

# WindWorks

A JOURNAL FOR THE CONTEMPORARY WIND BAND

ISSUE 5 SPRING 2001

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## SOUSA AND GERSHWIN®!

This issue of WindWorks will celebrate two of America's most beloved composers and performers: **John Philip Sousa and George Gershwin**. While Sousa and his contemporary, Victor Herbert, developed many of their theatrical writing skills from earlier successes of Strauss, Gilbert and Sullivan, Offenbach, DeKoven, and Lehar, Gershwin's Tin Pan Alley musicals were built upon the operettas of Sousa and Herbert. Both Sousa and Gershwin wrote and performed for the enlightenment of the public, but each also had his own experience and background in developing classical repertoire.

The Sousa saga is divided into two parts, with his marches under scrutiny in this issue, and his original suites and fantasias for band examined in Issue 6, Fall, 2001. In addition, a most important book, John Philip Sousa, American Phenomenon by Paul E. Bierley, is being re-released concurrently with this journal publication. Bierley's biography of Sousa is one of several of his research books on Sousa and his music, and is a primary source for research on this American giant at the turn of the century.

When the centennial of George Gershwin's birth occurred in 1998, the DHWL began a series of publications of Gershwin compositions to provide interesting programming options for contemporary wind conductors. Two versions of the Rhapsody in Blue were produced. One was a lean, jazz-oriented edition by Donald Hunsberger, based upon the original Paul Whiteman Band orchestration by Ferde Grofé, and the second was a setting of Grofé's orchestral score for a larger, more lush concert band accompaniment by Thomas Verrier.

Additional works in the DHWL related to Gershwin include the Fantasy Variations by Donald Grantham and Catfish Row, a suite for wind band—with soprano and baritone vocal soloists—based upon Gershwin's own orchestral suite from Porgy and Bess®.

The two Gershwin works released in this issue are excellent examples of his ability to combine serious form composition with immediate popular appeal. Cuban Overture, in a wind band setting by Mark Rogers, contains exciting melodic lines and Caribbean rhythms, all underscored by a large percussion section playing Cuban instruments. The second work is Gershwin's Second Rhapsody for Piano with the original orchestral accompaniment cast in a wind band setting arranged by James Ripley. This work was the solo vehicle for pianist Makato Ozone on the Eastman Wind Ensemble tour of Japan, June, 2000.



# DEFINING THE WIND BAND SOUND: JOHN PHILIP SOUSA: HIS MARCHES

BY DONALD HUNSBERGER

## THE SOUSA ERA (1880-1932)

John Philip Sousa was born in Washington, D.C. on November 6, 1854. His father, John Antonio Sousa, a trombonist in the United States Marine Band, was of Portuguese descent and his mother, Maria Trinkhaus, was born in Bavaria. Philip (as he was known in the family) became interested in music at an early age studying voice, violin, and piano as well as several wind instruments.

At the age of 13, young Philip was enlisted into the Marine Band as an apprentice musician when his father discovered that he was about to secretly leave home and join a traveling circus. He served a total of just under seven years with the Marine Band while continuing to study violin, composition, and harmony from a popular Washington orchestra director and teacher, George Felix Benkert. Sousa spent his teenage years in a dual life, that of band performer during the day, and as a civilian musician performing about Washington in the evenings.

By the time he was twenty, he was performing in Washington theatrical houses such as Ford's Theatre and the Washington Theatre Comique (at the latter as both violinist and conductor). Although the Comique was a vaudeville house, he gained valuable practical experience that enabled him to secure work with a traveling troupe performing in the Midwest, so he resigned from the Marine Band and went out onto the theater circuit. After several months, he left the road show and returned to Washington and soon moved to Philadelphia where he obtained a position playing violin in the National Exhibition (1876) Orchestra. Here, Sousa played under the baton of Jacques Offenbach, who was one of the international conductors brought to Philadelphia for the Exhibition.

Sousa then secured a position playing in the Chestnut Street Theatre and also began working for music publishers W. F. Shaw Co. in 1877 and for J. M. Stoddard and Co. the following year. He arranged a group of fourteen medleys (fantasias) based upon opera and operetta sources for piano and in 1879, compiled a book of 87 solos for piano and violin entitled *Evening Pastimes*, professional opportunities that helped sharpen his writing skills. He also began conducting a vaudeville orchestra in Cape May, NJ while continuing to play with the Exhibition Orchestra.

Sousa wrote his first operetta, *Katherine*, in 1879 and was soon invited to become musical director of a new opera company, the Amateur Opera Company. He orchestrated *H. M. S. Pinafore*, the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta that was currently enjoying success and popularity in America. The company traveled to New York (under a new name — the Church Choir Company) and performed for seven weeks at the Broadway Theatre. The run was highly successful and even pleased Gilbert and Sullivan, who attended one of their performances. The next major opportunity arose when he was asked to compile existing music, and compose new material, for a variety show, *Our Flirtations*. This was produced successfully at the Park Theatre in Philadelphia and subsequently went on tour in the Midwest. During the tour, while performing in St. Louis, Sousa was notified by his father, Antonio, that the U. S. Marine Band was interested in having him become the next leader

of the Band. Sousa left the operetta tour and returned to Washington, where he enlisted in the Marine Corps on October 1, 1880.

What was the status of the Marine Band at that time? What credentials did Sousa bring to the position? He was now 26 years old and had professional experience as a composer, orchestrator, violinist, and arranger in operetta and vaudeville. He was a true working musician of the day. However, he had not conducted a band, nor did he have any military leadership training (although he had served in the Marines for several years). He had written several marches in addition to his works for orchestra and the stage — primarily songs, fantasies, waltzes, etc. All this would quickly change as he began to revise the instrumentation and repertoire of the Marine Band. He began writing marches (six in 1881 alone) and transcriptions for the library, thus eliminating some of the less-artistic music, and some of the imported band literature from Europe.

