



2021

MARCH MANIA

32 MARCHES. 4 WEEKS. 1 CHAMPION.

MUSIC NOTES

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA BIOGRAPHY

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



“SEMPER FIDELIS”

John Philip Sousa

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Listen to the march](#)

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



“THE VOLUNTEERS”

John Philip Sousa

The man who asked Sousa to compose this march (Robert D. Heinl, chief of the Department of Patriotic Service) also requested that he include sounds characteristic of a shipyard. Sousa thought this unusual for a march, but he complied. Sections of the march were named “The Call to March,” “Getting Busy,” and “Laying the Keel Blocks,” and the score called for sirens, anvils, and a riveting machine.

The march was given a stirring première at the New York Hippodrome on March 3, 1918, by the combined bands of the navy’s Atlantic fleet, Sousa conducting. It was dedicated to Edward N. Hurley, chairman of the U.S. Shipping Board, and to the ship-builders who were constructing America’s emergency fleet. Sousa was dissatisfied with a riveting machine made to his specifications by a Chicago instrument manufacturer and called upon the Hippodrome sound effects man. A huge noise-maker was devised and used with ear-shattering effectiveness. Many people were puzzled at the departure from Sousa’s usual march style, but he was merely fulfilling a request.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 94. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

[“The Volunteers” is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 5](#)



IMPERIAL MARCH FROM STAR WARS: THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

John Williams

arranged by Stephen Bulla

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

[Listen to the march](#)



THE SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE

Abe Holzmann

Born in New York City, Abe Holzmann studied music both in Germany and at the New York Conservatory of Music, which led him to a career as a performing musician, composer, and music industry administrator. He became a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) in 1923 and served as the staff composer and pianist for the music publishing firm owned by Leo Feist. Holzmann primarily wrote marches, rags, cakewalks, and waltzes, all of which were very popular around the turn of the century. “The Spirit of Independence” was written around 1912 and was recorded by Conway’s Band on the Victor label. This military march and two-step became a hit during World War I.

[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](#)



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

Percy Grainger
edited by R. Mark Rogers

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

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

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

[Listen to the march](#)



"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 for 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](#)



“NOBLES OF THE MYSTIC SHRINE”

John Philip Sousa

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

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

[Listen to the march](#)

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



RAIDERS MARCH FROM RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

John Williams

transcribed by Paul Lavender

Shortly after scoring the music for *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*, John Williams collaborated with director Steven Spielberg on a different type of adventure film, this one also starring actor Harrison Ford. After his swaggering portrayal of Han Solo in the *Star Wars* films, Ford was tapped to play a bespectacled archeology professor who moonlit as a globe-trotting treasure hunter in the wildly successful debut film of the *Indiana Jones* series, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The film took theaters by storm in 1981, with Williams’ soundtrack featuring a rousing march that eventually served as the main theme for all four *Indiana Jones* movies. This march theme and the film’s love theme, both included in this arrangement, have become instantly recognizable as unforgettable musical images of the iconic adventurer.

[Listen to the march](#)



RADETZKY MARCH

Johann Strauss Sr.

transcribed by Max Villinger

The patriarch of the legendary Strauss family was the son of an innkeeper and was encouraged by his parents toward a career in bookbinding rather than music. Johann Strauss, however, would not be dissuaded and finally convinced his parents to allow him to study violin and music theory. At age fifteen, he played viola professionally, and then at age nineteen, he joined the Lanner Quartet. When Josef Lanner created a second orchestra, he made Strauss his assistant conductor. Within a few years, Strauss formed his own orchestra as a showcase for his compositions. Strauss and his music gained considerable fame when he and his orchestra toured extensively throughout Europe. Although his son Johann Strauss Jr. is remembered as “The Waltz King,” the elder Strauss composed more than 250 works, 152 of which were waltzes. During the seventeen years prior to his death, Strauss served as bandmaster to the First Citizen’s Regiment of Vienna.

The Radetzky March was composed in 1848 and was named for Count Josef Radetzky von Radetz, a venerable Austrian field marshal. The title page of the first edition bore the dedications “In honor of the great Field Marshal” and “Dedicated to the Imperial Royal Army.” Radetzky was commissioned by Field Marshal Lieutenant Peter Zanini, military advisor to the court, who organized a festival to celebrate the victories in Italy of the Austrian Army under the command of Field Marshal Radetzky. The first performance was conducted in Vienna by the composer on August 31, 1848.

[Listen to the march](#)



KNIGHTSBRIDGE MARCH FROM LONDON SUITE

Eric Coates

transcribed by Gerrard Williams

Eric Coates was born in the town of Hucknall in Nottinghamshire, England, in 1886. He was the youngest of five children and the only son. His father was a well-respected town doctor and his mother was an amateur pianist and singer. Coates studied violin as a young boy, eventually entering the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he continued his studies in viola and composition.

