

**MUSIC**



The U.S. Coast Guard Band's "Masters of Swing," left to right, Albert Lyman, Thomas Briggs, Andrew Sherwood, Lewis Buckley, Gregory Wirt, Yvonne Daniel (vocals) and Thomas Green.

## Coast Guard Band loves to play for appreciative Midwest crowds

JENNIFER VAN DOREN  
GAZETTE SPECIAL WRITER

When the members of the U.S. Coast Guard Band play at the Portage Community Bandshell at 7 p.m. next Sunday, they will have a special understanding of the music.

Half of the pieces in the show have been arranged by their own conductor, Commander Lewis Buckley. "It's a great joy because the players are so good," Buckley said. "It's wonderful to write something and put it in front of such wonderful players and know it will come out the best it will ever sound."

The 45-member band was formed in March 1925 and has been steaming straight ahead since then, performing at every inaugural celebration since Herbert Hoover's and at the funerals of presidents Taft, Roosevelt, Eisenhower and Kennedy.

Besides serving the country in this way, the band is a public relations tool for the Coast Guard, to let the general public know they are out there, said Chief Musician Ralph Thorp, who has played the string bass with the band for about 23 years. All members are enlisted in the Coast Guard, and they hail from 22 states.

The band has made more than 15 records over the past 12 years, and their New London, Conn., concerts are heard in 150 cities via National Public Radio. The first half of the free concert in Portage will consist of marches, show tunes and band classics,

while the second will swing with music from the Big Band era.

The band usually tours the eastern United States, but has ventured as far as Canada and Alaska. It has toured the Kalamazoo area several times before, and both Thorp and Buckley said they particularly enjoy playing to Midwestern crowds.

"The turnout for band concerts is larger for small towns than in large cities," Thorp said. "In a large city there is so much going on, a person interested in the classical side of music has a multitude of things to do." The concert here will be one of many honoring World War II veterans.

"Coming up on what is the 50th anniversary of World War II, it would be virtually impossible to target an individual event in World War II and have a corresponding date to have a remembrance," Thorp said. "Our appearance over the next two years is to pay tribute to veterans in a non-date-specific manner."

In June of 1989 the band became the first American military band to perform in the Soviet Union. It joined with the Leningrad Military District Band in a concert in October Hall in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg.

"It's an eye-opener to walk into another country that has a completely different culture," said Thorp.

The rain location for next Sunday's concert, which is sponsored by the Kalamazoo Gazette, is the Portage Central High School Auditorium.

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## Coast Guard Band plays more than patriotic music

By Betty Webb  
Tribune writer

If you think an evening spent with the U.S. Coast Guard Band means an entire evening of patriotic tunes and marches, think again.

This band can swing, too.

For instance, saxophonist Brian K. Sparks makes sparks fly on such tunes as Jimmy Dorsey's *Oodles of Noodles*. And vocalist Yvonne Daniel (Yeoman First Class), who can sing in three languages, enjoys belting out one big band classic after another.

The band members are fond of quoting Duke Ellington's, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing," and take his famous words to heart.

Commander Lewis Buckley is the director/composer/arranger for the U.S. Coast Guard Band.

Buckley has authored the official march for the U.S. Department of Transportation, written and arranged sound tracks for Coast Guard recruiting films, and was awarded the dis-

**U.S. Coast Guard Band**  
7:30 p.m. Monday, Gammage Auditorium, Arizona State University, Tempe. Information: 965-3434 and 678-2222. Free.

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tinguished service citation from the American Legion for his march *Purple Heart*. Under his leadership, the Coast Guard Band has recorded 14 albums and is heard regularly on National Public Radio.

Sparks, principal saxophonist,

received his bachelor of music degree from California State University and was accepted into the Military Band at West Point. During his tour of duty with that band, he received his master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music.

Daniel began singing in church at the age of 6, and continued singing through high school, culminating in three performances at Kennedy Center Opera House in Washington, D.C. She majored in voice at Prince George's College, and broadened her skills to include classical and opera.

She joined the Coast Guard in 1982, becoming a member of the Coast Guard Headquarters Volunteer Band, where she represented the Coast Guard when she sang for President Bush in *An Armed Forces Salute to President Bush*.

Besides their swing numbers, the U.S. Coast Guard Band will also perform *Gandalf the Wizard* by Johan de Meij, *The Liberty Bell* by John Phillip Sousa and *California Jubilee* by Roger Nixon.



The U.S. Coast Guard Band Masters of Swing concert is slated for Monday in Tempe.