



U.S. AIR FORCE

BAY NOTES



News from the USAF Band of the Golden West

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In This Issue:

Commander's Corner.....	1
Trout Fishing joins Concert Band.....	2
Jazz Ensemble March Tour.....	4
Brass Band Visits Washington.....	5
Bassoonist Presents Master Class.....	6
Deployment Group Forms.....	7
Arrivals and Departures.....	9



Technical Sergeants Neil Griffin (left) and Jim Butler (right) perform with the Commanders jazz ensemble at a recent concert in Newport, Oregon
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)



Commander's Corner
Major R. Michael Mench

For this issue, I have asked our band's superintendent, Senior Master Sergeant Tom Chaparas to write the Commander's Corner Article. Sergeant Chaparas is an outstanding Non-Commisioned Officer and an integral part of the band's management team.



Senior Master Sergeant Tom Chaparas

The past few months have been a whirlwind of activity for the men and women of the Air Force Band of the Golden West! Our performances with Trout Fishing in America were a great success and everything we'd hoped for. These wonderful musicians added the perfect touch to our effort to highlight the Month of the Military Child. Please read Staff Sergeant Ruedger's article for all the details of this wonderful event.

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continued from page 1

We also hosted world-renowned bassoonist John Miller. Mr. Miller presented a master class during which he coached our woodwind quintet; he offered performance and rehearsal tips as well his insights into woodwind quintet literature from his decades of experience. It is not often that we can host such a legendary musician and our thanks need to go out to Technical Sergeant Ken Buchanan for his singlehanded efforts in making this happen.

The whirlwind continued with our jazz band completing a very successful tour up the California coast and into southern Oregon. This tour was the last for this group for awhile as we are reconfiguring ensembles due to our upcoming deployment. Speaking of deployment, our popular music group, Mobility, began forming/arranging/rehearsing for their tour in southwest Asia. We are very proud of these fine Americans who have stood up to the challenge of doing their part to support our armed forces brethren in the current conflict. I am also proud of all our members who continue to serve America during these difficult times.

It is with mixed emotions that we bid farewell to two fine musicians: Staff Sergeant Nathan Drabek, saxophone and Staff Sergeant Wendy Hermes, flute. Both have decided to move forward with their lives outside the Air Force. Nathan and Wendy have been valued members and principal players of the band and have contributed to numerous public performances, ceremonies and recordings during their tenures. We wish them heartfelt good luck in the future while feeling sadness at their departure. They will always be members of our band family.

Guest Artists Join Concert Band and Mobility for Concerts

Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger

Local residents from Vacaville and Travis Air Force Base were treated to two wonderful concerts presented by the Band of the Golden West and a special guest ensemble. In celebration of "Month of the Military Child," our commander and conductor, Major R. Michael Mench invited the Grammy-nominated group Trout Fishing in America to join with the band for two concerts. Trout Fishing in America consists of two musicians, guitarist/vocalist Keith Grimwood and bass player/vocalist Ezra Idlet, who sing whimsical lyrics with catchy melodies that entertain audiences of all ages.



Major Mench welcomes guest artists Trout Fishing in America at the Vacaville Performing Arts Theatre in Vacaville, CA
(photo by Airman First Class Rachel Trimble)

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continued from page 2

Major Mench spoke of the idea of bringing this popular group to Travis, an idea he has had for several years. "Trout Fishing was No. 1 in my mind as somebody I wanted to work with," he said. "They look at things through kid's eyes but have a wonderful way of putting songs together." Based in Arkansas, the group has ties to California—they started singing on the streets of Santa Cruz in 1977. Fast forward to 2008, where they have their own recording studio and recording label and have released twelve compact discs. Thanks to the efforts of Technical Sergeant Ken Buchanan, the band's guest artist coordinator, Major Mench's idea became reality this past April.

The first concert was part of Vacaville Concert Society's series held at the Vacaville Performing Arts Theater. The sold-out concert started with an introduction by the Colonel Steven Arquette, Travis' 60th Air Mobility Wing commander. The band performed such favorites as **Free To Be...You and Me** and **Theme from The Incredibles**. Local radio personality Lynda Rose McMahan narrated the concert, and shared in the spotlight with the band for Staff Sergeant Jeremy Martin's adaptation of John Lithgow and Bill Elliot's **Band Shell Next to the Zoo**.