In 1880, the Marine Band was about 40 in number, but dropped to around 26 in Sousa's first year as he began to make changes deemed necessary. Most of the members were European and he began to recruit younger Americans to fill vacancies. With financial and working conditions unfavorable for the musicians, Sousa continued the existing practice of permitting band members to work outside the band schedule.

Although his experience and perhaps first-found love lay in musical theater, specifically operetta, Sousa was soon to gain much success and popularity through his march compositions. He had already begun to amass a viable reputation for his compositions when his march *The Washington Post* (1889) was adopted by dance studios as music for a new dance called the two-step. It became very popular in Europe as well as throughout the United States.

Paul Bierley states in *John Philip Sousa, American Phenomenon*:

*"History tells us that Sousa's greatest inspirations came when he was in the process of composing a march. The following story is typical of the ones he told on many occasions: If I want to write a march, I turn my imagination loose on scenes of barbaric splendor. I picture to myself the glitter of guns and swords, the tread of feet to the drum beat, and all that is grand and glorious in military scenes. How those compositions come I cannot tell. It is an utter mystery to me."*



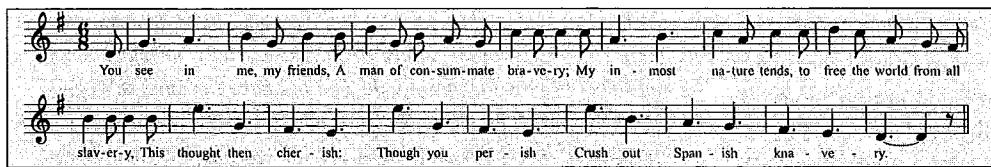
**Excerpt 1. Photograph of J. P. Sousa while Leader of the U.S. Marine Band**

Bierley continues:

"As to the aesthetic qualities of a march, Sousa had explicit technical standards. Foremost was simplicity, exemplified by a steady, solid rhythm. He believed a march should have a logical, clean-cut harmonic structure and a straightforward counterpoint which did not detract from the overall theme of the march. He further believed that a march should be a short masterpiece and that a composer should take the composition of a march as seriously as the composition of a symphony. It is a well-established fact that Sousa did just that; he wrote more marches of high caliber than any other composer."

During Sousa's career, he created several of his marches from music originally written for the operetta stage. These adaptations ranged from march melodies similar to an operetta theme to direct statements between operetta vocal lines and the band melodic lines. An example of the latter is most clearly shown in several sections from *El Capitan* (1895) with exact usage in the march of the same name. See Excerpts 2, 3, and 4.

**Excerpt 2. *El Capitan*. Act 1; No. 5. Solo: You see in me. (March: 1st strain.) (1896)**



You see in me, my friends, A man of con-sum-mate bra-ve-ry; My in-most na-ture tends, to free the world from all slav-er-y. This thought then cher-ish: Though you per-ish Crush out Span-ish kna-ve-ry.

**Excerpt 3. *El Capitan*. Act 1; No. 5. Chorus: Behold El Capitan. (March: 2nd strain.)**



Be-hold El Cap-i-tan! Gaze on his mis-an-throp-ic stare; Not-ice his pen-e-trat-ing glare. Come, match him if you can, He is their cham-pi-on be-yond com-pare.

**Excerpt 4. *El Capitan*. Act 2 and Act 3; Finale: Unsheath the Sword. (March: Trio; 2nd Strain.)**



Un-sheath the sword, let the ban-ners fly, for du-ty calls, we will win or die. The trum-pet's note and the roll of drum, Shall tell the foe the vic-tors come

The remaining march portion, trio — 1st strain, does not appear to be included in the operetta in a straight transfer setting as those above. However, similar melodic and rhythmic motives are included in the instrumental introductions to both Act I and Act II.

*El Capitan* became Sousa's greatest stage presentation, a fact undoubtedly aided by the constant performance of the *El Capitan* march! A list of operettas that gave rise to marches, and the marches thus inspired, would include:

**Operetta:**

- The Smugglers* (1882)
- The Queen of Hearts* (1885)
- The Bride Elect* (1897)
- The Charlatan* (1898)
- Chris and the Wonderful Lamp* (1899)
- The Free Lance* (1906)

**March:**

- The Lambs March* (1914)
- The Loyal Legion* (1890)
- The Bride Elect* (1897)
- The Charlatan* (1898)
- The Man behind the Gun* (1899)
- The Free Lance* (1906)

**EARLY WAX CYLINDER RECORDINGS BY THE MARINE BAND**

The year 1890 proved to be yet another huge step forward for Sousa and his newly renovated band when a cylinder recording company, the Columbia Phonograph Company, moved to Washington and began recording the Marine Band, producing 60 wax cylinders by the end of that year. They were to record over 200 marches within the following two years. Again, Paul Bierley notes:

"Sousa was becoming increasingly aware of the popularity of his marches and was eager to have them perpetuated by this novel invention. The High School Cadets and Corcoran Cadets, which

were written in 1890, were among the first pieces recorded. The cylinders were crude at best, and the recording process was laborious because mass production was unknown. To produce even a small number of recordings it was necessary to repeat the selection over and over again, using as many of the bulky recording machines as could be gathered around the players.

The infant recording industry had graduated from voice dictation to music. But the music was extremely coarse when played back through the ear tubes in the nickel-in-the-slot parlors that were springing up around the country. The playing time of the brittle wax cylinders was two minutes at the most, and about the only music that could be heard above the scratchy sound was that of a loud military band. Among the companies producing cylinders, the Columbia Phonograph Company was the leader. The

recordings made by the Marine Band, unrefined though they were, became the most popular recordings in America. Sousa's music was getting exposure, but he soon saw the futility of it all. The recording sessions were boring and tiresome. Because of the nature of the compositions recorded, a conductor was not a necessity, only someone to start and stop the players at the proper times. Sousa delegated this to an assistant and was absent when most, or perhaps all, the recordings were made."



