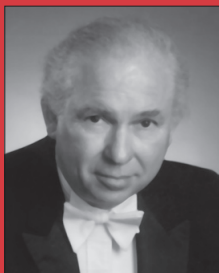




Music Educators



Past President of the American Bandmasters Association and long-time Director of Bands at the University of Kansas, appeared as John Philip Sousa in Concert.

Happy Birthday, Mr. Sousa

November 6, 2004 is the 150th anniversary of the birth of John Philip Sousa.

This provides a unique opportunity for bands throughout America to celebrate the life and career of this great American band leader, and through this, to focus attention on their own concerts and programs by capitalizing on the popularity of the “March King”. The people of America love the music of John Philip Sousa, and this is a wonderful opportunity to use that fact to your own advantage.

Let the “March King” help your band, and help you please your audiences and educate your students. Sousa marches are a welcome part of band concerts, and Sousa’s larger, serious works are interesting, well written works which are challenging for the players, and entertaining for the audience.

This is also an educational opportunity of the first order. Tied into a discussion of the life and times of Sousa are opportunities for discussions about many other topics related to the era in which he lived.

Sousa was born of immigrant parents in 1854, in Washington, D.C., in the days before the Civil War. As a child growing up, he became familiar with the parades of soldiers and bands that were a part of the war effort.

His father was a member of the Marine Band in Washington, and

when young John became interested in joining a circus, his father enlisted him in the Marine Band as an apprentice musician at the age of thirteen.

Sousa became an accomplished musician, studying the violin, and also learning other instruments while he was with the Marine Band.

Following his time with the Marine Band, Sousa became involved performing in theater orchestras, and he moved to Philadelphia. He was active not only as a performer, but also as an arranger, composer, editor, and sometimes conductor.



In 1880 he returned to Washington to become the 17th conductor of the Marine Band. The band flourished under his leadership. As the band continued to grow and succeed, so did its young conductor; and Sousa and the Marine Band became a very successful and popular part of the musical

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scene in Washington. In 1892 Sousa wrote his Washington Post march, and it became a very big hit on both sides of the Atlantic, as it was the perfect music to go with a new dance craze called “the two-step” which was popular in both Europe and in America. The popularity of this great march led to Sousa being called, “The March King”.

After twelve good years, Sousa left the Marine Band to form his own professional band, the Sousa Band. The combination of Sousa, his manager, David Blakely, and a talented band of musicians proved to be a great success. For the next many years the Sousa band performed all over America. They became the most popular musical attraction at many the greatest events of that era, and toured from coast to coast, bringing band music to people in cities large and small.

Following the successful American tours, Sousa and his Band toured Europe, taking the continent by storm. They were immensely successful and popular in Europe, and they then scheduled their first concert tour around the world.

Once again, they played to huge, enthusiastic audiences, and the Sousa Band became the best known, and most popular musical group in the world.

In 1896, Sousa and his wife were vacationing in Europe when Sousa learned of the death of his long-time manager, David Blakely. They immediately

returned to the United States, crossing the Atlantic Ocean on a steam ship. As he paced up and down the deck, a march began playing in his mind’s band. The march continued throughout the trip, and when Sousa reached shore, he wrote it down, not changing a single note. That march is The Stars and Stripes Forever, the most popular march in the world.

Sousa was a great patriot. He had served two terms in the Marine Corps. He later enlisted in the Army to serve in the Spanish-American War, and when World War I broke out, he once again volunteered. This time he joined the Navy. At the age of 62, he was in charge of the band training center at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station in Illinois.

Sousa’s life covered an amazing time of transformation of not only bands and music, but of our country, and the world.

In 1854, when he was born, slavery was legal in the United States, and it was an important part of the economy in certain regions. By 1861 America was at war, as the armies of the Confederacy and of the Union became involved in one of the bitterest and most costly wars in history. He saw the end of slavery, and the emergence of a new America following that tragic war. Countless thousands of Americans went west on the wagon trains, traveling the Oregon and the Santa Fe Trails, and in 1869 the first transcontinental railroad was complete, linking the

west coast to the Missouri River some 2,000 miles away.

Sousa, the child of immigrants, saw the new generation of immigrants make a great impact on American life. They worked in the factories, mines, and mills in the East. They suffered in “sweat shops”, and they helped form unions to protect their interests.

Across the plains and the prairies, they grew wheat, and they raised pigs, and they helped change the face of America.

In 1901 the President of the United States, for the first time ever, entertained a black man to dinner in the White House. Shortly after that an Italian, Guglielmo Marconi, transmitted the first wireless signal across the Atlantic – a major development in communications.

In 1903 the Wright Brothers flew their first airplane.

In 1905 Einstein conceived his theory of relativity, and also in 1905 Russia had its first revolution,

In 1908 Sousa’s friend, Henry Ford, produced his first Model T’s, changing forever the production of automobiles for the masses.

In 1912 the great “unsinkable ship”, the Titanic, sank.

In 1914 World War I began, and the U.S. entered the war in 1917.

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Also in 1914, the Panama Canal opened.

In 1917 the Communists took over Russia.

In 1918, World War I ended, after costing some 10 million lives.

In 1920 American women won the right to vote.

In 1927 Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1929 the United States Stock Market crashed, bringing on the Great Depression.

In 1932 Franklin D. Roosevelt defeated President Herbert Hoover, and became President of the United States, and

In 1932 John Philip Sousa, at the age of 77, died of a heart attack, in a hotel room in Reading, Pennsylvania following a rehearsal of the Ringgold Band. The last number he conducted was, appropriately, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*.

John Philip Sousa was an American phenomenon!

