

**28 January 1881** An attempt by the British to break Boer lines at Laing’s Nek is repulsed with heavy losses.

**29 January 1881** Two songs for voice and piano by Gabriel Fauré (35) are performed for the first time, by the Société National de Musique, Paris: *Nell* op.18/1 to words of de Lisle, and *Automne* op.18/3 to words of Silvestre.

**31 January 1881** *Jeanne d’Arc*, a scène lyrique for solo voices and female chorus by student Ernest Chausson (25), is performed for the first time, at the Paris Conservatoire.

**1 February 1881** A French company under Ferdinand de Lesseps begins to construct a canal across the Isthmus of Panama.

**2 February 1881** After 41 hours of debate by the Irish Nationalist Party, Speaker Henry Brand orders a vote on the first reading of the Coercion Bill for Ireland.

*Der Frühling* op.6/2 and *Nachwirkung* op.6/3, songs by Johannes Brahms (47) to words of Rousseau and Meissner respectively, are performed for the first time, in The Hague, 29 years after they were composed.

**4 February 1881** The first and fourth of the seven *Gypsy Songs* for voice and piano by Antonín Dvorák (39) to words of Heyduk are performed for the first time, in Vienna.

**5 February 1881** The first complete public performance of Franz Schubert’s (†52) Symphony no.1 D.82 is given in the Crystal Palace, London, 68 years after it was composed.

Thomas Carlyle dies in London at the age of 85.

**6 February 1881** *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*, an opera by Charles Villiers Stanford (28) to words of Squire after Moore, is performed for the first time, in the Hannover Hoftheater.

**8 February 1881** A furious battle at Skuinshoogte (near Ingogo) results in a Boer victory over the British.

Práxedes Mateo-Sagasta Escolar replaces Antonio Cánovas del Castillo as Prime Minister of Spain.

**9 February 1881** Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky dies in St. Petersburg at the age of 59.

*In Filanda*, a cantata by Pietro Mascagni (17) to words of Soffredini, is performed for the first time, in the Casa del Casino di San Marco, Livorno.

**10 February 1881** *Les contes d’Hoffmann*, an opéra-fantastique by Jacques Offenbach (†0) to words of Barbier completed by Guiraud, is performed for the first time, at the Opéra-Comique, Paris.

*El bien público* of Havana includes the first notice of Isaac Albéniz (20) as a conductor, in the Círculo Español.

**12 February 1881** The second version of Symphony no.2 by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (40) is performed for the first time, in St. Petersburg. See 7 February 1873.

**14 February 1881** *Walpurgisnacht* op.75/4 for two sopranos and piano by Johannes Brahms (47) to words of Alexis is performed for the first time, in Vienna.

**16 February 1881** The Canadian Pacific Railway is incorporated in Montreal.

**19 February 1881** The first complete public performance of Franz Schubert’s (†52) Symphony no.3 D.200 is given in the Crystal Palace, London 66 years after it was composed.

**20 February 1881** The second version of the Symphony no.4 by Anton Bruckner (56) is performed for the first time, privately by the Akademischer Wagner-Verein, in Vienna. See 4 February 1880, 22 January 1888, 12 December 1909 and 20 September 1975.

**21 February 1881** Modest Musorgsky (41) makes his last public appearances at morning and evening concerts in St. Petersburg.

**22 February 1881** *Stürmisch in Lieb’ und Tanz* op.393, a polka-schnell by Johann Strauss (55), is performed for the first time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna.

**23 February 1881** Modest Musorgsky (41) suffers a seizure at the home of contralto Darya Leonova in St. Petersburg but recovers and spends the night there, sleeping in a chair.

**24 February 1881** By the Treaty of St. Petersburg, China pays an indemnity to Russia for the return of the Ili River Valley.

Modest Musorgsky (41) suffers three fits of alcoholic epilepsy at the house of contralto Darya Leonova, St. Petersburg.

**25 February 1881**  Modest Musorgsky (41) is taken by friends to Nikolayevsky Military Hospital.

*The Maid of Orleans*, an opera by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (40) to his own words after Schiller, is performed for the first time, at the Mariinsky Theatre, St. Petersburg. The work is well received by the audience but critics are scathing. Playing Dunois is a famous bass named Fyodor Stravinsky.

