



2019 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.



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 14 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, N.J., 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. Serge Koussevitzky admired the work and commissioned an orchestral version for performance by the Boston Symphony that same year.

[Listen to the march](#)

[Read how Commando March won March Mania 2018](#)



"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 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](#)



ATHLETIC FESTIVAL MARCH

Sergei Prokofiev

Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev received his earliest musical training from his mother, who was a proficient pianist. By age 5 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 is the Athletic Festival March.

[Listen to the march](#)

[Read how Athletic Festival March won March Mania 2017](#)



AMERICAN PATROL

Frank W. Meacham

Frank W. Meacham is principally remembered today for his very popular American Patrol, but during his lifetime he was best known for his original songs, arrangements, and willingness to ghost-write tunes for others. He was the third son of John H. and Mary E. Meacham, who around 1850 moved from Albany, N.Y. to Buffalo where he and his two brothers were born. After working as a teacher, clerk, and bookkeeper for several years, John moved his family to Brooklyn in 1858. Frank's parents encouraged his musical interest from childhood; at age 10 he published the song "Come Over the Sea." Though this first song, and several others that followed, did not sell very well, he finally created a hit with "Down in the Cotton Field." From there his profession became focused on composing and arranging.

The work begins with a simple, soft drum cadence, simulating the approach of a military patrol on guard duty. The initial melody, which is an original tune by the composer, begins quietly, increasing in intensity. A melody of well-known patriotic songs follow, including "Columbia, Gem of the Ocean," "Yankee Doodle," and "Dixie." The music then fades until a final burst of martial music concludes the piece. Meacham copyrighted a piano version in 1885, and after the band arrangement was published in 1891, the work's popularity increased steadily through the decades. At least eight firms published vocal editions during World War II, while sixteen publishers printed editions for piano. Numerous concert and jazz arrangements have also been published for band and orchestra, from Carl Fischer's edition in 1891 to Edwin F. Kalmus' edition 90 years later. Recordings of this perennial favorite have been made by dozens of bands, including the Glenn Miller Band, since it was recorded by the Sousa Band, with Arthur Pryor conducting, in 1900.

[Listen to the march](#)



"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 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](#)



"HAIL TO THE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY"

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. As the 17th director, he led "The President's Own" from 1880 until 1892, and shortly after, he formed the civilian Sousa Band, which toured extensively for the next four decades, both in the United States and abroad.

In 1900, Sousa and his band traveled abroad to perform at the Paris Exposition. Sousa was a great patriot and relished this opportunity to represent his country at such a significant international event. This was also the very first overseas tour for the Sousa Band, and the group was welcomed with tremendous enthusiasm across Europe. During the Exposition, an impressive statue of Major General the Marquis de Lafayette was unveiled on July 4, 1900. The monument was presented "on behalf of the children of the United States" and depicted Lafayette on horseback offering his sword in support of the Americans during the Revolutionary War. For the unveiling, the statue was draped in an enormous American flag. Sousa composed "Hail to the Spirit of Liberty" specifically for the grand occasion.

[Listen to the march](#)

["Hail to the Spirit of Liberty" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



"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](#)



"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](#)



"THE DIPLOMAT"

John Philip Sousa

"The Diplomat" march was dedicated to Secretary of State John Milton Hay, whose diplomatic skill had impressed the composer. When performing this march in the prime of his career, Sousa gave a subtle but highly pleasing display of conducting

excellence for the benefit of both his audiences and his musicians. The first section of the march has a catchy melody which he had the band phrase and accent in a style different from the printed music. As the late Dr. Frank Simon, former Sousa Band solo cornetist remarked, “When the ‘Governor’ conducted this march, we could literally visualize the graceful swagger of a handsome diplomat, top hat, tux, striped trousers and all, strutting down the street, nodding cheerfully here and there.”

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 49. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



“HANDS ACROSS THE SEA” John Philip Sousa

“Hands Across the Sea” premiered at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia in 1899, one year after the onset of the Spanish American War. Written to bolster America’s position in maintaining peace around the world, Sousa included a quotation from an English diplomat and author, John Hookham Frere, on the cover of the published sheet music: “A sudden thought strikes me—let us swear an eternal friendship.”

