

Strike Up the Band! The Legacy of Patrick S. Gilmore

★ by Jere T. Humphreys ★

Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore (1829–92) was one of the most influential band conductors in American history, second in importance only to John Philip Sousa. It is entirely fitting, as we approach the Sesquicentennial of American public school music education (celebrating the period from 1838–1988), to review the contributions of the man revered as “the father of the concert band in the United States.”¹

Gilmore began his musical career as a band cornetist in his native Ireland. He then joined a British Army band that was transferred to Canada when he was seventeen. A short time later he moved to Boston, where his first job was with the music publisher-dealer John P. Ordway. Gilmore subsequently opened his own music store. During the 1850s, he became well known as a cornetist

Jere T. Humphreys is an associate professor of music education at Arizona State University, Tempe.



Patrick Gilmore in the uniform of the Twenty-second Regiment Band of New York. Photographs in this article courtesy of the American Bandmasters Association Research Center, University of Maryland, College Park.