



2024

MARCH MANIA

32 MARCHES. 4 WEEKS. 1 CHAMPION.

MUSIC NOTES

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA BIOGRAPHY

John Philip Sousa was born in 1854 in southeast Washington, D.C., near the Marine Barracks where his father Antonio played trombone in the Marine Band. Sousa studied piano and most orchestral instruments, excelling on the violin. When at age 13 young Sousa was almost persuaded to join a circus band, his father intervened, enlisting him as an apprentice musician in the Marine Band. Sousa remained in the band until he was 20, only to return five years later as the 17th Director. Sousa led “The President’s Own” from 1880 to 1892. Perhaps more than anyone else, Sousa is responsible for bringing the United States Marine Band to the level of excellence upheld today.



SEMPER FIDELIS

John Philip Sousa

It is unfortunate that President Chester A. Arthur, the man responsible for this march, did not live to hear it. In a conversation with Sousa, then leader of the U.S. Marine Band, he expressed his displeasure at the official use of the song “Hail to the Chief.” When Sousa stated that it was actually an old Scottish boating song, the President suggested that he compose more appropriate music. Sousa responded with two pieces, not one. First he composed “Presidential Polonaise” (1886). Then, two years after Arthur’s death, he wrote “Semper Fidelis.”

The march takes its title from the motto of the U.S. Marine Corps: “Semper Fidelis”—“Always Faithful.” The trio is an extension of an earlier Sousa composition, “With Steady Step,” one of eight brief trumpet and drum pieces he wrote for *The Trumpet and Drum* (1886). It was dedicated to those who inspired it—the officers and men of the U.S. Marine Corps. In Sousa’s own words: “I wrote ‘Semper Fidelis’ one night while in tears, after my comrades of the Marine Corps had sung their famous hymn at Quantico.”

For the first performance, Sousa demonstrated his flair for theatrics:

We were marching down Pennsylvania Avenue, and had turned the corner at the Treasury Building. On the reviewing stand were President Harrison, many members of the diplomatic corps, a large part of the House and Senate, and an immense number of invited guests besides. I had so timed our playing of the march that the “trumpet” theme would be heard for the first time, just as we got to the front of the reviewing stand. Suddenly ten extra trumpets were shot in the air, and the “theme” was pealed out in unison. Nothing like it had ever been heard there before—when the great throng on the stand had recovered its surprise, it rose in a body and led by the President himself, showed its pleasure in a mighty swell of applause. It was a proud moment for us all.

“Semper Fidelis” subsequently gained recognition as the official march of the U.S. Marine Corps. Sousa regarded it as his best march, musically speaking. It became one of his most popular marches, and he once stated that it was the favorite march of Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany—before World War I, of course. It was played by the Sousa Band in many foreign countries and always received acclaim as a well-known composition. Few knew that it had been sold outright to the publisher for the unbelievably low sum of \$35.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 83. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Semper Fidelis” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 2](#)



REVIVAL

John Philip Sousa

Composer of the National March of the United States of America, “The Stars and Stripes Forever,” John Philip Sousa was the most famous Director of U.S. Marine Band. He first joined the organization at age thirteen when his father, a trombonist in the Band, enlisted him as an apprentice to prevent the young Sousa from running away to join a circus band. Sousa remained in the Marine Band until he was twenty, only to return six years later as the 17th Director.

Sousa’s “Revival” March, completed in 1876, was one of his earliest and was originally written for orchestra, not band. In the middle section of the march, Sousa quotes the hymn “The Sweet By and By,” immensely popular at the time and still beloved today. Sousa’s former music teacher, John Esputa Jr., reviewed the piece in his weekly newspaper, the Musical Monitor: “The march is deserving of credit. We are glad to see such proficiency in one so young, and predict for him a brilliant future.”

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 80. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Revival” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 1](#)



THE BOYS OF THE OLD BRIGADE

W. Paris Chambers

Born in November 1854 just days before “The March King” John Philip Sousa, William Paris Chambers achieved popularity as a bandmaster and cornetist in the same golden age of American professional bands as his more famous contemporary. Chambers spent his early years in Pennsylvania, where he quickly rose through the ranks to direct his first band by age eighteen. From 1888 to 1893 he led the popular Great Southern Band of Baltimore as director and soloist, dazzling audiences around the country with his virtuosic cornet playing, excelling even in such extreme conditions as the high-altitude summit of Pike’s Peak in Colorado. Chambers’ penchant for showmanship found additional outlets at the C. G. Conn instrument store in New York City, where he performed impromptu solos as a salesman and manager, and later on concert tours in Europe and Africa. According to legend, one of Chambers’ favorite tricks was to perform with the cornet inverted, pressing the valves up with the backs of his fingers while remaining perfectly in tempo.