The first two of the Trois romances sans paroles op.17 for piano by Gabriel Fauré (35) are performed for the first time, by the Société National de Musique, Paris. See 19 January 1889.

**26 February 1881** Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (40) leaves Russia for the west. His sojourn will be cut short when he returns to attend the funeral of Nikolay Rubinstein.

**27 February 1881** Boers storm the British position on top of Mount Majuba completely routing them with heavy losses, including the death of the British commander, Sir George Pomeroy Colley.

**1 March 1881** The *SS Servia* is launched at Clydebank. It is the first large ocean liner made from steel.

*Why so Pale and Wan*, a part song, and the march *Pas-redouble no.1*, both by Edward Elgar (23), are performed for the first time, in Worcester.

**2 March 1881** The Coercion Act for Ireland, suspending habeas corpus, receives royal assent.

*The Wolverine March* by John Philip Sousa (26) is performed for the first time, in Washington.

**4 March 1881** James Abram Garfield replaces Rutherford Birchard Hayes as President of the United States. At the inauguration ceremony, *President Garfield’s Inauguration March* by John Philip Sousa (26) is performed for the first time. The 47th Congress of the United States convenes in Washington. Garfield’s Republican Party takes control of the House of Representatives while the parties are evenly divided in the Senate.

**5 March 1881** An armistice is concluded between the British and the Boers.

**6 March 1881** France annexes Oparo (Rapa Island, French Polynesia).

*Liebchen, schwing Dich* op.394, a polka mazurka by Johann Strauss (55), is performed for the first time, in the Musikverein, Vienna.

**11 March 1881** The leader of The People’s Will, Andrey Ivanovich Zheliabov, is arrested, causing plans for the murder of the Tsar to be accelerated.

Charles Bradlaugh loses his case to be seated in the House of Commons when a court rules he took his oath illegally. An appeals court will agree and his seat will be declared vacant. However, his Northampton constituents will reelect him.

**13 March 1881** A mining student named Rysakov throws a bomb at a carriage containing Tsar Alyeksandr II in Catherine Street, St. Petersburg. The Tsar is unhurt but when he steps from his carriage to see to the wounded Cossacks, a Polish student of the technological institute named Ignacy Hriniewicki throws a bomb at the Tsar’s feet. His Imperial Highness is carried into the Winter Palace where he dies. Hriniewicki dies in the street. Tsar Alyeksandr II, Grand Duke of Finland, King of Poland is succeeded by his son Alyeksandr III.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (40) is in the company of Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich in Naples when news arrives of the killing of the Grand Duke’s uncle, Tsar Alyeksandr II. The murder will close all theatres in Russia, interrupting the run of Tchaikovsky’s *The Maid of Orléans* in St. Petersburg.

**14 March 1881** String Quartet no.2 by Richard Strauss (16) is performed for the first time, in the Museumssaal, Munich.

**15 March 1881** *Rébecca*, scéne biblique for solo voices, chorus and orchestra by César Franck (58) to words of Collin, is performed for the first time, by the Société Chorale d’Amateurs Guillot de Sainbris, with piano accompaniment. See 16 May 1911.

**16 March 1881** Three songs for voice and piano by Richard Strauss (16) to words of Geibel are performed for the first time, in Munich: *Waldgesang, O schneller mein Ross*, and *Die Lilien glühn in Düften.*

**21 March 1881** The British garrison of Potchefstroom surrenders to besieging Boers.

**23 March 1881** A peace agreement is concluded between Great Britain and the Boers.

On his way to Nice for treatment of intestinal tuberculosis, Nikolay Grigoryevich Rubinstein dies in Paris.

While in Nice, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (40) learns of the death of his musical mentor, Nikolay Rubinstein, in Paris.

António Rodrigues Sampaio replaces Anselmo José Braamcamp as Prime Minister of Portugal.

A fire at the Nice Opera House kills 70 people.

**25 March 1881** Béla Viktor János Bartók is born at no.229 Szerb-Nagyszentmiklós in Nagyszentmiklós, Torantál District, Hungary (Sînnicolau Mare, Timis District, Romania), first of two children born to Béla Bartók, director of the local agricultural school, and Paula Voit, schoolteacher, both amateur musicians.

