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LAPD Concert Band

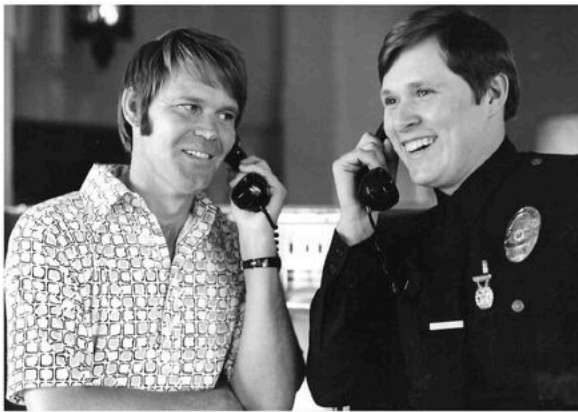
BY CHRISTINA CHALLEY

"Did you know there are approximately 7,000 spoken languages in the world today?" Said Jennifer Patterson, founder and president of California Music Studios. "Although only 10 percent of those are spoken by more than 100,000 people, there's clearly a communication gap between cultures throughout the world. But there's one language that everybody understands no matter what tongue they speak: music."

Music has often helped to bridge the communication gap between law enforcement and the communities they serve. This was the goal of LAPD Chief Ed Davis when, in 1972, he enlisted the help of a young police officer, **Jim Starr**, to enhance the Department's community outreach program, Neighborhood Watch,

by playing his guitar and singing to local elementary school students. This began Jim's career as "the Singing Cop," which was to take him and the Department along a musical journey that showed the community a different side of a police officer.

LAPD's "Singing Cop" began his Community Relations duties at local elementary schools, but soon found himself in demand in other areas of the community. He was enlisted to perform on the "Dinah Shore Show" on a segment titled "Kiss a Cop," honoring television actors portraying police officers, such as Efrem Zimbalist Jr. ("The F.B.I."); Joe Wambaugh (ex LAPD detective, producer of "The Onion Field"); Kevin Dobson ("Kojak"); Al Molinaro (Murray the cop on "The Odd Couple"); and Sam Melville and Georg Stanford Brown ("The Rookies"). On the



Glen Campbell and Jim.



Jim at Hollywood Bowl with the LAPD Band.

show, Jim sang "Tie a Yellow Ribbon" and "Country Roads," and later began getting fan mail!

Jim grew up listening to Glen Campbell, who was his idol. He admired his tremendous talent and always loved his song "Gentle on My Mind." To Jim's delight, the LAPD's public relations department, while arranging promotional segments for the Neighborhood Watch program, asked if Glen would pose with Jim for a photo. Glen had heard of Jim as the Singing Cop and agreed to do the promotion. During the shoot, Jim brought out his guitar and got Glen to sing with him. This led to Jim's participation in the annual Glen Campbell L.A. Open at the Riviera Country Club, sponsored by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. For the next five years, Jim was hired to play for the tournament, and was thrilled to play guitar with Glen, who would do a few songs at the awards dinner. Jim would see Glen enter the room and would introduce him by playing "Gentle on My Mind."

Another idol of Jim's was Sammy Davis Jr. At a police benefit concert starring Sammy, the Chief arranged a photo op.

This led to Jim playing for Sammy's backstage parties. Jim, wanting to impress Sammy, learned the song "The Candy Man." He started to play it and Sammy politely asked him to stop, saying it was NOT his favorite song!

Jim went on to sing with the LAPD Concert Band as part of the "Cops and Pops" performance at the Hollywood Bowl. This led to his eventual assignment as manager of the Band. As manager, Jim would take the Band to national and international venues, using music to represent the city of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Police Department. Today, as executive director of the Band and still known as the Singing Cop, Jim continues to bridge the communication gap with music. "Music is the universal language, and love is the key." – Mac Davis

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." ♦



Sammy Davis Jr. with Chief Davis and Jim.