The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa

Vol. 2 No. 26

SOUND OFF

MARCH (1885)

FULL SCORE

As performed by “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band
March, “Sound Off” (1885)

As leader of the U.S. Marine Band, Sousa came under the command of Major George Porter Houston. In Sousa’s eyes, Houston was a stern but fair officer, and this march was dedicated to him. As in the case of “Guide Right,” “Right Forward,” and “Right-Left,” the title was derived from a marching command.


Editorial Notes

Throughout Sousa’s career as a conductor, he often altered the performance of his marches in specific ways without marking or changing the printed music. These alterations were designed for concert performances and included varying dynamics and omitting certain instruments on repeated strains to expand the range of the musical textures, as well as adding unscripted percussion accents for dramatic emphasis at key points in the music. Although Sousa never documented his performance techniques himself, several players who worked extensively with Sousa provided directions for his frequently performed marches, most notably from cornetist Frank Simon. Many of the marches in Volume 2 of “The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa” were staples in Sousa’s regular concert repertoire and were included in the “Encore Books” used by the Sousa Band. A complete set of his Encore Books resides in the U.S. Marine Band Library and Archives and are referenced extensively by the Marine Band not only as a guide for some of Sousa’s special performance practice, but also to ascertain the exact instrumentation he employed in his own performances of his marches.

“The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa” appears in chronological order and is based on some of the earliest known sources for each composition. These newly edited full scores correct many mistakes and inconsistencies found in the parts of early publications; however, all remaining markings and the original scoring are preserved. Where instruments are added to the original orchestration, it is guided by the additional parts Sousa sanctioned in his Encore Books where applicable or based on these typical doublings. Additionally, the alterations traditionally employed by the United States Marine Band in performance are incorporated throughout; either those specifically documented by Sousa’s musicians or changes modeled on the customary practices of “The March King.”

The musical decisions included in these editions were influenced by the work of several outstanding Sousa scholars combined with many decades of Marine Band performance tradition. These editions would not be possible without the exceptional contributions to the study of Sousa’s marches by Captain Frank Byrne (USMC, ret.), Jonathan Elkus, Colonel Timothy Foley (USMC, ret.), Loras Schissel, Dr. Patrick Warfield, and “The March King’s” brilliant biographer, Paul Bierley.

Performance practices that deviate from the original printed indications are described below and appear in [brackets] in the score. In many instances these indications appear side-by-side with the original markings. An open diamond marked with an accent in the cymbal part indicates that the cymbal player should let that accent ring for an additional beat before rejoining the bass drum part.

Introduction and First Strain (m. 1-36): To facilitate the change from the fortissimo of the beginning to the forte of the first strain (m. 4), the Marine Band plays a slight diminuendo in m. 3, but the accents are still important here. The trombone figures in m. 7-8 and 11-12 (doubled by the low clarinet and solo cornet) are truly fortissimo each time. M. 21-36 is essentially a written out repeat with a new counter line for the euphonium, bassoon, and low saxophones. It was originally marked mezzo-forte, but should be played forte and expressively.

Second Strain (m. 36-68): All instruments play fortissimo with strong accents. The eighth notes in the second and third cornet should come through the texture throughout. Accents have been added in percussion in m. 44-45 and 52-53 as well as strong sfz notes in m. 62 and 64. Of special note, the tie in m. 46-47 for all melodic instruments appeared in only some of the original parts. Given the specific parts in which it appears, the evidence suggests that it probably was intended by Sousa as an interesting variation in this melody, and the Marine Band has indeed performed the march with this tie for most of its history with this march.
Trio (m. 68-84): Traditional performance practice of this march is a bit unusual here. It begins with the conventional alterations, dropping out piccolo, E-flat clarinet, cornets, and trombones. Cymbals are also tacet but snare drum and bass drum may continue to play. The dynamic is mezzo-piano first time. The deviation from typical performance practice occurs in m. 76 and 83-84, when trombones and cornets re-enter as indicated for their brief interjections. As was Sousa’s custom, the repeat of the trio is softer than the first time and the counter line in euphonium, tenor, and baritone saxophone is added the second time a shade louder than the main melody. The brass then play a strong crescendo in m. 85 (second ending) to set up the fortissimo of the break-up strain.

