

SOUNDS FROM THE HUDSON

The Official Schedule of Events of the United States Military Academy Band, West Point, New York

Colonel Thomas Rotondi, Jr. Commander/Conductor

Winter 2005

Volume 13 Issue 1



Trombonist Jim Pugh performs with the Concert Band and Jazz Knights in January.

Trombonist Jim Pugh Opens 2005 Concert Season

The Academy Band has invited a world-renowned soloist to join its ranks each January for the last two years. Past soloists were virtuoso clarinetist Eddie Daniels and percussionist Steve Houghton. The versatility of these two well-known talents allowed them to appear with both the Concert Band and Jazz Knights on the same event. This year's soloist is legendary trombonist Jim Pugh. He will join both the Concert Band and Jazz Knights for a performance on January 14th, at 8 p.m. in the Eisenhower Hall Theater.

Jim Pugh has had a distinguished career as a freelance trombonist, composer and educator. His playing crosses all boundaries. His recordings range from small-group jazz settings with Joe Lovano and David "Fathead" Newman to classical music with Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble. Jim was also a featured soloist on Grammy winning recordings with Woody Herman and has recorded large orchestral works with several major orchestras. Read more about Mr. Pugh at his website: www.jazzmasters.nl/jimpugh.htm.

Jazz Knights Celebrate African-American History Month

On February 18th at 8 p.m. in the Eisenhower Hall Ballroom the Jazz Knights will perform a concert in tribute to some of America's great African-American composers and musicians. Past guest artists during African-American History Month have included trumpeter Byron Stripling and the late jazz pianist James Williams. This year saxophonist extraordinaire David Liebman will share his intimate musical knowledge of the jazz idiom and its history as he performs with the Jazz Knights. Highly influenced by saxophonist John Coltrane during the 1960s, Mr. Liebman's illustrious career includes performances with drummer Elvin Jones' group in the late 1960s and membership in the legendary Miles Davis' group from 1970 through 1974. Today, Mr. Liebman is highly respected as a saxophonist, music educator, jazz historian and composer. In addition to Liebman, the Jazz Knights will feature several talented musicians from the band.



Jazz Knights SSG James, SSG Arnold, SFC Bradley and SSG Malone.

The Hellcats in Recital

On Sunday, March 6th, members of the Hellcats will perform a recital as a part of the U.S. Military Academy Band's Chamber Series. Held at the Jewish Chapel at West Point, the performance will begin at 3 p.m. and will showcase a variety of trumpet ensemble literature in the classical and jazz idioms. Selections will include Eric Ewazen's *Fantasia for Seven Trumpets* and Staff Sgt. Jon Leonard's arrangement of *Manteca*, made famous by the late Dizzy Gillespie. In addition to larger trumpet ensemble pieces, members will be presenting works for smaller ensembles. As with all Academy Band events, this recital is free and open to the public.



The Hellcats

CONCERT BAND

The Academy Band's "Music Under the Stars" concert series at the Trophy Point Amphitheatre was a popular success featuring a number of guests this season. On July 25th, Capt. Tod Addison presented a concert program featuring the charismatic bassist David Murray in solo works and accompanied by the Concert Band. In August, Capt. Addison conducted a concert of American works for band featuring guest clarinetist Deborah Chodacki on Leonard Bernstein's *Prelude, Fugue and Riffs*. Colonel Thomas Rotondi, Jr. took to the stage with the Concert Band for the closing performance of the season on September 4th. The band's traditional performance of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* was augmented by the presence of the U.S. Army Chorus under the direction of Maj. Jim Keene.

Between performances at Army home football games the Concert Band presented a number of exceptional performances this autumn. Col. Rotondi opened the Band's Chamber Recital Series with a program of works for chamber winds and organ on September 19th in the Cadet Chapel, featuring organist Craig Williams. On October 14th, Capt. Addison, the Concert Band and the Magic Circle Mime Company performed for a group of 1400 students from a dozen area schools in the band's annual Young People's Concert. November witnessed the band heading for the warm weather and sunshine of Bradenton, Florida to participate in Bradenton's Patriotism Week. Col. Rotondi conducted the band on three concerts and a parade for the Bradenton community.



The Hellcats perform with the "Spirit of America" Fife and Drum Corps at Disney World.

