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## LAPD Concert Band

BY MICHAEL ELLINGTON

The music is back. It's been 14 months since all kinds of live entertainment and familiar social interaction was shut down. And, it's been 14 months since the Los Angeles Police Concert Band has gathered together to make music to support a recruit graduation, special recognition event or entertain at a law enforcement-related occasion. A pool of volunteer musicians, who were used to meeting once a week to rehearse and expand an already-varied musical repertoire, found themselves unable to gather.

Executive Director Jim Starr says the thing he missed most was "the camaraderie... it's a relationship between

LAPD and volunteer musicians." Musical Director Maestro Richard Allen misses performing at the graduations. He feels a real loss at not being able "to provide a backdrop for the graduating recruits and their families as they begin their careers in law enforcement."

Since the shutdown, all Band members have continued to follow a solo practice schedule they've evolved over the years. Beyond that, though, they want to play together. They enjoy playing music live—sensing subtle changes in the energy of the players in their sections, the tempo, emotion and direction of the printed music and adjusting on the fly to keep the performance on track and follow maestro's baton.



Forest Lawn Memorial Day rehearsal.



LAPD Band.

late last year as the case numbers started to decline, a small number of players started meeting, outdoors and socially distant. That newly formed portion of the Band, the five-member Los Angeles Police Brass Quintet, was born. Steve Yerkes is on tuba, David Stassel holding forth on trumpet, French horn player Mark Kobayashi, Greg Lee on trombone and group leader trumpeter Didi Reyes rounds out the group.

In an effort to capture some of that group's performance magic, during the shutdown, Maestro Richard Allen assembled the entire band digitally to perform John Philip Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes Forever" and "God Bless the U.S.A." He emailed individual parts to each musician. They, in turn, recorded and returned their portions of the performance to him. Maestro edited the performances together and presented them on the Band's website, [www.lasown.com](http://www.lasown.com).

For the past few years, the Band has participated in the Forest Lawn Memorial Park Memorial Day Observance. The pandemic made it impossible for the traditional large crowds of honored veterans and their families to gather at the Glendale or Hollywood Hills parks. This year, a week before the actual day, the Band

participated in a virtual performance captured for later streaming on the park's Facebook Live page. You can see it here: <https://www.facebook.com/ForestLawn/videos/313381720392953>.

Flutist Beatrice Luna said, "It really felt good to be playing with everybody again. It didn't feel as though we had ever been apart. We're connected by the music and the camaraderie that we have developed during our time playing together." Fellow flutist Judy Reiter felt "really grateful to get back together with the Band."

Christina Challey, the Band's director of operations, summed it up this way: "With all that everyone has gone through this past year, it was like a joyous reunion to have everyone back together again. And I think because of the joy of being together, they played one of their best concerts ever, while honoring those, who through their sacrifice for our country, made our concert possible."

The Band is back.

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.lapolicfoundation.org](http://www.lapolicfoundation.org), and in the "Comments" box, put "For the Band." ♦

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