



The Complete  
Marches of

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

VOL. 2 No. 22

TRANSIT OF  
VENUS

MARCH

[1883]

FULL SCORE

AS PERFORMED BY

“THE PRESIDENT’S OWN” UNITED STATES MARINE BAND

## March, “Transit of Venus” (1883)

It is not known whether or not Sousa witnessed either of the two transits of Venus that occurred in his lifetime, but the phenomenon was the basis for the title of this march and also for one of his three novels.

The march received its première at a concert of the U.S. Marine Band on April 19, 1883, with Sousa conducting. The occasion was the unveiling of a statue of Joseph Henry, first secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, who had died in 1878. Henry, as president of the National Academy of Sciences, had been responsible for proper observation of the transit of Venus in 1874.

There is nothing in Sousa’s or Henry’s memoirs suggesting that the two were personally acquainted, but it is possible because they both lived in Washington at the same time. Inasmuch as several members of the National Academy of Sciences were present at the unveiling of Henry’s statue, it is likely that the march was intended as a salute to both Henry and the Academy.

Paul E. Bierley, *The Works of John Philip Sousa* (Westerville, Ohio: Integrity Press, 1984), 90. Used by permission.

### Editorial Notes

Throughout Sousa’s career as a conductor, he often altered the performance of his marches in specific ways without marking or changing the printed music. These alterations were designed for concert performances and included varying dynamics and omitting certain instruments on repeated strains to expand the range of the musical textures, as well as adding unscripted percussion accents for dramatic emphasis at key points in the music. Although Sousa never documented his performance techniques himself, several players who worked extensively with Sousa provided directions for his frequently performed marches, most notably from cornetist Frank Simon. Many of the marches in Volume 2 of “The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa” were staples in Sousa’s regular concert repertoire and were included in the “Encore Books” used by the Sousa Band. A complete set of his Encore Books resides in the U.S. Marine Band Library and Archives and are referenced extensively by the Marine Band not only as a guide for some of Sousa’s special performance practice, but also to ascertain the exact instrumentation he employed in his own performances of his marches.

“The Complete Marches of John Philip Sousa” appears in chronological order and is based on some of the earliest known sources for each composition. These newly edited full scores correct many mistakes and inconsistencies found in the parts of early publications; however, all remaining markings and the original scoring are preserved. Where instruments are added to the original orchestration, it is guided by the additional parts Sousa sanctioned in his Encore Books where applicable or based on these typical doublings. Additionally, the alterations traditionally employed by the United States Marine Band in performance are incorporated throughout; either those specifically documented by Sousa’s musicians or changes modeled on the customary practices of “The March King.”

The musical decisions included in these editions were influenced by the work of several outstanding Sousa scholars combined with many decades of Marine Band performance tradition. These editions would not be possible without the exceptional contributions to the study of Sousa’s marches by Captain Frank Byrne (USMC, ret.), Jonathan Elkus, Colonel Timothy Foley (USMC, ret.), Loras Schissel, Dr. Patrick Warfield, and “The March King’s” brilliant biographer, Paul Bierley.

*Performance practices that deviate from the original printed indications are described below and appear in [brackets] in the score. In many instances these indications appear side-by-side with the original markings. An open diamond marked with an accent in the cymbal part indicates that the cymbal player should let that accent ring for an additional beat before rejoining the bass drum part.*

**Introduction and First Strain (m. 1-20):** The cymbals should be choked after the crash in the first measure. The *piano* of the first strain is *subito* with quick crescendos to *forte* as indicated. The cymbal crash in m. 17 is also choked to maximize the effect of the percussion dropping out for two beats here. The pick-ups into the repeat are once again *subito piano*.

**Second Strain (m. 21-37):** The *fortissimo* ending the first strain is carried through to the second. Accents are added in the percussion in m. 24-25 to set up the *subito mezzo-piano* and swell dynamics in the following bars in all instruments except the trill in the flute/piccolo and E-flat clarinet. That change in dynamic should happen again at m. 34-36, even though it was not indicated in the original parts.

**Trio (m. 38-70):** This extended Trio starts *piano* and the piccolo, E-flat clarinet, cornets, and trombones can be *tacet* for the first part of this section. Sousa reduced the percussion section here to solo triangle. The articulation in the melodic figure starting in m. 44-45 was unclear in the original parts, generally occurring under one bar-long slur. For this edition, the decision was made to treat the two central quarter notes as tied, creating a “Scottish snap” effect that also appears in some of Sousa’s other music. The harmonic center changes in m. 55 and so does the dynamic, growing to *mezzo-forte* after the two bass drum hits in m. 53-54. This shift is a good spot to bring the brass back in at *mezzo-forte* to reinforce the changes here. Snare drum comes back in with a roll in m. 62, bass drum joins with a roll in m. 67, and the cymbals join the bass drum in *crescendo* at m. 69 leading to the final strain.

