



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.

# March TRANSIT OF VENUS

Flute/Piccolo

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

9

16

23

32

39 **TRIO.**

45

51

62

74

81

*ff* *p* *f* [*>*] *p* [*sub p*] *ff* *ff* [*mp*] [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] *p* [*<*] *mf* [*+ Picc.*] *ff*

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

Oboe

[optional part added by Gay Corrie]

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

*ff* *p*

7 *f* [*>*] *p*

13 *ff*

19 [1.] [2.] [*sub p*] *ff* *ff*

25 [*mp* < > < >] *ff*

32 [1.] [2.] [*mp* < > < >] [*f*] [*ff*] *p*

39 **TRIO.** *p*

49 [*mf*]

59

68 *ff*

77

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

E♭ Clarinet

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

ff p

7 *f* [*>*] p

14 *ff*

20 1. [sub p] 2. *ff* [mp] tr

29 *ff* [mp] [*<*] *f*

37 1. [*ff*] 2. [tacet] *p* **TRIO.** *p*

43 tr

50 tr *mf*

57

67 [Play] tr *ff*

77 tr

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

1st B $\flat$  Clarinet

March Tempo.

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

The musical score is written for the 1st B $\flat$  Clarinet part of the 'Transit of Venus' march. It is in 6/8 time and B $\flat$  major. The score consists of 11 staves of music, with measure numbers 7, 14, 20, 27, 34, 40, 46, 52, 61, 71, and 79 indicated at the beginning of their respective staves. The piece begins with a dynamic of *ff* and includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *f*, *mp*, *mf*, and *ff* throughout. Performance instructions include accents, slurs, and trills. A 'TRIO' section begins at measure 34, marked with a key signature change to B $\flat$  major. The score concludes with a final cadence at measure 80.

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

2nd B $\flat$  Clarinet

[optional part added by Gay Corrie]

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

The musical score is written for a 2nd B $\flat$  Clarinet in 6/8 time. It consists of 11 staves of music. The key signature has two flats (B $\flat$  and E $\flat$ ). The score includes various dynamics such as *ff*, *p*, *f*, *mp*, and *mf*, along with articulation marks like accents and slurs. A 'TRIO' section begins at measure 39. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of the final staff.



March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

3rd B $\flat$  Clarinet

[optional part added by Gay Corrie]

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

7

14

20

26

32

39 **TRIO.**

48

58

69

78

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

B $\flat$  Bass Clarinet

[optional part added by Gay Corrie]

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

ff p

8 f p

17 ff ff

25 [mp < > < >] ff

32 [mp < > < >] [f] 1. 2.

39 TRIO. p

47

55 mf

61

69 ff

78

March  
**TRANSIT OF VENUS**

Bassoon  
[optional]

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

The musical score is written for Bassoon in 6/8 time, featuring various dynamics and articulations. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The score is divided into measures 1-6, 7-12, 13-18, 19-25, 26-32, 33-38, 39-46, 47-56, 57-68, 69-77, and 78-84. Dynamics include *ff*, *p*, *f*, *[sub p]*, *[mp]*, *[ff]*, and *[mf]*. Articulations include accents, slurs, and hairpins. A TRIO section begins at measure 39. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

March  
**TRANSIT OF VENUS**

E♭ Alto Saxophone

[optional part added by Gay Corrie]

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

*ff* *p*

7 *f* [*>*] *p*

13 *ff*

19 1. [*sub p*] 2. *ff*

25 [*mp* < > < >] *ff*

32 [*mp* < > < >] [*f*] [*ff*] *p*

39 **TRIO.**

49 [*<*] *mf*

59

68 *tr* *ff*

78

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

B $\flat$  Tenor Saxophone

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

[optional part added by Gay Corrie]

March Tempo.

*ff* *p*

7 *f* [*>*] *p*

13 *ff*

19 1. [*sub p*] *ff* 2.

