

# John Philip Sousa

1854–1932

An American bandmaster and composer, he was born in Washington, D.C. He studied violin and harmony in his native city and learned band instruments as an apprentice to the U.S. Marine Band, in which his father played the trombone.

Early in his career he conducted theater orchestras, and he played in Offenbach's orchestra in its American tour (1876–77). Sousa was leader of the U.S. Marine Band from 1880 until 1892, when he formed his own band. He toured the United States, Canada, Europe, and other parts of the world with great success.

Sousa composed more than 100 marches, many of which became immensely popular, including "Semper fidelis" (1888), "The Washington Post March" (1889), "The Stars and Stripes Forever" (1897), and "Hands across the Sea" (1899).