



2017 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 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 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.



"THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER"

John Philip Sousa

With the possible exception of "The Star Spangled Banner," no musical composition has done more to arouse the patriotic spirit of America than this, John Philip Sousa's most beloved composition. ... Symbolic of flag-waving in general, it has been used with considerable effectiveness to generate patriotic feeling ever since its introduction in Philadelphia on May 14, 1897, when the staid Public Ledger reported: "It is stirring enough to rouse the American eagle from his crag, and set him to shriek exultantly while he hurls his arrows at the aurora borealis."

Aside from this flowery review, the march's reception was only slightly above average for a new Sousa march. It grew gradually in public acceptance, and with the advent of the Spanish-American War the nation suddenly needed such patriotic music. Capitalizing on this situation, Sousa used it with maximum effect to climax his moving pageant, "The Trooping of the Colors."

"The Stars and Stripes Forever" had found its place in history. There was a vigorous response wherever it was performed, and audiences began to rise as though it were the national anthem. This became traditional at Sousa Band concerts. It was his practice to have the cornets, trumpets, trombones, and piccolos line up at the front of the stage for the final trio, and this added to the excitement. Many bands still perform the piece this way.

With the passing years the march has endeared itself to the American people. The sight of Sousa conducting his own great band in this, his most glorious composition, always triggered an emotional response. The piece was expected—and sometimes openly demanded—at every concert of the Sousa Band. Usually it was played unannounced as an encore. Many former Sousa Band members have stated that they could not recall a concert in which it was not played, and that they too were inspired by looking into the misty eyes of those in the audience. That the players never tired of it is surely a measure of its greatness.

Sousa was very emotional in speaking of his own patriotism. When asked why he composed this march, he would insist that its strains were divinely inspired. In a Sousa Band program at Willow Grove we find this account:

Someone asked, "Who influenced you to compose 'Stars and Stripes Forever,'" and before the question was hardly asked, Sousa replied, "God—and I say this in all reverence! I was in Europe and I got a cablegram that my manager was dead. I was in Italy and I wished to get home as soon as possible. I rushed to Genoa, then to Paris and to England and sailed for America. On board the steamer as I walked miles up and down the deck, back and forth, a mental band was playing 'Stars and Stripes Forever.' Day after day as I walked it persisted in crashing into my very soul. I wrote it on Christmas Day, 1896."

The march was not put to paper on board the ship. Presumably it was penned in Sousa's hotel suite in New York soon after docking.

The composition was actually born of homesickness, as Sousa freely told interviewers, and some of the melodic lines were conceived while he was still in Europe. In one such interview he stated:

In a kind of dreamy way I used to think over old days at Washington when I was leader of the Marine Band...

when we played at all public official functions, and I could see the Stars and Stripes flying from the flagstaff in the grounds of the White House just as plainly as if I were back there again.

Then I began to think of all the countries I had visited, of the foreign people I had met, of the vast difference between America and American people and other countries and other peoples, and that flag of ours became glorified...and to my imagination it seemed to be the biggest, grandest, flag in the world, and I could not get back under it quick enough.

It was in this impatient, fretful state of mind that the inspiration to compose 'The Stars and Stripes Forever' came to me, and to my imagination it was a genuine inspiration, irresistible, complete, definite, and I could not rest until I had finished the composition. Then I experienced a wonderful sense of relief and relaxation. I was satisfied, delighted, with my work after it was done. The feeling of impatience passed away, and I was content to rest peacefully until the ship had docked and I was once more under the folds of the grand old flag of our country.

The interviewer then added this telling postlude: "Amen! to those sentiments,' I said. And as I looked at John Philip Sousa there were tears in his eyes."

Sousa explained to the press that the three themes of the final trio were meant to typify the three sections of the United States. The broad melody, or main theme, represents the North. The South is represented by the famous piccolo obbligato, and the West by the bold countermelody of the trombones.