Members of Trout Fishing in America lead a creative songwriting class at the Travis Air Force Base Youth Center
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

The second half brought out Trout Fishing in America, collaborating with the band on such favorites as **Science Fair**, **Lullaby** and **My Hair Had a Party Last Night**. The audience thoroughly enjoyed the concert and the band was pleased to perform two encores: **Murrell's** and **Dreaming**.

Members of Trout Fishing in America hold music for children in high regard, so they presented a songwriting clinic at the Travis Youth Center. Ezra and Keith said the most important thing for writing a song is to use your imagination, and write about what you feel. Ezra took numerous

suggestions from the children and they worked out a song about cooties, entitled **Circle Circle, Dot Dot**, complete with lyrics, guitar and a bass line. The song was recorded with the children singing along, and each child was given a CD of their new song.

The next concert was at the Travis Base Theater and included such songs as **Alien in My Nose** and **Always Chew Your Food**. Trout fishing members Keith and Ezra collaborated with Mobility, the Band of the Golden West's popular music ensemble in a concert that was a hit for all who attended.

continued on next page

continued from page 3

Following the concert, Colonel Arquette presented Keith and Ezra, Trout Fishing Members, Travis Air Force Base coins and thanked them for their performance. Ezra commented that the musicians in the Air Force band are “committed and talented” and he hopes to work with us again. Based on the enthusiastic reaction of the audiences, we’re looking forward to it!



Colonel Steven Arquette (left), 60th Air Mobility Wing Commander, congratulates members of Trout Fishing in America following the concert at Travis Air Force Base (USAF photo by Technical Sergeant Matthew McGovern)

Jazz Ensemble Presents Concerts in Northern California and Oregon

The Commanders jazz ensemble recently returned from a seven day tour to cities along the coastlines of Northern California and Oregon. Concerts were presented in Fort Bragg, Crescent City, and Gold Beach, California and Coos Bay, Florence, Newport, and Roseburg, Oregon. Demand for the free evening concert in Florence was so high; the band added an afternoon matinee performance, and both concerts were filled to capacity.



Commanders jazz ensemble in concert at the Event Center at the Beach in Gold Beach, California (Photo by Senior Airman Rachel Trimble)

The band added guest musicians Chief Master Sergeant Jon Yates, trumpet, from the Heritage of America Band at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia and saxophonist Technical Sergeant Neil Griffin, from the Air National Guard Band of the West Coast. Highlights from this tour included Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge, Master Sergeant Tom Eckert’s trombone and vocal solos on **Pennies from Heaven**, Technical Sergeant Jim Butler’s original composition **Fast as Airplanes**, which featured Jim and Neil Griffin, and Airman First Class Dustin Trimble’s arrangement of **Ninó**.

Concerts were well received; a review in the Florence Arts & Entertainment weekly said “...all the players were first-class superior musicians.”

Pacific Coast Brass Band Debuts in Pacific Northwest

Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger

The Pacific Coast Brass Band recently returned from its inaugural tour as an ensemble component of the USAF Band of the Golden West. The Pacific Coast Brass Band consists of ten brass players, one percussionist and one vocalist, and was conducted by our commander, Major R. Michael Mench. The wide variety of music presented by the band ranged from Rossini's **Barber of Seville Overture to America, the Beautiful**. A favorite of concertgoers was Airman First Class David Beasley's arrangement of **Quiero Cencerro** (translated: I love Cowbell) which featured trumpeter Airman First Class Jamie Lantz on the cowbell, who energized the crowd by going through the concert hall to have audience members play the cowbell.