JAZZ KNIGHTS

The Academy Band's Jazz Knights look forward to a busy performance schedule this winter. The group's saxophone and rhythm sections will be performing on Saturday, January 8th at the United States Navy Band's annual saxophone symposium. A line up of high-energy compositions that show off the group's ensemble and improvisational skills is planned. During the same period, other members of the Jazz Knights will be operating an information booth at the International Association of Jazz Educators Convention in Long Beach, California, January 5-8. If you attend the convention, please see us about concert information and career opportunities in the Academy Band or the Army.

From February 9th through 13th the Jazz Knights will be touring colleges in the Midwest, including Pennsylvania's Slippery Rock University, Ohio State University, Indiana State University and the Ohio University. In March, the Jazz Knights will hit the road again, performing in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on the 21st and in Tower City on the 23rd.

On March 29th the group will host their annual Jazz Workshop at West Point. Each year three different high school jazz bands participate in this popular educational event. Activities include a motivating concert by the Jazz Knights, educational jazz clinics and opportunities for the school ensembles to perform for each other while being mentored by members of the Jazz Knights.

THE HELLCATS

In addition to maintaining their ceremonial commitments at West Point and its surrounding area, members of the Hellcats have been actively performing with the Concert Band. In June, the Hellcats performed at Walt Disney World. While in Florida, the group performed at EPCOT, The Magic Kingdom and downtown Walt Disney World. Among their performances was a series of shows with Disney's "Spirit of America" Drum and Fife Corps in honor of Flag Day and the United States Army's 229th birthday. This is the second time the Hellcats have performed with the "Spirit of America."

In September, the Hellcats traveled to Concord, New Hampshire to participate in the New Hampshire Highland Games. The ensemble's performances were coupled with the Strathclyde Police Pipe Band from the United Kingdom. The concerts were deemed a success as the Hellcats continue to entertain audiences with their unique and exciting show.

Members of the ensemble have also maintained an active schedule. Most recently, Hellcat drummer, Sgt. 1st First Class Eric Sheffler attended the Percussive Arts Society International Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. Additionally, Staff Sgts. Eric Miller and Gino Villarreal will be performing recitals and presenting master-classes as a part of their brass quintet tour to Iowa and South Dakota this January.

Jazz Knights Midwest Tour

8 February, 7:30 p.m., Swope Music Hall, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania 724-738-2063.

9 February, 8 p.m., Hughes Auditorium, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio 614-292-6571.

10 February, 7:30 p.m., Woodrow Wilson Middle School, Terre Haute, Indiana 812-462-4396.

13 February, 7 p.m., Baker Center Auditorium, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 740-593-4244.

Concert Band and Jazz Knights
Solo Trombonist Jim Pugh
Friday, January 14, 8 p.m.
Eisenhower Hall Theater

Storm King Brass Quintet
Sunday, January 16, 3 p.m.
West Point Jewish Chapel

Staff Sgt. Christopher Rettie
Saxophone Recital
Sunday, January 23, 3 p.m.
West Point Jewish Chapel

Staff Sgt. Shawn Herndon
Clarinet Recital
Sunday, January 30, 3 p.m.
West Point Jewish Chapel

Staff Sgt. Butch Barnard
Trumpet Recital
Sunday, February 13, 3 p.m.
West Point Cadet Chapel

Jazz Knights
Salute to African-American
History Month
Friday, February 18, 8 p.m.
Eisenhower Hall Ballroom

West Point Woodwind Quintet
Sunday, February 20, 3 p.m.
West Point Jewish Chapel

Staff Sgt. John Manning and
Staff Sgt. Eric Miller
Trumpet Recital
Sunday, February 27, 3 p.m.
West Point Jewish Chapel

The Hellcats
Sunday, March 6, 3 p.m.
West Point Jewish Chapel

Staff Sgt. Samuel Kaestner
Clarinet Recital
Sunday, March 13, 3 p.m.
West Point Jewish Chapel



Hear the Storm King Brass Quintet
in recital on January 16.

