

= John Philip Sousa =

John Philip Sousa ( / ˈsuːsə / ; Portuguese pronunciation : [ ˈso ( w ) zɐ ] ; November 6 , 1854 ? March 6 , 1932 ) was an American composer and conductor of the late Romantic era , known primarily for American military and patriotic marches . Because of his mastery of march composition , he is known as " The March King " , or the " American March King " due to his British counterpart Kenneth J. Alford also being known by the former nickname . Among his best @-@ known marches are " The Stars and Stripes Forever " ( National March of the United States of America ) , " Semper Fidelis " ( Official March of the United States Marine Corps ) , " The Liberty Bell " , " The Thunderer " and " The Washington Post " .

Sousa 's father was of Portuguese and Spanish descent , his mother of Hessian ancestry . Sousa began his career playing violin and studying music theory and composition under John Esputa and George Felix Benkert . His father enlisted him in the United States Marine Band as an apprentice in 1868 . After departing the band in 1875 , Sousa learned to conduct . From 1880 until his death , he focused exclusively on conducting and the writing of music . He eventually rejoined the Marine Band and served there for 12 years as director . On leaving the Marine Band , Sousa organized his own band . He toured Europe and Australia and developed the sousaphone , a large brass instrument similar to the tuba . On the outbreak of World War I , Sousa was commissioned as a lieutenant and led the Naval Reserve Band in Illinois . Following his tenure , he returned to conduct the Sousa Band until his death in 1932 . In the 1920s he was promoted to lieutenant commander in the naval reserve , but never saw active service again .

= = Early life and education = =

John Philip Sousa was born in Washington , D.C. , the third of ten children of João António de Sousa ( John Anthony Sousa ) ( Seville , 22 September 1824 - 27 April 1892 ) , who was of Portuguese and Spanish ancestry ( son of João António de Sousa and wife Josefina Blanco , from Seville ) , and wife Maria Elisabeth Trinkhaus ( Darmstadt , 20 May 1826 - 25 August 1908 ) , who was of Hessian ancestry ( daughter of Peter Trinkhaus and wife Catherine Schafers ) . Sousa started his music education by playing the violin as a pupil of John Esputa and George Felix Benkert for harmony and musical composition at the age of six . He was found to have absolute pitch . During his childhood , Sousa studied voice , violin , piano , flute , cornet , baritone horn , trombone , and alto horn . When Sousa was 13 , his father , a trombonist in the Marine Band , enlisted him in the United States Marine Corps as an apprentice to keep him from joining a circus band .

= = Career = =

Several years long after serving his apprenticeship , Sousa joined a theatrical ( pit ) orchestra where he learned to conduct . He returned to the U.S. Marine Band as its head in 1880 and remained as its conductor until 1892 . Sousa led " The President 's Own " band under five presidents from Rutherford B. Hayes to Benjamin Harrison . Sousa 's band played at two Inaugural Balls , those of James A. Garfield in 1881 , and Benjamin Harrison in 1889 . The marching brass bass , or sousaphone , a modified helicon , was created by J. W. Pepper ? a Philadelphia instrument maker who created the instrument in 1893 at Sousa 's request using several of his suggestions in its design . He wanted a tuba that could sound upward and over the band whether its player was seated or marching . The sousaphone was re @-@ created in 1898 by C.G. Conn and this was the model that Sousa preferred to use .

He organized The Sousa Band the year he left the Marine Band . The Sousa Band toured from 1892 to 1931 , performing at 15 @,@ 623 concerts both in America and around the world , including at the World Exposition in Paris , France and at the Royal Albert Hall in London . In Paris , the Sousa Band marched through the streets to the Arc de Triomphe ? one of only eight parades the band marched in over its forty years .

= = Personal life = =

On December 30 , 1879 , Sousa married Jane van Middlesworth Bellis ( 1862 ? 1944 ) . They had three children : John Philip , Jr . ( April 1 , 1881 ? May 18 , 1937 ) , Jane Priscilla ( August 7 , 1882 ? October 28 , 1958 ) , and Helen ( January 21 , 1887 ? October 14 , 1975 ) . All were buried in the John Philip Sousa plot in the Congressional Cemetery . Wife Jane , daughters Jane Priscilla and Helen Abert joined the Daughters of the American Revolution ( DAR ) in 1907 . Their ancestor was Adam Bellis , who served under several different commands for the New Jersey troops in the American Revolutionary War .