By almost any musical standard, "The Stars and Stripes Forever" is a masterpiece, even without its patriotic significance. But by virtue of that patriotic significance it is by far the most popular march ever written, and its popularity is by no means limited to the United States. Abroad, it has always symbolized America. It has been recorded more often than practically any other composition ever written. Sales of the sheet music alone netted Sousa over \$400,000 in his lifetime; radio broadcasts, sheet music, and phonograph records brought his heirs tidy sums for many years. After the copyright expired in 1953, over fifty new arrangements appeared in the United States alone. Looking back at the march's astonishing success, it is difficult to believe that the publisher had shown little faith in it and that he had even suggested to Sousa that "Forever" be stricken from the title.

Sousa did not claim that his march title was original. He could have come by it in one of two ways. First, the favorite toast of bandmaster Patrick S. Gilmore's was "Here's to the stars and stripes forever!" Also, one of Sousa's publishers had earlier printed a piece with the same title.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 84. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["The Stars and Stripes Forever" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)

[Read how "The Stars and Stripes Forever" won March Mania 2016](#)



"NATIONAL EMBLEM" E.E. Bagley

Edwin E. Bagley is best known for the march "National Emblem" he began composing in 1902. The first rehearsal was believed to have taken place in the baggage car of a train en route from Bellows Falls to Greenfield, N.H. The première was given in New Hampshire by the Keene City Band which Bagley directed from 1915-1917.

Bagley used "The Star-Spangled Banner" as inspiration for the melodic material in the first strain of the march, but it was the herds of buffalo he saw while crossing the western prairies in the late 1800s that inspired the heavy, repeated beats in the trio section. The march's trio may sound very familiar because it has been used for many years to "advance and retire" the colors at military flag ceremonies. Conductor Frederick Fennell described "National Emblem" as being "as perfect as a march can be."

[Listen to the march](#)



"VALDRES" Johannes Hanssen

"Valdres" was Johannes Hanssen's first composition, and it takes its name from an area of Norway between Oslo and Bergen. Hanssen sold the march to a publisher for about five dollars, never imagining the international fame it would achieve. The opening solo contains the signature fanfare of the Valdres Battalion and other melodies are drawn from Norwegian folk and

folk-inspired sources.

Conducted by former Marine Band Director Col. John R. Bourgeois, USMC (ret.), this performance of “Valdres” was recorded by the Marine Band at George Mason University’s Center for the Arts Concert Hall in Fairfax, Va., in May 1992 for its educational recording Sound Off!

[Listen to the march](#)

[Read how “Valdres” won March Mania 2015](#)



“INVERCARGILL” Alex Lithgow

Alex Lithgow was born in Glasgow, Scotland, but grew up in Invercargill, New Zealand. He had a long career as a cornetist, violinist, composer and conductor, and earned the nickname “March King of the Antipodes”. The march named for his hometown was written originally, like all his marches, for the British-style brass band that was the norm in New Zealand. It became a worldwide success in the wind band arrangement of L. P. Laurendeau, but sadly, a lack of copyright protection kept Lithgow from enjoying the monetary reward commensurate with his success. The “Invercargill” remains his most popular, and a standard of bands around the world.

[Listen to the march](#)



“ENTRY MARCH OF THE BOYARES” Johannes Halvorsen

Born in the small industrial town of Drammen, Norway, Johan Halvorsen (1864–1935) began music studies on the violin at age seven. He later added piccolo, French horn, cornet, and percussion to his musical résumé. His first position as a professional musician was as a triangle player in the percussion section of the Oslo Second Brigade Band at age seventeen. Halvorsen wrote his first composition, a march, during his two-year tenure with the band. He left to continue his violin studies at the Stockholm Conservatory in Sweden. He also studied in Leipzig, Germany, and in Leige, Belgium, and then went on to perform as concertmaster of the Bergen Orchestra in Norway. In 1899, Halvorsen was appointed conductor of Oslo’s Christiania National Theatre, a post he held for almost thirty years.

“Entry March of the Boyares,” Halvorsen’s most famous work, was composed in 1895. He had been offered a teaching position in Bucharest, Romania, which he ultimately turned down, but in researching the country’s history, Halvorsen became fascinated with the story of the Boyares. Elite members of the region’s aristocracy from the tenth through the seventeenth century, the Boyares were outranked only by the ruling princes. Halvorsen’s march depicts the regal Boyares in procession.

