



**JOHN PHILIP SOUSA**

**His Life and Music**



***John Philip Sousa***  
***Study Guide***  
**Contents**

This guide contains the following:

1. Information sheets about John Philip Sousa, The Sousa Band, The Sousaphone, Well Known Sousa Marches, Frequent Sousa Band Soloists, and “The Stars and Stripes Forever” March.
  
2. Activities, including Listening Guides for “The Thunderer” and “Stars and Stripes Forever” marches; a class Composition Project; a class/individual Writing Project; and a Sousa Crossword Puzzle.



Addressing the NYS Learning Standards in the Arts

The Listening Guides, Activities, and Crossword Puzzle were created to extend learning in this unit.

**The Listening Guides** are in line with *Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art*.

**The Composition Activity** addresses *Standard 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts*.

**The Writing Activity** is meant to correlate with *Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Resources*.

## *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

This Study Guide was created by Colleen O'Neil and Kristin Hahn, 2006, for the Rome Community Concert Band. Teachers receiving this Guide may reproduce any part of it for educational classroom use. This Study Guide was written using the following resources:

John Philip Sousa, American Phenomenon by Paul E. Bierley  
Printed by Integrity Press, 1973

The following websites:

[www.dws.org](http://www.dws.org) website of the Dallas Wind Symphony

[www.jwpepper.com](http://www.jwpepper.com) Pepper Music Company website

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Program notes from:

“The Thunderer” by Sousa, arr. Brion and L. Schissel, Published by Barnhouse Co.

“Strictly Sousa” CD by the Dallas Wind Symphony; notes by Jerry Junkin.



This project and performances by the Rome Community Concert Band are made possible with funds from the Decentralization Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts, administered by the Central New York Community Arts Council; as well as from The City of Rome, The Rome Community Foundation, Gary's Music, and REM Fire Systems, Inc.

## Study Guide Activities • Suggestions For Use

### The Listening Guides

There are two listening guides included in this packet. "The Thunderer" listening guide focuses on melody and aural instrument identification. "The Stars and Stripes Forever" listening guide focuses on deciphering rhythms and beat keeping in cut-time. Each guide maps out the form of the particular march.

.....

#### *Using "The Thunderer" Listening Guide*

Materials: a recording of "The Thunderer" march, copies of this guide and pencils.

Read together the descriptions of march form, melodies and countermelodies written at the top of the page. Demonstrate on the piano (or on another instrument) for the class each melody and countermelody written in the guide. Then go over the directions together. Play the melody for the first strain again for the class, and then listen to the recording up to that point, hearing the melody and identifying the instruments playing it. Next, demonstrate again the countermelody for the first strain. Listen to the recording again through the end of the first strain, identifying the instruments of the countermelody. Continue this way, adding a melody/countermelody one at a time, until the end of the march is reached. Play the entire march again for the students, asking them to listen and follow their entire guide start to finish. Help them decide on the form for the march and write it at the bottom of their guides.

Answers:

1<sup>st</sup> Strain Melody: Upper Woodwinds, First Trumpets; Countermelody: Low Brass, Low Woodwinds

2<sup>nd</sup> Strain Melody: Trumpets; Countermelody: Upper Woodwinds

Trio Melody: Upper Woodwinds, First Trumpets

Dogfight Melody: *Stems up*-Trumpets; *Stems Down*-Everyone else, except percussion and trombones

Form: Introduction, 1<sup>st</sup> Strain (A, A1), 2<sup>nd</sup> Strain (B, B1), Trio (C), Dogfight (D), Trio (C), Repeat to Dogfight (ending).

.....

#### *Using "The Stars and Stripes Forever" Listening Guide*

Materials: recording of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" march, and copies of this guide and preparation sheet.

This activity is a good introduction, or review, of duple meters, especially cut-time. Go over the preparation sheet together. You may wish to demonstrate the "count and clap" examples before attempting them as a class, especially if the students are not familiar with cut-time.

