

THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD BAND

Captain Kenneth W. Megan, Director



BRIEF HISTORY

The United States Coast Guard Band is the premier band representing the United States Coast Guard and the Department of Homeland Security. The 55-member ensemble has performed at some of the most prestigious venues in the nation, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall. The Band also has a rich history of performing internationally: it is especially honored to have been the first American military band to perform in the former Soviet Union, with concerts in Leningrad and the surrounding area in 1989. In 2008, the Coast Guard Band became the first premier American military band to perform a concert tour of Japan. In addition, the US Coast Guard Band toured Taiwan in July 2011.

Based at the US Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, the Coast Guard Band frequently appears in Washington, DC, at presidential and cabinet level functions on formal and informal occasions. Historic events include National Christmas Tree lighting ceremonies, the American Bicentennial Celebration with President Gerald Ford, World War II Fiftieth Anniversary events in England, and Inaugural celebrations for every President since Herbert Hoover.

A number of notable vocal artists have appeared with the Coast Guard Band, including Placido Domingo, Marilyn Horne, Elizabeth Futral, Andy Williams, Roberta Flack, Lee Greenwood, Lorrie Morgan, Shirley Jones, Lonestar, and the Boys Choir of Harlem. Film, literary and television personalities have included Gregory Peck, Lucie Arnaz, Willard Scott, Walter Cronkite, John Amos, Alex Haley, and Richard Thomas. Coast Guard Band concerts have also featured instrumental artists such as Bill Watrous, Dale Clevenger, Slide Hampton, Cecil Bridgewater, Chris Vadala, David Shifrin, and Philip Smith. In 2008, under the direction of Maestro Leonard Slatkin, the Band performed a superb concert of music by Copland, Bach, and Hindemith, among others.

The United States Coast Guard Band was organized in March 1925 with the assistance of Lt. Charles Benter, leader of the United States Navy Band; Dr. Walter Damrosch, conductor of the New York Philharmonic; and "American March King" John Philip Sousa, former director of the United States Marine Band. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed congressional legislation resulting in the Coast Guard Band becoming the permanent, official musical representative of the nation's oldest continuous seagoing service. This event also established the Coast Guard Band as one of our nation's premier service bands.

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