Halvorsen’s compositional style was greatly influenced by fellow countryman Edvard Grieg, who was the uncle of Halvorsen’s wife. It was Grieg’s arrangement of “Entry March of the Boyares” for piano which first called attention to the work and began its surge in popularity as a work for orchestra and band. The U.S. Marine Band performed “Entry March of the Boyares” in concert in Hamar, Norway, in 1989, and the audience response to the march was similar to the enthusiastic response of the performance of a Sousa march in the United States.

[Listen to the march](#)

[Read how “Entry March of the Boyares” won March Mania 2014](#)



MARCH OF THE LEATHERNECKS Morton Gould

Morton Gould was enjoying a highly successful career in New York City when war was declared. Two of his brothers were already serving in the Army and another was in the Coast Guard, and Gould hoped to join them. He contacted both the Army and the Navy about signing up. An enlistment physical uncovered a heart murmur and a double hernia, making it clear that Gould would have to serve as a civilian. He always regretted that he was not able to serve in uniform.

Gould contributed to the war effort by composing a number of energetic and inspirational patriotic numbers including “Buck Private,” “American Legion Forever,” and “American Youth.” Additional works included March for Yanks, “Bombs Away,” and “Paratrooper.” In 1942 Eugene Goossens, conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony, asked him and a number of other leading American composers including Leonard Bernstein, Howard Hanson, and Aaron Copland to write a patriotic fanfare for brass and percussion. Gould responded with Fanfare for Freedom. In 1943 he wrote one of his most enduring works, “American Salute,” a set of variations on the Civil War-era song “When Johnny Comes Marching Home.” That same year he wrote a special tribute to Marines serving in the war and gave it the title March of the Leathernecks. His friend Phil Lang reworked it for band and it was published in 1944.

[Listen to the march](#)



“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](#)



“THE BRIDE ELECT” John Philip Sousa

After the widespread success of his operetta *El Capitan*, Sousa regrettably declined an offer of \$100,000 for *The Bride Elect*, from which this march was extracted. The operetta soon passed from the musical scene, but the march was a favorite of bandsmen for many years to come.

The march was pieced together from various sections of the operetta. The principal theme was developed from the song, “Unchain the Dogs of War,” which ended Act II. The march was sometimes programmed by the Sousa Band under that title.

According to Frank Simon, cornetist of the Sousa Band from 1914 to 1920, “The Bride Elect” was among Sousa’s own favorites. He once referred to it as the best march he had ever written.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 44. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Bride Elect” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)



“RIGHT—LEFT” John Philip Sousa

This unusual march calls for shouts of “Right! Left!” at regular intervals in the trio. Perhaps it was used in this manner by the Marine Band on the drill field.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 81. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Right—Left” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 2](#)



“NATIONAL FENCIBLES” John Philip Sousa

The National Fencibles of this march’s title were a popular drill team in Washington, D.C. The words to the trio of the march reflect their esprit de corps:

“Forward to the battle, the trumpet is sounding;
‘Come if you dare!’ We loudly sing.
Shoulder to shoulder, with hearts rebounding;
Onward we march with the Fencibles’ swing.”

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 72. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



“EL CAPITAN” John Philip Sousa

One of the perennial Sousa favorites, this march has enjoyed exceptional popularity with bands since it first appeared. It was extracted from the most successful of the Sousa operettas, El Capitan. El Capitan of the operetta was the comical and cowardly Don Medigua, the early seventeenth-century viceroy of Peru. Some of the themes appear in more than one act, and the closing theme of the march is the same rousing theme which ends the operetta.