**Final Strain (m. 71-end):** All instruments play *fortissimo* with good accents on the dotted quarter notes. The ties have once again been added to the melody starting in m. 76. Flute and piccolo should be sure to make the sixteenths heard at m. 75-77 and again at m. 83-85.

Full Score

# March TRANSIT OF VENUS

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

March Tempo.

Flute/Piccolo  
Oboe [optional] [G. Corrie]  
E $\flat$  Clarinet  
1st B $\flat$  Clarinet  
2nd & 3rd B $\flat$  Clarinets [optional] [G. Corrie]  
B $\flat$  Bass Clarinet [optional] [G. Corrie]  
Bassoon [optional] [Baritone]  
E $\flat$  Alto Saxophone [optional] [G. Corrie]  
B $\flat$  Tenor Saxophone [optional] [G. Corrie]  
E $\flat$  Baritone Saxophone [optional] [G. Corrie]

March Tempo.

E $\flat$  Cornet  
Solo B $\flat$  Cornet  
1st B $\flat$  Cornet  
2nd B $\flat$  Cornet  
Solo F Horn [originally E $\flat$  alto]  
1st & 2nd F Horns [originally E $\flat$  alto]  
Baritone  
1st Trombone  
2nd Trombone  
Bass Trombone  
Tuba

S.D.  
Drums + Triangle  
B.D./Cyms.

"TRANSIT OF VENUS"  
Full Score

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

Flt./Picc. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$   $f$  [sub  $p$ ]

Oboe [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$  [sub  $p$ ]

E $\flat$  Clar. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$  [sub  $p$ ]

1st B $\flat$  Clar. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$  [sub  $p$ ]

2nd & 3rd B $\flat$  Clars. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$

Bass Clar.  $p$   $ff$

Bsns. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$  [sub  $p$ ]

Alto Sax. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$  [sub  $p$ ]

Ten. Sax. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$  [sub  $p$ ]

Bari. Sax.  $p$   $ff$

E $\flat$  Cor. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$  [sub  $p$ ]

Solo B $\flat$  Cor. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$  [sub  $p$ ]

1st B $\flat$  Cor. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$  [sub  $p$ ]

2nd B $\flat$  Cor. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$

Solo Hrn. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$

1st & 2nd Hrns. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$

Bar. [ $\text{tr}$ ]  $p$   $ff$  [sub  $p$ ]

1st Trbn.  $p$   $ff$

2nd Trbn.  $p$   $ff$

B. Trbn.  $p$   $ff$

Tuba  $p$   $ff$

Drums  $p$   $f$

“TRANSIT OF VENUS”  
Full Score

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

Flt./Picc. *ff* *mp*

Oboe *ff* *mp*

E♭ Clar. *ff* *mp*

1st B♭ Clar. *ff* *mp*

2nd & 3rd B♭ Clars. *ff* *mp*

Bass Clar. *ff* *mp*

Bssn. *ff* *mp*

Alto Sax. *ff* *mp*

Ten. Sax. *ff* *mp*

Bari. Sax. *ff* *mp*

E♭ Cor. *ff* *mp*

Solo B♭ Cor. *ff* *mp*

1st B♭ Cor. *ff* *mp*

2nd B♭ Cor. *ff* *mp*

Solo Hrn. *ff* *mp*

1st & 2nd Hrns. *ff* *mp*

Bar. *ff* *mp*

1st Trbn. *ff* *mp*

2nd Trbn. *ff* *mp*

B. Trbn. *ff* *mp*

Tuba *ff* *mp*

Drums *ff* *mp*

"TRANSIT OF VENUS"  
Full Score

30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38

Flt./Picc. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*] [- Picc.]