Sgt. 1st Class John Parrette
Clarinet Recital
Sunday, March 20, 3 p.m.
West Point Jewish Chapel

West Point Chamber Winds
Col. Thomas Rotondi, conducting
Sunday, April 3, 3 p.m.
West Point Cadet Chapel

West Point Brass Quintet
Sunday, April 10, 3 p.m.
West Point Jewish Chapel

Concert Band
Spring Premieres
Wednesday, April 13, 8 p.m.
Eisenhower Hall Ballroom

Staff Sgt. Bryan Uhl and
Staff Sgt. Diana Cassar-Uhl,
Trumpet and Clarinet Recital
Sunday, April 17, 3 p.m.
West Point Jewish Chapel

Young Artist Competition
Winners with Concert Band
Sunday, May 8, 3 p.m.
Eisenhower Hall Ballroom

The 2005 Northeast
Regional Tuba and
Euphonium Conference
March 18-19
Eisenhower Hall Theater
Tuba and Euphonium soloists, clinics
and ensembles

Concert Band with guest
soloists, Saturday, March 19,
8 p.m.
Eisenhower Hall Theater

For more details see the
Academy Band's webpage at
www.usma.edu/band/

SOUNDS FROM THE HUDSON

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CW4 Douglas Hammond - Associate Bandmaster
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For concert information, cancellations and updates call the Concert Information Hotline (845)938-2617.
All performances by the U.S. Military Academy Band are free and open to the public. Check
<http://www.usma.edu/band/> for the latest news, photos, concert events and highlights.
U.S. Military Academy Band, Publicity Section, 685 Hardee Place, West Point, New York 10996-1587.

Jazz Knights' Guitarist Retires



Master Sgt. Robert Helsel, guitarist with the United States Military Academy Band's Jazz Knights, is a native of Miami, Florida. Master Sgt. Helsel has been a member of the U.S. Military Academy Band since May 1986 and served as rhythm section leader in the Jazz Knights since 1996. Since joining the Army in 1980, Master Sgt. Helsel attended the Army Element, School of Music and performed for six years with the band at Ft. McPherson in Atlanta, Georgia. There, he performed with such artists as Cab Calloway and Bill Watrous. He studied guitar with Steve Freeman of the Guitar Institute of Technology, acclaimed local Atlanta area guitarist Bob Shaw and ECM recording artist John Abercrombie. Here in West Point's marching band, Master Sgt. Helsel fulfilled his duties on cymbals for many parades on the plain and at Army sporting events. In 2001, he became the computer system administrator/IMO for the Academy Band. After his retirement in November of 2004, he became the system administrator at the Department of Foreign Languages, Office of the Dean at West Point. Master Sgt. Helsel currently resides in Newburgh, New York and will continue to work as a free lance musician in the area.

Concert Band Principal Tuba Retires

In November of 2004, the U.S. Military Academy Band bade farewell to Master Sgt. Joe Roccaro. Roccaro joined the United States Military Academy Band in May of 1981, and for the last several years served as principal tuba and tuba section leader in the Concert Band. He was a founding member of the West Point Tuba Quartet and performed for many years with the Highlands Brass Quintet. Roccaro was also an integral part of the standing friendship with the Allentown Band, America's oldest active civilian band in Allentown, Pennsylvania. As the Allentown and Academy Bands shared the stage on several joint concerts during Joe's time, he was reunited with his former tuba teacher, Mr. Ronald Demkee, the conductor of the Allentown Band. Before coming to West Point, Roccaro attended the Juilliard School of Music where he earned both his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees. Joe is a native of Easton, Pennsylvania, and plans to move back to the Easton area with his wife Denise.



NEW MEMBERS

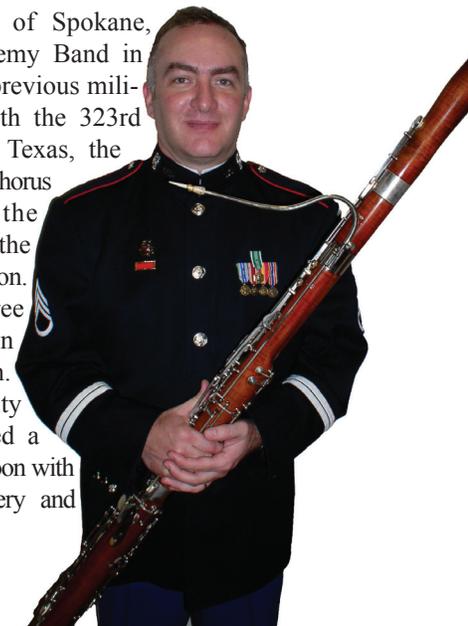
Staff Sgt. Erin Foster, clarinet

The band's newest member is clarinetist Erin Foster from Cincinnati, Ohio. Staff Sgt. Foster arrived at West Point in early October of 2004 after completing basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Erin attended the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music where she received her Bachelor of Music degree and studied with clarinetist Ron deKant.



