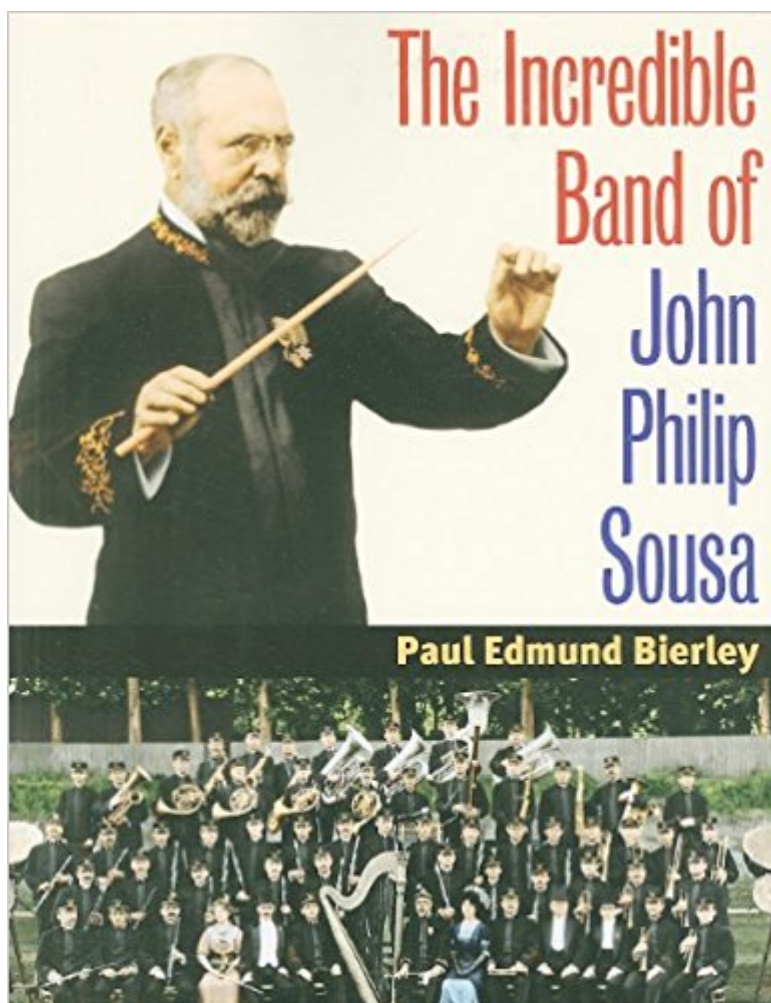


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# The Incredible Band Of John Philip Sousa (Music In American Life)



## Synopsis

John Philip Sousa (1854-1932) is an American icon. Most famous for his military marches, the composer-bandmaster led a disciplined group of devoted musicians on numerous American tours and around the world, shaping a new cultural landscape. Paul E. Bierley documents every aspect of the "March King's" band: its history, its star performers, its appearances on recordings and radio, and the problems they faced on their 1911 trip around the world. Enhanced by more than 120 images and photographs, *The Incredible Band of John Philip Sousa* also contains six statistical appendixes detailing where the band played, a complete list of musicians, instrumentation of the band, program listings, and a discography

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A remarkable array of carefully arranged and meticulously detailed data. . . . Bierley opens doors to new arenas of American music research. . . . With this remarkable book, Sousa research is now ready to really begin."--*Nineteenth-Century Music Review* "The premier Sousa authority, Bierley caps his forty-year career with this admirably comprehensive tome on his--and many Americans'--favorite subject. . . . Highly recommended."--*Choice* "Solidly researched, the book provides a view of music in American life not found in other studies of Sousa or the period. Highly recommended."--*Library Journal* [Â](#)

The ultimate reference on America's marching band marvel

This book is an incredible resource which surpasses all other research on The March King and his professional concert band. Everyone interested in the history of concert band music should own this book.

Outstanding reference for Sousa aficionados.

My first trumpet teacher was in the 1920 Sousa Band and listed in the book.

This was a very interesting book regarding the career of John Philip Sousa. I would recommend it for anyone who is interested in the history of music in America.

I bought this book because my grandfather - Charley Parker played clarinet in the band. I hoped to find a picture of him but didn't so I am disappointed. I used to have a photo of the band with him in it but it has been lost

Great reading. Outstanding research on the material!

This author has written extensively about Sousa and his band before. Much of that information is repeated here, but there are some new additions as well. The author has nicely highlighted each aspect of Sousa's career which makes for easy reading. The problem with Sousa is that we tend to exclude all other band composers and their music. There were many other great band composers around including R. B. Hall, Karl King, and Henry Fillmore to name some of the prominent American ones. Their music deserves notice as well, as Sousa often played their works. Sousa's band also tends to be somewhat over-rated by hero worship. Sure it was a great band, probably the best in the US at that time. But it was not the greatest in the world! Too many other European bands were around to deny Sousa that title. Sousa knew that any British Guards band like the Coldstream Guards, Scots Guards etc. was certainly as good. The French Garde Republicaine were also. In Prussia you had William Wieprecht who did much to modernize the modern military band. His combined Prussian Guards band got top ratings in Paris during a band festival there just before the Franco-Prussian War. How ironic indeed! So Sousa was not the only one around with a great band, and any serious reader should know this. Certainly Sousa did. But what Sousa did was market himself

far better than anyone else. He saw that as a civy street guy he could make a lot more fame and money than he was as director of the US Marine band. This was Sousa's main advantage, and he knew how to make the most of it. His conducting style was flamboyant, his programing entertaining and interesting. The whole concept of the encore march after a long piece of music was unique, and introduced excitment to his concerts. These things are what made him and his band great. Unfortunately Sousa developed the cult of his personality so much for his concerts that when he was not on the podium concert hall attendance often suffered. This indicated that his band would not likely outlive him. Americans came to see Sousa the man as much as the great music his superb band played. I doubt Sousa could have promoted his works any other way in this country. In that regard he was the first super-star who got his name all over the media. Many have followed in his foot-steps since. Some might think I am trying to downgrade Sousa and his great band here. Certainly not. One should merely have a little sense of perspective when reading about him. His marches were first-rate. He wrote 136 of them, of which only the top 10-15 often get played now. Most of them were excellent, some certainly were better than others. While this sounds like a lot of music, keep in mind some famous German march composers wrote hundreds of marches. Blackenberg is believed to have composed over a thousand! Kenneth Alford, the Great British march composer did only about 20, but they are all classics. Alford was a regimental bandmaster, and thus did not have the means to promote himself like Sousa did. Sousa should also be known for his many opperettas, novelty pieces, and classical transcriptions. In this regard he greatly expanded the musical level in the US during this time. Orchestras were around as well, but these did not travel like Sousa. There were also other great bands, like the Allentown band, far odler than Sousa's from 1828. In fact Sousa took many players from this great band which still exists today, and which probably recreates the approximate sound and style of Sousa better than any other. The great strength of this book are the many details provided of the personnel who played in the band, as well as concert programs, and tour iternary. There is one chapter devoted entirely to a band memebers diary recording his expereinces during Sousa's great World Tour of 1911. Great stuff, if perhaps a little too much at times. There is a lot of detail here, perhaps excessive at times, but obviously a labor of love by the author. This is certainly THE book to have about Sousa and his incredible band who left their mark in the world's concert halls.

This book is primarily a reference work for those looking for deeply detailed information from primary sources. It has other excellent background material as well, but if you want to see a nice cross-section of actual Sousa Band programs, or you want to find out if your great-grandfather

actually played in Sousa's Band like your grandmother always told you, this is the most definitive reference available.

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