Pacific Coast Brass Band onstage at Central Washington University in Ellensburg
(photo by Senior Airman Rachel Trimble)

For this tour, the band was honored to be joined by Staff Sergeant Matt Erickson, bass trombonist from the USAF Heartland of America Band (Offutt AFB, Nebraska) and Technical Sergeant Steve Schaughency, horn, from the US Air Forces in Europe Band (Germany). Matt and Steve volunteered to present a master class to students at Central Washington University in Ellensburg prior to the bands concert that evening. The evening concerts featured the low brass (horns, trombones, and tuba) in the **Bruckner Etude**, a solemn and reverent piece by Enrique Crespo composed in the style of the great Austrian composer, Anton Bruckner. Dimitri Shostakovitch's **Concertino**, arranged for brass by Michael Allen from the original two piano version, demonstrated the virtuosity of the ensemble and unique timbre created by 10 brass players. The sounds of park concerts and virtuosic soloists were recreated with trombonist Master Sergeant Tom Eckert's flawless performance of Arthur Pryor's



Members of the Pacific Coast Brass Band in performance in Seattle, Washington
(photo by Senior Airman Rachel Trimble)

Thoughts of Love. *continued on next page*

continued from page 5



Major Mench leads the Pacific Coast Brass Band at Seattle's Center House Stage
(photo by Senior Airman Rachel Trimble)

Senior Airman Rachel Trimble's vocal stylings on Matt Erickson's relaxing arrangement of **My Funny Valentine** resulted in well deserved applause. Concerts at the University of Washington in Seattle, the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho, and Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington closed with Ottorino Respighi's **Pines of the Appian Way**, the final movement of **Pines of Rome**. This arrangement, by Joseph Kreines, featured the Pacific Coast Brass Band, students and faculty members joining onstage for an exciting brass "tour de force" which generated tremendous applause from the appreciative audiences.

Concertgoers in Yakima, Washington, were in for a surprise on **Stars and Stripes Forever**. Since brass bands do not use piccolo flutes, the famous solo was delegated to our capable tubist, Senior Airman Jill Corbett and euphoniumist, Technical Sergeant Ken Buchanan, who negotiated the trills and leaps with apparent ease. Following the concert in Yakima, the Pacific Coast Brass Band returned to Travis Air Force Base with its inaugural tour a success.

Air Force Band Welcomes Bassoonist John Miller

Staff Sergeant Heather Holowecky

The Golden West Winds, Travis Air Force Base's woodwind quintet, is no stranger to presenting master classes. The quintet travels throughout California, Washington, Oregon, Nevada and Idaho regularly performing for the community and presenting master classes in schools. On March 19th, the roles were reversed when the band had the pleasure of welcoming world class bassoonist John Miller to coach a master class in which the Golden West Winds performed.



John Miller, principal bassoonist with the Minnesota Orchestra, leads the Golden West Winds woodwind quintet in recent master class
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

continued on next page

continued from page 6

A graduate of both the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and the New England Conservatory in Boston, Mr. Miller has held the position of Principal Bassoon in the Minnesota Orchestra since 1971. He has recorded both solo and Chamber works, and founded the Bubonic Bassoon Quartet in Boston. In addition to his performing career, Mr. Miller is also a prolific teacher. He is on the faculty at the University of Minnesota's School of Music, is active in the Summer Nordic Bassoon Symposium, and presents master classes at music schools and conservatories throughout the world.



Members of the Golden West Winds with our commander and John Miller: (l-r) Staff Sergeant Heather Holowecky, Technical Sergeant Coreen Levin, Major Mench, Senior Airman Robbie Mayes, John Miller, Master Sergeant Lezlee Masson, and Technical Sergeant Christy Bailes.
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

The Golden West Winds played all five movements of **Kleine Kammermusik fur funf Bläser** by Paul Hindemith. Mr. Miller coached the quintet on various topics including tone, communication and musical style. "We're so used to being our own critic from within the group...it was refreshing to get feedback from someone outside of the ensemble," remarked Technical Sergeant Coreen Levin, the quintet's oboist. The group's bassoonist and Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge, Master Sergeant Lezlee Masson, was particularly interested in the visiting bassoonist's perspective. "The opportunity for us to work with such a well known musician was quite an honor. The quintet worked hard to prepare the Hindemith and we all looked forward to any musical improvements that Mr. Miller might offer to us. In the end, it felt as if we were playing together more cohesively as an ensemble."

John Miller's visit to the Band of the Golden West was an enjoyable experience for all involved. The quintet benefited from his insightful observations, and the members of the band in the audience were equally impressed with his wealth of knowledge of chamber repertoire.