Symphony no.6 by Antonín Dvorák (39) is performed for the first time, in Prague.

**26 March 1881** The Principality of Romania is proclaimed a kingdom. Prince Carol I becomes King Carol I.

In constant distress, Modest Musorgsky (41) draws up his will in a St. Petersburg hospital.

In Paris, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (40), Jules Massenet (38), Eduard Lalo and Ivan Turgenyev are among the many who oversee the placing of the body of Nikolay Rubinstein in a lead coffin to be transported to Moscow. He died recently of intestinal tuberculosis.

*Festmarsch* in E flat op.1 by Richard Strauss (16) is performed for the first time, in the Augsburger Hof hotel, Munich.

**27 March 1881** Citizens of Basingstoke, Hampshire riot against the evangelical and temperance activities of the Salvation Army. The military is called in to quell the disturbances.

*Tarentelle* for voice and piano by Georges Bizet (†5) is performed for the first time, in the Cirque d’hiver, Paris.

**28 March 1881** 05:00 Modest Petrovich Musorgsky dies in Nikolayevsky Military Hospital, St. Petersburg of the cumulative effects of alcoholism, aged 42 years and seven days.

Phineas T. Barnum and James Anthony Bailey agree to join their two circuses into one.

**29 March 1881** A Requiem mass in memory of Modest Musorgsky takes place in the church of the Nikolayevsky Military Hospital, St. Petersburg. Most Russian musical notables are there, including Vladimir Stasov, Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (37) and Alyeksandr Borodin (47).

**30 March 1881** The earthly remains of Modest Musorgsky are laid to rest in the Nevsky Cemetery, St. Petersburg. Attending are the other members of the Kuchka, Alyeksandr Borodin (47), Cesar Cui (46), Mily Balakirev (44), and Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (37), along with many musicians and music students.

Symphony in d minor by Richard Strauss (16) is performed for the first time, in the Odeonsaal, Munich.

Banker Henry Lee Higginson publishes in the *Boston Herald* his plans for the new Boston Symphony Orchestra.

**1 April 1881** *Le tribut de Zamora*, an opéra by Charles Gounod (62) to words of d’Ennery and Brésil, is performed for the first time, at the Paris Opéra, conducted by the composer. The work is a success with the audience which includes President Jules Grévy.

**3 April 1881** An earthquake centered on Chios in the Ottoman Empire kills almost 8,000 people.

**5 April 1881** A peace treaty is signed between Great Britain and the Boers at Pretoria. The Transvaal gains independence under nominal British rule.

**6 April 1881** Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (40) arrives back in St. Petersburg after his sojourn in Italy and France.

**7 April 1881** Franz Liszt (69) travels with an entourage of 16 coaches to his birthplace of Raiding where a plaque is unveiled in his honor. He tours the town with hundreds of its citizens.

**10 April 1881** Henry Lee Higginson signs a contract with Charles Martin Loeffler (20) for Loeffler to play in his newly founded Boston Symphony Orchestra. Loeffler will move to Boston in September from New York. “It was the only member of the orchestra whom he personally and independently hired, ‘and it was the best.’”

**19 April 1881** Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield, dies in Mayfair, Middlesex at the age of 76.

**21 April 1881** Arthur Sullivan (38) completes the overture to *Patience* and gives it to Eugene d’Albert to score. He is a 17-year-old music student.

**22 April 1881** Dimitrie C. Bratianu replaces his brother Ion Constantin Bratianu as Prime Minister of Romania.

*The Viking’s Last Voyage* for baritone, male chorus and orchestra by George Whitefield Chadwick (26) is performed for the first time, in Boston, conducted by the composer. Earlier in the day, Chadwick is hired as a teacher of “free composition” at New England Conservatory.

**23 April 1881** *Patience, or Bunthorne’s Bride*, an operetta by Arthur Sullivan (38) to words of Gilbert, is performed for the first time, at the Opera Comique Theatre, London. Oscar Wilde is in the audience “looking forward to being amused.” The initial run of 578 performances is the longest of any Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, save *The Mikado.*

Ballade for piano and orchestra op.19 by Gabriel Fauré (35) is performed for the first time, by the Société National de Musique, Paris, the composer at the keyboard.