This was the march played by the Sousa Band, augmented to over a hundred men and all at Sousa’s personal expense, as they led Admiral Dewey’s victory parade in New York on September 30, 1899. It was a matter of sentiment with Sousa, because the same march had been played by the band on Dewey’s warship Olympia as it sailed out of Mirs Bay on the way to attack Manila during the Spanish-American War.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 44. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“El Capitan” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)



"H. M. JOLLIES" Kenneth 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](#)



"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), 67. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



"THE CHIMES OF LIBERTY" Edwin Franko Goldman

Edwin Franko Goldman (1878-1956) studied composition with Antonín Dvořák and performed as the solo cornetist of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra before forming the New York Military Band in 1911. One of the founding members of the American Bandmasters Association, Goldman created his concert band to "help raise the standards of bands and band music." Later known as the Goldman Band, it was one of the finest professional concert bands in America.

"The Chimes of Liberty," one of his most popular marches, reflects Goldman's pride in his country. His concern for other countries and world peace is evident as well: the march was written in 1922 to commemorate the Washington Conference for the Limitation of Armaments. The chimes are featured prominently, carrying the melody in the trio. The march also boasts a piccolo solo that rivals the piccolo solo in Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

[Listen to the march](#)



"MANHATTAN BEACH"

John Philip Sousa

Following in the footsteps of Patrick Gilmore, Sousa became a popular figure at Manhattan Beach, the famous New York summer resort. One of his most lavish medals was presented to him in 1894 by the proprietor, Austin Corbin, and other shareholders. The previous season, Sousa had dedicated this march to Corbin, and one of his manuscripts is inscribed to him.

Sousa once told a reporter that the march had been derived from an earlier composition, probably "The Phoenix March" (1875): "I wrote 'Manhattan Beach' while playing a summer engagement at that once-popular resort, using as the basis an old march I had composed when I was with Milton Nobles."

"Manhattan Beach" became a staple of bands all over the world, but the Sousa Band performed it differently by playing the trio and last section as a short descriptive piece. In this interpretation, soft clarinet arpeggios suggest the rolling ocean waves as one strolls along the beach. A band is heard in the distance. It grows louder and then fades away as the stroller continues along the beach.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 69. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



"COUNTRY BAND MARCH"

Charles Ives

transcribed by John 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.

Some of these unusual sounds are found in Ives' Country Band March, the composer's affectionate valentine to the enthusiastic haphazardness of the community bands he heard as a young man in Danbury. Ives revels in the cacophony produced by these amateur musicians making early entrances, playing "wrong notes," and cheerfully but inappropriately blurting out quotations of popular songs of the day, including "Arkansas Traveler," "Battle Cry of Freedom," "The British Grenadiers," "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "London Bridge," "Marching Through Georgia," "My Old Kentucky Home," "Yankee Doodle," and quotes of two very familiar Sousa marches. This dense but exuberant music often has simultaneous melodies competing for the audience's attention, and the percussionists bringing up the rear frequently add or drop beats as the group struggles to stay together.

[Listen to the march](#)



"BOYS OF THE OLD BRIGADE"

William 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 cor- net 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](#)



CHILDREN'S MARCH

Percy Grainger

Although Percy Grainger was born an Australian, he spent the majority of his professional life in England and America. He was an only child, and when his parents separated in 1890, he developed an inextricable bond with his mother that lasted until her death in 1922. She traveled and lived exclusively with Percy, acting as his caretaker, business manager, and closest confidant.

Rose Grainger was an accomplished pianist, and young Percy's earliest musical studies were kept within the family. He showed tremendous promise at the keyboard, and by 1895, he had reached the requisite age of thirteen to enroll in a conservatory. Rose and Percy left Australia for Germany where he was admitted to the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt am Main. After his graduation, mother and son relocated to London in 1901 and Grainger began his career as a concert pianist in earnest. 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 set about in Brigg, Lincolnshire, on the first of what would become countless trips to the English countryside to collect and document the tunes often sung by the native residents. First on paper, and then with the newly developed wax cylinder, Grainger eventually documented more than 700 English and Danish folksongs. He delighted in the nuances and "imperfections" rendered by each singer and arranged dozens of these tunes for various ensembles. In what would become the defining feature of his work, he not only preserved the tunes, but also the irregular meters and unique interpretations of each singer who first shared the music with him.