On the listening guide, each section of the march contains about two measures of its beginning rhythm. Count and clap each section with the students, then listen to the entire march. Encourage the students to feel the duple meter as they listen by tapping to the beat or conducting.

.....

Study Guide Activities • Suggestions For Use

continued

Composition Project

Materials: copies of the Composition Project page, staff paper, pencils, access to instruments as determined by the teacher, recording equipment and tapes, if desired.

This project is self-explanatory through its written directions and can be adapted in any way the teacher sees fit. One suggestion for introducing or expanding upon this activity would be to listen to additional marches (by Sousa and other composers) chosen by the teacher. While listening to the recordings, work as a class to determine the form of each march. Notice and discuss the similarities and differences in form among pieces of the march genre.



Writing Project

Materials: copies of the writing project page, pens/pencils, access to additional research material, if desired.

This project is self-explanatory via its written directions. One suggestion for introducing this project is to watch the video "The New Sousa Band in Concert at Wolf Trap." This video (available through many music supply magazines and on the web) features The New Sousa Band, directed by Keith Brion, presenting a concert in the style of Sousa. It is narrated by Beverly Sills and features the band, as well as some notable soloists. Also, many CD's of Sousa's music contain recordings of his voice, or original recordings of the Sousa Band. These may also be helpful in introducing or expanding upon this project.



What Have You Learned About Sousa? Crossword Puzzle

Materials: Copies of the Crossword page and pencils.

The crossword can be done together as a class, in small groups or individually. Students may use their study guide info packets to find answers or may test their knowledge, then check answers.

- |        |                  |      |                |
|--------|------------------|------|----------------|
| ACROSS | 1. SemperFidelis | DOWN | 2. March       |
|        | 6. Clarke        |      | 3. LibertyBell |
|        | 7. countermelody |      | 4. Jane        |
|        | 8. Helmecke      |      | 5. dogfight    |
|        | 10. Washington   |      | 9. Thunderer   |
|        | 15. National     |      | 11. Willson    |
|        | 16. Blakely      |      | 12. twostep    |
|        | 17. Baritone     |      | 13. Capitan    |
|        | 18. melody       |      | 14. tuba       |
|        | 19. Scotland     |      |                |
|        | 21. Marines      |      |                |
|        | 22. Brion        |      |                |



**JOHN PHILIP  
SOUSA**  
“The March King”  
(1854•1932)

John Philip Sousa was a world-famous composer and conductor who led the most famous concert band in history. Sousa and The Sousa Band helped to popularize concert band music, and performed all over the world. They were the first musical act to travel over million miles. Sousa is best remembered as a renowned composer of marches, but also wrote other patriotic pieces, operettas, solos, band arrangements and more.

John Philip Sousa was born in Washington, D.C., on November 6, 1854. His father was born of Portuguese parents in Spain, and his mother was Bavarian. Sousa had nine brothers and sisters. Sousa's father, Antonio, played trombone in the US Marine Band. Sousa grew up around military music and was highly influenced by it.

When Sousa was around six years old, he began the study of musical instruments. He studied and played violin, piano, flute, cornet, baritone, trombone, alto horn and vocal music. When he was around 13 years old, he tried to run away and join a circus band. His father became upset with him over this and enlisted him in the Marines as an apprentice. He stayed in the Marines until he was discharged in 1875. After this, he began performing on violin, playing and touring with theater orchestras. Eventually, he also became a conductor of a theater orchestra, conducting the operetta *H.M.S. Pinafore* by Gilbert and Sullivan on Broadway. Sousa met his wife, a vocalist named Jane van Middlesworth Bellis during rehearsals for *Pinafore*. They got married on December 30, 1879. They had three children: John Philip, Jr. (1881-1937); Jane Priscilla Sousa (1882-1958); and Helen Sousa (1887-1975).

When the Sousa Band first began touring nationally and internationally, Jane or one of Sousa's children almost always accompanied him on the trips.

