

## The United States Air Force Academy Band

The United States Air Force Academy Band proudly represents the Air Force Academy as the leading educational institution developing and inspiring air and space leaders of character with a vision for tomorrow. As one of twelve Air Force bands, the Academy Band maintains a rigorous performance schedule in support of Cadet and Air Force troop morale, recruiting and community outreach. For over 50 years, the Academy Band has used the power of music to inspire Air Force personnel and the nation they serve, produce innovative musical programs and products, and communicate Air Force excellence to millions around the globe.



The USAF Academy Band appears on behalf of Lieutenant General Mike Gould, Superintendent, USAF Academy. All performances are free and open to the public.



# THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY BAND

*First Lieutenant Jason S. Plosch - Commander*

## BLUE STEEL



## Blue Steel

**B**lue Steel is the premier commercial popular music ensemble of the United States Air Force Academy Band. Various line-ups of Blue Steel have been in operation for more than thirty years, enhancing community relations and supporting the recruiting mission of the USAF Academy and the United States Air Force. Blue Steel's mission also includes deployment, military support and troop morale. Currently, Blue Steel is made up of seven elite musicians that perform high energy music from a variety of genres. Blue Steel's versatile performers capture audiences with pop music, classic rock, country music and original compositions. Whether on a flight line in the desert, high school gymnasium, large concert hall or a national sporting event, Blue Steel has the ability to create the ideal atmosphere for any performance venue or setting.



## Commander and Conductor



**F**irst Lieutenant Jason S. Plosch was born and raised in Clinton, Iowa. He attended the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa where he graduated with honors and received his Bachelor of Music degree in 1995. In 1998, he acquired a Master of Music degree from Penn State University, State College, Pennsylvania.

Lieutenant Plosch enlisted in the United States Air Force in July 2001 and began his first assignment as a trumpeter with the USAF Band of Flight, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH in September 2001. As an enlisted member of the USAF Band of Flight, he performed in seven different ensembles and was versatile in all styles of music. He was a member of the first USAF brass ensemble, Hot Brass, to deploy to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. In 2008, Lieutenant Plosch was commissioned through the Officer Training School at Maxwell AFB, Alabama where he was a Distinguished Graduate. Afterward, he became the deputy commander of the USAF Academy Band in August 2008, and later assumed command in February 2012.

Lieutenant Plosch's professional credits include work at Disneyland, Anaheim, California and Tokyo Disneyland, Tokyo, Japan. He also performed with Princess Cruise Lines as well as serving as a high school instrumental director in Centerville, Iowa for three years. His ensembles consistently garnered the highest ratings during his tenure in Centerville. Lieutenant Plosch has also been involved with many regional orchestras in Iowa, Ohio and Pennsylvania. He has performed with such artists as Aretha Franklin, The Manhattan Transfer, Bernadette Peters, Lou Rawls, Byron Stripling and many others.

Lieutenant Plosch's military awards and decorations include the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, the Air Force Achievement Medal, the National Defense Service medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. He was chosen the USAF Band of Flight Airman of the Year in 2002 and NCO of the Year in 2007. He was named the Air Force Sergeant's Association Kittyhawk Chapter 751 Bandsman of the Year for 2002. He is also the USAF Academy's Company Grade Officer of the Year for 2009.

## Blue Steel Fact Sheet

### What they are

Six-piece popular music group featuring high-energy vocal and instrumental performances, performing for audiences across the country

One of ten performing groups that comprise the 53-member United States Air Force Academy Band

### What they do

Travel nationwide performing public concerts, patriotic shows, and civic and military functions, highlighting the best of today's popular music in support of the United States Air Force

In conjunction with local Air Force school recruiting programs, Blue Steel provides students with a positive image of professionals in today's Air Force

### What makes them unique?

Tremendous variety of contemporary popular musical styles performed for a broad range of audiences

## The United States Air Force Academy

When it comes to choosing a college, options seem almost endless. For the highly motivated high school graduate who is looking for something more from their college experience, The United States Air Force Academy is easily the first choice.



At a time when options are wide open, those who consider bigger goals, deeper learning, time-honored character development and possibly, a more rewarding future, choose to attend one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the world.

The Academy offers a world-class education, the opportunity to fly, and a guaranteed career right out of college. Many cadets create professional relationships that last a lifetime. It is true that there is no financial cost to attend the Academy, but there is a hefty price tag. Academy cadets pay for their education with sweat, hard work, early mornings, and late nights. They are held to the highest standards, without exception, and upon graduation are required to serve at least five years as a leader in the United States Air Force.