After the outbreak of World War I, Grainger moved to New York in 1914 and called America his home for the remainder of his life. He made a triumphant American solo debut in 1915, playing a concert of his own works to a sold-out audience in Aeolian Hall. Celebrated tenor Enrico Caruso was in attendance along with several notable critics, and Grainger was hailed as a modern genius at the keyboard. The Evening Post reported that "...in less than half an hour he had convinced his critical audience that he belongs in the same rank as [Ignacy Jan] Paderewski and [Fritz] Kreisler, sharing their artistic abilities, and yet as unique as they are, something new and sui generis. The audience was stunned, bewildered, delighted."

Despite his burgeoning success in America, in 1917 Grainger decided to join the U.S. Army in support of the war effort. He served with the Coast Artillery Band until 1919, playing both oboe and saxophone (which he had taught himself to play, among many other instruments). This was Grainger's first true experience with a concert band, and he was immediately taken with the unique sound of the ensemble. This encounter proved to be the beginning of his long and fruitful relationship with the wind band, resulting in dozens of works that have become the cornerstone of the ensemble's repertoire. In 1918, the same year he attained his U.S. citizenship, he composed his first original work for band, titled Children's March, "Over the Hills and Far Away."

Most of his works from this period were built upon the folk tunes Grainger had so diligently collected, and the melodies of Children's March seemingly spring from the same source. However, the work is built entirely upon original material and makes full use of the sonorous capabilities of the band, with special attention given to the double reeds, saxophones, and piano. In fact, 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 very end of the piece that the player hit a string inside the instrument with a marimba mallet. The cheerful romp is dedicated to Grainger's "playmate beyond the hills" (whom the composer never identified by name) and was premièred on June 6, 1919, by the Goldman Band with the composer conducting.

[Listen to the march](#)



"THE CIRCUS BEE"

Henry Fillmore

James Henry Fillmore Jr. was one of the most important band composers and conductors of the twentieth century. He composed and arranged under eight different names and wrote a very influential series of method books published as the Bennett Band Books, from which thousands of children learned to play.

Fillmore had a lifelong affection for ragtime and syncopated music. He is considered the "father of the trombone smear" because of the incredible popularity of his "Lassus Trombone," one of fourteen "trombone smears" that are part of his "Trombone

Family.” He composed more than 250 original works and made 750 arrangements. He was affiliated with five circus bands in his earlier years and later with his family’s publishing business. The Fillmore Brothers music publishing house was founded to publish church hymnals, and Henry’s father at first wanted nothing to do with such “common” music of the type Henry had been composing. Eventually, father and son reconciled, and Henry took over the business during the Depression.

Henry Fillmore led a professional band in Cincinnati that broadcast over radio station WLW and this led to recordings for the Columbia Phonograph Company. In 1938 he moved to Florida for health reasons and helped organize 32 high school bands in the state. His will left his estate and all future royalties to the University of Miami Band Department, and endowment that grew into hundreds of thousands of dollars and paid for the construction of Fillmore Hall at the university, which now houses a Fillmore Museum.

“The Circus Bee” was published in 1908 and was written, in part, to celebrate that Henry was finally allowed to publish music through the family business. The title refers to an imaginary circus newspaper called The Circus Bee.

[Listen to the march](#)



“BARNUM AND BAILEY’S FAVORITE”

Karl L. King

Karl L. King wrote this march for the thirty-two-piece Barnum and Bailey Circus Band in 1913 at the request of its director, the noted minstrel show cornetist, Ned Brill. King was twenty-two at the time and was preparing to join the band as a euphonium player. The euphonium part in this march (and in most of his other marches) shows his love for that instrument – he liked to hear the countermelody part “romping around.” His use of the word “favorite” in the title was a good choice. In a 1980 international music survey “Barnum and Bailey’s Favorite” ranked fourth in the top 140 marches.

[Listen to the march](#)



MARCH OF THE RESISTANCE FROM *STAR WARS: EPISODE IV – THE FORCE AWAKENS*

John Williams

transcribed by Paul Lavender

When the American Film Institute released their listing of the top twenty-five film scores of all time in 2005, it included the titles *Out of Africa*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Ben-Hur*, *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.