A year after getting married, Sousa returned to Washington to become leader of the US Marine Band (“The President's Own”). He conducted this band from 1880-1892 under five different presidents: Hayes, Garfield, Cleveland, Arthur and Harrison. In 1892, band promoter David Blakely convinced Sousa to resign as the Marine Band conductor and organize a civilian concert band. The first Sousa Band concert was performed on September 26, 1892 at Stillman Music Hall in Plainfield, NJ.

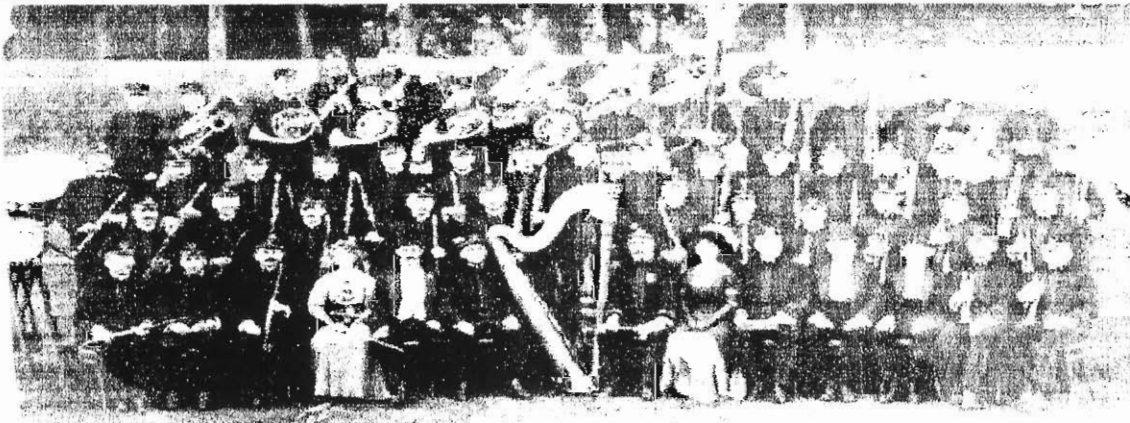
In 1895, Sousa's first operetta, *El Capitan*, debuted with great success. Sousa became a prolific composer. He wrote 15 operettas, 70 songs, 11 waltzes, 13 dance pieces and almost 400 other pieces for bands such as transcriptions, fantasies and solos. However, he is best known for the 136 marches he wrote, earning him the title of “The March King.”

The Sousa Band toured Europe three times: in 1900, 1901 and 1904. The band traveled on a world tour in 1910, bringing their performances to places such as New York, Great Britain, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji Islands, Hawaii and Canada. In 1917, during World War I, Sousa joined the US Naval Reserve at age 62. After the war, he continued to tour with the Sousa band. He also championed the cause for music education in our schools, he received several honorary degrees from colleges, and he fought for the rights of composers during the age when the phonograph and recorded music were beginning to rival live music performances in popularity. Sousa died at age 77, in 1932, after concluding a rehearsal with the Ringgold Band in Reading, Pennsylvania. The last piece he conducted at the rehearsal (and therefore in his life) was his famous march, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*.

### THE SOUSA BAND

Sousa's Band was founded in 1892, at a time when few professional orchestras existed. From the Civil War until around 1920, bands were the most important aspect of American concert life. During this "golden age" of town and community bands, The Sousa Band was the greatest. Whenever The Sousa Band came to an American town to perform, they were met at the train station with a huge celebration. Usually local high school bands would greet them, parties would be held in their honor, Sousa would be invited to speak on the radio and often be given the key to the city. Sousa's Band traveled the world, as well. They brought American band music to Europe and other places. Sousa's choice of music, his own compositions and his ability to plan quality concert programs that pleased the public helped make the Sousa Band so famous and well-loved.