Sousa, impressed with the Virginia Polytechnic Institute Regimental Band’s performance of his march “The Thunderer,” dedicated his performance of “Hands Across the Sea” to them at the 1901 Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. Founded in 1872 in Blacksburg as the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) was a land-grant college that required military training for all able-bodied male students. The students were organized into a Corps of Cadets, with initially just one snare drummer and one bass drummer providing a marching cadence while in formation. By 1893 the Band Company was formed, and The Regimental Band has since remained in existence as a distinct and separate unit within the Corps of Cadets.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“Hands Across the Sea” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



“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 newspaper’s 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 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, an 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](#)



“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), 67. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



MARCH FROM 1941

John Williams

transcribed by Paul Lavender

In Steven Spielberg's 1979 comedic film *1941*, residents of Los Angeles, California, mistakenly believe they are under attack from the Japanese in the aftermath of the assault on Pearl Harbor. The late John Belushi plays "Wild" Bill Kelso, a somewhat unstable yet affable Air Force pilot at the center of the action. According to John Williams, Kelso's antics "seemed to require a musical accompaniment that had humor and rhythmic vitality. As a result, I set myself the task of writing a zany patriotic march, that upon hearing, we might be moved to tap our feet to an imaginary parade going by, and have fun doing it."

The March from 1941 is indeed a fun-filled romp from beginning to end and is most certainly among Williams' best efforts in the genre of martial music. The première performance of this concert band transcription was given by the Marine Band in 2003, conducted by the composer.

[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](#)



"BY LAND AND SEA"

Kenneth J. Alford

England's "March King" was born Frederick Joseph Ricketts and used the pseudonym Alford only for his compositional work. The son of a coal merchant, he enlisted as a band boy in the First Battalion Royal Irish Regiment at age 14 playing cornet, violin, and euphonium. He attended the Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall from 1904 to 1908, serving as Assistant Director of Music during his last two years there. Upon completion of his studies, he was appointed Bandmaster of the Second Battalion Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. In 1927 he was commissioned a lieutenant and named Director of Music for the Royal Marines. He was transferred to Plymouth in 1930 and remained there until his retirement in 1944. It is interesting to note that both Alford and John Philip Sousa served as music director for the Marines of their respective countries. In comparison, Alford composed only 19 marches to Sousa's 135, yet Alford's marches are highly respected for their elegance and craftsmanship.

"By Land and Sea" is typical of the ceremonial slow marches used by the British and is dedicated to the Royal Marines, Plymouth Division. It was composed for a competition to select an official slow march for the Royal Marines, a contest, incidentally, which Alford did not win. Contest results notwithstanding "By Land and Sea" is considered one of Alford's most noble and distinctive marches. The trio section incorporates the regimental bugle calls of the three divisions of the Royal Marines at that time: The Portsmouth Division, The Plymouth Division, and the Chatham Division. For concert use, the march has an optional ending with a brilliant operatic flourish.

[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 PURPLE PAGEANT”

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 51 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. 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 and 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 FAIREST OF THE FAIR"

John Philip Sousa

"The Fairest of the Fair" is generally regarded as one of Sousa's finest and most melodic marches, and its inspirations came from the sight of a pretty girl with whom he was not even acquainted. It was an immediate success and has remained one of his most popular compositions. It stands out as one of the finest examples of the application of pleasing melodies to the restrictive framework of a military march.

The Boston Food Fair was an annual exposition and music jubilee held by the Boston Retail Grocers' Association. The Sousa Band was the main musical attraction for several seasons, so the creation of a new march honoring the sponsors of the 1908 Boston Food Fair was the natural outgrowth of a pleasant business relationship.

In fairs before 1908, Sousa had been impressed by the beauty and charm of one particular young lady who was the center of attention of the displays in which she was employed. He made a mental note that he would someday transfer his impressions of her into music. When the invitation came for the Sousa Band to play a twenty-day engagement in 1908, he wrote this march. Remembering the comely girl, he entitled the new march "The Fairest of the Fair."