*Sousa put America's best foot forward with his first European tour in 1900. In this era, he was the world's best known and highest paid musician.*

Around this time, Sousa wished to take the Marine Band on tour but the Commandant of the Marine Corps denied his request. Few bands other than Gilmore's traveled during that time and Sousa recognized the opportunity to introduce his band to the American public (along with his own music). The no-tour policy finally changed in 1891 and a five week tour was arranged for New England and the Midwest. David Blakely, who had managed some of Gilmore's tours, was hired to manage the Marine Band trip and he and Sousa became close associates — two professionals, who would soon work together in the formation of Sousa's own band.

## THE GREAT TRANSITION

The first major era in the development of the American wind band came to a close in a quick turn of events in 1892 when Sousa left the Marine Band early in the year to form his own professional ensemble, and, Patrick Gilmore died suddenly in St. Louis on September 24. Two days later, in Plainfield, NJ, the newly-formed Sousa Band performed its premiere concert. Sousa was now out in the commercial market and had to provide his audiences with substantial musical fare to earn their admiration and attendance at his concerts. He accepted this opportunity to continue writing what would soon become his own tradition of composition — music that firmly established him as a compositional giant through his own original suites for band and what would become some of the world's most popular marches. Prior to establishing his own band, he had already written over forty marches; he would proceed to write more than twice that number during the rest of his lifetime. The remainder of the current discussion will be focused on some of his marches; (the suites will be discussed in *WindWorks*, Issue 6; Fall, 2001).

## THE MARCHES

What musical elements identify these short masterpieces and their individualistic ability to be both singularly unique, yet bound together through style and technique? Obviously, each major composer has his or her own stylistic tendencies that become the foundation of their creativity.

The early music of Mozart may not have possessed the elegance or polish of his later works, but the hand of the compositional genius can be recognized in each period. Likewise, while an early symphony of Tchaikovsky may bear some of the same compositional hallmarks as his masterful Symphony No. 6 ("Pathétique"), the pathos and human suffering on display in the latter may not be seen so clearly in the earlier work.

In a similar fashion, the Sousa marches of his early tenure with the Marine Band — *Guide Right* (1881), *Right-Forward* (1881), *Congress Hall* (1882) — written shortly after he assumed the directorship, reflect more the quickstep styles of the earlier Civil War brass band era. However, by the middle of the decade, he was settling into his style with *The Gladiator* (1886), *The Rifle Regiment* (1886) and, especially in 1888, with *Semper Fidelis*, *The Crusader* and *National Fencibles*. In *The Works*

of John Philip Sousa, Paul Bierley offers these thoughts concerning the growth of Sousa's march composition techniques:

*"All of Sousa's marches have not had the same public appeal. Some of his early marches are almost never performed; while they are not substandard in workmanship, they do not have the mark of genius borne by some of his more significant works. Generally speaking, his marches of the 1880s and 1890s are military in character. Those written after the turn of the century are more sophisticated. This is especially true of those written during his last decade; these are polished works when compared with his earliest efforts and are definitely worthy of one called March King."*

What musical elements did he utilize to make his marches so unique that the sound of one being performed today still raises the Sousa flag? After close to forty years of conducting Sousa marches, I still find each one highly individualistic and laden with something special for that particular work. While preparing editions of marches for recording or performance, there is always the feeling that Sousa had 135 plus creations — so special to him that they were siblings to one another, yet remain individual or singular entities. Granted, not all of them are great or even equal in musical dimensions, but stylistically, they are indeed united in a most positive way.

The following procedures and analytical processes are not to be considered as complete for any one march by any means, and especially, are not inclusive of interpretative or performance practices for marches of the era. They are designed merely to provide basic analytical steps toward a further understanding of Sousa's music.

## FORMAL DESIGN OF THE MARCH

Sousa was responsible for establishing a formal design to the march that became the model for the 20th century. Earlier, European marches of the period frequently contained a da capo at the close of the trio that re-introduced the opening strain(s) once again. Sousa felt that a march should have a pronounced climax and that this climax should be at the end. His development of a

march form without the da capo/return/coda approach created an entity that he brought to perfection in concerts with the Marine Band and Sousa Band. With the latter, brass performers frequently lined the front of the concert stage for the final statement of the Trio theme.



Ever the patriot, Sousa gave up his lucrative tours to train Navy bandmen during World War I. He received the grand salary of \$1 per month.

Thus, the overall form of a Sousa march developed and a typical layout might include:

Introduction	4 or 8 measures
First strain	16 measures repeated
Second strain	16 measures repeated
Trio	16 or 32 measures
Break strain	16 measures
Trio	16 or 32 measures
Break strain	16 measures
Trio	16 or 32 measures

Sousa's genius for inventiveness emerged as he created variations on the above format, exceptions to the rules that lent special charm to those marches which broke free from the normal mold. Examples include *Semper Fidelis*, *Belle of Chicago* and *High School Cadets* that have no break strain. *On Parade*, also without a break strain, does possess a rare *da capo*. One of the longest trio designs occurs in *The Gallant Seventh* march in which the trio melody (16 mm.) is followed by:

- a unison trumpet/bugle call (16 mm.)
- trio melody stated once again (16 mm.)
- break strain (16 mm.)
- repeat of the trio melody (16 mm.)

And, in *Liberty Bell*, he wrote a 32 mm. trio melody with a 24 mm. break strain. The most unusual break strain, 15 measures in length, occurs in *The Thunderer*, which will be discussed in detail below. See Excerpt 12.

## THE INTRODUCTION

In many introductions, Sousa was at times somewhat abrupt in his opening statement preceding the first strain. *The Picadore*, *Belle of Chicago* and *Beau Ideal* are examples of this abruptness (3 to 4 measures in length); another excellent example of this minimal length is found in one of his most effective marches, *The Gladiator* — a true realization of his process of mentally imagining the virility of the subject. See Excerpt 5.

Other introductions utilizing unison lines without chordal structures until the climax are found in such marches as: *King Cotton*, *Corcoran Cadets*, *Washington Post*, *Our Flirtations*, and *Black Horse Troop*. On the other hand, in *The Rifle Regiment*, Sousa composed a twenty-measure, five-section opening statement that beautifully sets up the second strain and stands as the March King's longest introductory statement. See Excerpt 6.

