



## LOS ANGELES SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT BAND

By Dawn Anderson

Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Band

### A TRADITION OF SERVICE THROUGH MUSIC

**T**he Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Band would like to salute the brave men and women of the LASD for their contributions to our safety during this incredibly unprecedented time. You're on the front lines protecting our lives, liberty and possessions, and we are proud of you all!

At the time of this writing, we have been contacted by several venues where we have been asked to perform and informed that the summer concerts are being planned to go ahead as scheduled — but this can change, so please visit our website at [LASDBand.org](http://LASDBand.org) for the most updated information regarding our gigs. We hope to bring the joy of music to all of you in the communities we serve, so that the happiness of music fills your hearts.

Today, I would like to highlight Ruben Helmstaedter, an incredibly versatile musician who comes to us by way of Stuttgart, Germany. Ruben plays in both the LASD Swing Band (piano) and Concert Band (bassoon).

The bassoon was developed in the 17th century from an earlier instrument called the curtal, which came into existence as early as 1540. Both the French and Germans played a role in designing the modern bassoon. This instrument is exceptionally difficult to play for many reasons. Besides being a double-reed instrument, the position and size of the finger holes are said to be "scientifically irrational." The present four-piece construction of the bassoon is thought to have been developed in France around 1635; however, in 1865, a German instrument-maker named Carl Almenröder initiated changes that minimized some of the inherent problems with the tone quality. Almenröder's version was later perfected by a German firm owned by instrument-maker Johann Adam Heckel with its own size and position of finger holes. This latest version has become the standard bassoon used today. The instrument is made of European maple and is a beautiful deep red color.

Ruben started taking violin lessons from his mother at the age of 5, but admits that his lessons were prompted by jealousy because her students got a lot of attention. Music has always been a part



of Ruben's life, as he had the opportunity to attend many of the Stuttgart Philharmonic performances because his mother played violin in that prestigious orchestra. His main instrument has always been the piano; he began tinkering on it with his grandmother from the age of 4 months. Ruben quips that he "has improved much since then." His interest in the bassoon began the day he saw a performance of "Peter and the Wolf," a symphonic fairytale for children. The fable is told by a narrator and each character in the story is represented by a different instrument. (It's a wonderful way to introduce children to concert music.) In the tale, the bassoon represented Peter's grandfather. At just 2 years old, Ruben knew that that would be his instrument. It took years for him to grow into the size required to play the big, beautiful red bassoon.

Ruben plays many instruments in addition to the piano and bassoon, including bass guitar (both electric and upright), flute, tenor sax,

percussion, guitar, trombone and the the organ, "to varying degrees of proficiency," he adds. He is also a vocalist and is a member of choral ensemble, The Donald Brinegar Singers.

After high school, he went on to study computer science at the University of Stuttgart. However, after realizing he was not happy with that choice, he decided to switch his course of study, and in 2010, he traveled to the United States to preview schools. Nothing panned out for him at that time, and because he was previously accepted at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, Austria, he returned to Europe to begin his music education journey. Ruben was accepted into the school's Sound and Master program — a difficult program to enter. He was one of only eight accepted out of over 100 applicants. In 2012, with visa in hand and a couple of years of education in Vienna behind him, he returned to the U.S., landing in Southern California, and began studying music at Pasadena City College with private lessons from Dave Arny and Gary Fukushima. It was while attending this school that he met Zoe, who later became his wife. Zoe plays flute in the LASD Band and was introduced to readers in a past issue of *Star News*.

Ruben's professional musical accomplishments are colorful and diverse, encompassing performances with such well-known names as: Helmuth Rilling, a conductor, teacher and innovator of international fame who is as an ambassador of Bach's music around the world; Sir Simon Rattle, a British conductor and Grammy award winner who rose to international fame when he was the musical director for the Berlin Philharmonic; Michael Feinstein, an American singer and pianist who celebrates musical theater; Tom Wopat of the *The Dukes of Hazzard* series, but who also has released country and western songs; David Lockington, current conductor of the Pasadena Symphony; Chuck Berghofer, a double bassist studio musician who currently works in the film industry; and Morten Lauridsen, an American composer and professor of composition at USC's Thornton School of Music.

Ruben has enjoyed his musical journey and is grateful for all the opportunities it has afforded



him. He is proud of his classical background and his exposure to jazz because it taught him the language of music. Every time he performs, he evolves as a musician and a person.

For Ruben and Zoe, membership in the LASD Band gives them the opportunity to be a “part of a great community of musicians who perform with a noble mission. At each performance, audience members are positively touched by the LASD

Band’s message and performance. It’s wonderful to be a part of that!” Ruben says.

Ruben, we are so happy that you came to the U.S. and continue to grace the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department Band with your enthusiasm and musical talent, and we wish you much success on your continued musical journey.

Please call us for your Sheriff’s Department musical needs and/or events, such as retirements,

celebrations or holiday/patriotic festivities. We are here for you!

*If you play an instrument or 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. Please visit our website, LASDBand.org. ☆*

# ☆ IN MEMORIAM ☆

JOHN M. DUSTER	RETIRED 05-05-87, DECEASED 02-08-20	DEPUTY/VICE BUREAU
ARTHUR ESCAMILLAS	RETIRED 07-31-18, DECEASED 03-31-20	LIEUTENANT/CARSON STATION
HARVEY T. HATHAWAY	RETIRED 03-31-97, DECEASED 04-03-20	SERGEANT/NARCO
RANDALL E. HEDGES	RETIRED 01-11-99, DECEASED 02-13-20	DEPUTY/NORWALK
ARTHUR L. HOWELL JR.	RETIRED 11-08-99, DECEASED 04-03-20	SERGEANT/COURT SERVICES EAST
HIROSHI ISAGO	RETIRED 03-31-79, DECEASED 03-11-20	DEPUTY IV/CCB COURT SERVICES
LOUIE A. KEMP JR.	RETIRED 03-31-90, DECEASED 04-19-20	DEPUTY/NORWALK
JOHN H. KOCSIS	RETIRED 11-06-66, DECEASED 02-17-20	DEPUTY/LENNOX
VICTOR H. KRETSINGER	RETIRED 08-01-87, DECEASED 04-23-20	DEPUTY/SEB K-9
CHARLES (CHAZ) W. ROBINSON	RETIRED 03-31-03, DECEASED 04-11-20	SERGEANT/PDC NORTH
MARY E. SEATON	RETIRED 03-31-92, DECEASED 04-07-20	DEPUTY/IRC
RICHARD E. ZIMBEL	RETIRED 01-17-84, DECEASED 04-19-20	SERGEANT/NORWALK
MARIE L. CHANEY, WIFE OF RETIRED MEMBER, WILLIAM D. CHANEY, DECEASED 04-11-20		
JANET M. FRANKS, WIFE OF RETIRED MEMBER, WARREN E. FRANKS, DECEASED 04-21-20		
GERALDEAN NATISIN, WIFE OF RETIRED MEMBER, BART A. NATISIN, DECEASED 03-22-20		
FRANCES J. McCORMACK, WIFE OF DECEASED MEMBER, HARVEY J. McCORMACK, DECEASED 09-24-19		