Sousa attracted only the best musicians to his band. He was hard-working and expected the same of his band members, but he was very respectful to them as well. Only men held positions in the Sousa band, but some of the soloists invited to perform with the band were women. The Bandsmen in Sousa's group held him in the highest esteem, and after Sousa died, they were instrumental in maintaining Sousa's memory and honor. Several former Sousa band members were helpful in getting "Stars and Stripes Forever" designated legally as our national march. The Sousa Fraternal Society was established in honor of John Philip Sousa. This group of former Sousa Band members was dedicated to promoting the memory of Sousa and his band. For many years (at least through the 1970's), the Sousa Fraternal Society met each year in different places to honor one of their fellow bandsmen. Today, there is a "New Sousa Band" directed by Keith Brion, which travels the US and abroad presenting concerts in the style of Sousa. Mr. Brion dresses in a uniform similar to Sousa's, and the New Sousa Band members are outstanding professional musicians and soloists, who are helping to keep Sousa's musical tradition alive.



### THE SOUSAPHONE

The Sousaphone is believed to have been invented in 1893 by the instrument makers at the J. W. Pepper Company. John Philip Sousa is quoted in 1922 as saying during an interview that the Sousaphone received its name from a suggestion by the Pepper company around thirty years earlier. At that time, Sousa was conducting the Marine Band of Washington, DC, and the tuba being used in the Band was a circular type called a "Helicon." Sousa liked this instrument for parades but not for indoor concerts - he thought the tuba's tone shot forward too much and was too overbearing. He spoke to Mr. Pepper about making the tuba's bell adjustable so that it could turn upwards for concerts. Mr. Pepper built one and, being grateful to Sousa for suggesting it, named the new tuba the "Sousaphone." Today's Sousaphones are mostly used in marching bands and occasionally indoors too. The Sousaphone is a member of the tuba family, which also includes the euphonium.

*The Stars and Stripes Forever*  
*America's (and Sousa's) Most*  
*Famous March!*

John Philip Sousa composed "The Stars and Stripes Forever" on Christmas Day, 1896. Sousa and his wife Jane were on a much-deserved vacation in Europe, when he received a message that the manager of the Sousa Band, David Blakely, had died suddenly. Sousa was saddened at the news of the loss of his friend. The Band was scheduled to begin another cross-country tour soon, and Sousa knew that he had to cut his vacation short to return to the US and take over the business affairs of the Band. Sousa tells what happened next:

"Here came one of the most vivid incidents of my career. As the vessel (*the Teutonic*) steamed out of the harbor I was pacing on the deck, absorbed in thoughts of my manager's death and the many duties and decisions that awaited me in New York. Suddenly, I began to sense a rhythmic beat of a band playing within my brain. Throughout the whole tense voyage, that imaginary band began to unfold the same themes, echoing and re-echoing the most distinct melody. I did not transfer a note of that music to paper while I was on the steamer, but when we reached shore, I set down the measures that my brain-band had been playing for me, and not a note of it has ever changed."



The "Starts and Stripes Forever" was an immediate success, and Sousa's Band played it at almost every concert from then on. Sousa even set words to it! The last verse, sung with the melody of the Trio, is:

*Hurrah for the flag of the free.*  
*May it wave as our standard forever*  
*The gem of the land and the sea,*  
*The banner of the right.*  
*Let despots remember the day*  
*When our fathers with might endeavor*  
*Proclaimed as they marched to the fray,*  
*That by their might and by their right*  
*It waves forever.*

After Sousa died, several attempts were made by former Sousa Band members to designate "The Stars and Stripes Forever" as America's National March. A bill was finally passed in Congress making it official, and was signed by the late President Ronald Reagan on December 11, 1987.

## A Few Well Known Sousa Marches



*The Thunderer* was written in 1889 and was Mrs. Sousa's favorite march. The prominent trumpet part in the second strain is called "Here's To Your Health, Sir!" and is actually a melody Sousa also used in his publication, The Trumpet and Drum.