Coates spent several years performing as an accomplished violist with The Queen's Hall Orchestra, under the direction of Sir Henry Wood, founder of the Proms. Coates left the orchestra in 1919 to become a full-time composer. He drew inspiration for many of his pieces from everyday life in the city. His 1933 *London Suite* depicts three London districts: Covent Garden, Westminster, and Knightsbridge. The third movement made Coates famous, as the BBC chose Knightsbridge March as the signature tune for its popular Saturday night radio program, *In Town Tonight*. The BBC offices were inundated with over 30,000 letters in six weeks about this new tune, prompting them to print reply cards to keep up with responses!

[Listen to the march](#)



MARCH FROM EL CID

Miklós Rózsa

transcribed by Robert Hawkins

In the 1930s and 40s, the escalating chaos and destruction caused by World War II prompted several prominent European composers to immigrate to America. While some forged successful academic careers, others were lured to the bustling and lucrative world of Hollywood. The results were spectacular: as the golden era of filmmaking was dawning, a host of experienced and established composers were penning the musical scores. Luminaries such as Franz Waxman and Erich Korngold, who had carved out stellar reputations as serious concert composers in their homelands, wrote remarkably sophisticated music for classic films such as *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *Rebecca*, and *Sunset Boulevard*.

Hungarian composer Miklós Rózsa arrived in Hollywood in 1940. Although his journey was also precipitated by the war, it was not due to Nazi persecution but rather financial considerations. Rózsa completed his studies in Paris and quickly became one of the most prominent young talents in Europe. In addition to his success as a concert music composer, he also had begun scoring for films and was hard at work on the music for the film *The Thief of Baghdad* in 1939. The war dried up funds for the movie in London and forced the production to move to America. Since the score was also unfinished, Rózsa went along and arrived in Manhattan in April of 1940. As he made his way west to California, he did not know that Hollywood would become his permanent home.

During the waning years of World War II, Rózsa established himself as one of the most sought-after composers in Hollywood and wrote music for films directed by the biggest names in the industry. In 1944 and 1945 he composed for the Alfred Hitchcock films *Double Indemnity* and *Spellbound*, the latter of which earned him an Academy Award. He went on to win two more Oscars for his unforgettable scores to *A Double Life* and *Ben-Hur*. The 1961 film *El Cid* starring Charlton Heston and Sofia Loren was nominated for three Academy Awards and tells the story of fabled Spanish hero Rodrigo Díaz, who defends Christian Spain and drives away the invading Moors. Rózsa's march from the film captures both the Spanish flavor of the subject and the epic nature of the action on screen.

[Listen to the march](#)



"OUR FLIRTATION"

John Philip Sousa

Although John Philip Sousa is now best known for the composition of more than 135 marches, he also wrote and arranged music in other genres, one of these being the theater. In his twenties, Sousa conducted, orchestrated, and arranged several theater productions, including the wildly popular *HMS Pinafore* by W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. After this successful production in Philadelphia, Sousa was also asked to conduct and compose incidental music for the variety show *Our Flirtations*. Included in the music that he composed for the show was the march "Our Flirtation."

[Listen to the march](#)

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



“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), 43. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



“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](#)



“GOLDEN JUBILEE”

John Philip Sousa

To commemorate his fiftieth year as a conductor Sousa wrote this, one of his most brilliant marches. He was hesitant to compose anything for his own gratification but reasoned that his public might expect something special. The march was given its première by the Sousa Band at the beginning of its engagement at the Steel Pier in Atlantic City on July 29, 1928, and then featured on the 1928 “golden jubilee” tour.

Subtracting fifty from 1928 gives 1878 as Sousa’s first year as a conductor. In actuality, he began his conducting career in 1875 as leader of the orchestra in a traveling company which featured Milton Nobles in the play *Bohemians and Detectives*, otherwise known as *The Phoenix*. But apparently Sousa did not consider this conducting per se, because he led the orchestra while playing first violin. As a conductor whose capacity was strictly conducting, his first position was with the Philadelphia Church Choir Company in their production of *H.M.S. Pinafore*. Their first rehearsals were held late in 1878, Sousa’s apparent point of reference.

The inspiration came with considerable difficulty, even for Sousa. He searched for suitable melodies for five months, but nothing was forthcoming. Then suddenly the inspiration came, and within a day's time he had the march sketched in its entirety. His thoughts were recorded in the 1928 tour programs:

I've always been inspired by an occasion, and as I thought of the golden jubilee and of all it meant to me—fifty years of band [sic] leading—I seemed to see the world passing in review. There they were, peoples of every land—on parade, at great music festivals, going to war, at expositions, attending the opera, in the home—listening to a march. So the music took form and then “The Golden Jubilee March” was ready for placing on paper.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 57. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



“ACROSS THE DANUBE”

John Philip Sousa

The Danube River was one of the borders of the Ottoman Empire, which was regularly at war with czarist Russia. In their fourth extended war, the Russians gained one decisive victory by crossing the Danube in June and July, 1877. Sousa credits the inspiration for “Across the Danube” to one such victory of Christendom over the Turks, and it was probably the news of this particular battle which caught his fancy.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 39. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



“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 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](#)



“KING KARL KING”

Henry Fillmore

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

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

[Listen to the march](#)



“THE MELODY SHOP”

Karl L. King

Karl L. King began his career playing the baritone in a circus band before becoming bandmaster for Barnum and 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.

