



John Philip **SOUSA**

Music for Wind Band • 14

The Glass Blowers Overture

Esprit de Corps

The International Congress

The Central Band of the RAF

Keith Brion



John Philip Sousa (1854-1932)

Works for Wind Band, Volume 14

John Philip Sousa personified turn-of-the-century America, the comparative innocence and brash energy of a still new nation. His ever touring band represented America across the globe and brought music to hundreds of American towns. John Philip Sousa, born 6th November, 1854, reached this exalted position with startling quickness. In 1880, at the age of 26, he became conductor of the U.S. Marine Band. In twelve years the vastly improved ensemble won high renown and Sousa's compositions earned him the title of "The March King". Sousa went one better with the formation of his own band in 1892, bringing world acclaim.

In its first seven years the band gave 3500 concerts; in an era of train and ship travel it logged over a million miles in nearly four decades. There were European tours in 1900, 1901, 1903, and 1905, and a world tour in 1910-11, the zenith of the band era.

The unprecedented popularity of the Sousa Band came at a time when few American orchestras existed. From the Civil War to about 1920, band concerts were the most important aspect of U.S. musical life. No finer band than Sousa's was ever heard. Sousa modified the brass band by decreasing the brass and percussion instruments, increasing its woodwinds, and adding a harp. His conducting genius attracted the finest musicians, enabling him to build an ensemble capable of executing programs almost as varied as those of a symphony orchestra. The Sousa Band became the standard by which American bands were measured, causing a dramatic upgrading in quality nationally.

Sousa's compositions also spread his fame. Such marches as *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, *El Capitan*, *Washington Post*, and *Semper Fidelis* are universally acknowledged as the best of the genre. Sousa said a march "should make a man with a wooden leg step out", and his surely did. Although he standardized the march form as it is known today, he was no mere maker of marches, but an exceptionally inventive composer of over 200 works, including symphonic poems, suites,

operas and operettas. His principles of instrumentation and tonal color influenced many classical composers. His robust, patriotic operettas of the 1890s helped introduce a truly native musical attitude in American theater.

1 March of the Royal Trumpets (1892)

After leaving the Marine Band to form his own professional band in the summer of 1892, Sousa composed this grand processional march as a feature for his new professional band's upcoming first tour. As a highlight, the trumpet parts were performed on a special set of five-foot long "Aida style" herald trumpets. Sousa later refashioned much of this same music as the final movement, *Her Majesty the Queen*, for his suite *In the King's Court*.

2 Overture to *The American Maid* – Operetta or Overture 'The Glass Blowers' (1909)

This brief but brilliant show overture opens with the bubbly and hammering *Song of the Factory*. It continues with several martial segments from the show that later became transformed as the Sousa march *From Maine to Oregon*.

3 The Triton Medley – March (1892)

This music expands an earlier Sousa composition for violin and piano. In 1892 Sousa enlarged that score by adding several additional strains and re-titling it as the *Triton 'Medley' March*.

4 Listen to My Tale of Woe – Humoresque (1888)

Sousa based this humoresque on a catchy popular tune by Hubbard T. Smith. The words begin pleasantly enough:

"A Little Peach in an orchard grew,
Listen to my Tale of Woe"

but eventually the story leads to a sad demise:

"Under the turf where the daisies grew,
Listen to my tale of woe,
They planted John and his sister Sue,
And their little souls to the angels flew."

5 The Lambs – March (1914)

Sousa was but one of The Lambs Club's famous theatrical members. His *Lambs March* was expressly written for the New York club's annual "Gambol" parade. A surviving news photo shows Sousa elegantly dressed in evening wear and sporting full theatrical makeup and leading a band and the club's members as they marched up Broadway.

6 Esprit du Corps – March (1888)

Today this stirring march, composed during Sousa's time as leader of the Marine Band, continues to symbolize the great spirit of the United States Marines.

El Capitan and His Friends – Suite (1885-1898)

7 I. El Capitan (1895)

8 II. The Charlatan (1898)

9 III. The Bride Elect (1897)

During the mid-1890s, in a remarkably short period of four years, Sousa composed and produced three highly successful operettas: *El Capitan*, *The Charlatan*, and *The Bride Elect*. To celebrate these great successes he combined the most popular tunes from each show into a suite of three charming medleys.

10 The Circumnavigators Club – March (1931)

Since he had taken his entire band on a tour around the world in 1911 Sousa was well qualified for his treasured membership in New York's exclusive "Circumnavigators Club." For that club's annual meeting in December 1931 he composed and dedicated what was to become his last march. Three months later on 6th March, 1932, Sousa passed away.