*Nobles of the Mystic Shrine* is an interesting and colorful march that begins in a minor key (B flat), which is not usual for Sousa's writing. It was written in 1923 and has prominent parts for harp, tambourine, triangle and bells.

*Semper Fidelis*, written in 1888, is designated as the official march of the US Marine Corps. Sousa dedicated this march to the officers and members of the Marine Corps. In 1927, he told a newspaper interviewer that he had written *Semper Fidelis* one night while moved to tears after the Marine Corps had sung their famous hymn at Quantico.

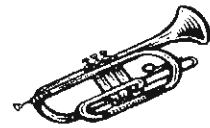
*The Liberty Bell* march was one of the first marches that earned Sousa a large sum of money in advance of its publication. Sousa wrote the march in 1893 for inclusion in one of his operettas, which never actually opened. Around this time, his son was marching in a parade in Philadelphia in honor of the return of the Liberty Bell to its home after a tour of the country. This event inspired the march's name.

*The Washington Post March* is one of Sousa's most frequently played pieces. Written in 1889, it was the perfect accompaniment to the latest dance craze, the two-step. The march and the dance became overnight sensations.

*Manhattan Beach* in New York was the location of many Sousa Band summer concerts. The march was written in 1893, and is one of Sousa's shortest marches. It was adapted by Sousa to reflect a walk along the beach, with clarinet arpeggios mimicking the rolling waves of the ocean. The sound of the full band grows louder and louder, then fades away as the listener "strolls" down the beach.

## Frequent Sousa Band Soloists

*Herbert L. Clarke, cornet* - Clarke was already a famous cornet soloist in this country when he joined Sousa's Band. In addition to performing, he also composed and arranged many of his own solos. One of them "Bride of the Waves," is still popular today.



*Arthur Pryor, trombone and assistant conductor* - Pryor was conductor for most of Sousa Band's recording sessions. His most famous solo was his variations on "The Blue Bells of Scotland." After several years with Sousa, Pryor left to form his own band, which was also very popular.

*R. Meredith Willson, flute/piccolo* - Willson toured with Sousa's Band for three years, after which he wrote the Broadway musical, *The Music Man*. The musical, which was one of the most famous of all time, was also made into a movie, and told the story of a slick band instrument salesman who takes a sleepy Iowa town by storm.

*Simone Mantia, baritone* - Mantia's most famous solo was his variations on Thomas Moore's "Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms."

*August Helmecke, bass drum* - Helmecke was Sousa's highest-paid musician. It was often remarked jokingly that he and Sousa could read each other's mind. Sousa loved to add special bass drum and cymbal accents to his marches during performances. A simple glance to Mr. Helmecke was all that was needed for Sousa to get the musical effect he wanted!



*Marjorie Moody, vocalist* - Moody was a frequent soloist with the Band, often performing pieces from Sousa's own operettas.

*March Form*

Generally, the form of a march is as follows:

Introduction, First Strain (Themes A, A1); Second Strain (Themes B, B1), Trio (Theme C),  
Dogfight (Theme D), Trio, Dogfight.

However, there are as many variations on this form as there are marches themselves!  
See if you can figure out the form of "The Thunderer" march, as well as follow the directions below for  
this Listening Guide.

*Melodies and Countermelodies*

Melody - the main tune.

Countermelody - a supportive and complimentary tune played along with the main tune.  
Melodies are often repeated in marches. Countermelodies are used to add interest to the music.

Listen to "The Thunderer" March by John Philip Sousa. For the first two strains, follow the melody and countermelody, written in 8-measure examples. Work as a class to determine the instrument(s) that are playing each melody and countermelody. Then listen to the melodies of the Trio and dogfight sections, and determine the melody-playing instruments in those sections as well. The march starts with a 4-measure Introduction.

First Strain

Melody:

Melody continues and is played by: \_\_\_\_\_

The melody is repeated, and joined by the countermelody.

