

for your Information

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LAPD Band

by Maestro Richard Allen

When I was asked to write an article for the *Thin Blue Line*, I thought how insignificant anything I could pen would be with respect to the officers who put their lives on the line every day. With that in mind, I humbly have jotted down a few notes that might be of interest to your readers, mentioning the music the LAPD Concert Band performs at the graduation and police ceremonies.

Our music library consists of over 10,000 arrangements, specifically for Concert Band. In layman's terms, that's an orchestra without strings, a marching band without the marching, or a Sousa band without the sousaphone. But our fine collection of musicians do have a commitment to performing for each and every graduation ceremony, and to do their best to honor the new officers



Music for LAPD graduation.

who are about to set foot on their honorable careers.

So what music to choose from? And what is appropriate for the ceremony that

would entertain the audience and provide a musical backdrop for the Police Academy, guests and officers? What do we prepare for the Honorable Mayor of Los Angeles, the Chief of Police and the fallen officers of our city?

There are some givens here: "Pomp and Circumstance," that famous song your children may have marched down the aisle to at their school graduation, to "The Star Spangled Banner," which we currently have on file in various forms and keys to accommodate any singer or soloist. During the inspection, we may go through a dozen or so songs, with a drum cadence in between, to allow for the woodwinds to catch a breath. This is the section where we most likely emulate a military band, of sorts. And in our library of music, we like to call this "The March Book."

However, the pre-ceremony music is all our own choosing. These are some nice tunes that keep the audience anticipating what is to come, along with entertaining them with a plethora of information transmitted by the "voice" of the LAPD Band, Michael Ellington. This gives us time to regroup and prepare the next featured song. During this half hour, we like to mix it up a bit. You may hear the "Dragnet" theme or even a

bagpipe concerto. But when the moment comes to bring on the delegates, "Sempre Fidelis" is the only song we play to march in the top brass.

Among the flourishes of fanfares and Americana, the LAPD Concert Band has been performing at graduations, rain or shine, since 1954. And although you may not recognize everything we play, the memory of a soundtrack leaves the new recruits with a feeling of duty and honor. At least that is what our intention is. To send them off with the sounds of John Philip Sousa to John Williams. The LAPD Concert Band will be there to support and create a soundtrack for our newest officers.

So, the next time you join us at a graduation or police function, look over to the side and say "hi" to the LAPD Concert Band. Or better yet, dust off your clarinet or saxophone and sit in on one of our rehearsals. We meet every Wednesday at 4 p.m. on the gym stage at the Academy. Or just come and listen, we are there "To Perform and Serve."

For more information about the Band, visit www.lasown.com, or please contact Jim Starr, executive director, at sngcop@aol.com. For greatly appreciated donations, please go to www.lapolicefoundation.org, and in the "comments/memo box," put "for the Band." ♦



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A look at our sheet music.