11 The Loyal Legion – March (1890)

After the Civil War the U. S. officers who had served the Union formed a fraternal organization called "The Order of the Loyal Legion."

For the 1890 Loyal Legion meeting Sousa and the Marine Band premiered a new march which he dedicated to them. Some of the materials were drawn from Sousa's earlier 1885 operetta *The Queen of Hearts*.

12 The International Congress – Fantasy (1876)

During the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 an all-star festival orchestra was created under the leadership of French composer Jacques Offenbach. Sousa was asked to perform in the first violin section and also invited to work with Offenbach as an arranger. At Offenbach's request and in consideration of the international nature of the Exposition, the 21-year-old Sousa (his formidable compositional and arranging gifts already in full flower) fashioned a grand medley comprising national anthems, folk music, classical music and patriotic airs, titled *The International Congress*. Well-known patriotic or characteristic melodies were assembled from the United States as well as major countries of Europe including England, France, Ireland, Germany, Russia, Finland, Austria, Poland, Denmark, Italy, and Greece. Sousa's skilled arrangements and elegant transitions mingle throughout, managing to create a singularly unified and unique composition. The twenty-five minute work opens with *Yankee Doodle*, here transformed as a clever fugue, and concludes with Sousa's stirring setting of the *Star-Spangled Banner*, arranged in the style of Wagner's *Tannhauser Overture*.

Keith Brion

Program notes by Keith Brion are freely based on material taken from "The Works of John Philip Sousa," Integrity Press with the express permission of the author, Paul E. Bierley. The introduction is extracted from Roger Ruggeri's program notes for the Milwaukee Symphony.

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The Central Band of the Royal Air Force



Music has been a part of the Royal Air Force since 1912, when the Service existed as the Royal Flying Corps. In 1918 the Royal Air Force was formed and the Central Band was established shortly thereafter. In 1922 it was the first military band to be broadcast on BBC radio and continues to be frequently featured in that medium. The band is also well recognised for its recording prowess. Since 1955, when it became the first military band to make an LP, the band has remained at the forefront of contemporary military band recording. Musicians from the Central Band are also required to support British forces on operations abroad. Personnel are being deployed in rôles as diverse as detainee handlers in Afghanistan and ambulance drivers in the Falkland Islands. Nevertheless, whether working as musicians or medics, their aim remains the same – to display, through their conduct and performance, the excellence for which the Royal Air Force has become renowned.

Keith Brion

Keith Brion leads his own New Sousa Band and is a frequent conductor of light music orchestral concerts throughout America and internationally. He is a specialist in Sousa's period style and has published numerous performing editions of his music.

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(1854-1932)

Music for Wind Band • 14

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|-----------|---|--------------|
| 1 | March of the Royal Trumpets (1892) | 4:08 |
| 2 | Overture to <i>The American Maid</i> – Operetta (Overture ‘The Glass Blowers’) (1909)* | 5:47 |
| 3 | The Triton Medley – March (1892) | 1:27 |
| 4 | Listen to My Tale of Woe – Humoresque (1888)* | 2:37 |
| 5 | The Lambs – March (1914) | 2:04 |
| 6 | Esprit de Corps – March (1888) | 2:39 |
| | El Capitan and His Friends – Suite* | 17:00 |
| 7 | I. El Capitan (1896) | 5:12 |
| 8 | II. The Charlatan (1898) | 3:59 |
| 9 | III. The Bride Elect (1897) | 7:49 |
| 10 | The Circumnavigators Club – March (1931) | 1:49 |
| 11 | The Loyal Legion – March (1890) | 2:43 |
| 12 | The International Congress (1876) – Fantasy | 24:37 |

***WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING**

The Central Band of the RAF • Keith Brion

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For further information on the printed scores in this series,
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AMERICAN CLASSICS

The unprecedented popularity enjoyed by John Philip Sousa was garnered through constant national and international touring with a band that included some of the very best American instrumentalists. Volume 14 of this series includes brilliant show overtures, such as *The Glass Blowers*, theatrical marches such as *The Lambs*, the suite *El Capitan and His Friends*, from three of Sousa's remarkably successful operettas and, last but not least, the 22 year-old composer's extraordinary collection of patriotic songs of many countries, *The International Congress*, which ends with *The Star Spangled Banner* set against the violin obbligato from Wagner's *Tannhauser*.

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Playing
Time:
64:54