On the heels of his work in the 1970s with Spielberg that produced the blockbusters *Jaws* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, Williams signed on in 1977 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 impact that his music for the movies would have both in the world of film and well beyond. Williams has scored dozens of themes for the seven films in the series, many of which have achieved world-wide recognition on a scale equal to some of the most popular classical music in history.

The Force Awakens was released in December 2015 and the story 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. The appropriately dramatic and powerful March of the Resistance is distinctive and appears prominently at key points in the movie.

[Listen to the march](#)



“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), 89. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



“THE GLADIATOR” John Philip Sousa

Nothing among Sousa’s memoirs reveals the identity of the “gladiator,” but the first printing of the sheet music carried a dedication to Charles F. Towle of Boston. Towle was a journalist who was editor of the Boston Traveller at the time this march was written, but the nature of his association with Sousa is not known.

Sousa’s daughter Helen conjectured that her father might have been inspired by a literary account of some particular gladiator. It is unlikely that he would have dedicated a march to gladiators in general because of their ferocity and deeds of inhumanity, but perhaps one noble gladiator who had been a victim of circumstances might have been his inspiration. There has also been speculation that the march had some Masonic significance, inasmuch as it was written at the time he was “knighted” in Columbia Commandery No. 2, Knights Templar, but this lacks substantiation.

For Sousa, “The Gladiator” brought back both happy and unhappy memories. In 1885 he had written the dirge “The Honored Dead” for Stopper and Fisk, a music publisher in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. They were so pleased that they asked him to write a quickstep march. He responded with “The Gladiator,” but they rejected it. Their shortsightedness cost them dearly; Sousa then sold it to Harry Coleman of Philadelphia, and it eventually sold over a million copies.

“The Gladiator” was the first Sousa composition to reach such wide circulation. He himself was unaware of its popularity until its strains startled him one day while in Philadelphia on business. Many years later he gave this dramatic account:

I was taking a stroll along Broad Street. At a corner a hand-organ man was grinding out a melody which, somehow, seemed strangely familiar. As I listened more intently, I was surprised to recognize it as my own ‘Gladiator’ march. I believe that was one of the proudest moments of my life, as I stood there on the corner listening to the strains of that street organ!

“As the Italian, who was presiding over the crank, paused, I rushed up to him and seized him warmly by the hand. The man started back in amazement and stared at me as though he thought I had taken leave of my senses.

“My friend! My friend!” I cried. ‘Let me thank you! Please take this as a little token of my appreciation!’

“I tore myself away, walking on air down the remainder of the street and leaving the organ grinder dazed by the coins I had thrust into this hand. I don’t believe he can account for the gift to this day.

“But I was exultant. My music had made enough of a hit to be played on a street organ. At last I felt that it had struck a popular chord.

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

[Listen to the march](#)

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



“ENTRY OF THE GLADIATORS” Julius Fucik

Julius Arnost Vilem Fucik is 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 12 and studied with Antonín Dvořák. He served a period of mandatory military service and served three years in bands of the Austro-Hungarian Army. Following his discharge, he performed as a professional bassoonist.

In 1897, Fucik 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 44 as the result of unsuccessful cancer surgery.

Fucik 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 Fucik 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. The march takes on an entirely different character when performed at a more stately tempo as in this performance.

[Listen to the march](#)



MIDWAY MARCH

John Williams

transcribed by Paul Lavender

The 1976 feature film *Midway* chronicles the incredible Battle of Midway, which was a turning point in the Pacific during World War II. Until this critical stand and victory led by the U.S. Marines, the Imperial Japanese Navy had been undefeated in battle for nearly eighty years. The film highlighted the remarkable American strategy and success against all odds with an all-star cast including Charlton Heston, James Coburn, and Henry Fonda, who played the part of legendary Admiral Chester Nimitz.