With that price comes an experience that can't be found anywhere else. Air Force Academy cadets are surrounded by other young Americans who are pushing themselves to the limits, developing strength and character and discovering the qualities that make great leaders.

## Air Force Academy Band Information

### Key Personnel

First Lieutenant Jason S. Plosch—Commander/Conductor  
Chief Master Sergeant Randall A. Doersch—Band Manager, Support  
Chief Master Sergeant John P. Gohl—Band Manager, Logistics  
Mr. Frederick C. Correll—Director of Operations

### Contact for More Information

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS  
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## Personnel



**Master Sergeant Stephen L. Brannen**, *guitar*, hails from Nashville, Tennessee. He currently holds a degree in Recording Industry from Middle Tennessee State University. He has studied with Charles Postlewaite, Steve Owens and Rick Hayden. He originally entered the Air Force in March 1989, and was stationed at Scott AFB, Illinois, and Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. He separated from the Air Force in 1994 and became a guitarist at Opryland USA located in Nashville, Tennessee, until 1997. He rejoined the Air Force in

November 1999, as a member of the Heritage of America Band, stationed at Langley AFB, Virginia. He became a member of The United States Air Force Academy Band in January 2002, and is also a member of the Marching Band.

**Master Sergeant Chris Gaona**, *drum set*, earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Percussion Performance from the University of Colorado in Boulder. His principal percussion teachers include Doug Walter, Chris Hanning and Dr. John Davis. Chris has performed with many jazz greats to include Sammy Nestico, The New York Voices, John Hollenbeck, Shelly Berg, Marcus Roberts, Jon Hendricks and Diane Schuur. Chris joined the Air Force Band of Mid-America in 1996 and has been with The United States Air Force Academy Band since July of 1999. Sergeant Gaona is a member of the Marching Band, Concert Band, and Blue Steel.



**Technical Sergeant Andrew J. Benton**, *piano*, was born January 2nd, 1971 and grew up in Colorado Springs, Co. Expressing an interest in music from a young age and, with the support of his family, Andrew studied piano throughout his primary education years. He studied piano as an undergraduate at Adams State College and went on to receive an M.A. at Indiana University in May, 1997. Upon completion of

Basic Military Training Andrew became a member of The United States Air Force Academy Band on April 26th, 2004. As a pianist in the organization, he is proud to serve the band and country in the uniform of The United States Air Force.

**Technical Sergeant Julie A. Bradley**, *voice*, hails from Wichita, Kansas. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with both Bachelor and Master of Music Education Degrees from Wichita State University. Julie studied voice as well as piano and cello. Her teachers include Deborah Baxter, Judith Fear, David Schepps and Elizabeth Carroll. Before joining the Air



Force, Julie taught vocal music in both middle school and high school and performed in many operas and musicals including "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Grease." She has been a featured soloist with the Air Capital Big Band and the Wichita State University Jazz Arts Ensemble. She became a member of The United States Air Force Academy Band in July 1999, and performs with the Concert Band, Marching Band, and Blue Steel.

**Technical Sergeant Paul McWhirter III**, *sound and recording engineer*, was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from Florida State University, and a degree in Recording Arts from Full Sail University. TSgt McWhirter entered the Air Force in 2005 and was assigned to the Band of the Air Force Reserve at Robins AFB, Georgia. During that time, he worked with notable artist such as Restless Heart, Lee Greenwood, Jamie O'Neal, John Popper, Melina Leon, and Kid Rock. TSgt McWhirter joined the USAF Academy Band in February, 2010, and is currently the FOH engineer for the Blue Steel and plays bass drum in the Marching Band.

**Senior Airman Colin Trusedell**, *bass*, is originally from Indianapolis, IN. After high school, Colin was accepted into the Navy Music Program and attended the Navy School of Music. In 2005, Colin was selected as the Navy Band's Bluejacket of the Quarter, 4th Quarter, and Bluejacket of the Year. In 2008, Colin separated from the Navy and received an Undergraduate degree in Music Business and the Entertainment Industries from the University of Miami. In 2010, Colin worked for AEG Live, where he was an Event Coordinator in the Operations Department for booking and scheduling major concert events for AEG in the Southeastern United States. Colin joined the United States Air Force Academy Band in 2011, and is currently performing with Blue Steel and the Marching.

