



## LOS ANGELES SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT BAND

By Dawn Anderson

Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Band

### A TRADITION OF SERVICE THROUGH MUSIC

Greetings from the LASD Band! This month I would like to highlight our LASD Swing Band and some of our exceedingly talented swing musicians. Swing music advanced in the 1930s and 1940s from the jazz bands of the 1920s. Through the Great Depression and then through World War II, swing music helped keep spirits high. Swing music is loud and happy, and it has a special syncopation all its own. Swing is definitely not background music, but is designed to be listened to actively or to enjoy the specialized dancing that moved a generation. Although swing has taken a back seat to the modern music of today, it has always had a following by those who appreciate the jazz sound. Those musicians who play swing music find it exceptionally rewarding because of the free style that allows for the unrestricted expression to ad lib. For many music lovers in the world today, swing has never gone out of style and seems to pick up more fans in every generation. Our Swing Band is requested by the young as well as the seasoned and is kept very busy performing for all kinds of events.

to her credit as well, including with the Jimmy McConnell Orchestra and the L.A. Mambo All-Star Afro-Cuban Orchestra directed by Bobby Chavez, and just last month she played Marian Anderson at the famous Wilshire Ebell Theatre. Sylvia performed at the Edinburgh Jazz Festival in Scotland in August 2017 as Sarah Vaughan in the musical *When Divas Were Divas*, directed, produced and written by Sharon L. Graine, who also performed as Billie Holiday. But what really sets our "Sweetheart of Swing" apart is her willingness to give back to the citizens of Los Angeles County. On March 31, she performed *When Divas Were Divas* for free at the Willie Agee Playhouse in Inglewood for the fans of jazz and swing. She joined the LASD Concert and Swing Bands to give back to the communities we serve, and we are happy that she shares her incredibly talented voice with us.

Our Swing Band consists of 17 members who also play in our Concert Band. Among the Swing Band members, there are five saxophone players. Pete Mittelstadt is one of our premier musicians, playing the saxophone for the LASD Swing Band as



degree in music education. He served in the Army, the last 13 years as a bandmaster for the 300th Army Band. He credits music with giving him a vocation as he taught music in the West Covina School District for 31 years. Through music, he has met some lifelong friends and been able to spend the majority of his time doing what he loves.



Arguably, some of the best female vocalists emerged during the Swing Era — such as Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald and Martha Tilton, to name a few — and just like the swing bands of the past, we have our own "Sweetheart of Swing." Her name is Sylvia Boyd and she hails from the Motor City of Detroit. She has a whole host of accomplishments, including the Trail Blazer Award, the Legendary Living Jazz Vocalist Award and a Certificate of Appreciation from Mayor Villaraigosa as an exemplary inspiration for keeping jazz and blues alive for the next generation. She has many performances

well as clarinet for the Concert Band. Pete is a native Angeleno; except for a few years while serving our country in the Army, he has lived in SoCal all his life. Like many of us, Pete started his musical career on the piano. At his mother's urging he started lessons at the age of 6. As he got older, he wanted to play in his school band and asked his mother for a cornet — but she misunderstood him and bought him a clarinet. Luckily for Pete, it clicked, and later he learned the saxophone as well, making him a valuable player in our bands. He furthered his musical education, first at LACC and then at USC, and received his master's

Besides playing in and conducting a number of Southland swing bands, he has traveled as far as Brazil playing in a Glenn Miller jazz band. But Pete's assets don't end with his playing ability. He is our in-house arranger. Many times, our conductor would like to play music that is either hard to find or not arranged for concert bands. We simply give the task to Pete and, with his musical background and knowledge of all the instruments, he can score the music into a piece that the Concert Band can play. Pete assists with conducting the Swing Band when needed, and we are lucky he has become a member of the

LASD Band.