Several scenes in the film were shot using the USS Lexington, the last Essex-class aircraft carrier from World War II in service at the time of production. The movie also employed a special sound mix called Sensurround. This early technique of enveloping the audience in the sonic action of the movie was used in only four films of the era and required special speakers to be installed in theaters where they were shown.

John Williams provided the dramatic and visceral musical score for the movie. Williams had recently won his first Academy Award for his score to *Jaws* in 1974 and was quickly becoming one of the most sought after composers in Hollywood at the time of *Midway*'s release. Right after his work on this film, he composed the now-iconic music to the first installment of *Star Wars*.

[Listen to the march](#)



“COMMANDO MARCH”

Samuel Barber

Samuel Barber, born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, was one of America’s most gifted composers. A child prodigy, he started composing at age seven and wrote his first opera three years later. At age fourteen he entered the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. In the early 1930s Barber decided to study abroad and became a fellow at the American Academy in Rome in 1935. He received numerous prizes and awards including two Pulitzer prizes, the American Prix de Rome, three Guggenheim fellowships, an honorary doctor of fine arts degree from Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., and election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Barber served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during the Second World War. While assigned to the Technical Training Command in Atlantic City, New Jersey, he was asked to compose a march for the band stationed there. He completed the work in 1943 and described it as representing a “new kind of soldier, one who did not march in straight lines” but “struck in stealth with speed, disappearing as quickly as he came.” It was premièred by the Army Air Forces Technical Training Command Band in Atlantic City on May 23, 1943. Sergei Koussevitzky admired the work and commissioned an orchestral version for performance by the Boston Symphony that same year.

[Listen to the march](#)



SUPERMAN

John Williams

When the movie version of *Superman* was released in 1978, the most famous of superheroes was brought to life in spectacular fashion. As one of the very first big-budget comic book movies, the film paved the way for countless other classic characters to make their way to the silver screen over the last three decades. For Williams, the opportunity to work on the project was a

chance of a lifetime:

Growing up in my generation meant that you avidly followed the exploits of Superman in the syndicated comic strips that regularly appeared in newspapers across the country. It was a time when Superman fired the imaginations of all of our youngsters, and I was no exception.

Many years later, when Director Richard Donner asked me to compose the score for his feature-length film of *Superman*, I was thrilled. I truly felt that I was revisiting a formative part of my childhood. I remember how excited I was when Mr. Donner showed me his wonderful film with actors Christopher Reeve and Margot Kidder flying high above the Statue of Liberty in one of the movie's many memorable moments. I began by writing this piece, which formed the basis of the musical score for the film.

The movie's great success wouldn't have been possible without Christopher Reeve, who embodied every characteristic of what we imagined Superman to be. Without him, this music would never have seen the light of day.

[Listen to the march](#)



ATHLETIC FESTIVAL MARCH

Sergei Prokofiev

Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev received his earliest musical training from his mother, who was a proficient pianist. By age five he had completed his first compositions for piano including six marches. He studied with Anatoly Lyadov and Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, where he graduated in 1914 after completing studies in composition, conducting, and piano performance. Following the October Revolution, Prokofiev traveled the United States and Europe from 1918 to 1936, performing and composing. Best known for his orchestral works such as his First Symphony, Fifth Symphony, and *Peter and the Wolf*, Prokofiev also composed a collection of patriotic marches for military band upon his return to Russia in 1936 titled Four Marches, Opus 69. Written for the Spartakiad, a Russian athletic festival that was inspired by the well-disciplined warriors of ancient Sparta, the first in this collection of marches is the Athletic Festival March.

[Listen to the march](#)



"THE WHITE PLUME"

John Philip Sousa

Sousa and Edward M. Taber collaborated on a song called "We'll Follow Where the White Plume Waves" to support the presidential election campaign of James Gillespie Blaine, affectionately known as the "plumed knight." Sousa rearranged the song as a military march, added new sections, and called it "The White Plume."

