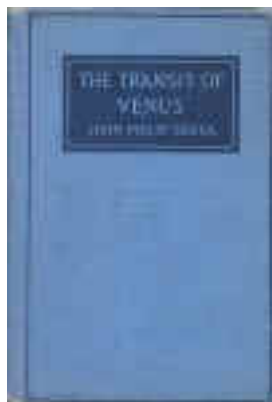


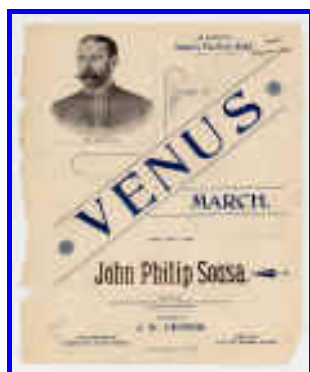
[Note: A separate [Transit of Venus Music](#) page includes the contributions of John Philip Sousa.]



<http://www.wgpark.com/page.asp?pid=10>

John Philip Sousa, the famous bandmaster, wrote a 1920 novel *Transit of Venus* about an imaginary voyage to photograph the event.

## John Philip Sousa



<http://www.loc.gov/rr/perform/ihas/>

The Library of Congress has compiled a thorough collection of music related to the transit of Venus, including John Philip Sousa's *Transit of Venus March*. You can see the entire history of Sousa's piece, hear a modern orchestrated version, and download a **FREE** band score. Sousa originally composed the march for the unveiling ceremony of the statue of [Joseph Henry](#), the first Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. The ceremony had been planned to occur before the 1882 transit, but didn't actually happen until April 19, 1883. Henry, whose statue is now in front of the Smithsonian "Castle" in Washington, D.C., was on the U.S. Transit of Venus Commission. (More info from Sun-Earth Connection Education Forum Venus Transit Background Reading- Music and Literature at <http://sunearth.gsfc.nasa.gov/sunearthday/2004/vtbackmusic.htm>.)

<http://www.transitofvenus.org/phmband-intro.mp3>

Megan Dowell, Family Readiness Leader of the 428th MP Company, and Chuck Bueter introduce John Philip Sousa's *Transit of Venus March* at the 2004 Spring Band Concert; (audio only).

<http://www.transitofvenus.org/phmband.mp3>

The PHM Band performs John Philip Sousa's *Transit of Venus March* at the 2004 Spring Band Concert; (audio only).

From the Washington Post, October 31, 2003

## **Dusting Off a Rarity for Venus's Celestial March**

By Reilly Capps

Legendary Washington composer John Philip Sousa likely watched on Dec. 6, 1882, as the planet Venus eclipsed a small part of the sun. This rare alignment -- when the planet's orbit takes it between the Earth and the sun -- is called the "Transit of Venus."

Shortly after the astronomical phenomenon, Sousa began work on a musical march of the same name.

Sousa wrote at least four marches about the way the heavenly bodies march across the night sky. The marching was a member of the astrology-loving Masons, and he paid close attention to the movement of the heavens.

But the "Transit of Venus March" never caught on, and went unplayed for more than 100 years. Sousa's copies of the music were destroyed in a flood.

But now Venus is approaching another transit, and fans of Sousa are resurrecting the forgotten march. It will be performed at 8 tonight at the Schlesinger Concert Hall in Alexandria.

"The interesting thing about band leaders at the time is that their concept of the universe was that there was this hidden balance and all these cosmic things going on," says Sten Odenwald, an astronomer at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt. Odenwald is preparing for June 8, when Venus will block out part of the sun for the first time in nearly 122 years. He has also worked with the Virginia Grand Military Band to organize the performance of "Transit of Venus."

Unlike "Stars and Stripes Forever" or "The Washington Post March," Sousa's "Transit of Venus" did not bring Sousa fame, nor did the novel Sousa wrote with the same title.

Loras Schissel, who works in the music division of the Library of Congress, found the old sheet music for "Venus" languishing in the library's files.

"It's a little three-minute gem," says Schissel, who also conducts the Virginia Grand Military Band. "It was written in a time when people were less cynical and more optimistic. It was America on the threshold of thinking that anything was possible, and Sousa captured that feeling perfectly."

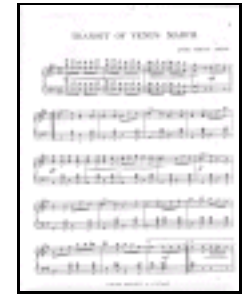
Because bands today use different instruments than they did in the 1880s, Schissel had to rework the score for a modern ensemble. Last year, the Virginia band trotted the new version out for a test run. But most people, including John Philip Sousa IV, the composer's great-grandson, have never heard it performed. He will attend tonight's performance and hear it live for the first time.

The band will play the "Transit" march more frequently in the next few months as astronomers wait for the actual event. The 1882 transit was accompanied by enormous fanfare. Thomas Hardy worked it into the plot of a novel, and the event was covered by the press worldwide. Boys stood on the street corners of New York, offering a glimpse through telescopes for a dime. Odenwald believes the 2004 transit should receive much the same response.

The Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall is at 3001 N. Beauregard Rd., Alexandria. Tickets, available at the door, will be \$20 for adults and \$10 for students.

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<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/admin/emailfriend?contentId=A49214-2003Oct31&sent=no&referrer=emailarticle>



Note: The Bovaco Catalog carries John Philip Sousa's *Transit of Venus March* band arrangement. The march costs \$25.00 (plus UPS shipping) for a reprint of each published part on 8.5 x 11-inch pages. You may reproduce as many copies for your own use as necessary. You may call them at (480) 948-9870 or write them at The Detroit Concert Band, Inc., 7443 East Butherus, Suite 100, Scottsdale, AZ 85260.

<http://www.dws.org/sousa/mid/transit.mid>

John Philip Sousa's *Transit of Venus March*; ([MIDI file](#)). [Broken link, May 24, 2004]

[Note: Loras Schissel and the Virginia Grand Military Band have generously given permission for their recording of Sousa's *Transit of Venus March* to be included in the *Transit of Venus* Program being compiled as part of a Toyota TAPESTRY grant for educators. Visit the *Transit of Venus* clearinghouse at <http://analyzer.depaul.edu/paperplate/transit.htm> for information on the distribution of this educational resource.

[www.transitofvenus.org](http://www.transitofvenus.org)

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