During the 1910s King wrote mostly circus marches, many known as “screamers” because of their virtuosic tempi. Faster than a normal military march, “The Melody Shop” is one of his most famous marches from this early time period in his career, dating from 1910. It is rousing and spirited throughout, and features fast-moving, embellished lines alongside more lyrical melodies. Towards the end of the march, the score features a virtuosic solo passage for the euphonium, which drives the march to its exuberant finish.

[Listen to the march](#)



MARCH FROM SUPERMAN

John Williams

transcribed by Paul Lavender

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. For John 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](#)



”DEFENDERS OF FREEDOM”

Kenneth Douse

Kenneth Douse was born in England and joined the Marine Band Symphony Orchestra as a violinist in 1926. He began 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](#)



MOORSIDE MARCH FROM A MOORSIDE SUITE

Gustav Holst

transcribed by Gordon Jacob

Gustav Holst is considered one of the early advocates for the wind band medium and, as such, contributed several works to the wind band repertory. Many of the characteristics heard in Holst’s compositions set him apart from other English composers. His music utilized unconventional time signatures, rising and falling scales, ostinato, bitonality, and occasional polytonality.

In 1927, Holst was commissioned to write a competition piece for the BBC and the National Brass Band Festival Committee. The resulting piece, *A Moorside Suite*, is actually not a piece that belongs in the typical wind repertoire, as it was written for a traditional British brass band comprising of a range of brass and percussion instruments. English composer Gordon Jacob arranged *A Moorside Suite* for strings in 1952 and later made another arrangement of the piece for military band under the title *Moorside March* in 1960.

The march opens with a rising, four-note motive that makes its way into an energetic theme consisting of six-bar phrases. A second theme, introduced by the alto saxophone, uses standard eight bar-phrases. The grandeur of the trio is similar to the ceremonial marches of Edward Elgar and William Walton. After a brief modulatory section based on the opening motive, the first two themes are restated, and the march finishes with a coda containing material from the trio.

[Listen to the march](#)



“THE NATIONAL GAME”

John Philip Sousa

Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, baseball’s high commissioner, asked Sousa to compose this march on the occasion of the National League’s fiftieth anniversary. Earlier the two had met in Havana. No doubt Sousa told him of his enthusiasm for the game and of the Sousa Band’s own team.

Paul E. Bierley, The Works of John Philip Sousa (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 73. Used by permission.

[Listen to the march](#)

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



MIKADO MARCH

John Philip Sousa

The popularity of Sousa's medley marches, which were based on themes of other composers, never approached that of his original compositions. Such was the case with the Mikado March, which utilized themes from the celebrated Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.

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

[Listen to the march](#)

[Mikado March is part of The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa: Volume 2](#)



"FROM MAINE TO OREGON"

John Philip Sousa

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

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

[Listen to the march](#)

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



"GLORIA"

Frank H. Losey

arranged by Julius S. Seredy

Frank Hoyt Losey was born in Rochester, New York, to a musical family. He began his instrumental studies with his mother at age five and learned to play the cornet, the violin, and the piano in his early teens. He played the cornet professionally with the Soldiers' Home Band of Bath, New York, then continued studies in harmony and arranging. He was appointed principal brass instructor at the Mansfield (Pennsylvania) Conservatory of Music in 1895. In the early twentieth century, he became an arranger and composer for Carl Fischer in New York, which led to the founding of the Losey's Military Band School in Erie, Pennsylvania, which was a great boon for his career.

In 1919, Thomas A. Edison chose Losey to become the musical advisor for Edison's phonograph company. This prestigious appointment likely encouraged Henry Ford to select Losey to arrange music for Ford's personal orchestra in Detroit, Michigan. Ultimately, Losey arranged more than 2,500 works and composed more than 400 original tunes. Of these original compositions, the "Gloria" march is best known. First published in 1898, this work is still a popular marching and concert standard among bands. Later in his performing career, Losey had to switch from playing the cornet to playing the trombone and euphonium because of a lip injury; his experience with playing those three instruments is evident throughout "Gloria."

[Listen to the march](#)



“THE CHARLATAN”

John Philip Sousa

It would seem that a march taken from one of Sousa’s most musically interesting operettas would rank among his better efforts, but such was not the case with this march. It was extracted from Acts II and III of *The Charlatan*, and despite a wealth of published editions it was soon all but forgotten.

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

[Listen to the march](#)

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



“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](#)



“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](#)



MARCH FROM 1941

John Williams

transcribed by Paul Lavender

In the 1979 comedy film *1941* by Steven Spielberg, residents of Los Angeles mistakenly believe they are under attack from the Japanese in the aftermath of the assault on Pearl Harbor. The late John Belushi played Captain 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.

[Listen to the march](#)



“THEY ARE THERE!” (A WAR SONG MARCH)

Charles Ives

transcribed by James B. Sinclair

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

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

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

[Listen to the march](#)

COMPETING MARCHES



2021 MARCH MANIA PLAYLIST

Listen to the competing marches on the Marine Band's YouTube channel:

<http://bit.ly/MarchMania2021Playlist>