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## Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection

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Encore presentations of the entire *Discoveries* series every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. on WRTI-HD2

**Saturday, July 7th, 2012, 5:00-6:00 p.m.**

**John Philip Sousa** (1854-1932). *The Stars and Stripes Forever* (1896). Rochester Pops, Jeff Tyzik

**Sousa**. *The Occidental* (1887). Detroit Concert Band, Leonard B. Smith

**Sousa**. *The Picadore* (1889). Eastman Wind Ensemble, Frederick Fennell

**Sousa**. *Semper fidelis* (1888). USMB, William F. Santelmann

**Sousa**. *Rifle Regiment* (1893). Royal Artillery Band, Keith Brion

**Sousa**. *The Directorate* (1894). Heritage of America Band, Col. Lowell E. Graham

**Sousa**. *The Liberty Bell* (1894). Detroit Concert Band, Leonard B. Smith

**Sousa**. *Hands Across the Sea* (1899). Washington Winds, Keith Brion

**Sousa**. *El Capitan, March* (1895). Washington Winds, Keith Brion

**Sousa**. *The Free Lance, Selections* (1906). Royal Artillery Band, Keith Brion

**Sousa**. *New York Hippodrome* (1915). Band of H.M. Royal Marines, Lt. Col. G.A.C. Hoskins

**Sousa**. *Anchor and Star* (1918). Allentown Band, Ronald Demkee



The circus came to town, and the music director, walking through the streets, heard a violin beautifully played from a house he was passing by. He knocked on the door, and offered a job to the 13-year-old boy who was practicing. The boy, always independent (he had started his own dance orchestra two years earlier), decided to run away the next day and, yes, to join the circus. But his father got wind of it and the next morning marched him to the Marines, apprenticing him to the band there. The father could do that, because he played trombone in the United States Marine Band. The town was Washington, D.C., the father was Antonio Sousa, and the son was John Philip.

Antonio was Portuguese, born in Spain; his wife Marie was German, and the immigrants' third child would bring American band music to such a degree of sophistication that the world would recognize him as the best at what he did. If Vienna's Johann Strauss Jr. is The Waltz King,

America's John Philip Sousa is The March King.

He left that Marine Band when he was 20, and for the next six years played violin in theater orchestras. He played in the centenary orchestra in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park. Sousa also directed musical theater in Philadelphia and began composing a string of operettas, which was later to culminate in a bona fide hit, *El Capitan*. The Marines noticed his successes, though, and hired him back to conduct the U.S. Marine Band. He was 25. He started composing the marches that would make him famous, and turned the group into the finest military band in the world. His early *Semper fidelis* is the official song of the Corps.

After 12 years, Sousa left the Marine Band to form his own, and took American band music around the country and on multiple international tours. The operation was huge (sometimes with more than 70 players) and profitable. He hired the best players and paid them well. In addition to an increasing repertoire of marches (sometimes sight-read at concerts from barely dry parts), the Sousa Band performed arrangements of classical works. They played, for instance, selections from Wagner's *Parsifal* almost a decade before the opera landed in New York.

But Sousa became the most popular entertainer in the world because he created a worldwide appetite for an American brand of music played by the most virtuosic musicians available. The public ate it up, and still does. His music was immediately published in various transcriptions, including orchestral, many of which are in the Fleisher Collection. History is full of stories of fathers keeping their sons out of music to direct them into the family business. But for Antonio and John Philip, music was the family business.

John Philip Sousa was rehearsing the Ringgold Band in Reading, Pa., in 1932, when he died of a heart attack. The last piece he conducted was *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. Not many Americans know that their country has an official march. That's it.

Hosted by [Kile Smith](#), former Curator of the Fleisher Collection, and [Jack Moore](#), Program Director of [WRTI](#). In *Discoveries from the Fleisher Collection* we uncover the unknown, rediscover the little-known, and take a fresh look at some of the remarkable treasures housed in the Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music, at the Parkway Central Library of the [Free Library of Philadelphia](#). The Fleisher Collection is the largest lending library of orchestral performance material in the world. For recording details, please go to our [web page](#). For a detailed list of all our shows, please visit our [archives](#).