Excerpt 5. *The Gladiator*. Introduction; mm 1-4.

Excerpt 7. *The Thunderer*. Introduction; mm 1-4.

Excerpt 6. *The Rifle Regiment*. Introduction; mm.1-21.

Excerpt 8. *The Thunderer*. First strain with repeat; mm. 5-20; 21-36.

Musical score for Excerpt 8, first strain with repeat. The score is written for three staves: Treble, Bass, and Bass. The first strain (mm. 5-20) features a melody in the Treble staff with a trill and a '2nd time only' marking. The Bass staff provides a steady accompaniment. The second strain (mm. 21-36) repeats the first strain with some variations in the Treble staff.

Excerpt 9. *The Thunderer*. Second strain; mm. 37-52.

Musical score for Excerpt 9, second strain. The score is written for three staves: Treble, Bass, and Bass. The Treble staff features a melody with a trill and a '2nd time only' marking. The Bass staff provides a steady accompaniment. The second strain (mm. 37-52) features a more complex melody in the Treble staff with a trill and a '2nd time only' marking.

Excerpt 10. *The Thunderer*. Repeat of the second strain; mm. 53-68.

Musical score for Excerpt 10, repeat of the second strain. The score is written for three staves: Treble, Bass, and Bass. The Treble staff features a melody with a trill and a '2nd time only' marking. The Bass staff provides a steady accompaniment. The repeat of the second strain (mm. 53-68) features a more complex melody in the Treble staff with a trill and a '2nd time only' marking.

Under this style of analysis, one has to admit that *The Stars and Stripes Forever's* four measure introduction is so well known that it actually only requires about 3-5 melodic notes to be recognized!

## A VARIATION FORMAT

Continuing the analytical process with emphasis on melodic development, consider *The Thunderer March* (1889), a highly individualistic entity among Sousa's output. It possesses power, forward motion, gracious melodic lines, a unique introduction, a most-singular quality break strain and the use of variations, or additional melodic lines added to the previously stated material. While Sousa began numerous marches with unison lines spread throughout the band's tessituras, this is the only march using two diatonic scale lines (on C7 harmony) set in opposite direction. See Excerpt 7.

The first strain melodic line begins on a whole note with a trill set against a strong harmonic/rhythmic feeling of downbeat and afterbeat. On the repeat of the strain, a baritone register counter melody is presented in a stepwise format. The harmonic resources are F major, G7 and C7. See Excerpt 8.

The second strain is a trumpet and drum tune *Here's Your Health, Sir!* taken from J. P. S.'s own earlier compilation *The Trumpet and Drum* (1886). [This instruction book contains trumpet exercises, drum exercises, bugle calls, and eight original trumpet and drum tunes. Bierley also describes the trio of *Semper Fidelis* as an extension of an earlier Sousa composition *With Steady Step*, one of the eight brief trumpet and drum pieces he wrote for *The Trumpet and Drum*.] A baritone register countermelody based on the F-harmonic series is now set against the simple rhythm/harmony resources. See Excerpt 9.

The repeat of this trumpet tune features an upper woodwind countermelody with a new baritone register countermelody. See Excerpt 10.

The use of these *second time only* variants in each of these strains is a form of "layering technique." Frequently, a typical second strain would provide a rousing answer to what had been established in the first strain through a contrasting harmonic chordal, or block, format; in closing, it would set up the melodious, reduced-tension trio. There would be a firm tonic resolution of the harmony of the second strain before proceeding to the added-flat key of the trio.

The trio now provides a gracious soprano melodic line set within the confines of an octave in the treble staff. The bass line complements this treble melody by moving diatonically in opposition to the longer notes of the treble phrase. The harmonic language is set in B-flat, Cm and F7. See Excerpt 11.

The 15-measure break strain opens with trumpet fanfares, utilizing a statement and answer format, with the bass voices responding on a scalewise ascending line. Sousa writes the first fanfare and its answer in F major, and follows this sequentially a major third higher in A major. The use of the F pedal is then carried through the remainder of the strain, sounding over a dominant V chord, a diminished 7th chord on G-sharp, and a return to the dominant. See Excerpt 12.

The final statement of the trio is repeated along with the break strain and is identical to the earlier statement shown in Excerpt 10. It contains no additional countermelodies, but rather, relies upon a combination of a chordal background and companion rhythm/harmony afterbeats. The harmonic resources are again restricted to B-flat, Cm and F7. The total number of measures in this march may appear to be higher than those found in various published editions of non-variation type settings; this is due to melodic instruments having each strain written out rather than using a repeat with a *first time only* or *second time only* instruction.

How many other marches by Sousa, or another composer, bear this compositional completeness and simplicity — these few statements that stand so well by themselves? There are many marches in Sousa's output that contain more notes set in rapid melodic lines and those works clearly stand out from the more straight "up and down" style marches.

## THE BREAK STRAIN

An examination of break strains (or dogfights, as they were frequently called) is an interesting study in its own right. Every composer of marches has his favorite type of musical diversion between the two (or more) statements of the trio melody. As mentioned above, Sousa frequently used a simple statement and answer format. *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, *National Fencibles*, *Washington Post*, *Beau Ideal* each of these has a variation of this approach. Frequently, baritone-bass voices would begin the statement answered by the upper voices. In Excerpt 13 from *The Gladiator March*, the entrances are reversed.