Countermelody:

Countermelody is played by: \_\_\_\_\_

The melody and countermelody continue, then we move on to the Second Strain.

## Second Strain

Melody:

Melody continues and is played by: \_\_\_\_\_

The melody is repeated, and joined by the countermelody.

Countermelody:

Countermelody is played by: \_\_\_\_\_

The melody and countermelody continue, then we move on to the Trio.

## Trio

Melody Played by: \_\_\_\_\_

## Dogfight

Melody Played by: \_\_\_\_\_

After the dogfight, we hear the Trio melody again, then a repeat back to the dogfight. Have you figured out the form for "The Thunderer"? Write it here:

"The Stars and Stripes Forever" Listening Guide  
Focus on Rhythm

About two measures worth of rhythms are written below for each section of this march. Try to recognize these rhythms in  $\phi$  as you listen to "The Stars and Stripes Forever" by John Philip Sousa:

INTRODUCTION - 4 measures

FIRST STRAIN - 16 measures  
(played twice)

SECOND STRAIN - 16 measures  
(played twice)

(pick-up notes)

DOG FIGHT - 24 measures

(pick-up notes)

TRIO - 31 1/2 measures

PICCOLO SOLO - 32 measures  
(over Trio Theme)

After the piccolo solo, a mini-dogfight follows, and then the ending, which features the Trio melody and the piccolo solo.

Preparation Sheet for the  
 "Stars and Stripes Forever"  
 Listening Guide

EXPLORING RHYTHM

Most marches are written in *duple meter* (two beats per measure), such as:

2 (2 beats per measure) ♩ or 2 (2 beats per measure) 6 (6 beats per measure)  
 4 (♩ = one count) 2 (♩ = one count) 8 (♩ = one count)

"The Stars and Stripes Forever" is written in ♩. In cut time, the basic note and rest values are as follows:

♩ = 1 count    ○ = two counts    ♪ = 1/2 count    ♪ = 1/4 count

♩ = 1 count    ♪ = two counts    ♪ = 1/2 count    ♪ = 1/4 count

CLAP AND COUNT the following rhythms with your teacher's help:

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

A dot after a note adds one-half the value of the note to itself. A dotted quarter note in cut-time will receive 3/4 of a count and will usually be followed by an eighth note. A dotted half note will receive one and one-half beats and usually be followed by a quarter note.

♩ = ♩ + ♩    Count & clap:

Some syncopation in cut-time:  
 Count and clap:

## COMPOSITION PROJECT

In using this unit, you've studied a basic march musical form. Use the template below to compose your own piece of music using a standard march form. Work individually, or split into small groups and choose one section below per group. Decide ahead of time if your class will use pitched or non-pitched instruments. If using pitched instruments, ask your teacher for staff paper so you can accurately notate your music. Your teacher may add other guidelines for you to follow. When finished, perform and record, if possible, your new composition!

Introduction - 4 measures

First Strain - 8 measures, then repeat Theme A (add optional counter melody on repeat)

Second Strain - 8 measures, then repeat Theme B (add optional counter melody on repeat)