Late in his life , Sousa lived in Sands Point , New York . Sousa died of heart failure at the age of 77 on March 6 , 1932 , in his room at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel in Reading , Pennsylvania . He had conducted a rehearsal of " The Stars and Stripes Forever " the previous day with the Ringgold Band . He is buried in Washington , D.C. ' s Congressional Cemetery . A school ( John Philip Sousa Elementary ) and a band shell were named after him and there was a memorial tree planted in nearby Port Washington , New York . Wild Bank , his seaside house on Hicks Lane , has been designated a National Historic Landmark , although it remains a private home and is not open to the public . He was posthumously enshrined in the Hall of Fame for Great Americans in 1976 , one of just 102 Americans ever to be honored in such a manner .

= = Military service = =

Sousa served two periods of service in the United States Marine Corps . He first enlisted on June 9 , 1868 at the age of 13 as an apprentice musician . In official records , his initial rank was listed as " boy " . He re @-@ enlisted on July 8 , 1872 and was promoted to musician . He left the Marine Corps in 1875 at the age of 20 .

His second period of Marine service was from 1880 to 1892 . During this period he was the leader of the Marine Band in Washington , D.C. ( Some sources state that Sousa served with the rank of Sergeant Major and was eventually promoted to Warrant Officer but this is erroneous as the leader of the band was a separate rank from sergeant major and the Marine Corps did not have warrant officers until 1916 . ) Sousa 's salary as " leader of the band " ( his official Marine Corps rank ) was \$ 83 per month which compared to a second lieutenant at \$ 115 @.@ 67 per month and a sergeant major with 20 years of service at \$ 30 per month .

Under his leadership , the Marine Band became the premier military band in the United States . The Columbia Phonograph Company produced 60 cylinders of recordings of the Marine Band conducted by Sousa . The recordings , along with two tours in 1891 and 1892 , led to Sousa becoming nationally famous . During his time with the Marine Band , Sousa composed several of his famous marches including The Washington Post , The Thunderer and Semper Fidelis which remain staples of marching bands to this day .

In July 1892 , Sousa requested , and received , a discharge from the Marine Corps to pursue a financially promising civilian career as a band leader . He conducted a farewell concert at the White House on July 30 , 1892 and was discharged from the Marine Corps the next day .

On May 31 , 1917 , shortly after the United States declared war on Germany and entered World War I , Sousa was commissioned as a lieutenant in the United States Naval Reserve . At that time , Sousa was 62 years old which was then the mandatory retirement age for Navy officers . During the war , Sousa led the Navy Band at the Great Lakes Naval Station near Chicago , Illinois . Being independently wealthy at this point in his life , he donated most of his naval salary , except a token \$ 1 per month , to the Sailors ' and Marines ' Relief Fund .

Sousa was discharged from active duty after the war 's end in November 1918 . He returned to conducting his own band but continued to wear his naval uniform for many of his concerts and other public appearances . In the early 1920s , he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserve but did not return to active duty .

For this service during the war , Sousa received the World War I Victory Medal . By right of his wartime service , he was elected as a Veteran Companion of the Military Order of Foreign Wars .

= = Honors = =

Sousa was decorated with the palms of the Order of Public Instruction of Portugal . He also received the Royal Victorian Medal from King Edward VII of the United Kingdom in December 1901 for conducting a private birthday concert for Queen Alexandra .

During World War II , the Liberty ship SS John Philip Sousa was named after him . The ship 's bell is still used by the Marine Band in concert .

Sousa has a star in his honor at 1500 Vine Street on the Hollywood Walk of Fame .

In 1976 , Sousa was inducted into the Hall of Fame for Great Americans . In 1998 , he was inducted into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame in Cincinnati , Ohio .

The band hall of the Marine Band was dedicated as " John Philip Sousa Band Hall . "

In 1987 , an act of Congress named " The Stars and Stripes Forever " as the National March of the United States .

= = Music = =

Sousa wrote 137 marches , 15 operettas , 5 overtures , 11 suites , 24 dances , 28 fantasies , and 322 arrangements of nineteenth @-@ century western European symphonic works .