Please visit our band's webpage: www.bandofthegoldenwest.af.mil



Current Openings:

The United States Air Force Band of the Golden West announces immediate openings for the following vacancy:

PIANO/KEYBOARDS

Approximate starting salary \$36,000, 30 days annual paid vacation, full medical and dental benefits.

For consideration, send resume to: auditions@travis.af.mil

Band of the Golden West Ensemble Prepares for Deployment

Mobility, the Band of the Golden West's popular music ensemble, has been chosen to provide music "in theater" for U.S. forces deployed to Southwest Asia. The group will perform under the banner of the U.S. Air Force Central Command Band. Members of Mobility have organized under the leadership of Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge Master Sergeant Tom Eckert, trombonist, and started specific training in preparation for the deployment. Technical Sergeant Mike Williams has arranged numerous popular songs that will provide a "taste of home" for audiences. Air Force Bands

have provided music to forward deployed troops and civilian audiences since 2004, and these performances are always well-received.



Mobility, the band's popular music ensemble
(photo by Staff Sergeant Scott Ruedger)

Departures

Staff Sergeant Nathan Drabek, saxophonist, departs the band after four years of dedicated service. While with the band, Nathan performed frequently as soloist with the Concert Band and the Commanders jazz ensemble. In addition to his musical duties, Nathan was instrumental in preparation of the release of the recent popular music ensemble compact disc *Mobility*, and he served as guest artist coordinator for the Great Composer Concerts which presented clinics for local area music educators. One of his most memorable performances with the band was the interment ceremony for President Reagan. Nathan could also be found tending the band's grill preparing his special burgers for band cookouts. Following his military service, Nathan hopes to enter the business field.



Staff Sergeant Nathan Drabek
(photo by Senior Airman Rachel Trimble)



Staff Sergeant Wendy Hermes
(photo by Staff Sergeant Leo Smith)

Departing the band with eight years of active service is flutist **Staff Sergeant Wendy Hermes**. A regular member of the Concert Band and Golden West Winds woodwind quintet, Wendy was featured as soloist on several tours. Audience members will recognize Wendy from her excellent piccolo work in John Philip Sousa's *Stars and Stripes Forever*, a regular encore at band concerts. In addition to her musical duties, Wendy served in media and supply divisions within the band. Outside the band, Wendy is an avid road cyclist, and could often be found riding in area criterium races. Following her separation, Wendy plans to remain in the Northern California area.

Upcoming Appearances by the Band of the Golden West:

As always, please check our website, www.bandofthegoldenwest.af.mil, for the most current information, which may change without notice.

Group	Event	Date	Time	Location
Rhythm & Brass	Music in the Summer Air	June 28th	2:00-4:00 pm	Public Library, San Leandro, CA
Mobility	Salute to Airmen	July 2nd	4:45-6:45 pm	Dormitory Area, Travis AFB, CA
Mobility	Celebrate America	July 3rd	6:00-9:00 pm	Hutchins Street Square Park, Lodi, CA
Mobility	Independence Day Celebration	July 4th	7:30-9:30 pm	Cal Expo Grandstand, Sacramento, CA
Marching Band	Fourth of July Parade	July 4th	12:00 noon	Calistoga, CA

Rhythm and Brass is Band of the Golden West's Newest Ensemble



Rhythm and Brass, the band's newest ensemble

Rhythm and Brass recently debuted as the newest component ensemble within the Band of the Golden West. A multi-capable ensemble, Rhythm and Brass combines the standard brass quintet with a saxophone, percussionist, guitar and vocalists and is able to perform a wide range of musical styles from rock and latin to marches and jazz. Rhythm and Brass is capably led by trombonist Master Sergeant Cecil Benjamin.

To request a performance, please contact our Director of Operations, Master Sergeant Aaron Johnson at:
aaron.johnson-02@travis.af.mil

Coda

Contact the USAF Band of the Golden West:

USAF Band of the Golden West	707-424-2263	
Editor, BayNotes	707-424-0282	
Scheduling/Band Requests	707-424-3327	aaron.johnson-02@travis.af.mil
Auditions	707-424-3735	auditions@travis.af.mil