25 [*mp*] [*<*] [*>*] [*<*] [*>*] *ff*

32 [*mp*] [*<*] [*>*] [*<*] [*>*] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*]

39 **TRIO.**

49 [*<*] *mf*

59

68 *ff*

78

March  
**TRANSIT OF VENUS**

E♭ Baritone Saxophone

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

[optional part added by Gay Corrie]

**March Tempo.**

The musical score is written for E♭ Baritone Saxophone in 6/8 time, featuring a key signature of two flats (B♭ and E♭). The piece is divided into several sections with dynamic markings and performance instructions:

- Measures 1-8:** Starts with a *ff* dynamic, followed by a *p* dynamic. A first ending bracket covers measures 5-6, and a second ending bracket covers measures 7-8.
- Measures 9-16:** Features a *f* dynamic followed by a *p* dynamic.
- Measures 17-24:** Includes a first ending bracket over measures 18-19 and a second ending bracket over measures 20-21. Dynamics range from *ff* to *ff*.
- Measures 25-31:** Contains dynamic markings of *mp* and *ff*.
- Measures 32-38:** Includes a first ending bracket over measures 33-34 and a second ending bracket over measures 35-36. Dynamics include *mp* and *f*.
- Measures 39-46:** Labeled **TRIO.** with a *p* dynamic.
- Measures 47-53:** Continues the Trio section.
- Measures 54-60:** Includes a *mf* dynamic.
- Measures 61-68:** Continues the Trio section.
- Measures 69-77:** Features a *ff* dynamic.
- Measures 78-84:** Concludes the piece with a final cadence.

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

E♭ Cornet

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

The musical score is written for E♭ Cornet in 6/8 time. It consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with a *ff* dynamic and a *p* dynamic. The second staff has *f* and [*>*] *p* dynamics. The third staff has a *ff* dynamic. The fourth staff has [*sub p*] and *ff* dynamics. The fifth staff has [*mp*] and *ff* dynamics. The sixth staff has [*mp*] and [*ff*] dynamics. The seventh staff is labeled **TRIO.** and has a *p* dynamic. The eighth staff has a [Play] instruction and a *mf* dynamic. The ninth staff has a *ff* dynamic. The tenth staff ends with a double bar line.

March  
**TRANSIT OF VENUS**

Solo B $\flat$  Cornet

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

*ff* *p*

7 *f* [*>*] *p*

14 *ff*

20 1. [*sub p*] 2. *ff*

26 [*mp*] *ff*

32 [*mp*] [*f*] [*ff*] 1. 2. [*tacet*]

39 **TRIO.** *p*

49 [*Play*] [*mf*]

59

69 *tr* *ff*

78



March  
**TRANSIT OF VENUS**

1st B $\flat$  Cornet

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

*ff* *p*

7 *f* [*>*] *p*

14 *ff*

20 1. [*sub p*] 2. *ff*

26 [*mp* < > < >] *ff*

32 [*mp* < > < >] [*f*] [*ff*] 1. 2. [*tacet*]

39 **TRIO.** *p*

49 [*mf*] [*Play*]

59

69 *ff*

78

March  
**TRANSIT OF VENUS**

2nd B $\flat$  Cornet

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

The musical score is written for a 2nd B $\flat$  Cornet in 6/8 time. It consists of ten staves of music. The key signature has two flats (B $\flat$  and E $\flat$ ). The score includes various dynamic markings such as *ff*, *p*, *f*, *mp*, and *mf*, along with articulation marks like accents and slurs. A first and second ending are present between measures 20 and 25. A TRIO section begins at measure 39, marked with a *p* dynamic. The score concludes with a final double bar line at measure 92.

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

Solo F Horn

[originally E♭ alto]

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

7

13

19

26

33

39 **TRIO.**

48

57

64

71

79

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

1st F Horn

[originally E $\flat$  alto]

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

7

14

21

27

33

39 **TRIO.**

46

53

60

67

74

80

*ff* *p* *f* [*>*] *p* *ff* [*mp* < >] [*f*] *p* [*mf*] *ff*

March

2nd F Horn

[originally E $\flat$  alto]

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

The musical score is written for a 2nd F Horn in 6/8 time. It consists of 80 measures across ten staves. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The score includes various dynamics such as *ff*, *f*, *p*, *mp*, and *mf*, along with articulation marks like accents and slurs. There are first and second endings at measures 14-20 and 33-38. A 'TRIO' section begins at measure 39. The piece concludes with a final double bar line at measure 80.