Chambers’ compositional output parallels his performance interests, encompassing nearly ninety marches and several cornet solos. He wrote “The Boys of the Old Brigade” in 1902 while working at the Conn store in New York. The march opens with an attention-catching fanfare and features the low brass throughout.

[Listen to the march](#)



JACK TAR

John Philip Sousa

John Philip Sousa was born in southeast Washington, D.C., near Marine Barracks Washington where his father Antonio was a musician in the Marine Band. Sousa studied piano and most orchestral instruments, but his first love was the violin. He became very proficient on the instrument, and at age thirteen was almost persuaded to join a circus band. His father intervened, however, and enlisted him as an apprentice musician in the Marine Band. Sousa remained in the band until he was twenty and later returned to become its seventeenth Director.

Written in 1903, “Jack Tar” is a tribute to the Royal British Navy. While most of the melodies in this march are original, borrowed from Sousa’s own operetta *Chris and the Wonderful Lamp*, the break strain quotes the British sea shanty “The Sailor’s Hornpipe.” The naval feel of this march is reinforced by scoring that calls for ship’s bell and whistle. The world première took place in London at the Royal Albert Hall in the presence of King Edward VII. That evening, Sousa and his band collaborated with the bands of the Scots Guard, the Irish Guards, the Coldstream Guards, the Himenoa Band of New Zealand, and the Queen’s Hall Orchestra.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 64-65. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Jack Tar” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



COLONEL BOGEY

Kenneth J. Alford

Composed in 1913 and first published in 1914, "Colonel Bogey" was an instant hit, becoming a best-seller on the sheet music "charts" by selling more than a million copies by the early 1930s. Furthermore, the march gained worldwide exposure and popularity when it was featured as the musical theme for *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, an Oscar-winning film that was set during the Second World War.

Fittingly, the composer Kenneth J. Alford had an extensive military background. Alford was actually the nom de plume of Major F. J. Ricketts, Director of Music for the Royal Marines at Plymouth (U.K.). Fluent on the cornet, piano, and organ, he had also served as bandmaster at the Royal Military School of Music, and later led the band of the Second Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, an infantry regiment of the British Army. The inspiration for the march and its amusing title came from Alford's experience of playing golf with an eccentric colonel who, instead of shouting the customary "Fore!" after an errant shot, would issue the warning by whistling.

Although "Colonel Bogey" proved to be his most famous composition, Alford also wrote and published hymns, fantasias, solos for xylophone and piano, and many classical and operatic arrangements under his mother's maiden name. Ultimately, it was his gift for writing marches that earned him the nickname of "The British March King."

[Listen to the march](#)



ENTRY OF THE GLADIATORS

Julius Fučík

Julius Fučík was considered the "Czech March King" with more than 400 works to his credit, including operettas, chamber music, masses, overtures, and songs. He entered the Prague Conservatory at age twelve and studied with Antonín Dvořák. He served a period of mandatory military service for three years in bands of the Austro-Hungarian Army. Following his discharge, he performed as a professional bassoonist. In 1897, Fučík became a military bandmaster with the band of Infantry Regiment 86 near Sarajevo, later leading bands in Hungary and Bohemia. He retired from military service in 1913 and founded a music publishing firm in Berlin. He died at age forty-four as the result of unsuccessful cancer surgery.

Fučík composed "Entry of the Gladiators" between 1897 and 1900, during his tenure as a military bandmaster in Sarajevo. The original title was *Grande March Chromatique*, but Fučík became enthralled with the description of gladiators in Henry Sienkiewicz's book *Quo Vadis?* and changed the title. The march has become associated with the circus and, in that context, has traditionally been played at breakneck speed.

[Listen to the march](#)



IMPERIAL MARCH FROM STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

John Williams

arranged by Stephen Bulla

John Williams' menacing musical signature for Darth Vader and the Empire from George Lucas' original *Star Wars* trilogy remains one of the most iconic symphonic themes in all film music. Like many of Williams' award-winning scores to these classic films, this theme is instantly recognizable, both as a portrait for one of the most unforgettable characters in *Star Wars*, as well as an exciting and dramatic symphonic march.