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 96. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["The White Plume" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 2](#)



"PURPLE PAGEANT MARCH"

Karl L. King

Karl L. King began his career playing the baritone in a circus band before becoming bandmaster for Barnum & Bailey's The Greatest Show on Earth. In addition to directing, he composed innovative music to match the exciting emotions and rhythms of circus acts, including his best known march, "Barnum and Bailey's Favorite." He left the traveling circus lifestyle to settle in Fort Dodge, Iowa, where he spent the remaining fifty-one years of his life directing the Fort Dodge Municipal Band, an organization which eventually became known as the Karl L. King Municipal Band of Fort Dodge to reflect his influence. During his time in Iowa, King continued to contribute to bands around the country by helping to found the American Bandmasters Association and by composing music for educational programs, both graded music for developing school band programs and fight songs

for American universities.

“The Purple Pageant” belongs to the college music category. Composed in 1933, King dedicated the march to Glenn C. Bainum and his Northwestern University Band. Bainum directed the Northwestern Band in Evanston, Illinois, from 1926, when it was first placed under the supervision of the music school, through World War II until his death in 1953. Bainum was an innovator in marching band formations and increased membership in the band rapidly from the initial group of seventeen musicians. The title “The Purple Pageant” evokes the showmanship of Bainum’s band dressed in their purple Northwestern uniforms. The march opens with a flashy fanfare, then gallops along vibrantly with splashes of lyricism in the winds and touches of virtuosity in the brass.

[Listen to the march](#)



“THE WASHINGTON POST”

John Philip Sousa

During the 1880s, several Washington, D.C., newspapers competed vigorously for public favor. One of these, the Washington Post, organized what was known as the Washington Post Amateur Authors’ Association and sponsored an essay contest for school children. Frank Hatton and Beriah Wilkins, owners of the newspaper, asked Sousa, then leader of the Marine Band, to compose a march for the award ceremony.

The ceremony was held on the Smithsonian grounds on June 15, 1889. President Harrison and other dignitaries were among the huge crowd. When the new march was played by Sousa and the Marine Band, it was enthusiastically received, and within days it became exceptionally popular in Washington.

The march happened to be admirably suited to the two-step dance, which was just being introduced. A dancemasters’ organization adopted it at their yearly convention, and soon the march was vaulted into international fame. The two-step gradually replaced the waltz as a popular dance, and variations of the basic two-step insured the march’s popularity all through the 1890s and into the twentieth century. Sousa’s march became identified with the two-step, and it was as famous abroad as it was in the United States. In some European countries, all two-steps were called “Washington posts.” Pirated editions of the music appeared in many foreign countries. In Britain, for example, it was known by such names as “No Surrender” and “Washington Greys.”

Next to “The Stars and Stripes Forever,” “The Washington Post” has been Sousa’s most widely known march. He delighted in telling how he had heard it in so many different countries, played in so many ways—and often accredited to native composers. It was a standard at Sousa Band performances and was often openly demanded when not scheduled for a program. It was painful for Sousa to relate that, like “Semper Fidelis” and other marches of that period, he received only \$35 for it, while the publisher made a fortune. Of that sum, \$25 was for a piano arrangement, \$5 for a band arrangement, and \$5 for an orchestra arrangement.

According to a letter dated September 28, 1920, from Sousa to Edward B. McLean, editor of the Washington Post, one edition of this music was published in Mexico under the title “Unser Pasa.”

Today, at a community room in Washington, a spotlight illuminates a life-sized color portrait of the black-bearded Sousa, resplendent in his scarlet Marine Band uniform. This is the John Philip Sousa Community Room in the Washington Post Building. It is the newspapers’ tribute to the man who first gave it worldwide fame.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 95. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Washington Post” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 3](#)

THE BILLBOARD MARCH

John Klohr

The Billboard March was dedicated to the general amusement paper of the same name and published in 1901. Until its outdoor entertainment section was succeeded by Amusement Business in 1961, Billboard remained preeminent in its field. John Klohr didn’t think much of this march at first, but conceded it was a success after the royalties paid for his home in Cincinnati. The trio is still well known for as a show-business emblem, accompanying everything from circus parades to stand-up comedians’ entrances.

[Listen to the march](#)

COMPETING MARCHES



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