= = = Marches = = =

Sousa wrote 137 marches , published by Harry Coleman of Philadelphia , Carl Fischer Music , the John Church Company , and the Sam Fox Publishing Company , the last association beginning in 1917 and continuing until his death . Some of his notable ones are :

" The Gladiator March " ( 1886 )

" Semper Fidelis " ( 1888 ) ( Official March of the United States Marine Corps )

" The Washington Post " ( 1889 )

" The Thunderer " ( 1889 )

" The Loyal Legion March " ( 1890 )

" High School Cadets " ( 1890 )

" The Liberty Bell " ( 1893 ) ( later used as credits theme for Monty Python 's Flying Circus TV series )

" Manhattan Beach March " ( 1893 )

" King Cotton " ( 1895 )

" Stars and Stripes Forever " ( 1896 ) ( National March of the United States )

" El Capitan " ( 1896 )

" Hands Across the Sea " ( dedicated to the band of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets ? the Highty @-@ Tights ) ( 1899 )

" Hail to the Spirit of Liberty " March ( 1900 )

" Invincible Eagle " ( 1901 ) ( dedicated to Pan @-@ American Buffalo Exposition )

" Imperial Edward " March ( 1902 )

" Fairest of the Fair " ( 1908 )

" Glory of the Yankee Navy " ( 1909 )

" U.S. Field Artillery " ( 1917 ) ( modified version " The Army Goes Rolling Along " is the official song of the U.S. Army )

" Who 's Who in Navy Blue " ( 1920 ) ( composed at the request of the United States Naval Academy class of 1920 and dedicated to Tecumseh , a bronze reproduction of the figurehead of the U.S.S. Delaware that occupies a key place at the Academy )

" The Gallant Seventh " ( 1922 )

" Nobles of the Mystic Shrine " ( 1923 )

" The Black Horse Troop " ( 1924 ) ( written in honor of Troop A , 107th Cavalry , Ohio National Guard ) .

" Pride of the Wolverines " ( 1926 )

" Minnesota March " ( 1927 )

" New Mexico March " ( 1928 )

" Salvation Army March " ( 1930 ) ( dedicated to the Salvation Army 's 50th anniversary in the U.S. )

Sousa wrote marches for several American universities , including the University of Minnesota , University of Illinois , University of Nebraska , Kansas State University , and Marquette University .

= = = Operettas = = =

Sousa wrote many notable operettas including :

The Smugglers ( 1882 )

Désirée ( 1883 )

The Queen of Hearts ( 1885 ) , also known as Royalty and Roguery

El Capitan ( 1896 )

The Bride Elect ( 1897 ) , libretto by Sousa .

The Charlatan ( 1898 ) , also known as The Mystical Miss , lyrics by Sousa

Chris and the Wonderful Lamp ( 1899 )

The Free Lance ( 1905 )

The American Maid ( 1909 ) , also known as The Glass Blowers .

Marches and waltzes have been derived from many of these stage @-@ works . Sousa also composed the music for six operettas that were either unfinished or not produced : The Devils ' Deputy , Florine , The Irish Dragoon , Katherine , The Victory , and The Wolf .

In addition , Sousa wrote a march based on themes from Gilbert and Sullivan 's comic opera The Mikado , the elegant overture Our Flirtations , a number of musical suites , etc . He frequently added Sullivan opera overtures or other Sullivan pieces to his concerts . He was quoted saying , " My religion lies in my composition " .

= = Writings , views and interests = =

Sousa had several additional interests outside of music . He wrote three novels ? The Fifth String , Pipetown Sandy , and The Transit of Venus ? as well as a full @-@ length autobiography , Marching Along and numerous articles and letters @-@ to @-@ the @-@ editor on a variety of subjects . He participated in trapshooting , taking an active role on the national stage in competitions .