**Excerpt 11. The Thunderer. Trio; mm. 69-84.**

**Excerpt 12. The Thunderer. Break strain. mm. 85-99.**

**Excerpt 13. The Gladiator. Break strain. mm 52-67.**

## SCORING PRACTICES

Although the marches may have been written for differing purposes, i.e. parade or concert use, Sousa appears to have followed a principle of separation of timbres in assigning various voice requirements. Major questions — among others — that may help ascertain the sound or timbre of a march include:

1. **Treble melodic line (TML).** How is the TML scored? What unison doublings and/or octave couplings are used? Is there a clear separation of timbres and tessituras between the TML and countermelodies?
2. **Treble countermelody (TCM).** How is this doubled? Is space provided between it, the TML and the BCM? How do rhythmic note values complement each line?
3. **Baritone register countermelody (BCM).** What is the spacing between this line and the TML? What are the instrumental timbres on each? Are contrasting rhythmic note values present?
4. **Rhythm/harmony writing (RH).** What is the location on the staff? What timbres are involved? What is the useage of longer note values versus shorter afterbeats?
5. **Bass line (BL).** Is there freedom from strict triadic outlining? Are there arpeggiated lines or scale type passages?
6. **Percussion writing (P).** What variations (ex. accents or syncopation) are provided in addition to straight rhythmic pulses and afterbeats.

These questions help establish formulae to utilize when examining how one strain of a march differs from another in Sousa marches. Frequently, the more deviation, the greater the musical interest.

Primary soprano melodic lines were written within the confines of the treble staff with treble countermelodies usually in the octave above. Baritone range countermelodies, normally found in euphoniums, trombones and saxophones,



*Now recognized as the most influential bandmaster of all time, autographed Sousa photos bring thousands of dollars.*

ranged from C, an octave below middle C to G<sub>2</sub>, an octave and a fifth above. The bass line occupies the area from the bass clef staff C down to F, an octave below the bass clef. Spanning the upper half of the bass clef and the lower half of the treble clef are the rhythm/harmony figures.

As Sousa's writing continued to develop for the members of his own band following the turn of the century, the use of upper tessituras becomes apparent. Solo cornet parts began to rise above the staff and the solo or first clarinet voice became the primary instrument frequently placed into an extreme upper register, often written to four ledger line G<sub>4</sub>. In *Sempre Fidelis* Sousa wrote high A(A<sup>4</sup>) sounding G concert. In some marches (*High School Cadets*, for example), the solo clarinet part was identical to the solo cornet in various strains — only an octave higher!

Technical demands also increased with time; woodwind countermelodies became more florid and brass parts gained additional responsibilities. *Hands Across the Seas*, *The Glory of the Yankee Navy* and *The Pride of the Wolverines* have difficult technical passages sprinkled throughout. The repeat of the trio of *Hands Across the Seas* has a most interesting trombone-euphonium countermelody to offset the brilliant upper woodwind countermelody.

As Sousa's Band grew in size following its first decade, the number of woodwinds also grew, particularly in clarinets, which must have altered the overall timbre of the band in such instances. In 1892, the Sousa Band used 12 B-flat clarinets; by 1900, this was raised to 16. 1915 was a developmental highpoint, 20, on the way to 26 by 1924. That year, in total, there were 48 woodwinds and 22 brasses.

## SUMMARY

What conclusions may be drawn from this brief examination of John Philip Sousa and his marches? We know that during the first two decades of his writing for band, his marches were more military in nature than for concert use, thus his clean, clear straight "up and down" style offered clarity when they were played outdoors or on parade. The later marches became more developed while retaining similar formal designs. Each strain was written for its effectiveness when juxtaposed with its companion phrases and each bore its own individual trademark. Stylistically, one can identify a Sousa march from its melodic inventiveness, inherent tight organization and use of timbral separation.

Examine now an excerpt from Frank Byrne's edition of *Solid Men To the Front* (1918) [Wingert-Jones Music Co.] and apply the above principles to each of the different writing categories (TML, TCM, etc.). The brackets and instructions in the clarinet parts indicate which octave to play on each statement of the repeated phrase. (See Byrne's article on performance practices in Sousa marches in *The Wind Ensemble and Its Repertoire*, DHWL BK01, Warner Bros. Pub.). See Excerpt 14.



Excerpt 14. Solid Men to the Front. Second Strain. mm 21-28.

This musical score is for the second strain of 'Solid Men to the Front', measures 21-28. It is arranged for a large wind ensemble. The score includes parts for Piccolo, Flute, Oboes (1 and 2), Bassoons (1 and 2), Eb Clarinet, Bb Clarinets (1, 2, and 3), B. Clarinet, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Bass Saxophone, Cor Anglais, Trumpets (1, 2, 3, and 4), Horns (1, 2, 3, and 4), Trombones (1, 2, 3, and 4), Euphonium, Tubas, Snare Drum, and Cymbals/Bass Drum. The score begins at measure 21, which is marked 'Play 2nd time only'. The music is in 2/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth and thirty-second notes. Dynamics range from *p* to *ff*. The score concludes at measure 28.

## CUBAN OVERTURE

GEORGE GERSHWIN

ARRANGED BY WIND BAND BY R. MARK ROGERS

In mid-February, 1932, George Gershwin left New York with several friends to take a vacation in Havana, Cuba. His successful show, *Of Thee I Sing*, had just opened to acclaim on December 26, 1931, and the premiere of his *Second Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra* had taken place in Boston on January 29, 1932. While in Cuba, he became fascinated with the native music of the island stating: "Cuba was most interesting, especially for its small dance orchestras, who play the most intricate rhythms most naturally." When he returned to New York several weeks later, he came armed with Cuban percussion instruments (bongo drum, gourd, maracas and claves) and musical ideas.

These ideas culminated in a symphonic work he entitled *Rumba*; its first performance was presented in an all-Gershwin concert in Lewisohn Stadium on August 16, 1932, conducted by Albert Coates. Later, on November 1 of the same year, it was performed at the Metropolitan Opera under the title *Cuban Overture*. Gershwin provided these program thoughts:

*"In my composition I have endeavored to combine the Cuban rhythms with my own thematic material. The result is a symphonic overture which embodies the essence of the Cuban dance. It has three main parts. The first part (Moderato e Molto Ritmato) is preceded by a (forte) introduction featuring some of the thematic material. See Excerpt 1. Then comes a three part contrapuntal episode leading to the second theme. The first part finishes with a recurrence of the first theme combined with fragments of the second.*

*A solo clarinet cadenza leads to a middle part, which is in a plaintive mood. It is a gradual developing canon in a polytonal manner. This part concludes with a climax based upon an ostinato of*

*the theme in the canon, after which a sudden change in tempo brings us back to the rumba dance rhythms. The finale is a development of the preceding material in a stretto-like manner. This leads us back once again to the main theme.*

*The conclusion of the work is a coda featuring the Cuban instruments of the percussion."*

As is the case with the *Second Rhapsody*, the *Cuban Overture* portrays a composer in transition trying out new ideas in harmony and counterpoint, and, streamlining his orchestration. Doubtless a major source of this change and historians will argue how much or how little was due to Gershwin's studies with theorist Joseph Schillinger, which began in 1932.

