

Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic  
65<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
McCormick Place West

# **John Philip Sousa's America**

## **The March King's Life in Pictures and Stories**

**John Philip Sousa IV**

email: [sousaiv@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sousaiv@sbcglobal.net)

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# SOUSA

MUSICAL AMERICA'S GALLERY  
OF CELEBRITIES—No. 26



John Philip Sousa, Whose Melodious and Stirring Band Music Has Carried  
His Name as an American Composer All Over the World

# ROCKS

# **John Philip Sousa's America**

## **The March King's Life in Pictures and Stories**

John Philip Sousa ... a rock star?

Actually, he was.

While the terms *rock and roll* and *rock star* had not yet entered the American vernacular at the time of Sousa, he was every bit our nation's first and undoubtedly the world's most-admired rock star. So it beckons the question: How did Sousa become our first rock star?

He was born on November 6, 1854, in Washington, DC, to parents John Antonio Sousa, a Portuguese immigrant, and Maria Elisabeth Trinkaus, a Bavarian.

Sousa began the study of music at an early age—the violin was his instrument—and by the age of twelve he wanted more than anything to join the circus as a traveling musician, with the ultimate goal of leading the circus band and making lots of money. But Sousa's father had other ideas for his son. At the tender age of thirteen, JPS was enlisted in the U.S. Marine Band ("The President's Own") as an apprentice musician—a "band boy" (child labor laws had yet to be passed).

Just eleven years after touring the country as a musical theater composer and conductor, Sousa became the youngest leader of the Marine Band. He was the first leader to take the Marine Band on tour, and in part thanks to the enormous popularity of his compositions, the band became one of the most recognized and loved in the country.

Sousa's international fame was established in 1889 when he composed "The Washington Post March." Perfectly suited to the new dance-craze—the "two-step"—Sousa's name and music became known throughout the world.

And so the journey to rock-star status had begun.

But bigger and better things were in store for Sousa. He realized that if he could move forward from his commitment to the Marines and to the President of the United States, he could (and would) become the most famous musician of his time. The era of the "Sousa Band" began at a concert in Plainfield, NJ, in September of 1892.

Throughout his entire career, Sousa believed that success came not only by giving people what they wanted but also ensuring that it was the very best. Only the finest music played by the finest musicians was acceptable.

## **The proof is in the numbers...**

- During his career Sousa performed some 14,000 concerts on five continents.
- By the end of the 1890s, Sousa had three hit musicals playing on Broadway at the same time.
- Sousa's 65-piece band (with female harpist and beautiful opera singer) performed for 60,000 people per week. The band toured constantly in the United States and throughout Europe and Russia.
- In 1911, Sousa took his musicians on a tour around the world.
- Sousa wrote over 130 marches, 17 light operas, dozens of suites, songs, concert pieces, and show tunes. He authored several books.
- At the age of 62, Sousa joined the U.S. Navy as an officer to build and lead the Navy Band at the Naval Training Station at Great Lakes, IL. His job was to raise money for the war effort—and that he did ... well over a million dollars.

## **John Philip Sousa...**

- ... a beloved composer and conductor (the first American musical superstar)
- ... a patriot who unselfishly served his country whenever needed
- ... a family man with a beautiful wife, two daughters, and a son
- ... a sportsman who claimed national titles in trapshooting and wouldn't hesitate to head off on a 100-mile horseback ride
- ... a legend whose name and legacy is still relevant and an artist who demanded the best from himself and delivered the best to his audiences

*I'd give five years off of my life to have composed the first four measures of "The Stars and Stripes Forever."*

—Leonard Bernstein

*He was in life rather small in stature, very modest and unassuming, yet he produced something that any hour of the day or night can quicken the blood and thrill the nerves of every American man, woman or child. His tunes were the Lincoln's Gerrysburg Address of music.*

*El Capitan, The Washington Post, and The Stars and Stripes Forever is a monument that needs no concrete. It's for the soul. And not for the eye.*

*Our little March King is dead, but his marches will be marched to through the ages.*

—Will Rogers  
from *The New York Times*  
March 8, 1932



# John Philip Sousa's America

## The Patriot's Life in Images and Words

BY JOHN PHILIP SOUSA IV with Loras John Schissel

John Philip Sousa was the Beatles of his day—America's first big superstar: conductor of more than 14,000 concerts, composer of a hundred hit tunes, and author of three Broadway musicals...running at the same time! In 1900, he was the best-known musician in the world, living among presidents, corporate giants, and movie stars.