**26 April 1881** The sloop *HMS Doterel* explodes and sinks while anchored off Punta Arenas, Argentina. 143 crewmen are killed with only twelve survivors. The tragedy will be determined to be an accident.

**27 April 1881** The first of a wave of pogroms against Jews across Russia over the next year begins in Elisavetgrad (Kirovgrad).

**29 April 1881** The New Zealand passenger ship *SS Tararua* goes aground on Otara Reef on the south end of New Zealand. Only 20 of the 151 people aboard manage to survive.

**30 April 1881** French naval forces seize Bizerta as French troops invade Tunis from Algeria.

The discovery of the pneumococcus bacterium responsible for pneumonia by the American George Miller Sternberg, almost simultaneously with Pasteur, is published in the Bulletin of the National Board of Health.

**1 May 1881** The city of Bizerte, Tunisia surrenders to invading French troops.

**6 May 1881** Five months after killing the entire male population of the Turkoman city of Geok Tepe, the Russian Empire creates a new Transcaucasian province.

**7 May 1881** Rioting against Jews begins in Kiev. Dozens of Jews are killed and 2,000,000 rubles of property destroyed over the next three days.

*Myrthenblüthen* op.395, a waltz for male chorus and orchestra by Johann Strauss (55), is performed for the first time, in the Hofburg.

*Le Voyageur* op.18/2 for voice and piano by Gabriel Fauré (35) to words of Silvestre is performed for the first time, by the Société National de Musique, Paris.

**9 May 1881** Prince Aleksandur of Bulgaria dismisses his government and, with the acquiescence of Russia, assumes dictatorial powers. Jokhan Kazimir Gustavovich Ernrot replaces Petko Stoychev Karavelov as Prime Minister.

The *Second Mephisto Waltz* for orchestra by Franz Liszt (69) is performed for the first time, in Budapest.

**10 May 1881** *Jubelfest-Marsch* op.396 by Johann Strauss (55) is performed for the first time, in Theater-an-der-Wien, Vienna.

*Mam’zelle Moucheron*, an opérette-bouffe by Jacques Offenbach (†0) to words of Leterrier and Vanloo, is performed for the first time, at the Théâtre de la Renaissance, Paris.

**11 May 1881** In a manifesto issued today, Tsar Alyeksandr III makes clear his intention to maintain autocracy.

**12 May 1881** The Treaty of Bardo is signed by France and Muhammad as-Sadiq, Bey of Tunis. France is allowed to occupy any Tunisian territory it considers necessary and agrees to protect the Bey’s person, family and country against attack. By the end of the month, France will institute a military occupation of Tunisia.

The first electric tramway goes into service in Berlin, designed by Dr. Werner von Siemens and built by Siemens and Halske Company.

**13 May 1881** Théodore Justin Dominique Roustan becomes the first French governor of Tunisia.

**16 May 1881** The Gross Lichterfelde Tramway enters into service near Berlin. It is the first electric tram in the world.

**17 May 1881** *Air de Ballet* for orchestra by Edward Elgar (23) is performed for the first time, in Worcester.

Incidental music to Sophocles’ play *Oedipus tyrannus* by John Knowles Paine (42) is performed for the first time, in Sanders Theatre of Harvard University, before an rapt audience including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Julia Ward Howe and Charles Eliot Norton. The critics are complimentary.

**21 May 1881** The American Red Cross is founded in Washington by its first president, Clara Barton.

**24 May 1881** The *SS Victoria* capsizes in the Thames River at London, Ontario, killing upwards of 200 people.

**28 May 1881** Agostino Depretis replaces Benedetto Cairoli as Prime Minister of Italy.

**31 May 1881** Louis Pasteur supervises the injection of anthrax into sheep he has previously inoculated, at Pouilly-le-Fort, France. It is witnessed by dignitaries, press and hundreds of farmers.

King Leopold II of Belgium invests Franz Liszt (69) with the Order of Leopold, in Brussels.