Break-up Strain (m. 87-102): Cymbals rejoin here with good accents that ring every other measure. The low brass leads this classic break-up strain with plenty of heft. Be careful to not allow the quarter notes to rush here. After a final strong accent on beat two of m. 102 for all, the dynamic immediately drops to mezzo-forte for the first time through the final strain.

Final Strain (m. 103-end): Piccolo, E-flat clarinet, cornets, trombones and cymbals are tacet again, and clarinets play down the octave first time as indicated by the small notes. All play mezzo-forte only. Cornets and trombones play their interjections again in m. 110 and 117-118 as in the trio. The repeat returns to the break-up strain, played as before, and all play the final strain at fortissimo and in the upper octaves second time through.
"SOUND OFF"
Full Score

Flute/Picc

Oboe

E♭ Clar

Solo or 1st B♭ Clar

2nd B♭ Clar

3rd B♭ Clar

Alto Clar

Bass Clar

Bsn

Alto Sax

Tén. Sax

Bari. Sax

E♭ Cor

Solo B♭ Cor

1st B♭ Cor

2nd & 3rd B♭ Corrs

1st & 2nd Hrns

3rd & 4th Hrns

Euph

1st & 2nd Trbs

B. Trbn

Tubs

Drums

*The tie does not appear in all parts of the original edition, but it does appear in more parts than not. Some scholars consider it spurious. If the tie is omitted, it is recommended that players apply the accent and carry the accidental over the bar.
SOUND OFF
Oboe

TRIO.

[mp-p]

[1.]

[2.]

[mp-ff]
March

SOUND OFF

(1885)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

Eb Clarinet

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SOUND OFF

Solo or 1st B♭ Clarinet

March Tempo.

(1885) JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

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March

SOUND OFF

Eb Alto Clarinet

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

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SOUND OFF

Eb Alto Saxophone

March Tempo.

(1885)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

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SOUND OFF
Eb Alto Saxophone

TRIO.

[mp - p]

[1.

[2.

[mp - ff]

[mf - ff]
March

SOUND OFF

B♭ Tenor Saxophone

(1885) JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

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SOUND OFF

John Philip Sousa

Eb Baritone Saxophone

(1885)

March Tempo.

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SOUND OFF
Eb Cornet

62

TRIO.

69

[mp-p]

75

82

1. [Play]  2. [Play]

[mp]  [ff]

89

96

ff

103

[2nd time only]

[mf-ff]

109

115

1. [Play]  2. 

[---]
March
SOUND OFF
(1885)
JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

Solo

March Tempo.

Solo

March Tempo.

Solo

March Tempo.

Solo

March Tempo.

Solo

March Tempo.

Solo

March Tempo.

Solo

March Tempo.
SOUND OFF
1st B♭ Cornet
March
SOUND OFF
(1885)
JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

2nd B♭ Cornet

March Tempo.

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March
SOUND OFF
3rd B♭ Cornet
(1885)
JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

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(1885)
JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

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SOUND OFF
1st F Horn

\[ \text{TRIO.} \]

\[ \text{[mp]} \]

\[ \text{[mp-p]} \]

\[ \text{[mf-ff]} \]

\[ \text{[mf-ff]} \]
March

SOUND OFF

(1885)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

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SOUND OFF

(1885)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

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March
SOUND OFF
(1885)
JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

ff

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]

March Tempo.

\[\text{poco } f\]
March

SOUND OFF

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

(1885)

March Tempo.

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March
SOUND OFF
JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

7 Solo

15

23 Solo

31

38

44

50

56

March (1885)

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March

SOUND OFF

(1885)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

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March

SOUND OFF

(1885)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

Drums

March Tempo.

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