[Listen to the march](#)



THE PRIDE OF PITTSBURGH

John Philip Sousa

The title of this composition was selected in a contest sponsored by Pittsburgh newspapers, but inasmuch as the march was never published Sousa subsequently used at least three other titles when programming it with the Sousa Band. These were “The Belle of Pittsburgh,” “Homage to Pittsburgh,” and “Homage to Nevin and Foster.” The march was written for the dedication of Music Hall at the Western Pennsylvania Exposition (Pittsburgh Exposition) and included melodies by two Pittsburgh composers, Stephen Foster and Ethelbert Nevin. Foster’s “Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming” and Nevin’s “Narcissus” were the melodies used.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Pride of Pittsburgh” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



H.M. JOLLIES

Kenneth J. Alford

Kenneth J. Alford was the pen name of Frederick Joseph Ricketts, who began his musical career at age fourteen as a “band boy” in the Royal Irish Regiment playing cornet, violin, and euphonium. He went on to become a respected bandmaster in the British army, rising to the rank of major. Early in his career, junior officers were discouraged from non-military pursuits, hence the use of a pseudonym for his published compositions. His march “H. M. Jollies” was written in 1929. The title refers to the nickname for the Royal Marines, to which Ricketts had recently transferred. By this time, “Alford” was world-famous as a march composer, and widely regarded as the British equivalent of John Philip Sousa. “H. M. Jollies” shows Alford at the peak of his mature style and is a justly beloved march.

[Listen to the march](#)



AMERICAN PATROL

Frank W. Meacham

Born in Buffalo, New York, Frank W. Meacham began his professional music career at age ten, having secured the publication of his first song. During Meacham’s lifetime, most of his original compositions failed to gain recognition, but he became known as one of the country’s most skilled arrangers. However, he did eventually achieve success as a composer of martial music, most notably with his famous march entitled “American Patrol,” first copyrighted as a piano score in 1885 and subsequently arranged for band in 1891. As with many “patrol” marches of the era, this work imitates the sound of a military band approaching and then marching off into the distance. It begins softly with a snare drum cadence followed by a two-part theme in the upper winds, which constitutes Meacham’s only original melodic contribution. The rest of the march is a medley of three popular patriotic songs: “Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean,” “Dixie” (followed by a drum cadence and a recapitulation of the original theme), and finally “Yankee Doodle.” “American Patrol” remains a favorite in the concert band repertoire and has been recorded by numerous ensembles, including the Glenn Miller Band and the Sousa Band.

[Listen to the march](#)



THE PATHFINDER OF PANAMA

John Philip Sousa

More than anyone else, John Philip Sousa is responsible for bringing the United States Marine Band to the level of excellence upheld today. As a composer, he wrote the best known and most loved marches in the repertoire; as Director, he was an innovator who shaped the future of the Marine Band.

Sousa was born in 1854 in southeast Washington, D.C., near the Marine Barracks where his father Antonio played trombone in the Marine Band. Sousa studied piano and most orchestral instruments, excelling on the violin. When at age thirteen young Sousa was almost persuaded to join a circus band, his father intervened, enlisting him as an apprentice musician in the Marine

Band. Sousa remained in the band until he was twenty, only to return five years later as the seventeenth director. Sousa led “The President’s Own” until 1892, and shortly after, formed his own Sousa Band, which toured extensively for the next four decades, both in the United States and abroad.

Shortly after the completion of the Panama Canal in 1914, the Sousa Band was invited to perform at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition, held in San Francisco. At the request of Walter Anthony, a reporter for the San Francisco Call, Sousa composed “The Pathfinder of Panama” march to commemorate the opening of the Panama Canal and dedicated it to the exposition as well. The “Pathfinder” in the title of the march refers not to an individual, but to the Panama Canal itself, an engineering marvel that shortened the ocean voyage between San Francisco and New York by approximately 8,000 miles and continues to have an incalculable impact on the shipping of goods and passengers worldwide.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 78. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Pathfinder of Panama” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



CYRUS THE GREAT

Karl L. King

Raised in Canton, Ohio, during the turn of the twentieth century, Karl L. King was undoubtedly influenced both by the rich tradition of band music in the Midwest and the most popular form of entertainment at the time, the circus. As a young musician, he played multiple brass instruments as well as piano, but he ultimately settled on the baritone, which he played in several circus bands between 1910 and 1913, among them the Barnum and Bailey Band. It was during this time that King became known for his ability to compose circus marches quickly, a skill much in demand, as there were very few compositions that fit the rhythm and pacing of circus performances. He was quite prolific over the course of his career, composing more than 188 marches and circus “screamers,” and he is considered to have done for the circus march what John Philip Sousa did for the patriotic march.