He led and conducted the most famous band in the world. He was a prolific composer, composing operettas, songs and vocal solos, suites and descriptive pieces, arrangements and transcriptions, and over 136 of the greatest marches ever written. He was also a popular and successful author, writing 7 books, and at least 138 articles for magazines and newspapers.

He was an accomplished horseman,

a world class skeet shooter, an avid baseball player (pitcher), an entertainer extraordinaire, a prosperous businessman, and one of the greatest American stars of the late 19th and early 20th century.

In 1987, his composition, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, officially became the national march of the United States of America. It is the most played and most recorded instrumental work in the world.

What can you and your band do to commemorate the life and legacy of this great American? There are many opportunities in every school and in every community. This is one project that you may want to discuss with your students or your players.

Following are some suggestions that you might want to consider.

PRESENT YOUR OWN "SOUSA CONCERT", or A **"TRIBUTE TO SOUSA"** in this Sesquicentennial Year's concerts

There are wonderful new editions of many of Sousa's finest marches, which enable today's bands and conductors to perform these legendary American band classics with style and effectiveness, and with integrity.

A "Sousa Concert" can be great fun, and very attractive. Presenting a concert in the Sousa style can be very effective programming.

If an entire Sousa Concert is not appropriate, or realistic, try including one good Sousa march in each

concert. This can be your band's, and your school's, and your community's tribute to the "March King".

**INTERDISCIPLINARY
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Sousa's lifetime covers a remarkable span of American history, including social changes, political changes, cultural changes and musical and artistic changes. These are excellent topics for Humanities projects, History, Geography, Sociology, or Government courses. Sousa and the Sousa band redefined the concert band, and elevated its stature in both America and in the capitals of Europe. And they introduced great music by great composers to generations of Americans, who would not have otherwise had the opportunity to hear performances of music by Wagner, Saint-Saens, and other masters.

HELP YOUR LIBRARIAN HELP YOU

The Sousa books are not only informative, but they are also entertaining. The caring band director will see that his students have access to these books, but you do NOT have to spend your money or the band budget to do this.

All librarians want to purchase books and materials that the teachers want in their different academic areas, and that students will not only enjoy, but from which they will benefit.

There are some terrific books about Sousa that your students

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will enjoy, and that YOU will enjoy also. They are books that need to be in our school libraries so students interested in music, the arts, or this era of American history, can use them as references; or which they can read for pleasure. Tell your librarian about these books.

Several of these are:

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA, American Phenomenon, by Paul Bierley, pub. by Warner Bros.(earlier editions were from Integrity Press). A wonderful biography, with excellent information about Sousa as a child; Sousa the man; Sousa the leader and conductor; Sousa the American hero and star; the eras and environments in which he lived and worked, and the international impact of his band and his music.

MARCHING ALONG, by John Philip Sousa, ed. by Paul Bierley, pub. by Integrity Press. This autobiography is the March King's very personal account of his early life, childhood, musical career, and life, beginning in Washington, D.C. in 1854 in the days preceding the Civil War. It continues through his days as the 17th conductor of the U. S. Marine Band, through the creation of his own Sousa Band, and through his challenges and adventures, as his career carried him to the heights of success as one of the best known and most revered American icons.

THE MARCH KING AND HIS BAND, by Kenneth Berger, pub. by Exposition Press. Published in 1957, this book was the first Sousa biography to tell the story of Sousa's last four years – which are not included in

his autobiography, *Marching Along*. The author has diligently presented the Sousa story with attention to details and to accuracy. His first draft of this book was read and checked by Sousa's daughter, and by 50 former members of the Sousa Band.

THE WORKS OF JOHN PHILIP SOUSA, by Paul Bierley, pub. by Integrity Press. This is an annotated listing of all the works that were known to be by Sousa when the book went to press in 1984. Included are not only the famous marches, but longer more serious compositions, songs and vocal works, operettas, solos and ensembles, and literary works including books and articles. This is a treasure trove of information.

SPONSOR OR HELP SPONSOR AND SUPPORT A "JOHN PHILIP SOUSA JUNIOR HONOR BAND"

This is a special program for middle school or junior high musicians, sponsored and coordinated by the John Philip Sousa Foundation, a non-profit organization. These honor bands have been a great success in every state in which they have been held. They are filling an important need, rewarding, and providing motivational opportunities for our talented younger performers.

For more information see the John Philip Sousa Foundation web-site, or for further information, contact the Sousa Foundation project co-chairs: Gladys Wright (e-mail: agwright@gte.net) ph. 765-403-1730; or Robert Foster (e-mail: rfoster@ku.edu) ph. 785-864-3326,

SUPPORT THE FUND RAISING EFFORTS FOR THE NEW SOUSA STATUE IN OUR NATION'S CAPITAL

Join bands all over America, to help raise funds for the first ever full-size, full length statue of the greatest band leader in history, to be placed in our nation's capital in front of the new Marine Band facility. More detailed information can be found on the Sousa Foundation web-site.

Donations can be sent to:

Victor Zajec, Treasurer
Sousa Statue Project
18603 Aberdeen
Homewood, IL 60430

SOUSA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL HONOR BAND

Honor and support your best high school musicians by encouraging and supporting their application to perform in the Sousa National Honor Band, conducted by Col. John R. Bourgeois, former leader and conductor of "The President's Own" United States Marine Band.

The band will meet in New Orleans, rehearsing and performing on the campus of Loyola University, June 11 – 15, 2005. Applications and additional information may be found on the John Philip Sousa Foundation web-site, under the project heading: Honor Band.

Further inquiries may be addressed to Bruce Dinkins
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Phone. 512-414-3838.