**1 June 1881** Louis Pasteur is informed that all the unvaccinated sheep in his experiment are sick, thus proving the effectiveness of his anthrax vaccine.

**2 June 1881** When members of the press view the results of his field trials, Louis Pasteur is elevated to an international celebrity.

**3 June 1881** The instrumental version of *Burschenwanderung* op.389, a polka française by Johann Strauss (55), is performed for the first time, in the Musikverein, Vienna.

**4 June 1881** The Association for the Promotion of Church Music in Moravia is approved by the Governor of Moravia. Its driving force is Leos Janácek (26).

**11 June 1881** *Libuse*, a festival opera by Bedrich Smetana (57) to words of Wenzig translated by Spindler, is performed for the first time, for the opening of the National Theatre, Prague. The evening is attended by the Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria, to whom the composer is presented.

**14 June 1881** John McTammany of Cambridge, Massachusetts is granted a US patent for a player piano.

**16 June 1881** In fierce fighting, French land and naval forces capture Sfax from Tunisian rebels.

**18 June 1881** The Alliance of the Three Emperors, between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia, is renewed in a secret treaty in Budapest.

In Sudan, Muhammad Ahmad ibn Abd-Allah, a Moslem fundamentalist, declares himself al-Mahdi, the divinely guided one.

**19 June 1881** Sinfonia in F by Pietro Mascagni (17) is performed for the first time, at the Istituto Musicale Luigi Cherubini, Livorno.

**21 June 1881** Ion Constantin Bratianu replaces his brother Dimitrie C. Bratianu as Prime Minister of Romania.

His first store, in Utica, New York, having failed, Frank Winfield Woolworth opens a new store in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. This will be the beginning of his retail empire.

**24 June 1881** Andrew Ainslie Common of Great Britain and Henry Draper of the United States each photograph a comet.

A railroad bridge outside of Cuautla, Morelos, Mexico collapses sending a train into a ravine. Over 200 people, mostly soldiers and their families, are killed.

**25 June 1881** The *USS Jeannette*, commanded by Lt. George De Long, is crushed by pack ice 950 km north of Siberia after spending 21 months drifting. The survivors man life boats and row south.

**26 June 1881** Giacomo Puccini (22) is fined ten lire by the Academic Council of the Milan Conservatory for “continued unjustified absences.”

**28 June 1881** A treaty of alliance is concluded between Austria-Hungary and Serbia in Belgrade.

**2 July 1881** US President James A. Garfield is shot by Charles Guiteau in Washington.

Franz Liszt (69) falls down the stairs at his home in Weimar. He will be incapacitated for eight weeks.

A convention between Greece and Turkey sets their border from north of the Vale of Tempe to the Gulf of Arta. Greece gains Thessalia and the region of Arta, which includes 213,000 sq km and 500,000 people.

**4 July 1881** Tuskegee Institute, among the first American institutions for higher education of Blacks, is founded by Booker T. Washington.

**6 July 1881** Egyptian tomb-robber Abd Rassul Ahmed leads Emile Brugsch into an ancient tomb he recently discovered at Deir al Bahri (actually, his goat discovered it). Brugsch is the assistant to the famous French Egyptologist Gaston Camille Charles Maspero. The tomb holds 40 mummies including Thutmose III, Rameses II and Sethos I, as well as 6,000 funerary objects.

**13 July 1881** The Grand National Assembly meets in Svishtov, Bulgaria and institutes conservative constitutional reforms proposed by Prince Aleksandur. These essentially make Bulgaria a dictatorship. The Prince replaces Prime Minister Jokhan Kazimir Gustavovich Ernrot with himself.

In the Old Town church in Brünn (Brno), Leos Janácek (27) marries his piano pupil Zdenka Schulzová, daughter of Emilian Schulz, director of the Teachers’ Institute of Brünn, shortly before her 16th birthday.

**14 July 1881** Famed outlaw William H. Bonney (Billy the Kid) is shot to death at Ft. Sumner, New Mexico Territory by Lincoln County sheriff Pat Garrett, a former associate.

**15 July 1881** *Romanza Duca d’Alba* for tenor, violin, harmonium and piano by Pietro Mascagni (17) to words of Romani, is performed for the first time, at the Istituto Musicale Luigi Cherubini, Livorno.