King composed the march “Cyrus the Great” (subtitled Persian March) as a tribute to his friend “Cy” Tremain. However, he likely drew musical inspiration from the titular emperor, who founded the Persian Empire around 550 B.C.E. The march begins with an introductory brass fanfare leading into a descending low brass theme that recurs throughout the first strain. King made the somewhat less common choice to use the low brass section as the lead melodic voice for a muscular second strain. The trio moves to a celebratory major tonality, with each of its three iterations separated by a traditionally low brass-heavy breakup strain.

[Listen to the march](#)



THE CHANTYMAN’S MARCH

John Philip Sousa

After enlisting in the U.S. Navy in 1917, Sousa made a study of sea chanteys and then wrote an article for The Great Lakes Recruit entitled “Songs of the Sea.” He made further use of the study while on a brief leave from the navy the following spring by composing one of his medley-type marches and calling it The Chantyman’s March. The march incorporates eight chanteys, in this order: “Knock a Man Down,” “Away for Rio,” “Haul the Bowline,” “The Ballad of Billy Taylor,” “It’s Time for Us to Leave Her,” “Put up Clearing Gear,” “Hoodah Day,” and “A-Roving.”

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 45. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Chantyman’s March” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 5](#)



CHILDREN'S MARCH: "OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY"

Percy Grainger

Although Percy Aldridge Grainger was born an Australian, he spent the majority of his professional life in England and America. After attending conservatory in Germany, Grainger relocated to London and began his career as a concert pianist. During this time, he also composed feverishly and began to take particular interest in the native folk songs of his new home. In 1905, he made the first of many trips to the English countryside to collect and document tunes sung by locals. Grainger eventually recorded more than 700 English and Danish folk songs and arranged dozens of them for performance by various ensembles. He delighted in the nuances and imperfections rendered by each singer and preserved the tunes in their natural state, with irregular meters and the unique interpretations of the original singers.

After the outbreak of World War I, Grainger moved to New York and called America his home for the remainder of his life. Despite burgeoning success as a concert pianist, he joined the U.S. Army in 1917 to support the war effort. His service as an oboist and saxophonist with the Coast Artillery Band introduced Grainger to the unique sound of the wind band, beginning a long and fruitful interest in this ensemble, which resulted in dozens of works that have become cornerstones of the wind band repertoire.

In 1918, the same year Grainger attained his U.S. citizenship, he composed his first original work for band, titled Children's March, "Over the Hills and Far Away." Though the piece, like many of his other works from this period, sounds as if it could contain the folk tunes Grainger had diligently collected in England, this particular work was built upon original material. Children's March is believed to be the first original work for concert band with an integrated piano part, complete with the unusual instruction at the end of the piece to hit a string inside the instrument with a marimba mallet. The cheerful romp is dedicated to an "enigmatic playmate beyond the hills" (whom the composer never identified by name) and was premiered on June 6, 1919, by the Goldman Band with the composer conducting.

[Listen to the march](#)



THE BLACK HORSE TROOP

John Philip Sousa

Sousa's love for horses is reflected in this march dedicated to the mounted troops of a Cleveland National Guard unit. Their exclusive use of black horses was the inspiration for the title. Troop A, once known as the First City Troop of Cleveland, was originally an independent militia group and has had a long, distinguished history since its formation in 1877. Sousa's most noteworthy association with the troop came in 1898. The Sousa Band, having arrived in Cleveland just as the troop was preparing to leave for the Spanish-American War, marched in a parade escorting them from the Armory to the train depot. His first association was much earlier, however. As leader of the U.S. Marine Band in 1881, he marched with the organization in the funeral cortege of President James A. Garfield.

At a dinner held in Sousa's honor in November, 1924, the march was requested by Captain Walker Nye of Troop A. The request was fulfilled promptly, and the march was presented in Cleveland on October 17, 1925, at a Sousa Band concert which also marked the forty-eighth anniversary of Troop A. For the occasion, the mounted troopers were dressed in the blue uniforms of 1877, complete with black fur busbies. Sousa presented a manuscript of the march to Captain Nye. Troop A reciprocated by presenting Sousa with a beautiful bronze statuette entitled "The Last Drop," which depicted a trooper on horseback.