Because of an oversight, the march almost missed its première. Nearly three months before the fair, Sousa had completed a sketch of the march for the publisher. He also wrote out a full conductor's score from which the individual band parts were to have been extracted. The band had just finished an engagement the night before the fair's opening and had boarded a sleeper train for Boston. Louis Morris, the band's copyist, was helping the librarian sort music for the first concert, and he discovered that the most important piece on the program—"The Fairest of the Fair"—had not been prepared.

According to Morris's own story, the librarian, whose job it had been to prepare the parts, went into a panic. There was good reason; considerable advance publicity had been given to the new march, and the fair patrons would be expecting to hear it. In addition, the piano sheet music had already been published, and copies were to be distributed free to the first five hundred ladies entering the gates of the fair.

Morris rose to the occasion. He asked the porter of the train to bring a portable desk, which he placed on a pillow across his lap. He worked the entire night, and the parts were nearly finished when dawn broke. Both were greatly surprised by the appearance of Sousa, who had arisen to take his usual early morning walk. When asked about the frenzied activity, they had no choice but to tell exactly what had happened.

There were many times in the life of John Philip Sousa when he demonstrated his benevolence and magnanimity, and this was surely one of them. After recognizing Morris's extraordinary effort and remarking that it was saving the band from considerable embarrassment, he instructed him to complete his work and to take a well-deserved rest, even if it meant sleeping through the first concert.

With no one the wiser, Louis Morris—hero of the day—was asleep in his hotel as Sousa's Band played "The Fairest of the Fair" for the first time on September 28, 1908. Sousa did not mention the subject again, but Morris found an extra fifty dollars in his next pay envelope—the equivalent of two weeks salary.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 50. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["The Fairest of the Fair" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



"KING COTTON"

John Philip Sousa

It is a curious fact of the music world that marches written for fairs and expositions almost always fade into oblivion. Two notable exceptions are Sousa's "King Cotton" and "The Fairest of the Fair." The former was written for the Cotton States and International Exposition of 1895, and the latter for the Boston Food Fair of 1908.

Sousa and his band had great drawing power at fairs and expositions and were much sought after. But officials of the Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta attempted to cancel their three-week contract with the Sousa Band because of serious financial difficulties. At Sousa's insistence they honored their contract, and at the first concert they became aware of their shortsightedness. Atlanta newspapers carried rave reviews of the band's performances.

For example:

...The band is a mascot. It has pulled many expositions out of financial ruts. It actually saved the Midwinter Fair in San Francisco. Recently at the St. Louis and Dallas expositions Sousa's Band proved an extraordinary musical attraction, and played before enormous audiences. It is safe to predict that history will repeat itself in Atlanta, and that

the band will do the Exposition immense good. A great many people in South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia have postponed their visit to the Exposition so as to be here during Sousa's engagement, and these people will now begin to pour in.

Sousa's latest march, "King Cotton," has proved a winner. It has been heard from one end of Dixie to the other and has aroused great enthusiasm and proved a fine advertisement for the Exposition.

The Sousa Band did indeed bring the exposition "out of the red," and the same officials who had tried to cancel Sousa's engagement pleaded with him to extend it. "King Cotton" was named the official march of the exposition, and it has since become one of the perennial Sousa favorites.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 66. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



"REVIEW" John Philip Sousa

This was Sousa's first published march, and it was sold outright to the publisher for 100 copies of the sheet music. It was called Opus 5 and was dedicated to Colonel William G. Moore of the Washington Light Infantry. In later years, Sousa did not have a very high opinion of the march. To wit: "...Happily for me and for the general public it never became at all popular, and the echoes of the strains have long ago died away. I suppose it is now so deeply buried in oblivion that a 1,000 foot pole could not reach it. It is such a long time since I wrote it that I have no recollection whatever of the air. I did not preserve the manuscript..."

