

for your



Information

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LAPD Band

by Christina Challey

He wanted to find a home for his euphonium, and the LAPD Concert Band was thrilled to accommodate. This is how Les Benedict became a member of this historic band.

Besides his great musicianship with the euphonium, Les is also an accomplished instrumentalist on the alto, tenor and bass trombone, alto flugel-horn, tuba, contrabass bugle, trumpet and Eb cornet!

It all started in the small town of Kingston, Tenn., near Oak Ridge. Oak Ridge is famous for being known as “The Secret City,” home of The Manhattan Project. The Manhattan Project was a research and development undertaking during World War II that produced the first nuclear weapons. Les’ father, Ed, was one of those who worked on the Project.

Ed was also a talented musician and singer. He played keyboard and guitar, sang in and directed the church choir, and led his own barbershop quartet. Because Kingston had no school music

program, Ed organized the parents in fundraising, hired a band director and got the American Legion to let the kids use the Legion Hall for rehearsal before school in the morning. This is where Les began his musical career.

When Les was 10 years old, his mother worked for a political campaign for three days at \$5 per day to buy Les his first trombone. In high school, he started playing the tuba, and at Tennessee Tech, the “family” college where his dad, aunts and uncles attended, he branched out into playing other instruments that would take him down the path of a professional musician. In his sophomore year, Les credits the then-new departmental chairman of the music department, Dr. James Wattenbarger, for growing the department and challenging Les to “wear many hats.” Some of Les’ “hats” included playing tuba with the faculty brass quintet and euphonium with the symphonic wind ensemble.

Les’ incredible list of accomplishments include performing with Elvis Presley on the 1973 most-watched television special in history, “Aloha from



Group photo of the Band (Les is in front row).

Hawaii.” He was the featured euphonium and trombone soloist with Mr. Jack Daniel’s Original Silver Cornet Band. He has played on television specials and series, including “Family Guy,” “Dallas,” “The West Wing,” Tony Bennett, Carol Burnett, Dolly Parton, Debby Boone and with the 50th Anniversary Grammy Orchestra. He is an adjunct faculty member at the College of the Canyons and worked with UCLA and USC film scoring classes. He performed as featured soloist with The Disneyland Band presenting History of the American Band to a half million California elementary school students. As a member of the U.S. Air

Force Band, Les received a special citation from former President Richard M. Nixon for participation in welcoming the Apollo astronauts back from the moon in 1969.

Les loves all kinds of music, from orchestral to chamber music, to bands to small group jazz. Tchaikovsky is a favorite as are Stravinsky’s Firebird, Prokofiev’s 5th symphony, all things Bach and Mozart, Frank Sinatra, The Hi-Lo’s, Singers Unlimited and Mnozil Brass. A few favorite players are Lawrence Brown, Urbie Green and Frank Rosolino. And his wife traveled the world as a dancer with a Hawaiian music troupe promoting the Islands for the Hawaii Visitors Bureau.

You can hear Les’ recording of “Silent Night for 8 Trombones” on YouTube—and he plays all eight trombones! We are so glad that Les has found a home with the LAPD Concert Band!

For more information about the band, please contact Jim Starr, executive director, at sngcop@aol.com. For greatly appreciated donations, please go to www.lapd-foundation.org, and in the “notes box,” put “for the Band.” ♦



Les Benedict



Announcing *Primary Elections* for

Los Angeles Police Protective League
Board of Directors
Term of
January 1, 2018 – December 31, 2020

Office No. 1 – Police Officer Rank

Office No. 6 – Detective Rank

Office No. 7 – Sergeant Rank

Office No. 9 – Lieutenant Rank

PLEASE NOTE

Candidate filing period will open

Tuesday, August 1 at 9 a.m. and

close Tuesday, September 5, at 5 p.m.

Ballots will be mailed on Tuesday, October 3

and counted on Friday, October 20.

Don't be left in the dark

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