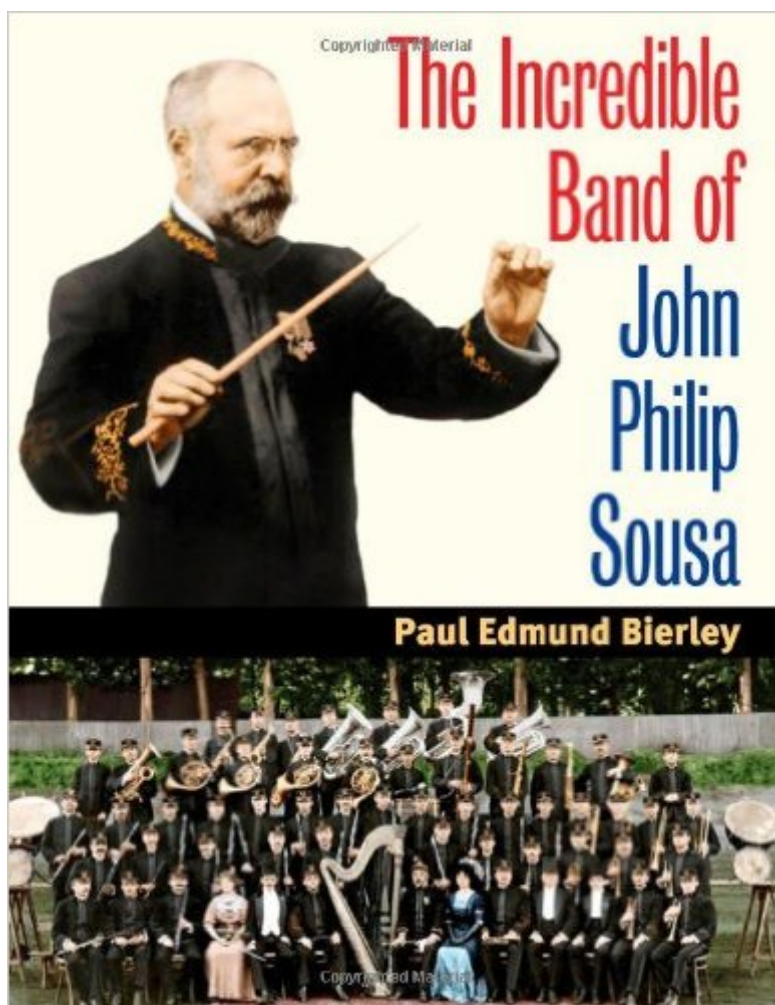


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The Incredible Band Of John Philip Sousa (Music In American Life)



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

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 Republicanne 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 civvy 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 programming entertaining and interesting. The whole concept of the encore march after a long piece of music was unique, and introduced excitement to his concerts.

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