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

[Listen to the march](#)

["Review" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 1](#)



"THE INVINCIBLE EAGLE" John Philip Sousa

John Philip Sousa began composing this patriotic march during a late-night train ride from Buffalo to New York in 1901. Blanche Duffeld, soprano with the Sousa Band at the time, described a scene in which the composer was flailing away at the pages of his notebook and playing an imaginary violin in a fit of inspiration. Sousa described the finished product as:

"One of my 'sunshine' marches. Some of my heavy marches are intended to convey the impression of the stir and strife of warfare, but 'The Invincible Eagle' shows the military spirit at its lightest and brightest—the parade spirit, in fact, with the bravery of the uniform, the sheen of silken standards and the gleam of polished steel and all its other picturesque features."

Written for and dedicated to the Pan-American Exposition held in Buffalo in the summer of 1901, Sousa initially thought that "The Invincible Eagle" could eclipse the popularity of "The Stars and Stripes Forever." While it never reached the heights of the future official National march, a Washington Post review of "The Invincible Eagle" debut at the White House for President McKinley describes the new march as, "a good one...full of the twists and turns that reveal the popular composer's master hand."

[Listen to the march](#)

["The Invincible Eagle" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 4](#)



"SONS OF UNCLE SAM" Earl E. McCoy

Born in Indianapolis, Earl E. McCoy spent most of his life in Texas before attending the University of Illinois to study music under its legendary Director of Bands Albert Austin Harding. Shortly after, McCoy was offered the choice of a staff position with the university's band or a national tour with a musical production. He chose to join the tour, and the majority of his career was spent touring with and conducting theater orchestras and traveling productions, including a ten-year engagement with the Majestic Theater Circuit. Toward the end of his life, McCoy co-founded the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and the Dallas Band.

McCoy composed several marches during his career and was in the process of composing a symphony at the time of his death. He wrote the march "Sons of Uncle Sam" in 1917, which was the year that the United States joined World War I. The piece likely served as a patriotic composition to bolster the American spirit during the tumultuous period that engulfed the entire world.

[Listen to the march](#)



"CENTURY OF SERVICE" Capt. Ryan J. Nowlin

On Aug. 13, 1918, in Washington, D.C., 40-year-old Opha May Johnson was the first of about 300 women who initially enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve for service during World War I. They served in clerical and administrative positions and marched in parades. "After the Armistice the women were released from active duty by mid-1919 and transferred to the inactive reserve for the duration of their enlistment. One platoon of women Marines was called back to active duty for one day on Nov. 11, 1921, to escort the Body of the Unknown Soldier to his final resting place in Arlington National Cemetery," said Nancy Wilt, the national historian of the Women Marines Association and Director/Curator of the Women of the Corps Collection. "I have tremendous respect for the women of WWI who by the thousands lined up across the country to become members of the Marine Corps and serve a country that had not given them the right to vote," Wilt continued. "It is amazing the service of the Salvation Army, the American Red Cross, the military women of WWI, and the thousands of other woman volunteers who harvested crops, rolled bandages, and knitted cold weather sweaters and mittens for units."

Wilt wrote a letter to Marine Band Director Col. Jason K. Fettig to ask the Marine Band to honor the centennial with a march since the nearly 24,000 women Marines of World War II marched to Louis Saverino and Emil Grasser's "March of the Women Marines" and the 1970s women Marines danced to Saverino's "Women Marine Waltz." Fettig agreed and selected Assistant Director Capt. Ryan Nowlin to musically mark the occasion. "I spent an hour and a half on the phone with her to get my musical ideas, all of which are inspired by the story of these first women Marines answering the nation's call in 1918," Nowlin said. "I wrote these melodies constantly rising in pitch to symbolize that always reaching, always growing, that determined spirit of these women who volunteered in 1918. It is truly an honor to write the march in recognition of the century of service of women in the United States Marine Corps."

[Listen to the march](#)



"DEFENDERS OF FREEDOM" Kenneth Douse

Kenneth Douse was born in England and joined the Marine Band Symphony Orchestra as a violinist in 1926. He had begun taking saxophone lessons prior to joining the band, and he continued to teach himself the instrument, eventually becoming a solo saxophonist with the Marine Band. Douse held this prestigious position until 1950, performing many times as a featured soloist with the band on concerts, tours, and radio broadcasts. After he retired from the Marine Band, he joined the National Symphony Orchestra as both a violinist and a saxophonist where he remained until 1968.

