

John Philip Sousa to John W. Hughes

March 12, 1930.

Typed letter signed, 1 page.

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My Dear Sir:

There is only one way of judging music and that is either by its beauty or its lack of beauty. In the olden days men were very much impressed with the beauty of melodic design and worked for the success of music according to their idea of melody and their harmonic knowledge. Most of the composers of today go in for color and, if they get a lot of color they feel satisfied and let it go at that.

It is my belief that a man or a woman cannot write melodic music without an inspiration from something above themselves – that might make your atheist laugh, but I believe that the compositions of today are written by men who write them without inspiration and write entirely from their knowledge of harmonic structure and thus produce music that is lacking in the quality of inspiration.

Yours very truly,

John Philip Sousa

Mr. John W. Hughes

Cincinnati, O