**16 July 1881** Charles Martin Loeffler (20) sails from Le Havre aboard *Le Canada* emigrating to the United States.

**19 July 1881** Sitting Bull and his small band surrender at Fort Buford, Montana Territory.

**22 July 1881** Hubert Parry (33) and his family move into their new house, “Knight’s Croft”, in London.

**26 July 1881** Alexander Graham Bell is admitted to the sick room of President James Garfield in the White House. He uses his metal detector to attempt to find the bullet in the President’s body. He fails.

**27 July 1881** *Le Canada* docks in New York, eleven days out of Le Havre. Aboard is the latest immigrant to America, Charles Martin Loeffler (20).

**29 July 1881** The freedom of the press is restored by the French government.

**1 August 1881** After successfully locating a bullet in a veteran in his laboratory, Alexander Graham Bell attempts to find a bullet in President Garfield for a second time. Again he fails.

**2 August 1881** Alexander Graham Bell discovers that, contrary to his instructions, there was a steel wire mattress under the President while he examined him. This was why his metal detector failed to work. Unfortunately, by this time, Bell is being vilified in the press as a quack.

**3 August 1881** By the Pretoria Convention, the Transvaal State is reestablished under British suzerainty.

The British Admiralty suspends the power of command officers to impose corporal punishment.

One day after addressing 15,000 supporters in Trafalgar Square, Charles Bradlaugh, having been elected twice, goes to the House of Commons to claim his seat. It takes ten policemen to keep him out of the building.

**12 August 1881** Sparked by a welder’s torch, the Prague National Theatre, opened two months ago, burns to the ground. Within five days, 240,000 guilders will be donated for its rebuilding.

**16 August 1881** Sabah comes under the rule of the British North Borneo Charter Company.

**22 August 1881** The second Irish Land Act is passed by Parliament. It creates the Irish Land Commission to address the issue of excessive rents.

**26 August 1881** Algeria, Bone, and Constantine become French départments.

**27 August 1881** A hurricane strikes Savannah, Georgia and travels inland over the next three days. An estimated 700 people are killed.

**3 September 1881** Gustav Mahler (21) takes up his appointment as conductor of the Landschafliches Theater in Laibach (Ljubljana).

**4 September 1881** A second round of voting in the French general election results in most seats going to moderate leftists, especially the Republican Union and the Republican Left.

The *Messe des pêcheurs de Villerville* (*Messe basse)* by Gabriel Fauré (36) is performed for the first time, in the church of Villerville, Calvados, across the mouth of the Seine from Le Havre. See 10 September 1882.

**9 September 1881** An Egyptian nationalist rising under Arabi Pasha begins against the Ottoman Empire.

**15 September 1881** A monstrous typhoon makes landfall at Haiphong killing an estimated 300,000 people.

**18 September 1881** The border between Greece and the Ottoman Empire is set by a convention signed today by representatives of Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

**19 September 1881** American President James A. Garfield dies in Elberon, New Jersey, where he was brought to escape the heat in Washington while he convalesced from his wounds of 2 July.

**20 September 1881** 01:30 American Vice-President Chester A. Arthur is sworn in as President at his home on Lexington Avenue in New York.

**24 September 1881** Gustav Mahler (21) conducts for the first time as the principal conductor of the Landschafliches Theater in Laibach (Ljubljana).

**27 September 1881** The new Budapest Opera House is opened in the presence of Emperor Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth. Franz Liszt (69) composed his *Ungarisches Königslied* for the event, but the work is not performed because it includes the Rákóczy tune, referring to the old enemy of the Habsburgs.

**2 October 1881** *The Stubborn Lovers*, a comic opera by Antonín Dvorák (40) to words of Stolba, is performed for the first time, in the New Czech Theatre, Prague.

**3 October 1881** Gustav Mahler (21) conducts an opera for the first time, *Il Trovatore*, at the Landestheater in Laibach (Ljubljana).

**9 October 1881** Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (37) writes that he has resigned from the directorship of the Free School of Music, St. Petersburg.