In addition to his active performing career, Douse was a composer and wrote several marches and saxophone solos during his time in the Marine Band. The march "Defenders of Freedom" was published in 1949 and its title symbolized the spirit of the Americans who fought to ensure the preservation of liberties during the Revolutionary War at battles such as Bunker Hill and Yorktown.

[Listen to the march](#)



"THE MARINES OF BELLEAU WOOD"

Taylor Branson

edited by Capt. Ryan J. Nowlin

June 26, 2018, marked the 100th anniversary of the end of one of the most significant battles in the history of the United States Marine Corps. The Battle of Bois de Belleau, or Belleau Wood, exemplified the Marine Corps' core values of honor, courage, and commitment. The battle commenced on June 6, 1918, and proved to be one of the most ferocious engagements fought by American troops during the First World War. The 5th and 6th Marine Regiments, under the command of the U.S. Army's 2nd division, were tasked with capturing Belleau Wood and clearing it of German soldiers. Before launching their assault on the forest, the Marines first had to cross an open wheat field into oncoming machine gun fire, a weapon new to warfare. In the first day, more than 1,000 Marines died—more than the Corps had lost in its 143-year history up to that point. After three weeks of tree-to-tree fighting, including multiple charges on German machine gun nests with fixed bayonets and hand-to-hand combat, the Marines cleared Belleau Wood of the German Army entirely on June 26, turning the tide of the war. United States forces suffered 9,777 casualties, including 1,811 killed. Many of those who gave their lives are buried in the nearby Aisne-Marne American Cemetery. After the battle, the French renamed the wood Bois de la Brigade de Marine (Wood of the Marine Brigade) in honor of the Marines' tenacity.

To commemorate the fifth anniversary of this historic battle, the United States Marine Band performed a new march, "The Marines of Belleau Wood," on June 6, 1923. The piece was composed by Taylor Branson, William H. Santelmann's assistant director, who would go on to lead the Marine Band from 1927 to 1940. The march is dedicated to Army Major General James G. Harbord, commander of the 4th Marine Brigade. Branson pays musical tribute to Marines of Belleau Wood in many ways, including quoting the Marines' Hymn in the melody of the second strain. Most notably, however, is the composer's construction of the trio. The melody gradually increases in dynamic while restating a determined motive in different tonal centers, clearly representing the ceaseless nature of the Marines' assault.

In France, the anniversary was marked in July 1923. At this time, Belleau Wood was officially dedicated as an American battle monument. Major General Harbord was made an honorary Marine and attended the event. In his address, he aptly stated the hallowed purpose of the new memorial:

"Now and then, a veteran, for the brief span that we still survive, will come here to live again the brave days of that distant June. Here will be raised the altars of patriotism; here will be renewed the vows of sacrifice and consecration to country. Hither will come our countrymen in hours of depression, and even of failure, and take new courage from this shrine of great deeds."

[Listen to the march](#)



"GUIDE RIGHT"

John Philip Sousa

Sousa marches had a banner year in 1881. Sousa had just reached his stride as leader of the U. S. Marine Band and wrote six that year. Two of these, "Guide Right" and "Right Forward," were written for parade use, and their names were derived from marching commands. Both were dedicated to a Captain R. S. Collum of the Marine Corps.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 59. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

["Guide Right" is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 1](#)



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](#)



"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), 78. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



"OH, HENRY!"

Capt. Ryan J. Nowlin

Before joining "The President's Own," Captain 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 and was appointed to his current position in 2014.

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](#)



ENTRY MARCH OF THE BOYARES

Johan 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 30 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 centuries.

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](#)



"NATIONAL EMBLEM"

E.E. Bagley

Edwin E. Bagley is best known for the march "National Emblem," which 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](#)

COMPETING MARCHES



MARCH MANIA 2019 YOUTUBE PLAYLIST

Check out 2019 March Mania competing marches on the Marine Band's YouTube channel:

<http://bit.ly/MarchMania2019playlist>