Many of the former Sousa Band members expressed their fondness for this composition and commented on the descriptive character it assumed when performed by Sousa himself. Part of the effect was due to the 6/8 rhythm, which suggests the canter of horses. Also contributing to the effect was Sousa's use of simulated hoofbeats.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 42. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["The Black Horse Troop" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 6](#)



ON PARADE

John Philip Sousa

Sousa inserted this original march when he orchestrated Goodwin and Stahl's operetta, *The Lion Tamer*. The march was later published as a separate composition under two titles, "On Parade" and "The Lion Tamer."

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["On Parade" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)



"NOBLES OF THE MYSTIC SHRINE"

John Philip Sousa

John Philip Sousa, like many prominent musicians throughout history, was a member of a Masonic Lodge. He became a member of the Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine in Washington, D.C., in April 1922, and was promptly named the first honorary director of the Almas Temple Shrine Band. His nephew, A. R. Varela sponsored him, and asked him to compose this march. The new march saluted Shriners in general but was dedicated specifically to the Almas Temple and the Imperial Council.

The Shriner's national convention was held in Washington in June 1923, and Sousa was invited to lead a band of 6,200 Shriners in Griffith Stadium. This was the largest band he ever conducted, and this new association with the Shriners led to several Shrine bands accompanying the Sousa Band in performances of the new march as Sousa toured the United States. "Nobles of the Mystic Shrine" is unique in that it is one of the few Sousa marches that begins in a minor key, giving it an exotic sound, and it is also one of the few that includes a published part for harp. The "Jingling Johnny" or Turkish crescent, which is a marching instrument consisting of a pole hung with jingling bells, is heard through the use of percussive instruments such as tambourines and the triangle. These are essential to the texture and refer to the intriguing Eastern sounds heard in shrine marching music, thus making "Nobles of the Mystic Shrine" one of the more unusual but wonderful Sousa marches.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 74-75. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["Nobles of the Mystic Shrine" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 6](#)



"KING KARL KING"

Henry Fillmore

Henry Fillmore composed more than 250 works for band and arranged hundreds of other pieces, publishing many of them under pseudonyms to avoid saturating the market. The Fillmore Band, active from 1927 to 1938, and famous for its weekly radio broadcasts, was among the last in a long line of professional ensembles to provide Americans with the unique combination of music and entertainment that characterized the "Golden Age" of concert bands. Most of Fillmore's music was composed especially for his own band. He often wrote music for his favorite soloist, a dog named Mike the Radio Hound, tailoring pieces to his barks. Mike, a member of the Cincinnati Musicians Association, Local 1, barked on cue in time to the music during local concerts and on weekly radio broadcasts.

Fillmore's final march, "King Karl King," was originally titled "The Big Brass Band." It was composed for a film that was never finished and was published posthumously. At Fillmore's request, the march was named after his fellow march composer and friend, Karl L. King.

[Listen to the march](#)



MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY MARCH

John Philip Sousa

On November 16, 1923, in recognition of what Sousa had done for his country in both peace and war, Marquette University bestowed upon him an honorary Doctor of Music degree. It was the first such degree given by that university. Sousa composed this march as an expression of his appreciation and presented the piano manuscript to the university.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 71. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["Marquette University March" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 6](#)



THE MINNESOTA MARCH

John Philip Sousa

It seems incredible that an institution would refuse a composition by a composer of Sousa's stature, but this happened in the summer of 1927 in Minneapolis. Clarence W. Spears, coach of the University of Minnesota football team, had verbally requested the march for his school in 1926; the following year the march was formally requested by the alumni organization. When the time came for the dedication of the march at the Minnesota State Fair on September 3, 1927, the delegated alumni representative was out of town, and Lotus D. Coffman, president of the university, was asked to accept Sousa's manuscript of the march on behalf of the university. He refused, however, because he felt the march should be presented at a university function, not at the state fair, and he was wary of commercial implications. Nevertheless, the dedication ceremony was held, and the Sousa manuscript was accepted by the state fair president.

Sousa used Indian themes in the march, though sparingly, because he had been impressed by the number of Indian names in Minnesota. He later added field drum and bugle parts upon the request of Colonel Frederick G. Stutz, commanding officer of the 206th National Guard Infantry Regiment of Minnesota. The march's title was chosen in a campus contest, and words were written by student Michael J. Jalma.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 71. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["The Minnesota March" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 6](#)



THE THUNDERER

John Philip Sousa

Other than the fact that Sousa's "thunderer" was undoubtedly a Mason, his identity may never be revealed. "The Thunderer" march was dedicated to Columbia Commandery No. 2, Knights Templar, of Washington, D.C., and it was composed on the occasion of the Twenty-fourth Triennial Conclave of the Grand Encampment. The conclave was held in October 1889 and was sponsored by Columbia Commandery No. 2. Sousa had been "knighted" in that organization three years earlier.

