

I'm listening live to the first performance ever of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" in Philadelphia May 14, 1897. Everyone loved John Philip's Sousa's song. There was a vigorous response when it was performed that day, and the audience began to rise as if it was the national anthem. The flutes, trumpets, clarinets, and all the drums, they just all mix together all so well. It looked like everyone had practiced so hard, but most importantly it looked like they had fun performing. The song was playing at an unveiling of a statue of George Washington. I wonder what will happen next to this song of peace and greatness.

After the show was over, I tried to find him. It took a while to search for him, and even more people were gathered around John. Finally, I got his attention and asked to interview him when he had time. I'm so glad that he agreed to my interview. What is the truth behind the song everyone had risen for on May 14, 1897.

I started to tell John Philip Sousa of the stunning reaction of the audience once he performed the song for the first time. I said the audience's eyes gleamed with awe, and were just astonished. I also mentioned that I felt so inspired and patriotic, and that I thought that all the instruments mixed so well together. John even said himself that it was a masterpiece even without its patriotic significance. It is also heard that it is a symbol of the promise of a nation of people.

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I started to ask Sousa about his experience and inspiration for writing "The Stars and Stripes Forever". He said that his inspiration for his song was in honor of the passing of John's closest friend and manager. I went on to ask him how it was made and where. John Philip Sousa replied and said that the composition was actually born of homesickness. He made it himself and wrote it on Christmas day, 1896 in Sousa's hotel suite in New York. John Sousa really does hope that "The Stars and Stripes Forever" will make the top charts for at least a couple weeks.

John Philip Sousa's life is very important. He was born November 6, 1854 Washington DC near the Marine Barracks. His father, Antonio, worked at the Marine Barracks as a musician in the Marine Band. John was the third of ten children. At one point in his life John wanted to become a baker instead of a composer. Before he performed "The Stars and Stripes Forever", he wrote and composed about fifty-five marches.

When he was just six, he began studying voice, violin, piano, flute, cornet, baritone, trombone and alto horn. At the age of thirteen, John was almost persuaded to join a circus band. He became an apprentice musician in the Marine Band, where his father worked until the age of twenty. After serving seven years with the marines, he was discharged. Thereafter, he performed as a violinist and conductor in various theater orchestras in Washington and Philadelphia. After he was an apprentice, John Philip Sousa studied music theory and composition with George Felix Benkert, a noted Washington orchestra leader and teacher.

This extraordinary song "The Stars and Stripes Forever", is a military march that will be sure to make some great history. John Philip Sousa knew exactly what he was doing making this song. David Blakely, the man who the song was written about. He did mournfully pass away. John somehow always knew he would be a composer. "The Stars and Stripes Forever" shows America's patriotism.

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