Certainly, Gershwin's musical interests were widening at this point as his music library now included Bach's *Art of the Fugue*, Schubert, Beethoven, Brahms, and the then avant-garde works of Berg and Schoenberg. For many years, he had been an irregular student of music and now surprised his friends with his knowledge of the inner workings of the classics. While linear aspects of his music revealed a growing confidence, Gershwin's orchestral technique was

making even greater strides and it may very well be that this is the area in which Schillinger influenced Gershwin the most.

*Cuban Overture* has the fewest examples of the frequent excessive instrumental doublings that Gershwin used in his orchestration of *Concerto in F*, *An American in Paris*<sup>TM</sup> and *Second Rhapsody*. In *Cuban Overture*, Gershwin was able to demonstrate a great leap forward in musical maturity, as well as demonstrating how his interest in new and different musical cultures could affect his own creativity.

Gershwin also highlighted the formal aspects of his music as he was obviously aware that even critics praising his work were not happy with the sometimes awkward construction of some of his orchestral music. This was an aspect of his creative efforts that he constantly sought to improve.

It is well known that Gershwin composed primarily at the piano, often writing his first scores for duo piano as live performances by himself and his friends enabled him to try out the pieces in real time. Thus, as a prime resource, we have the composer's original piano duet version, usually a two piano version but, in this case, a score for two performers on one piano. Only when he was satisfied with the overall form and flow of the

### Excerpt 1. Cuban Overture. mm. 16-21.

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piece, did he proceed with the orchestration. (Another most effective study tool is the piano duet score of *American in Paris*<sup>™</sup>, which provides, in addition, a short, or condensed score for study purposes.) Every effort has been made to conform to Gershwin's original rhythmic autograph in the current edition.

As an orchestrator, he was wonderfully inventive, but often in a crude sort of fashion. After his death in 1937, many of his scores were worked on by others, including Frank Campbell-Watson, Ferde Grofé and Robert Russell Bennett. In 1987, in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Gershwin's death, Warner Bros. Publications issued a facsimile edition of the original manuscript score to *Cuban Overture*. In the introductory material to the score (among much other pertinent material) one reads: "Frank Campbell-Watson has stated that, of Gershwin's major orchestral works that he prepared for print, *Cuban Overture* required more house-cleaning than anything else." Conductors wishing to prepare a thorough study of this score are advised to consult this invaluable document.

This wind orchestration of *Cuban Overture* was transcribed at the request of Ray C. Lichtenwalter, music director and conductor of the Texas Wind Symphony, who presented an all-Gershwin concert in April, 2000.

—R. Mark Rogers

### R. MARK ROGERS

Mark Rogers was born in Littlefield, Texas and earned degrees in instrumental music from Texas Tech (bachelor and masters degrees) and the University of Texas (doctorate in wind conducting). He served as band director on the faculties of South Plains College and the University of South Alabama and is currently director of publications for Southern Music Company, San Antonio, Texas where his editions of the band music of Percy Grainger and John Philip Sousa, and transcriptions of orchestral music, have drawn widespread acclaim.

In his spare time, Rogers plays bassoon and contrabassoon with orchestras in Corpus Christi, Victoria, Seguin, and New Braunfels, Texas. He has performed with the San Antonio Symphony on numerous occasions. He also serves as choir director of the Thousand Oaks Baptist Church, San Antonio and has appeared in local productions of music theatre and operetta.



## Wind Library

# SECOND RHAPSODY FOR PIANO AND WIND ENSEMBLE

## GEORGE GERSHWIN

### ARRANGED BY JAMES C. RIPLEY



### JAMES C. RIPLEY

James C. Ripley is an Assistant Professor of Conducting and Ensembles at the Eastman School of Music where he teaches undergraduate conducting and serves as Associate Conductor of the Eastman Wind Ensemble and the Eastman Wind Orchestra. Dr. Ripley also maintains the administrative responsibilities of Ensemble Coordinator for the department.

Dr. Ripley is an active arranger and editor of wind ensemble music, and has appeared as guest clinician and conductor throughout the United States and Canada.

*The years surrounding the beginning of the 1930s were busy and exciting for George and Ira Gershwin as their theatrical successes placed them in a position of prominence in America, England and Europe. In 1927, they wrote Strike Up the Band and Funny Face (starring Fred and Adele Astaire; 1928 brought forth Rosalie and Treasure Girl (starring Gertrude Lawrence and Clifton Webb); 1929, Show Girl (starring Ruby Keeler); 1930, Strike Up the Band and Girl Crazy (starring Ginger Rogers). 1931 would be the apex of these collaborations with the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical, Of Thee I Sing with its hit songs "Love Is Sweeping the Country" and "Wintergreen for President". While these theatrical endeavors occupied their time and energies, a new entertainment medium was beginning to sweep the country, motion pictures with sound. The Gershwins would not be far behind the introduction of this entertainment force.*

The premiere of *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson, in 1927, brought the attention of the new Hollywood sound film producers to George and Ira Gershwin, and by 1929, the two had agreed to score a film for the Fox Film Corporation. The *Rhapsody in Blue*<sup>™</sup> had already been put into a

film entitled *The King of Jazz* starring Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra.