March  
**TRANSIT OF VENUS**

Baritone

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

*ff* *p*

7 *f* [*>*] *p*

13 *ff*

19 [sub *p*] *ff*

26 [*mp* < > < >] *ff*

33 [*mp* < > < >] [*f*] [*ff*] *p*

39 **TRIO.**

47 [*<*] *mf*

57

69 *ff*

78

March  
**TRANSIT OF VENUS**

Baritone, T.C.

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

*ff* *p*

7 *f* [*>*] *p*

13 *ff*

19 1. 2. [*sub p*] *ff*

26 [*mp* < > < >] *ff*

33 1. 2. [*mp* < > < >] [*f*] [*ff*] [*p*]

39 **TRIO.**

47 [*<*] *mf*

57

69 *ff*

78

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

1st Trombone

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

The musical score is written in bass clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a 6/8 time signature. It consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *ff* and a *p* marking later in the staff. The second staff has *f* and *p* markings. The third staff has *ff* markings. The fourth staff has *mp* and *ff* markings with dynamic hairpins. The fifth staff has *mp* and *f* markings with dynamic hairpins. The sixth staff is marked **TRIO.** and *p*. The seventh staff has a *mf* marking. The eighth staff has a *ff* marking. The ninth staff has a *ff* marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic hairpins.



# March TRANSIT OF VENUS

2nd Trombone

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

*ff* *p*

8 *f* *p*

16 *ff* *ff*

24 [*mp* < > < >] < *ff*

32 [*mp* < > < >] [*f*]

**TRIO.**

39 [tacet] *p*

46

53 [Play] [*mf*]

60

67 *ff*

74

80

March  
**TRANSIT OF VENUS**

Bass Trombone

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

The musical score is written for Bass Trombone in 6/8 time, featuring a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The piece is divided into several sections with dynamic markings and performance instructions:

- Measures 1-8:** Starts with a *ff* dynamic, followed by a *p* dynamic section.
- Measures 8-17:** Features a *f* dynamic section followed by a *p* dynamic section.
- Measures 17-25:** Includes first and second endings, with a *ff* dynamic marking.
- Measures 25-32:** Contains dynamic markings of *[mp]* and *ff*.
- Measures 32-39:** Includes first and second endings, with dynamic markings of *[mp]* and *[f]*.
- Measures 39-47:** Labeled **TRIO.** with a *[tacet]* instruction and a *p* dynamic marking.
- Measures 47-55:** Features a *[Play]* instruction and a *mf* dynamic marking.
- Measures 55-61:** Continues with a *mf* dynamic.
- Measures 61-69:** Includes a *ff* dynamic marking.
- Measures 69-78:** Continues with a *ff* dynamic.

March

# TRANSIT OF VENUS

Tuba

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

March Tempo.

The musical score is written in bass clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a time signature of 6/8. It consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with a *ff* dynamic and a repeat sign. The second staff has a *f* dynamic. The third staff features a *ff* dynamic and first/second endings. The fourth staff starts with a *ff* dynamic and includes a *[mp]* dynamic marking. The fifth staff has a *ff* dynamic. The sixth staff includes *[mp]* and *[f]* dynamic markings. The seventh staff is labeled **TRIO.** and begins with a *p* dynamic. The eighth staff has a *mf* dynamic. The ninth staff has a *ff* dynamic. The tenth staff concludes the piece.

# March TRANSIT OF VENUS

Drums

+Triangle

(1883)

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

**March Tempo.**

S.D.  
B.D./Cyms.

*ff* *p*

9 *f* *p*

16 *f* [*mp*] [*ff*]

22 [*ff*] [*mp*] [*ff*]

31 [*mp*] [*f*]

**TRIO.**

39 Triangle *p*

51 Triangle B.D. [*mp*] [*mf*] *mf*

62 S.D. *p* [*mf*] + Cyms.

71 *ff*

79