"The Thunderer" was Mrs. John Philip Sousa's favorite march. This was revealed by their daughter Helen, who also surmised that the "thunderer" might have been her father's salute to the London Times, which was known as "the thunderer." It has since been determined that Sousa probably had no association with the newspaper at that time, however. The "thunderer" might have been one of the men in charge of making arrangements for the 1889 conclave—in particular, Myron M. Parker, who worked tirelessly to make the event the spectacular success that it was.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 67. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["The Thunderer" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

John Philip Sousa

Sousa considered the University of Illinois the finest college band in the world and had great admiration for its director, A. Austin Harding. Some of Sousa's musicians were graduates of Harding's band, and others had studied at the university in off-season.

This march was completed on June 6, 1929, and given its premiere at a Sousa Band broadcast on June 17. On March 20 of the following year Sousa visited the university and was given a royal welcome. He was made honorary conductor of the band, presented with a handsome gold medal, and named "Great Tribal Chief of the Illini." In typical Sousa humor, he filled out a freshman try-out sheet, stating that his instrument was a "low-pitched baton," and that although his tonguing was "triple-threat," his embouchure had been "lost in the war."

Before his death Sousa had promised Harding that the Sousa Band library would be willed to the university. The bulk of it was eventually presented by Sousa's widow and is now in the school's Sousa Library.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 89. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["University of Illinois" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 7](#)



MARCH OF THE WOMEN MARINES

Louis Saverino

Louis Saverino was a talented instrumentalist and composer who also enjoyed a distinguished twenty-five-year career as a member of "The President's Own." Born in 1915 in Windber, Pennsylvania, he was taught musical notation as a toddler by his father, which led to a lifelong ability to visualize and notate any music he heard. After winning a four-year scholarship to the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester in New York, Saverino flourished musically and obtained the school's first tuba performance degree in 1938. A year later, he joined the Marine Band, performing primarily on tuba, string bass, and bass clarinet.

Much admired by his colleagues for his amazing and versatile instrumental skills, Saverino was also held in high regard by Marine Band Director William F. Santelmann for his composition and music-scoring abilities. After the establishment of the U.S. Marine Corps Women's Reserve in 1943, a last-minute request for a parade march prompted Saverino to conceive and complete the march in one night. The march was so well received that it was designated as the official March of the Women Marines, and Saverino's efforts were rewarded with a letter of commendation from Marine Headquarters.

[Listen to the march](#)



"THE LIBERTY BELL"

John Philip Sousa

For \$500 more, this march probably would have been named "The Devil's Deputy." Sousa was composing music for an operetta of that name at the request of the celebrated comedian Francis Wilson. Sousa asked \$1,500 for the work, but Wilson offered \$1,000. When they could not come to an agreement, Sousa withdrew with his partially completed manuscript, which included a lively march.

Sousa and George Frederick Hinton, one of the band's managers, were in Chicago witnessing a spectacle called America when a backdrop, with a huge painting of the Liberty Bell, was lowered. Hinton suggested that "The Liberty Bell" would be a good title for Sousa's new march. By coincidence, the next morning Sousa received a letter from his wife in which she told how their son had marched in his first parade in Philadelphia—a parade honoring the return of the Liberty Bell, which had been on tour. The new march was then christened "The Liberty Bell." It was one of the first marches Sousa sold to the John Church Company and was the first composition to bring Sousa a substantial financial reward.

According to a story told by the Sousa Band's first soprano, Marcella Lindh, she contributed one of the themes of the march. Sousa had heard her whistling a catchy tune of her own and had asked her permission to incorporate it into one of his marches. Several years later she heard "The Liberty Bell" march being performed by a band in Europe and recognized her own melody in the march.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 89. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["The Liberty Bell" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)



THE PRIDE OF THE WOLVERINES

John Philip Sousa

The Sousa Band's 1925 tour was an excellent indication of the ensemble's success and popularity. Whereas most touring concert bands disbanded in the years following World War I, the Roaring Twenties were kind to the Sousa Band, and it attracted large audiences and lots of money. This was fortunate, as expenses for the eight-month tour (which extended into March 1926) totaled more than \$11.5 million in today's inflation-adjusted dollars. Later tours were less ambitious, particularly after the 1929 stock market crash.

