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## LAPD Band

by Michael Ellington

The Los Angeles Police Concert Band's University Outreach Program introduces students interested in volunteering their talent while serving their community, to the opportunity to perform with the LAPD Band at various concerts and events. This month's band member profile takes a look at one of these outstanding musicians: Tom Brown.

Music has been a part of Tom's life from his early years in San Luis Obispo to his present-day Los Angeles musical pursuits. "I started playing the trumpet

when I was 8 years old and switched to drums around age 10 at the behest of my elementary music teacher, who recognized that I struggled with playing the trumpet," Tom said. "I didn't realize it at the time, but this began a now almost 15-year journey for me into the depths of drums and percussion."

Like many who play any instrument, Tom's interest began with a fascination with watching other people play. Tom said he was mesmerized by his friends' abilities to play drums while still in elementary school. He felt stuck playing trumpet. His older sister had played

the horn but gave it up when she entered high school. He wanted to explore this much more interesting world of percussion. He started six months of private drum lessons before shifting to what would become 10 years of self-taught study. Along with drums, Tom also plays piano and ukulele. One other family member was musical, too. His aunt, Lisa Ann Brown, spent some time during the '80s as the vocalist of her own bands.

Tom had played in many school ensembles since childhood. Joining the jazz band at Atascadero High School really kicked his drive to excel into high gear. That experience found



Tom on drums.

him traveling to music festivals all over California and playing at a higher level. This kind of progress continued through his time at Cuesta College and persuaded him to pursue a career in music.

When asked what kind of music he likes best, his answer was right to the point: "Jazz. It's the music I have dedicated the last decade to pursuing, and I find there to be an extreme depth of artistry and creativity present among the community of fellow jazz musicians." Tom has deep respect for the artists who make up the music scene, locally and globally. He is inspired by all the different ways to be connected to fellow musicians through social media.

Day to day, his life literally revolves around music. He is finishing up his final semester to earn his degree in musical performance at California State University Northridge. Tom feels fortunate to have spent time among the dedicated students there. He ranks his teachers

among the absolute best, and finds it humbling to be mentored by them. Additionally, he teaches private drum lessons for all ages at MozArt Music Academy in Tarzana.

Though drums are the principal focus of his musical journey, another member of the percussion family has garnered some of Tom's attention. For the past four or five years, he has been developing a proficiency on jazz vibraphone. He counts himself fortunate to have had great teachers like Charlie Shoemaker and Nick Mancini. Luminaries like Lionel Hampton and Gary Burton have furthered his interest in this natural extension of jazz drumming.

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



Tom with the LAPD Band at Forest Lawn.



Tom Brown

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