



LOS ANGELES SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT BAND

By Dawn Anderson

Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Band

A TRADITION OF SERVICE THROUGH MUSIC

Happy new year from the LASD Band! Our first year has been a busy one. We were honored to perform at the Galen Center for the LASD Medal of Valor recipients. We played at the Reagan Library for its Fourth of July celebration, as well as for the 9/11 remembrance in the city of Lakewood. Other performances included the L.A. County Fair, band festivals in Poway and Temecula and a summer evening concert at the Grove in Cerritos. Our premiere performance at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion on Christmas Eve was a celebration of the many cultural communities that make up the county of Los Angeles, and we were proud to represent the LASD as the opening performance. It was televised on PBS SoCal and has been a grand tradition for the County of Los Angeles for the past 58 years.

I would like to take you on a musical journey into the LASD Band and introduce to you some of the elite members of the Band. This month we will visit the clarinet section. The clarinet section of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Band has musicians who range in personalities and backgrounds colorfully rich with varied musical experiences. But they all have one thing in common: the love of music and, in particular, the clarinet.

Let us first take a look at the clarinet itself: It is a single-reed instrument and a member of the woodwind family. The modern clarinet has been tooting since the mid-1700s. It was Mozart's favorite instrument, and he wrote some of his most beautiful pieces for the clarinet. By the 1800s, the clarinet was a standard orchestral and concert band instrument. During the jazz/big band era of the 1940s and '50s, the clarinet was the central instrument of the swing bands. You may have heard of Benny Goodman, a famous jazz clarinet player from that time period and the leader of his own big band.

Let us venture now into the life of our concertmaster. Concertmaster is a coveted and time-honored position whose responsibilities include much more than just great musicianship. It is traditionally held by the first-chair clarinet player. Our current concertmaster, Darrell Mettler, plays all solos for the clarinet section and is the conductor's right-hand man. Darrell is a graduate of USC and, like many of our accomplished clarinet players, studied under the late renowned clarinetist Mitchell Lurie. Thanks



to a traveling accordion player teacher, Darrell first picked up the clarinet in fifth grade while attending school in Bakersfield. The partnership between the conductor and concertmaster is essential. Together, their leadership roles will have much to do with the success of the band.

Wes Brown was raised on a farm in North Dakota on a Sioux reservation. At age 10, Wes tried to play the cornet, with little success. But at age 14, with money saved from loading trucks in Fargo, he was able to purchase a simple clarinet from a pawn shop for \$7. In a very short time, he was playing in a German band. He went on to college to study music and engineering. He earned his master's degree in electrical engineering and taught at USC. During his career at Hughes Aircraft, he worked on many exciting projects; international satellite communications work took him all the way to China with President Nixon in 1972. Now retired, Brown continues with musical activities. As second-chair first clarinet, he takes over the concertmaster

duties when needed. We are pleased that he moved here to Southern California and shares his musical talent with the LASD Concert Band.

Diane Lang's main instrument for the LASD Concert Band is the E-flat clarinet. Her father wanted her to learn to play an instrument when she was about 9 years old. He chose the clarinet and it just stuck. Diane was very active in high school and college, playing in the UCLA band. "Women were not allowed to march back then," she remembered. She earned her master's degree at the Manhattan School of Music and her doctorate at USC. She studied with acclaimed clarinetists Lurie and Leon Russianoff. Diane plays for the Rio Hondo Symphony in addition to playing with LASD Concert Band. She just recently retired from teaching music to students in the Los Angeles School District.

The clarinet section is one of the largest in the band, so we will continue our musical journey into the clarinet section in upcoming articles. Our first year was exciting and eventful and our hope for the new year is to be a part of even more ceremonies within the Department. As always, we hope to bring harmony to the communities we serve and enhance the programs in which we participate.

If you play an instrument or have previously played an instrument, it may be time to dust it off and join the LASD Band. If you would like to have one of our bands perform for an event, either the dance band or concert band (subject to Department guidelines), please contact me at Dawn.LASDBand@gmail.com. ☆