It was at an appearance in Detroit during that 1925 tour that the city's mayor, John W. Smith, publicly requested of Sousa that he compose a new march for his city. Sousa obliged a year later with "The Pride of the Wolverines" (Michigan is nicknamed the "Wolverine State"), which he dedicated to Smith and the people of Detroit. It was soon after declared Detroit's official march, a status it held until it was replaced by Leonard Smith's "Hail, Detroit" in 1951.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 56. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["The Pride of the Wolverines" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 6](#)



OH, HENRY!

Lt. Col. Ryan J. Nowlin

Before joining "The President's Own," Marine Band Director Lt. Col. Ryan Nowlin worked as an educator, directing bands in Ohio public schools and serving as an instructor at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. In addition to co-authoring a comprehensive band pedagogy method, he was commissioned to compose numerous pieces for concert band and various chamber groups. Nowlin joined the Marine Band as a Staff Arranger in 2010, was appointed Assistant Director in 2014, and was named 29th Director of the Marine Band in 2023.

Nowlin's march "Oh, Henry!" reflects his Ohio roots by honoring the Cincinnati treasure and band music icon Henry Fillmore (1881-1956). Celebrated as a legend in the world of concert marches, Fillmore's lively personality is inescapable in his works. A consummate entertainer who drew inspiration from his background as a circus musician, Fillmore frequently altered the performance of his marches, making each rendition new and engaging to audiences and performers alike. "Oh, Henry!" is an homage to the singular style and personality of Fillmore's impressive body of work, including his abiding love of the trombone smear. This piece captures the spirit of the Fillmore Band with nods to some of Fillmore's most well known and beloved marches.

[Listen to the march](#)



MARCH OF THE RESISTANCE FROM STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

John Williams

transcribed by Paul Lavender

When the American Film Institute released its 2005 listing of the top twenty-five film scores of all time, it included the familiar titles *Out of Africa*, *Ben Hur*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Psycho*, *The Godfather* and *Gone with the Wind*. John Williams was responsible for three of those twenty-five selections, and at the very top was his unforgettable score to the original *Star Wars* movie. In 1977, on the heels of his work with Spielberg that produced the blockbusters *Jaws* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, Williams signed on to score a new “space western” written and directed by George Lucas. At that time, no one could have predicted the global popularity of this film and its successive chapters, nor could Williams have imagined the broad impact that his music would have in both the film realm and beyond. Williams has scored dozens of themes for the seven films in the *Star Wars* series, many of which have achieved world-wide recognition on a scale equal to some of the most popular classical music in history. The latest installment in the series, *The Force Awakens* was released in December 2015 and tells a story that takes place some thirty years after the conclusion of *The Return of the Jedi*. As old and new characters come together in the film, Williams’ score artfully weaves together familiar music from the original films with brand new themes and brilliantly highlights pivotal actions and relationships. March of the Resistance is part of a suite from *The Force Awakens* and is first heard in the movie when Poe Dameron and Resistance forces arrive on Takodana to fight the First Order at Maz Kanata’s castle.

[Listen to the march](#)



THEY ARE THERE! (A WAR SONG MARCH)

Charles Ives

transcribed by James B. Sinclair

Charles Ives is recognized as one of the greatest American composers of the twentieth century, but he did not receive such accolades during most of his lifetime. In fact, he made his living as a successful insurance salesman. When his unique and progressive music finally saw the light of day, however, he earned a Pulitzer Prize in 1947 for his Third Symphony.

Ives was born in Danbury, Connecticut, where his father, George Ives, was a Civil War bandmaster and leader of the Danbury Cornet Band. Ives attended Yale University, studying organ and composition, but both his father’s influence and his own early musical experiences in Danbury had as much impact on his musical sensibilities as his formal education. The elder Ives was intrigued by unplanned musical moments, like two bands playing in unrelated keys as they marched down the street in a parade, and George would often encourage Charles to explore unconventional sounds, such as playing the accompaniment of a tune in one key on the piano while singing the melody in an unrelated key.

In 1917, in honor of American soldiers headed into World War I, Ives composed a song with the title “He Is There!” He adapted the lyrics and added a coda in 1942, as more American soldiers were headed into World War II. The title was also tweaked slightly, to “They Are There!”