Even today, millions hear and love his music. Schools, stages, highways, statues, and events are named after him. "The Stars and Stripes Forever" is the National March of the United States of America.

Yet there was also a mystery about him: although he was the first to attempt a world tour with a 65-piece band, he never spoke to his audience.

Just who was John Philip Sousa?

This book tells the story about what made Sousa, SOUSA—a story that his great-grandson John Philip Sousa IV is uniquely qualified to tell.

This intimate portrait brings Sousa to life—who he was, why he was driven to succeed, his love of country—and explores his life and times. Soursa shares hundreds of photos, cartoons, short stories, news clippings, quotes, sheet music covers, and magazine ads, collected in family scrapbooks, the Sousa Archive in the Library of Congress, and U.S. Marines archives.

*John Philip Sousa's America* is a compelling portrait of a great American: a heartfelt story that will resonate for generations to come.

*This book also includes a bonus compact disc recording featuring The March King's most beloved works performed by his successors with "The President's Own" U.S. Marine Band and a rare archival track of Sousa's own voice, introducing his band and playing his beloved "The Stars and Stripes Forever."*

**G-8161 Hardcover, full color, 216 pages with CD .....\$34.95**

John Philip Sousa IV is the only living direct namesake of John Philip Sousa. "I would like to think that in some small way I have continued my Great Grandfather's love of and service to our country."

Loras John Schissel is the senior musicologist at the Library of Congress.

### For the first time on DVD and Blu-ray!

The classic movie starring Robert Wagner, Clifton Webb, Debra Paget, and Ruth Hussey from 1952

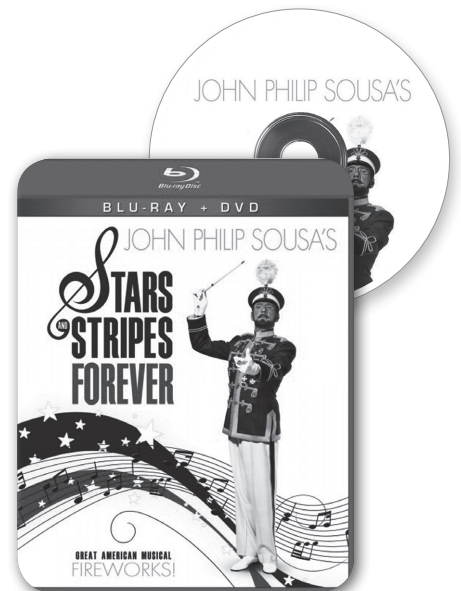
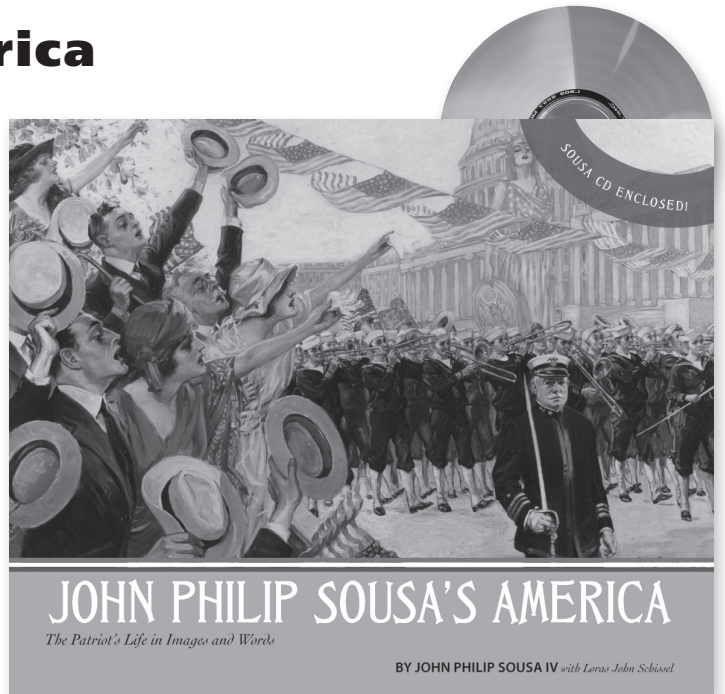
## John Philip Sousa's Stars and Stripes Forever

Released simultaneously with the book *John Philip Sousa's America*, this delightful movie is a favorite among band directors and music educators everywhere. Now finally available on DVD and Blu-ray, this musical revolves around the life of "The March King," full of vivid costumes, scintillating music, and great acting. Along with "The Music Man," this film is a true American classic.

**DVD-885 DVD and Blu-ray package .....\$34.95**

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