Since their life in New York was a constant overlapping of new theatrical events, shows written and waiting to be produced, plus shows being re-staged in new venues, it became necessary for them to be free of New York commitments before traveling to the Fox Studio in California. Their latest success, *Girl Crazy*, opened at the Alvin Theater on October 14, 1930, and within a month, George and Ira departed for Los Angeles by train.

The work that eventually became *Second Rhapsody* was originally conceived as an extended orchestral sequence for the film musical, *Delicious*. This sequence, which was variously referred to as *Manhattan Rhapsody*, *New York Rhapsody* or *Rhapsody in Rivets*, was to describe the sounds and movements of the city. In addition to this music, Gershwin was to contribute the film's title tune and several other songs.

Edward Jablonski, in his biography *Gershwin*, describes the film score in these words:

*"By January 1931, Gershwin had completed his rhapsody (contrary to popular belief, the original, eight-minute work remained in the finished picture.) In this sequence, a despairing, about to be deported Janet Gaynor leaves her happy, singing Russian friends and wanders alone through the streets of Manhattan; there is minimal dialogue with the music blending with street noises which range from the shouting of newsboys to the hammering of riveters.*

*Photographically, it is the most imaginative aspect of Delicious... Dramatic camera angles, lighting, and the fluid movement of the camera capture the apprehension of the young woman as she moves almost balletically through the*

clamorous, crowded streets... Gershwin's music for this sequence is restless, pulsating; interspersed are quiet moments but with the rivet theme serving as a ritornello."

By coincidence, *Delicious* eventually opened in New York on the same day, December 26, 1931, as George and Ira's show, *Of Thee I Sing*.

Following a stay of several months in Hollywood, George's next endeavor was to compose a totally new work based upon the beginnings of the Hollywood rhapsody. He worked on this through the early months of 1932, first in a two piano version and then in a fully orchestrated setting. On June 26, 1931, Gershwin hired a fifty-five piece orchestra for a read-through at the National Broadcasting Company's Studio B with himself playing piano and his friend and associate, William Daly, conducting. Through a fortuitous earlier arrangement, the studio was wired to the Victor Recording Laboratories and a recording was made of the first reading. This recording would later prove most valuable as a guide to Gershwin's own

interpretation of the work. Gershwin wrote only a few days after the reading that, "In many respects, such as orchestration and form, it is the best thing I've written."

*Second Rhapsody* was premiered in Boston on January 29, 1932, with Serge Koussevitzky conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Gershwin as soloist; they repeated the performance several days later at Carnegie Hall in New York. The work was well received and was published, but only in a version for two pianos. The orchestral version was not published until the early 1950s, and contained a great number of unexplainable alterations from the original scoring. Michael Tilson Thomas, in conjunction with Ira Gershwin and the Library of Congress, had a new set of parts made from the manuscript full score thus restoring the original orchestration.

*Second Rhapsody* has frequently been considered a sequel to *Rhapsody in Blue*™ (1924), and while there are similarities between the two, a more convincing comparison might be to consider the later work as an outgrowth of a colorful, dramatic, lush film score while the *Rhapsody in*

*Blue*™ belongs more in the lean, jazz world of the middle Twenties. The *Second Rhapsody* is of the cinematic white tie and tails world of *American in Paris*™ or Leonard Bernstein's *On the Town*. There are frequently more segues than transitions and more melodies than development sections; the various styles range from sophisticated rumba to bluesy ballads.

The solo piano part contains some of Gershwin's most poignant writing for the instrument but, just as frequently employs the instrument for colorful accompaniment passages or bits of technical panache. If the soloist is so inclined, lengthy cadenzas could be added to the solo part before rehearsal markings 17, 21, or 45.

Gershwin's original orchestral forces for *Second Rhapsody* differed considerably from Ferde Grofe's original 1924 orchestration of *Rhapsody in Blue*™, a muscular, jazz orchestra setting. The current setting for solo piano and wind ensemble is based upon Gershwin's manuscript full score and sketches, as well as the published version for two pianos, all housed in the Music Division, Library of Congress.

In transcribing *Second Rhapsody* for wind band, I have retained most of Gershwin's original orchestration ideas when possible. Saxophones are used prominently in the transcription, both as a characteristic 1930s jazz component, but also to serve as a complement to the standard orchestral woodwinds.

— James C. Ripley

Gershwin composed the *Second Rhapsody* just prior to the *Cuban Overture*. A brief examination of the primary slow melodic passages in each reveals a close similarity of melodic shape and background chordal movement. In *Cuban Overture*, the long flowing arpeggios of the melodic line influence the rising and falling chromatic tones in the middle voices. These voices, in turn, drastically affect the harmonic values of the whole-note chords. Meanwhile, in the *Second Rhapsody*, a very impressionistic feeling is created through the slowly moving melodic line over the half-note chords that alter their harmonic values step by step.

— D. H.

**Excerpt 1. Cuban Overture. mm. 201-205.**

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**Excerpt 2. Second Rhapsody. mm. 226-234.**

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## ON THE BOOKSHELF

### JOHN PHILIP SOUSA, AMERICAN PHENOMENON.

Paul E. Bierley. Warner Bros. Publications, 2001.  
270 pages. ISBN 0-918048-06-0

*The current publication is a reprint (with additions) of Paul Bierley's wonderful biography of John Philip Sousa. Sousa possessed multiple abilities in song composition, large scale suites, fantasias for band, and marches; in addition, he was, a successful novelist and athlete.*

### THE SOUSA FEW KNEW

Few know that around the turn of the century, our "March King" was actually the world's best known musician. And...

Few know, that despite all the publicity and hype surrounding this superstar, he was actually a very modest and approachable man. Between concerts, he put reporters totally at ease for he was a writer himself; his daughter, Helen, often said that he probably would have been a newsman had he not chosen music for a career. With fame came wealth — he was the highest paid musician in the history of music up till that time. But...