[Listen to the march](#)



FROM MAINE TO OREGON

John Philip Sousa

Sousa’s “All American” operetta, *The American Maid* (The Glass Blowers), contains one recurring march theme, the title of which does not appear in the list of songs. Perhaps the publishers made this arrangement so that “reprise” would not appear so many times. The theme is the nucleus around which Sousa built the march “From Maine to Oregon.” The march, like the operetta, met with only limited success.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“From Maine to Oregon” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



THE NORTHERN PINES

John Philip Sousa

“So much is said from the negative side about the youth that it indeed restores one’s faith to find here, year after year, hundreds of boys and girls with such ideals, such marked ability and evident industry.” Many times in the 1920’s Sousa expressed optimism about the future of music in America. The country’s potential was in the hands of youthful musicians whose capabilities inspired him on countless occasions. Perhaps his greatest inspiration in this vein came in July, 1930, when he was guest conductor at the National Music Camp at Interlochen. After this memorable occasion, he was invited to return the following year.

The camp at Interlochen was founded by Dr. Joseph E. Maddy among beautiful pines of Northern Michigan in Indian country. Just prior to Sousa’s second visit, he composed “The Northern Pines” and dedicated it to Dr. Maddy and the camp. He conducted the National High School Band in the first performance at a Sousa Day program on Sunday afternoon, July 26, 1931, at which time the faculty and students presented him with a medal. Sousa signed over royalties of the new march, which had not yet been printed, to the camp. A Sousa scholarship was founded, and one or more outstanding music students were brought to Interlochen each year for several seasons. Today the walkway which circumnavigates the principal stage and audience area is known as the John Philip Sousa Walk.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 75. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Northern Pines” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 7](#)



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

John Philip Sousa

Who actually made the request of Sousa to compose this march is not known, but the request was probably made prior to November, 1927. At that time, Sousa and the three ladies of the Sousa Band were guests at a dinner given by the chancellor of the university, E. A. Burnett. The following day, Burnett wrote Sousa reminding him of an earlier promise to compose a march. Burnett’s letter read, in part:

We have not forgotten your promise to write a march for the University of Nebraska when you are in the mood and feel the impulse to glorify the great rolling prairies where we are trying to build a new appreciation of music and art.

The title was suggested by Sousa and approved by Burnett. Apparently Sousa had at one time considered using “The Cornhuskers” as the title, because several newspapers made reference to it. It was dedicated to the faculty and students of the University of Nebraska.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 92. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“University of Nebraska” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 6](#)



KANSAS WILDCATS

John Philip Sousa

On October 10, 1928, at a Sousa Band concert in Manhattan, Kansas, Sousa was presented a handsomely bound petition requesting that he compose a march for the Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science. A march was subsequently dedicated to the college, but it was not the one written in response to the petition.

Fragments of two manuscripts of the march originally intended for the college bear the titles “The Wildcats” and “The Wildcats of Kansas March.” A copyist’s manuscript of a later march, the one which was eventually dedicated to the college, sheds light on what might have happened. The title of this march, “The Sword of San Jacinto,” was crossed out, and above it was written “Kansas Wildcats.” The retitled march was then published under its new name. A publisher’s note penciled on the front page reads: “Mr. Sousa agrees in letter. Contract under way.”

The following conclusions have been reached from a study of the manuscripts. Sousa wrote a march for the Kansas State

College of Agriculture and Applied Science and called it, at various times, “The Wildcats” or “The Wildcats of Kansas March.” At the same time he was also writing two other marches. One of these was called “The Sword of San Jacinto,” and the title of the other is unknown. When the copyist’s score of “The Sword of San Jacinto” was sent to the publisher, two things might have happened. First, Sousa could have been under pressure from the Kansas college and instructed the publisher to change the title of the march to “Kansas Wildcats.” Second, he could also have sent the publisher the march originally intended for the college together with “The Sword of San Jacinto” and perhaps the untitled march as well, and the publisher might have mixed them up. In any case, only one of the three marches was published – the one known today as “Kansas Wildcats.”

What happened to the various manuscripts of the three marches is not clear. If they were indeed all sent to the publisher, it is possible that all might not have been returned. After Sousa’s death, the manuscripts at the Sands Point home were stored in the basement archives uncatalogued and, for the most part, unsorted. Later, Sousa’s daughters gave some manuscripts to the Library of Congress. In one package was found the first page of the band score of “The Wildcats” and the final fifteen pages of the untitled march. What became of the missing pages of either march is not known.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 65. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Kansas Wildcats” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 7](#)