= = = Trapshooting = = =

As a trapshooter , he ranks as one of the all @-@ time greats , and is enshrined in the Trapshooting Hall of Fame . He organized the first national trapshooting organization , a forerunner to today 's Amateur Trapshooting Association ( ATA ) . Sousa remained active in the fledgling ATA for some time after its formation . Some credit Sousa as the father of organized trapshooting in United States . He also wrote numerous articles about trapshooting . Sousa was a regular competitor representing the United States Navy in trapshooting competitions , particularly against the United States Army . Available records indicate that Sousa registered more than 35 @,@ 000 targets during his shooting career . A quote from his Trapshooting Hall of Fame biography says it best : " Let me say that just about the sweetest music to me is when I call , ' pull , ' the old gun barks , and the referee in perfect key announces , ' dead ' . "

= = = Writing = = =

In his 1902 novel The Fifth String , a young violinist made a deal with the Devil for a magic violin with five strings . The strings can excite the emotions of Pity , Hope , Love and Joy ? the fifth string was of Death and can be played only once before causing the player 's own death . He was unable

to win the love of the woman he desired . At a final concert , he played upon the death string . In 1905 , Sousa published a book *Pipetown Sandy* , which included a satirical poem titled " The Feast of the Monkeys " . The poem described " a lavish party attended by variety of animals , however , overshadowed by the King of Beasts , the lion ... who allows the muttering guests the privilege of watching him eat the entire feast " . At the end of his gluttony , the lion explained , " Come all rejoice , You 've seen your monarch dine . "

In 1920 , he wrote a 40 @,@ 000 @-@ word story , " The Transit of Venus " . It was about a group of misogynists called the Alimony Club who , as a way of temporarily escaping the society of women , embark on a sea voyage to observe the transit of Venus . The captain 's niece , however , had stowed away on board and soon won over the men . Sousa also wrote a booklet , " A manual for trumpet and drum " , published by the Ludwig drum company , with advice for playing drums and trumpet . An early version of the trumpet solo to " Semper Fidelis " was included in this volume .

= = = Hostility to recording = = =

Sousa held a very low opinion of the emerging and upstart recording industry . Using an epithet coined by Mark Twain , he derided recordings as " canned music " , a reference to the early wax cylinder records that came in can @-@ like cylindrical cardboard boxes . In a submission to a congressional hearing in 1906 , he argued :

These talking machines are going to ruin the artistic development of music in this country . When I was a boy ... in front of every house in the summer evenings , you would find young people together singing the songs of the day or old songs . Today you hear these infernal machines going night and day . We will not have a vocal cord left . The vocal cord will be eliminated by a process of evolution , as was the tail of man when he came from the ape .

Law professor Lawrence Lessig cited this passage to argue that in creating a system of copyrights in which control of music is in the hands of record labels , Sousa was essentially correct .

Sousa 's antipathy to recording was such that he almost never conducted his band when it was being recorded . Nevertheless , Sousa 's band made numerous recordings , the earliest being issued on cylinders by several companies , followed by many recordings on discs by the Berliner Gramophone Company and its successor , the Victor Talking Machine Company ( later RCA Victor ) . The Berliner recordings were conducted by Henry Higgins ( one of Sousa 's cornet soloists ) and Arthur Pryor ( Sousa 's trombone soloist and assistant conductor ) , with Sousa quoted as saying , " I have never been in the gramophone company 's office in my life . " A handful of the Victor recordings were actually conducted by Sousa , but most were conducted by Pryor , Herbert L. Clarke , Edwin H. Clarke , or by four of Victor 's most prolific house musicians : Walter B. Rogers ( who had also been a cornet soloist with Sousa ) , Rosario Bourdon , Josef Pasternack , and Nathaniel Shilkret . Details of the Victor recordings are available in the external link below to the EDVR .

= = = Other interests = = =

Sousa also appeared with his band in newsreels and on radio broadcasts ( beginning with a 1929 nationwide broadcast on NBC ) . In 1999 , Legacy Records released some of Sousa 's historic recordings on CD . In 1922 , he accepted the invitation of the national chapter to become an honorary member of Kappa Kappa Psi , the national honorary band fraternity . In 1925 , he was initiated as an honorary member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia , the national fraternity for men in music , by the fraternity 's Alpha Xi chapter at the University of Illinois . In 1952 , 20th Century Fox honored Sousa in their Technicolor feature film *Stars and Stripes Forever* with Clifton Webb portraying the composer . Fox music director Alfred Newman arranged the music and conducted the studio orchestra for the soundtrack . It was loosely based on Sousa 's memoirs , *Marching Along* .

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