THE UNITED STATES
Coast Guard Band

Commander Kenneth W. Megan, Director

www.uscg.mil/band

THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD BAND

History

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.

The mission of the Coast Guard Band has greatly expanded since 1925. Today the Band is the proud musical representative of the United States Coast Guard and the Department of Homeland Security, appearing at presidential and cabinet level functions on formal and informal occasions. Leamy Hall Auditorium, on the grounds of the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, serves as the Band's at-home venue. The Coast Guard Band also tours regularly throughout the United States, and has performed in the former Soviet Union, Canada, England, and Japan, and chamber groups from within the Band have played in Taiwan.

Performances

Since its formation, the Coast Guard Band has developed an international reputation as one of the finest professional concert bands in the world, offering music of great variety and appeal. Concert programs include a broad spectrum of styles, including classic wind band repertoire, stirring patriotic arrangements, inspiring marches, virtuosic solo features, and swinging jazz charts. Over the course of a year, performances include a monthly concert series at the Academy, numerous ceremonial functions, and community concerts and tours that serve as opportunities to enhance the visibility of the Coast Guard. The Band regularly produces recordings for public distribution, and frequently provides programs to National Public Radio for broadcasts heard throughout the country, as well as Australia, Japan, and Europe.

The Coast Guard Band's musical activities also include a recital series and several educational outreach programs. The United States Coast Guard Chamber Players Recital Series takes place on Sunday afternoons from early fall to late spring. Coast Guard Band members and guest artists perform a wide variety of music, from great European masterpieces to works by the most contemporary composers.

Three educational initiatives reach over 11,000 students annually. The Outreach Program consists of various small ensembles that visit local schools to present educational assembly programs. Young People's Concerts are presented in Leamy Hall Auditorium to students in grades four through eight. Finally, the competitive Young Artists Solo Competition is open to high school musicians in select Connecticut counties. The Solo Competition winner performs as soloist with the U.S. Coast Guard Band.

Musicians

The United States Coast Guard Band selects only the most highly skilled musicians through an extremely competitive audition process. Openings are announced on the Band's website and notices are sent to college and university music departments. Auditions are held at the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. The audition process is much like that of any major symphony orchestra, with a screened preliminary round to ensure anonymity, and musical requirements that include performance of a solo and concert band and orchestral excerpts. Candidates are advanced to a final round based on their demonstrated musical ability; the winner of that round must complete an interview and reference check in addition to meeting Coast Guard requirements. The director makes the final decision to award the position to the winner, who then enlists in the United States Coast Guard for a period of four years at the rank of Musician 1st Class (E-6).

While there are no degree requirements to become a member of the United States Coast Guard Band, current musicians are graduates of our nation's finest music schools. Members hold undergraduate and advanced degrees from such renowned institutions as The Juilliard School, Indiana University, Rice University, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, the Eastman School of Music, the New England Conservatory, the University of Michigan, the University of Illinois, and the University of North Texas. Many Coast Guard Band musicians choose to make their careers in the Band, often serving for twenty to thirty years.

Special Guests and Performances

A number of notable vocal artists and ensembles have appeared with the United States Coast Guard Band including Elizabeth Futral, Placido Domingo, Marilyn Horne, 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. Renowned American conductor Leonard Slatkin led the Band in a superb performance of music by Copland, Bach, and Hindemith.

The Coast Guard Band has performed at some of the most prestigious venues in the nation, among them the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall. Additionally, the Band has participated in such historic events as inaugural celebrations for every President since Herbert Hoover, National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremonies, the American Bicentennial Celebration with President Gerald Ford, and the World War II Fiftieth Anniversary events in England. The United States Coast Guard Band has a notable history of international performances. The Band is especially honored to have been the first American military band to perform in the former Soviet Union, presenting concerts in Leningrad and the surrounding area in June 1989. In 2008, the Coast Guard Band became the first premier American military band to perform a concert tour of Japan. The Brass Quintet and Saxophone Quartet performed throughout Taiwan to great acclaim in 2010.

Please direct comments or questions to:

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The United States Coast Guard is a multi-mission maritime military service, and one of the nation's five Armed Services. Its mission is to protect the public, the environment, and U.S. economic interests—in the nation's ports and waterways, along the coast, on international waters, or in any maritime region as required to support national security.

Today, the Coast Guard will:

Save 15 lives

Assist 114 people in distress

Protect $4.9 million in property

Conduct 82 search and rescue cases

Seize $2.4 million worth of illegal drugs

Interdict and rescue 17 illegal migrants at sea

Respond to 11 oil and hazardous chemical spills

Board and inspect 202 vessels of law enforcement interest

Learn more about the Dept. of Homeland Security at www.dhs.gov
the U.S. Coast Guard at www.uscg.mil
and the U.S. Coast Guard Band at www.uscg.mil/band
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