Oboe *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*]

E♭ Clar. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*] [tacet]

1st B♭ Clar. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*]

2nd & 3rd B♭ Clars. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*]

Bass Clar. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*]

Bssn. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*]

Alto Sax. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*]

Ten. Sax. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*]

Bari. Sax. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*]

E♭ Cor. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*] [tacet]

Solo B♭ Cor. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*] [tacet]

1st B♭ Cor. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*] [tacet]

2nd B♭ Cor. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*] [tacet]

Solo Hrn. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*]

1st & 2nd Hrns. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*]

Bar. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*]

1st Trbn. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*]

2nd Trbn. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*]

B. Trbn. *ff* [*mp*] [*f*]

Tuba *ff* [*mp*] [*f*]

Drums *ff* [*mp*] [*f*]

“TRANSIT OF VENUS”  
Full Score

TRIO. 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46

Flt./Picc. *p*

Oboe *p*

E♭ Clar. *p*

1st B♭ Clar. *p*

2nd & 3rd B♭ Clars.

Bass Clar. *p*

Bssn.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax. *p*

TRIO.

E♭ Cor. *p*

Solo B♭ Cor. *p*

1st B♭ Cor. *p*

2nd B♭ Cor. *p*

Solo Hrn. *p*

1st & 2nd Hrns. *p*

Bar.

1st Trbn. [tacet] *p*

2nd Trbn. [tacet] *p*

B. Trbn. [tacet] *p*

Tuba *p*

Drums Triangle *p* 4 8



"TRANSIT OF VENUS"  
Full Score

47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54

Flt./Pic.  
Oboe  
Eb Clar.  
1st Bb Clar.  
2nd & 3rd Bb Clars.  
Bass Clar.  
Bsns.  
Alto Sax.  
Ten. Sax.  
Bari. Sax.  
Eb Cor.  
Solo Bb Cor.  
1st Bb Cor.  
2nd Bb Cor.  
Solo Hrn.  
1st & 2nd Hrns.  
Bar.  
1st Trbn.  
2nd Trbn.  
B. Trbn.  
Tuba  
Drums

12  
B.D. [mp] [mf]

“TRANSIT OF VENUS”  
Full Score

55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62

Flt./Pic. *mf*

Oboe *mf*

E♭ Clar. *mf*

1st B♭ Clar. *mf*

2nd & 3rd B♭ Clars. *mf*

Bass Clar. *mf*

Bsns. *mf*

Alto Sax. *mf*

Ten. Sax. *mf*

Bari. Sax. *mf*

E♭ Cor. *mf* [Play]

Solo B♭ Cor. *mf* [Play]

1st B♭ Cor. *mf* [Play]

2nd B♭ Cor. *mf* [Play]

Solo Hrn. *mf*

1st & 2nd Hrns. *mf*

Bar. *mf*

1st Trbn. *mf* [Play]

2nd Trbn. *mf* [Play]

B. Trbn. *mf* [Play]

Tuba *mf*

Drums *mf* Triangle 4 S.D. *p*

"TRANSIT OF VENUS"  
Full Score

63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70

Flt./Picc. [+ Picc.]

Oboe

E♭ Clar. [Play]

1st B♭ Clar.

2nd & 3rd B♭ Clars.

Bass Clar.

Bssn.

Alto Sax.

Ten. Sax.

Bari. Sax.

E♭ Cor.

Solo B♭ Cor.

1st B♭ Cor.

2nd B♭ Cor.

Solo Hrn.

1st & 2nd Hrns.

Bar.

1st Trbn.

2nd Trbn.

B. Trbn.

Tuba

Drums

B.D. only *[mf]*

+ Cyms.

“TRANSIT OF VENUS”  
Full Score

71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78

Flt./Picc. *ff*

Oboe *ff*

E♭ Clar. *ff*

1st B♭ Clar. *ff*

2nd & 3rd B♭ Clars. *ff*

Bass Clar. *ff*

Bssn. *ff*

Alto Sax. *ff*

Ten. Sax. *ff*

Bari. Sax. *ff*

E♭ Cor. *ff*

Solo B♭ Cor. *ff*

1st B♭ Cor. *ff*

2nd B♭ Cor. *ff*

Solo Hrn. *ff*

1st & 2nd Hrns. *ff*

Bar. *ff*

1st Trbn. *ff*

2nd Trbn. *ff*

B. Trbn. *ff*

Tuba *ff*

Drums *ff*

4

"TRANSIT OF VENUS"  
Full Score

79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86

Flt./Pic.  
Oboe  
Eb Clar.  
1st Bb Clar.  
2nd & 3rd Bb Clars.  
Bass Clar.  
Bsns.  
Alto Sax.  
Ten. Sax.  
Bari. Sax.  
Eb Cor.  
Solo Bb Cor.  
1st Bb Cor.  
2nd Bb Cor.  
Solo Hrn.  
1st & 2nd Hrns.  
Bar.  
1st Trbn.  
2nd Trbn.  
B. Trbn.  
Tuba  
Drums

4