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LAPD Concert Band

BY MICHAEL ELLINGTON

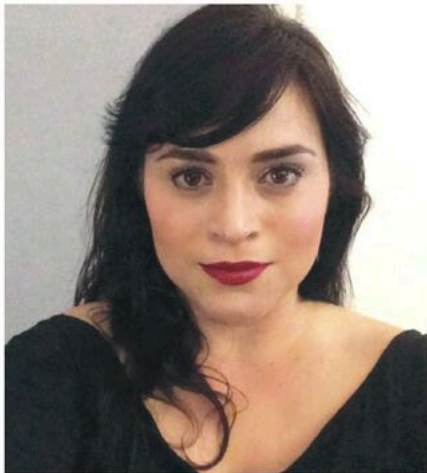
This month, we'll spend some time with a new member of the LAPD Band, Lacey Waggner. This Bay Area-born musician had some passing interest in playing flute at age 14, before switching to and staying with the French horn (hereafter referred to as "the horn"). Lacey says the first time she held a horn, she had no idea what she was doing or how to hold it properly. "When you see professional horn players in an orchestra, they look so natural and comfortable. The first time I held one, I was deeply perplexed."

That confusion did not last long. As she began to explore the range of works that showcased the instrument, "I almost immediately fell in love with horn repertoire... and knew I wanted to spend the rest of my life with this instrument in my hands."

Her parents are ardent lovers of music, although neither her mother, a Silicon Valley engineer, nor her father, a retired probation officer, pursued playing music past their childhoods.

Lacey doesn't play any other instruments. In her words, "I have some lingering PTSD from grad school piano proficiency, but that's as far as my other musical talents go." She is laser-focused on her horn.

Among the last- ing influences on her musicianship is one of her teachers. While studying at California State University, East Bay (Hayward) she played in bands under Tim Smith. Lacey describes him not only as the most brilliant musician she has ever met, but a well-organized, thorough and empathetic teacher, as well.



Her favorite player sits in the Chicago Symphony's horn section. James Smelser is the second horn player. Lacey has never met anyone so talented and yet so humble. Lacey thinks he might even be clairvoyant. "He's so sensitive to what's going on around him, not only in his section, but in the whole ensemble, that it seems like he knows what/how people are going to play before they do!"

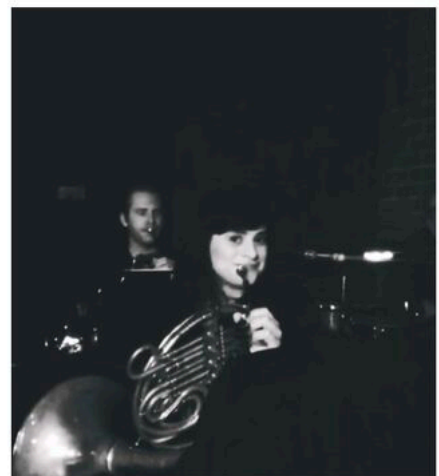
Lacey keeps her proficiency intact by following a practice regimen prescribed by a teacher she met when she moved to Los Angeles after grad school. Kristy Morrell gave her a daily routine to play. "And I've been taking my medicine! Every day I play through a maintenance routine, and since the pandemic, I've been choosing two etudes at a time [a high one and a low one] to work through."

One of her favorite groups to play with is Brewers Brass, a Bay Area-based brass quintet. Some of the other performers are not only fantastic musicians, but some of her favorite people. Chris Marquis and Mark Schmidt on trumpet, Dave Otteson on trombone and Dan Olivas on tuba round out the group. They play a fair amount of jazz and pop arrangements from their expansive repertoire library. "Playing

with them makes me a better musician. It's such a pleasure." She says she learns something from them at every gig.

When asked why she plays, Lacey replied, "You know, I love music; nothing makes me happier than playing, listening to or studying music, but a big part of why I'm a musician is other musicians! Generally, in my experience, musicians are not only fun and funny, but thoughtful, friendly and sympathetic."

For more information about the Band, see our website at www.lasown.com and contact Jim Starr, executive director, at sngcop@aol.com. For greatly appreciated donations, please go to www.lapolicefoundation.org, and in the Comments box, put "For the Band." ❖





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