

# for your Information

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## LAPD Band

by Christina Challey

Have you, at one time or another, stood in front of the mirror with a hairbrush or ketchup bottle in hand and pretended to be a singer, TV personality or radio announcer? Well, at the age of 8, LAPD Band member Michael Ellington did just that. After standing in front of the bathroom mirror, hairbrush in hand, announcing the news, "That evolved into climbing the walnut tree in our backyard and announcing to the neighborhood the traffic flow on our street" Michael said. From that to playing the newscaster Ed Sullivan in

a school play, and providing outgoing messages on friends' telephone answering machines, Michael's announcing skills developed into a talent that was to serve him in some interesting ways in his future career.

In 1975, Michael joined the LAPD as a detention officer in the Jail Division. Dealing with various arrestees with different backgrounds, cultures and degrees of criminality, he developed a unique way of building rapport. He said that at mealtime, he would "announce" the rules to the inmates and make it sound like they were boarding a ride at Disneyland, even adding that famil-

iar phrase, "thank you for visiting the Magic Kingdom." Michael said, "It got them to smile, but most importantly, it had the effect of engaging people and getting them to follow the rules."

Michael continued to hone his speaking talent and became the go-to "voice" for officer training videos and Departmental events. In 1993, Michael completed the Police Academy's Instructor Development Course, taught by Sgt. Jim Starr. Sgt. Starr was also the vocalist and announcer for the LAPD Concert Band. He approached Michael about doing a little announcing

for the Band at recruit graduations. This led to Michael researching the Band's music and history and developing the informative presentations you will hear him announce at recruit graduations today.

Along with his reputation as the "Voice of LAPD," Michael has also become a musician in the LAPD Swing Band. While in high school, following his mother's musical ability with the piano, Michael developed an interest in playing, not the piano—but the guitar! Inspired by Woodstock in the 1970s and musicians such as Richie Havens, Jimi Hendrix, Wes Montgomery, Freddie Green and Tommy Emmanuel, he became hooked on jazz. He said he loves everything about jazz, from finger-style guitar to big-band music. At the top of his list of favorite jazz guitarists is Wes Montgomery. He said Wes' "phrasing, attack and melody choices seem fresh every time I hear them."

Although Michael did not play the guitar in school bands—he said the parochial schools he attended didn't have budgets for bands or music programs—he did continue to practice and play, and when the opportunity arose to play with the LAPD Swing Band, he didn't hesitate. After joining the Band, he said, "I became awash in the vibrant sounds of brass, reeds, rhythm and percussion."



LAPD Detention Officer Ellington



Ellington loves guitars.

Along with Michael's announcing skills (the hairbrush was long ago replaced with a real microphone) and adept musicianship, he also contributes to the Band with vocal collaborations, such as his performance of the patriotic rendition of "Duty, Honor, Country." As a member of the LAPD Concert Band's production team, he assists with program development and event coordination. He said, "I am honored to be performing with and announcing for so many talented musicians, vocalists and our inspired conductor, Richard Allen."

For more information about the Band, please contact Jim Starr, executive director, at [sngcop@aol.com](mailto:sngcop@aol.com). For greatly appreciated donations, please go to [www.lapolicyfoundation.org](http://www.lapolicyfoundation.org), and in the "notes box," type "For the Band." ♦

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