And now we move to the section that Dr. Don Holcomb, conductor extraordinaire, continually claimed has the most fun — the percussion section. Our Swing Band has an extraordinary percussionist, Greg Simmons. He is extremely shy about tooting his own horn; however, I am happy to shine a light on him. He was born in San Francisco but grew up in Denver, Colorado. He was drawn to music by the soundtrack of *Star Wars* and began to play the violin

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when he was just 10 years old — the year when *Star Wars* was released, 1977. He has always admired and appreciated film music. His life reads like a resume, as he has been able to study and work with very talented and respected members of the music and film industries. Once he mastered violin, he moved on to playing brass instruments and then landed on percussion. He says, "I play anything I can get my hands on," and that includes some strange and exotic instruments from Central America. After high school he studied music at Denver University — composition under Donald Keats with intensive private seminars by Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein. Greg feels privileged to have studied with Grammy-nominated Austin Wintory and Emmy winners Eric Schmidt and Charles Fernandez. He also feels fortunate to have shared the stage with Branford Marsalis, Bobby Shew, Doc Severinsen and Greg Gisbert. Understanding that there is always more to learn, he is now studying jazz composition with Kim Richmond. Greg currently is working in the film industry, doing a plethora of jobs from composing to acting. He just wrapped work on a feature film, *LOCO*, a Disney production, as an

actor. But music is his first love and has always been a part of his identity. One of the greatest moments of his musical performances was in 1985. After performing some Buddy Rich charts, he was surprised by an introduction to Buddy Rich, who said, "Nice job, kid." It was his one brush with drumming greatness! Greg says, "Playing gives me joy and excitement each and every time I step behind an instrument. ... Nothing is more exciting than creating!" Greg, we feel joy and excitement every time you perform with the LASD Swing and Concert Bands, and we are thrilled that you share your talent, enthusiasm and experience with the LASD Bands!

As you can see, the LASD Swing Band is peppered with exceptionally talented musicians who enjoy playing their music for the avid listeners and appreciators of jazz music. In upcoming articles, I would be honored to shine the spotlight on more of our Swing and Concert Band members who volunteer their time, talent and generosity to the LASD to bring harmony to the communities we serve.

*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. ☆*

## ☆ IN MEMORIAM ☆

JAMES M. BAUST	RETIRED 03-18-77, DECEASED 11-02-17	SERGEANT/MIRA LOMA
RANDY D. HANEY	RETIRED 07-16-16, DECEASED 05-21-18	SERGEANT/CST
DON F. JAMES	RETIRED 08-20-90, DECEASED 05-19-18	LIEUTENANT/NORWALK
LARRY A. LUTER	RETIRED 09-02-97, DECEASED 05-04-18	DEPUTY/WALNUT
BRADLEY PAUL JR.	RETIRED 02-16-00, DECEASED 05-27-18	SERGEANT/WALNUT
GARY E. ROBINSON	RETIRED 07-01-81, DECEASED 05-02-18	DEPUTY DS3/CARSON
GAIL B. SCORZA	RETIRED 03-02-11, DECEASED 05-03-18	DEPUTY/SANTA CLARITA VALLEY
MADELYN S. SMITH	RETIRED 09-17-92, DECEASED 04-03-18	DEPUTY/CIVIL LIT
ROBERT G. WALDRON	RETIRED 06-08-87, DECEASED 04-30-18	DEPUTY/ANTELOPE VALLEY
REGINALD T. YAMATO	RETIRED 06-01-83, DECEASED 03-02-18	DEPUTY/HOMICIDE
VIRGILLINE ADKINS, WIFE OF RETIRED MEMBER RUPERT C. ADKINS, DECEASED 04-25-18		
JULIA D. BARTSCH, WIFE OF RETIRED MEMBER MANFRED BARTSCH, DECEASED 12-23-17		
GLORIA BRANWELL, WIFE OF DECEASED MEMBER ERNEST E. BRANWELL, DECEASED 03-29-18		
JEAN CAMPBELL, WIFE OF RETIRED MEMBER ROBERT G. CAMPBELL, DECEASED 05-08-18		
CONSTANCE MOTANDER, WIFE OF DECEASED MEMBER DONALD MOTANDER, DECEASED 02-13-91		
TARINA F. MURRAY, WIFE OF RETIRED MEMBER CHARLES MURRAY, DECEASED 05-14-18		
EPHRAIM T. SKIPS, HUSBAND OF ACTIVE MEMBER SANOE K. SAMATUA, DECEASED 5-16-18		