Staff Sgt. Glenn West, bassoon

Staff Sgt. Glenn West, of Spokane, Washington, joined the Academy Band in September of 2004. Glenn's previous military service includes duty with the 323rd Army Band in San Antonio, Texas, the U.S. Army Europe Band and Chorus in Heidelberg, Germany and the Air National Guard Band of the Northwest in Spokane, Washington. Glenn has a Bachelors degree from Eastern Washington University in Cheney, Washington. He also attended the University of Minnesota where he earned a Master of Music, studying bassoon with Dr. Wendal Jones, Charles Ullery and Sharon Kuster.





Left to right: SFC Messenger, SFC Tice, COL Rotondi and SSG Ham in front of the Military Band of the People's Liberation Army, Beijing, China.

ACADEMY BAND MUSICIANS MAKE HISTORIC VOYAGE TO CHINA

This past October, the U.S. Military Academy Band's commander and three soloists made a historic voyage to perform with the Military Band of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in Beijing, China. The collaboration between the Chinese and American bands was the first time U.S. military musicians performed with this organization in a live concert for a public audience. As the U.S. Military Academy Band commander, Col. Thomas Rotondi, stated, "This was a significant international, musical partnership event. It was exhilarating to see Chinese and American musicians performing together. We will all treasure our time in China and will never forget this wonderful experience."

The Military Band of the People's Liberation Army is the only state-level, professional military band in the Chinese Republic. Established in 1952, it has approximately 300 members and is divided into three large wind ensembles. It routinely performs for heads of state, national and international dignitaries as well as for the general Chinese populace. The musicians are the finest in the country, many of them graduates of the Central Conservatory in Beijing.

Col. Rotondi served as guest conductor in a concert with the PLA Band on October 26th, 2004. He brought three USMA



Zhao Liu served as flute soloist and interpreter for the West Pointers.

Band soloists to perform at the event: Sgt. 1st Class MaryKay Messenger, soprano; Sgt. 1st Class Wayne Tice, alto saxophone; and Staff Sgt. Jason Ham, euphonium. During the trip Zhao Liu, a former member of the PLA Band, served as the interpreter for the Americans, and also as flute soloist on the concert. The four USMA musicians spent twelve days in China rehearsing with the PLA Band, giving master classes to band members and students from the Central Conservatory, and seeing some of the major Chinese cultural attractions.

For the concert at the Chinese National Library, Col. Rotondi programmed several Western/European works to include Verdi's overture to *La Forza del Destino* and James Barnes' *Variations on a Theme by Niccolo Paganini*. Also on the program were uniquely American selections like Sgt. 1st Class Messenger's Broadway feature *Thoroughly Modern Millie* and vocal selections from Gershwin's American Opera *Porgy and Bess*. "It was a thrill to share our American musical styles with the Chinese musicians. They played our styles with energy and vitality," Rotondi said. Sgt. 1st Class Tice was featured performing the alto saxophone showpiece *Introduction and Samba* by Maurice Whitney and Staff Sgt. Ham played Vladimir Cosma's *Euphonium Concerto*. Zhao Liu was featured on the concert performing Bizet's *Carmen Fantasia*. Programmed at the end of the event was Philip Egner's *Official West Point March*. The crowd of 1500 roared on to receive two encores, the nationalistic Chinese work *Good News from Beijing Reaches the Frontier* and John Philip Sousa's masterpiece *The Stars and Stripes Forever*.

Academy Band and PLA Band members made lasting and continuing friendships. "The Chinese were certainly hospitable to us," Sgt. 1st Class Messenger noted. "Flowers awaited us at the airport when we arrived and in our hotel rooms. The food was magnificent and they freely spent time with us touring the historical Chinese sights like Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Summer Palace, the Ming Dynasty Tombs and the Great Wall of China. It was the experience of a lifetime," Sgt. 1st Class Messenger added. Col. Rotondi concluded, "We shared musical ideas and learned about the culture of the Chinese people. More importantly, we will be bonded forever by friendship." READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE AT WWW.USMA.EDU/BAND/

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U.S. Military Academy
U.S. Military Academy Band
685 Hardee Place
West Point, NY 10996-1587

Cover Photo: An American flag measuring 50 by 100 yards was unfurled at the closing of the Army vs. Louisville half-time show commemorating the anniversary of 9/11 on September 11, 2004. The U.S. Military Academy Band performed patriotic selections as the flag was held by members of the United States Corps of Cadets, the New York City Fire Department and the New York City Police Department.