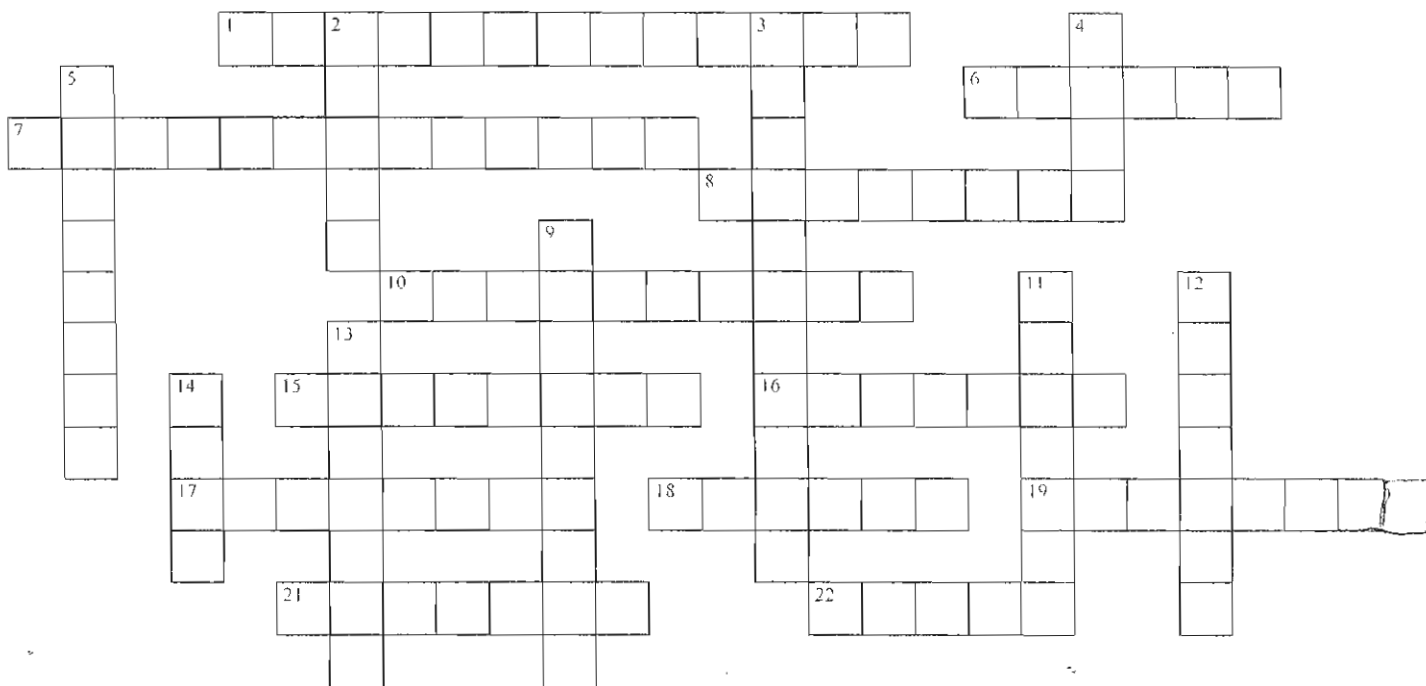
Trio - 16 measures

Dogfight - 16 measures

Repeat the Trio and the Dogfight. Decide as a class on how the march should end (ie, should any other themes be repeated?)



# What Have You Learned About Sousa?



## ACROSS

- 1 The official march of the US Marine Corps
- 6 Herbert L. \_\_\_\_\_, Sousa Band cornet soloist
- 7 A melody that compliments the main tune
- 8 Highest paid Sousa musician and bass drum soloist
- 10 Sousa's birthplace and our nation's capital
- 15 In 1987, "The Stars and Stripes Forever" was designated our \_\_\_\_\_ March
- 16 Sousa Band Manager: David \_\_\_\_\_
- 17 Simone Mantia's instrument
- 18 The main tune
- 19 Arthur Pryor's famous trombone solo: The Bluebells of \_\_\_\_\_
- 21 Sousa enlisted in this service branch at age 13
- 22 Director of the New Sousa Band: Keith \_\_\_\_\_

## DOWN

- 2 John Philip Sousa's nickname: The \_\_\_\_\_ King
- 3 The first piece to earn Sousa a large advance of money
- 4 Mrs. Sousa's first name
- 5 In march form, a lively section that usually follows the Trio theme
- 9 Mrs. Sousa's favorite march
- 11 Piccolo and flute player who also wrote "The Music Man"
- 12 Dance that became popular along with "The Washington Post" March
- 13 El \_\_\_\_\_ was Sousa's first operetta
- 14 A relative of the Sousaphone and a member of the low brass family