Few know that he was a lousy businessman. His first manager, David Blakely, was entirely responsible for his sudden financial success. Blakely told him flatly that he was naive for selling such hits as *The Washington Post* and *The Thunderer* outright to Harry Coleman Publishing Co. for \$35.00 each! Blakely insisted on negotiating with publishers himself and promptly directed Sousa to the John Church Company (later bought by Theodore Presser Co.). As a result, Sousa's new marches were soon bringing in royalties of five figures a year. One can imagine the consternation of Coleman in losing Sousa, after having made enough on *The Washington Post* alone to purchase two factories!

Yes, Sousa's marches made him rich. But, that is not all he wrote....

Few know that he wrote operettas, fantasias, suites, humoresques, many songs and other types of music as well. The operettas soon came into their own with *El Capitan* and others finding a welcome market in their day.

Doesn't it stand to reason that his band really had to be a super group to be so successful? That it was. It became the acknowledged model of perfection and its performances were on the same level of excellence as the finest symphony orchestras of the day. In its first few years alone, the Sousa band was playing more concerts than all six of our major orchestras combined.

Few know that Sousa had an expressed mission. Simply put, he had a passion for raising the level of America's appreciation of great music. Amidst the entertaining music his audiences came to expect, he slyly sparked his programs with a healthy dose of classics, old and new. The concerts were truly an eclectic mix.

Sousa was also extremely sensitive about Europeans viewing America as a cultural void, and he diligently tried to rectify this matter. In the process, he became a cultural export, touring Europe four times and making one tour around the world. He was truly America's international composer, but despite that...

Few know that he was an American through and through. His intense patriotism grew (as he put it) from being born in the shadow of the Capitol dome during a period when America was emerging as a world power. A look at the titles of his music shows clearly that he was telling the story of his beloved country through his music. It is this writer's contention that John Philip Sousa expressed his love of country in a more profound way than any other composer who ever lived — of any country.

A man this active must have been a real dynamo on the podium, right? And a real tyrant as well? Quite the opposite was true. He never berated a musician; he never raised his voice, even if someone 'bombed' at a performance. Working with the finest professionals money could buy, he knew a mistake would not be repeated.

In his later years, he was a sort of father figure to the musicians and they loved him. Consider this: Twelve years after he died in 1932, his former musicians formed the Sousa Band Fraternal Society and met in New York each year on his birthday. How many conductors — of any era — have commanded such loyalty? Speaking of genius...

Few know that Sousa composed without the aid of any musical instrument. He wrote down an idea in whatever key he heard it. Moreover, he wrote vertically, not horizontally, creating the

conductor's score in the various clefs as he went along with amazing speed. And, in ink. There are very few corrections in his manuscripts.

Few know how many manuscripts he discarded. He could compose at any time but was likely to throw away a manuscript unless the music had come to him as the result of a genuine inspiration.

Inspiration — that was the critical element in Sousa's composing process. He was very vocal about this. In interviews, in his own writings, he made many references to a "Higher Power" to which his creativity may certainly be credited. In this regard, he and a few other great composers had something very much in common.

Several others have composed more marches, and it's obvious that some of their marches are better than many of Sousa's. But, the fact remains that a higher percentage of his are still more popular and are performed more frequently.

His philosophy was simply stated: "I would rather be the composer of an inspired march than the composer of a manufactured symphony" — and — "A good march should make a man with a wooden leg want to step out!"

"Wooden legs" or not, we're still 'stepping out' to the melodies of a man about whom few really know very much! — Paul E. Bierley

### PAUL BIERLEY

Paul Bierley is one of America's most honored band historians, with published biographies of John Philip Sousa and Henry Filmore ("Hallelujah Trombone!"). Additional books include "The Works of John Philip Sousa" and "The Music of Henry Filmore and Will Huff". Bierley is also an active tuba performer, playing and recording with the New Columbian Brass Band and the Detroit Concert Band. He is retired from a life-long career as an aeronautical engineer and research specialist.



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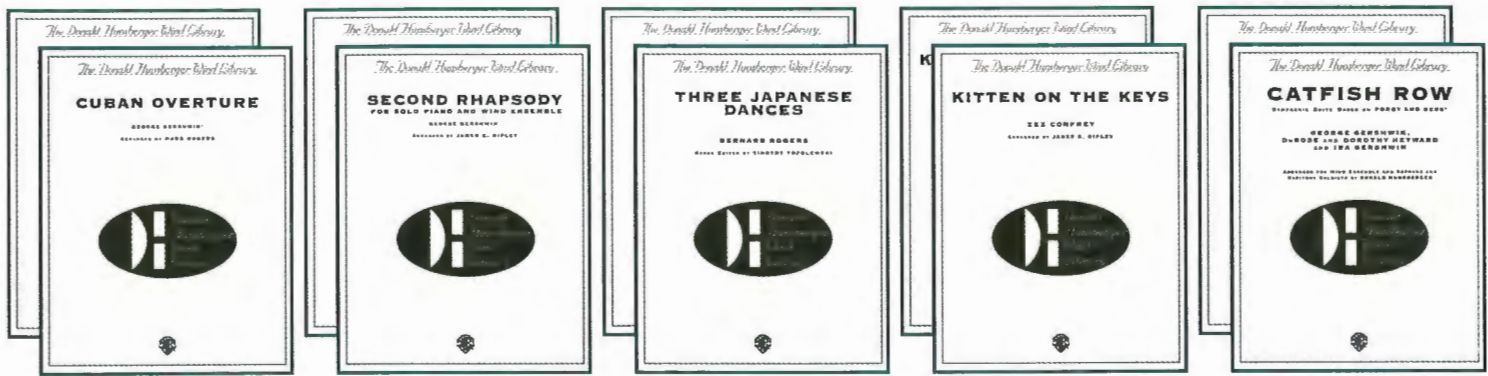
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## *WindWorks*

*A Journal for the  
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Issue 5 • Spring 2001

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*WindWorks* (ISBN 0-7579-0693-1) is published by Warner Bros. Publications, 15800 NW 48th Avenue, Miami, Florida 33014. Postage paid at Miami, Florida, and additional mailing offices.

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04/01 CAT01246 Printed in USA



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