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Hey there and welcome to episode 69 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so happy you're joining me today. A quick note to let you know that enrollment for my online piano lesson programs – both Busy Kids Do Piano and Busy Moms Do Piano – will be open next week for one week only – so it's open from May 2nd–May 9th. If you or your kiddo is looking for a step-by-step approach to learning piano at an affordable price, you'll definitely want to learn more about my membership programs, and I'll link to them in the show notes so you can check them out.

We're finishing up our series on the March King today – and if you've been listening to the previous episodes in the series you know, by now, that the March King is none other than the American composer John Philip Sousa. We learned about his life in episode 67, and in our last episode, episode 68, we discussed one of his most famous works – The Stars and Stripes Forever. If you haven't listened to these episodes yet, be sure to check out the show notes where I'll place links to the entire series on Sousa.

Today we're going to learn about another well-known piece, Sousa's march called "Semper Fidelis".

The year was 1888 and the United States President Chester Arthur requested that a new piece be composed that would be associated with the U.S. President. During a conversation with Sousa – who was leader of the Marine Band at the time – the president told Sousa he did not like the official use of the song "Hail to the Chief." Sousa explained to President Arthur that the song was actually an old Scottish boating song, and the President suggested he compose something more appropriate. Sousa actually responded by composing two pieces – the first was called "Presidential Polonaise". Two years after President Arthur's death, Sousa wrote "Semper Fidelis", which in Latin, means "Always Faithful" – a

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motto of the U.S. Marine Corps. Sousa said in a 1927 interview that he wrote it one night while in tears after hearing his peers of the Marine Corps sing their famous Hymn at Quantico. Neither of Sousa's pieces took the place of "Hail to the Chief" as the song most closely associated with the United States president, but the song did come to be regarded as the official march of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Listen to how Sousa describes the premiere performance of his famous march.

"We were marching down Pennsylvania Avenue, and had turned the corner at the Treasury Building. On the reviewing stand were President Harrison, many members of the diplomatic corps, a large part of the House and Senate, and an immense number of invited guests besides. I had so timed our playing of the march that the 'trumpet' theme would be heard for the first time, just as we got to the front of the reviewing stand. Suddenly, ten extra trumpets were shot in the air, and the 'theme' was peeled out in unison. Nothing like it had ever been heard there before – when the great throng on the stand had recovered its surprise, it rose in a body, and led by the President himself, showed its pleasure in a mighty swell of applause. It was a proud moment for us all."

Sousa considered this to be one of his best marches, musically speaking. The piece was created for a band of wind instruments in addition to a percussion section. Do you notice the prominent, staccato drums and trumpets in the piece? How about the drum solo in the middle of the piece, where the music transitions from loud to soft?

This march became one of Sousa's most popular and was played by the Sousa band in many foreign countries. The song continues to be performed by the United States Marine Band countless times each year. In our last episode of Busy Kids Love Music, we talked about the standard U.S. military march form that Sousa developed. I'd love for you to head to this episode's show notes at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/69](https://www.buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/69) and listen to a full rendition of "Semper Fidelis" that is linked for you

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there. As you listen, see if you can identify the sections we learned about in our last episode when it comes to the military march form – the introduction, first and second strain, trio and final strain. Again you'll find a link to the full performance of this piece at [buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/69](https://www.buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/69), and you can listen there and apply some of the things you've learned in this podcast series about John Philip Sousa to analyze the structure of the piece.

Thanks so much for joining me today – and joining me for this whole series – to learn about composer John Philip Sousa. I hope you've enjoyed discovering things about his life and patriotic, musical contributions to the American military band. I look forward to connecting with you again when our next episode of Busy Kids Love Music airs in two weeks. Bye for now!