**10 October 1881** Richard D’Oyly Carte opens his new Savoy Theatre in London with a production of *Patience* by Gilbert and Sullivan (39). The building has been erected to accommodate the immense popularity of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. In honor of the event, Arthur Sullivan conducts the performance personally. The auditorium is illuminated by electricity. See 28 December 1881.

**11 October 1881** David H. Houston of Cambria, Wisconsin receives a US patent for roll film.

**12 October 1881** Charles Stuart Parnell is arrested under the Coercion Act for inciting Irish farmers to violence in the land war. He becomes a hero overnight.

**15 October 1881** The hall of the Paris Opéra is illuminated by electricity for the first time, during a gala evening celebrating the Congress of Electricity.

**18 October 1881** While residing in Kilmainham prison in Dublin, Charles Stuart Parnell joins other Irish MPs in issuing the “No Rent Manifesto.” They call upon supporters of the Irish Land League to withhold their rent payments.

**19 October 1881** WS Gilbert visits Arthur Sullivan (39) in his London home with a vague idea for an operetta including fairies and the House of Lords (*Iolanthe*).

**20 October 1881** The British government declares the Irish Land League to be illegal.

**21 October 1881** Wyatt and Virgil Earp along with Doc Holliday kill members of the Clanton gang and McLowery Brothers at the OK Corral, Tombstone, Arizona Territory.

**22 October 1881** A gala concert celebrating the 70th birthday of Franz Liszt takes place in the German embassy in Rome, where Liszt is living. Among the attenders is Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (41). He feels affection for Liszt, but not his music.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra gives its inaugural concert at the Music Hall.

**23 October 1881** Charles Lamoureux inaugurates the Concerts Lamoreux in Paris. Over the next ten years, two hundred concerts will be given in this series.

**25 October 1881** A statue of Giuseppe Verdi (68) is dedicated in the foyer of Teatro alla Scala, Milan. The honoree does not attend.

Cellist Victor Herbert (22) is given a solo opportunity with the Court Orchestra of Stuttgart when the scheduled pianist becomes ill. He plays the a minor concerto of Georg Eduard Goltermann. The audience is appreciative.

**27 October 1881** Elections for the fifth Reichstag of the German Empire result in the Center Party holding the most seats, followed by the Progress Party and the Conservatives.

**28 October 1881** Mikhail von Reutern replaces Pyotr Alyeksandrovich Valuev as Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of Russia.

French forces take Kairouan, Tunisia without a shot.

**30 October 1881** Serenade for strings by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (41) is performed publicly for the first time, in St. Petersburg. See 3 December 1880.

**1 November 1881** Richard (68) and Cosima Wagner depart Bayreuth for another journey to Italy.

**2 November 1881** Hugo Wolf (21) enters duties as chorus master at the Stadttheater in Salzburg.

The American Association of Professionals, a second baseball league, is created by six teams in Cincinnati.

**3 November 1881** *Awake, my heart*, an anthem for chorus and organ by Charles Villiers Stanford (29) to words of Klopstock (tr.Wilson), is performed for the first time, in St. Paul’s Cathedral, London.

**5 November 1881** Richard Wagner (68) and his family arrive in Palermo where they will spend the winter until 2 February.

**9 November 1881** Concerto for piano and orchestra no.2 by Johannes Brahms (48) is performed for the first time, in Budapest. the composer at the keyboard.

**12 November 1881** Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky’s (41) song *Softly the Spirit Flew Up To Heaven* op.47/2, to words of A. Tolstoy, is performed for the first time, in St. Petersburg.

Concerto for piano and orchestra no.2 by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (41) is performed for the first time, in New York.

**13 November 1881** Horatio Parker (18) begins lessons with George Whitefield Chadwick in Chadwick’s Boston home at 149a Tremont Street. It is Chadwick’s 27th birthday.

**14 November 1881** Léon Gambetta replaces Jules Ferry as Prime Minister of France.

António Maria de Fontes Pereira de Melo replaces António Rodrigues Sampaio as Prime Minister of Portugal.

The trial of Charles Guiteau begins in Washington. He is charged with killing President Garfield.

**15 November 1881** The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions is formed at a meeting in Pittsburgh. In five years it will become the American Federation of Labor.

**17 November 1881** Kaiser Wilhelm I opens the new German Diet with a speech including promises for sweeping social reform.

The first three movements of a String Quintet by Anton Bruckner (57) are performed for the first time, in Vienna. See 7 May 1883.

**18 November 1881** John Philip Sousa (27) is raised to the level of Third Degree Mason.

**19 November 1881** Incidental music to Aristophanes’ play *Die Frösche* by Engelbert Humperdinck (27) is performed for the first time, in the Stadttheater, Cologne.

**25 November 1881** *Der lustige Krieg*, an operetta by Johann Strauss (56) to words of Zell and Genée, is performed for the first time, in the Theater-an-der-Wien, Vienna. The work is not a total disaster.

**26 November 1881** *I Bless You Forests* op.47/5, a song by Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky (41), to words of A. Tolstoy, is performed for the first time, in St. Petersburg.

**1 December 1881** *The Prince and the Pauper* by Mark Twain is published in London.

**3 December 1881** Henry Stanley founds the settlement of Leopoldville (Kinshasa) on the Congo River. He names it after his patron, the King of Belgium.

**4 December 1881** Concerto for violin and orchestra by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (41) is performed for the first time, in Vienna.

The first issue of the *Los Angeles Times* goes on sale.

**6 December 1881** *Nänie* for chorus and orchestra by Johannes Brahms (48) to words of Schiller is performed for the first time, in Zürich, directed by the composer.

**7 December 1881** Leos Janácek (27) is appointed the first director of the Organ School in Brünn (Brno). He is the driving force behind its creation.

Andante with Variations and Scherzo for violin, cello, and piano by Ferruccio Busoni (15) is performed for the first time, in Milan.

**8 December 1881** Shortly before the beginning of the second Viennese performance of *Les contes d'Hoffmann* in the Ringtheater, fire breaks out on stage. Since the doors open inward, many are killed in the crush. About 650 people are burned, asphyxiated, or trampled to death. Johann Strauss (56) attended the Vienna premiere last night. Anton Bruckner (57), who keeps all his musical manuscripts in an apartment next door, rushes to the scene to save his work. By the time he gets there, the fire is under control. Among the dead are Heinrich Nachod and his wife, aunt and uncle of Arnold Schoenberg (7). Their two children will be adopted by the Schoenbergs.

**9 December 1881** Elections are held for the New Zealand Parliament. For the first time, all adult men are eligible to vote.

**14 December 1881** *An eine Äolsharfe* op.19/5, a song by Johannes Brahms (48) to words of Mörike, is performed for the first time, in Strasbourg.

String Quartet no.9 by Antonín Dvorák (40) is performed for the first time, at Trieste.

**19 December 1881** *Hérodiade*, an opéra by Jules Massenet (39) to words of Milliet and Grémont (pseud. of Hartmann) after Flaubert, is performed for the first time, at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, Brussels. It is the first French opera to be premiered here and is a resounding success.

**22 December 1881** Leos Janácek (27) applies to the Brno Regional School Board to be transferred from his post at the Teachers’ Institute.

**24 December 1881** Oscar Wilde boards ship for his famous lecture tour of the United States. The captain of his vessel, the *Arizona*, will later remark, “I wish I had had that man lashed to the bowsprit on the windward side.”

**25 December 1881** *O heilige Nacht* for tenor, female chorus, and organ by Franz Liszt (70) is performed for the first time, in Rome.

**28 December 1881** The Savoy Theatre becomes the first theatre to be entirely illuminated by electricity. One gaslight is kept burning, in case the experiment in electricity fails. Between the acts of *Patience* by Gilbert and Sullivan (39), the impresario, Richard D’Oyly Carte comes on stage and demonstrates the safety of electricity. He has an electric light wrapped in muslin and smashed to demonstrate that it can not cause fire with drapery. The audience is impressed and duly applauds. See 10 October 1881.

**31 December 1881** Edward Elgar (24) leaves Worcester for a sojourn in Leipzig.

Arthur Sullivan (39) reaches Port Said on a tour of Egypt and Italy.

©2004-2016 Paul Scharfenberger

14 April 2016