

The Beacon

The United States Coast Guard Band
Fall 2017



We have a new look! We've given our newsletter an official title, *The Beacon*, and have updated the format to allow more space for the important information that keeps you current with our activities. We hope you enjoy it!

EVENT SCHEDULE

CONCERT IN CLINTON

Friday, October 6, 7:00 p.m., *The Morgan School, 71 Killingworth Turnpike, Clinton*
Tickets are required and can be obtained free of charge through the Clinton Chamber of Commerce via phone or self-addressed, stamped envelope.

92nd SEASON OPENER

Sunday, October 8, 2:00 p.m., *Leamy Concert Hall*
LCDR Williamson will conduct the Band in a concert featuring the music of Bernstein, Holst, Sousa, and more. MU1 Joe D'Aleo will perform a new saxophone concerto by composer Jess Turner entitled *Inner Child*.

AMERICAN TRAVELER

Sunday, November 19, 2:00 p.m., *Leamy Concert Hall*
LCDR Williamson will conduct the Band in a concert featuring the music of Maslanka, Korngold, Hindemith, and more.

COAST GUARD BAND SAXOPHONE QUARTET LIBRARY SERIES

Saturday, December 2, 2:00 p.m., *Farmington Main Library, 6 Monteith Drive, Farmington*
Sunday, December 3, 2:00 p.m., *Cheshire Public Library, 104 Main Street, Cheshire*
The Coast Guard Band Saxophone Quartet will perform an assortment of chamber works. No tickets are required.

A FAMILY HOLIDAY

Sunday, December 10, 2:00 p.m., *Leamy Concert Hall*
Celebrate the holidays with a family friendly matinee performance led by CWO4 Richard Wyman featuring both holiday classics and new music for the season.

SONGS OF THE SEASON

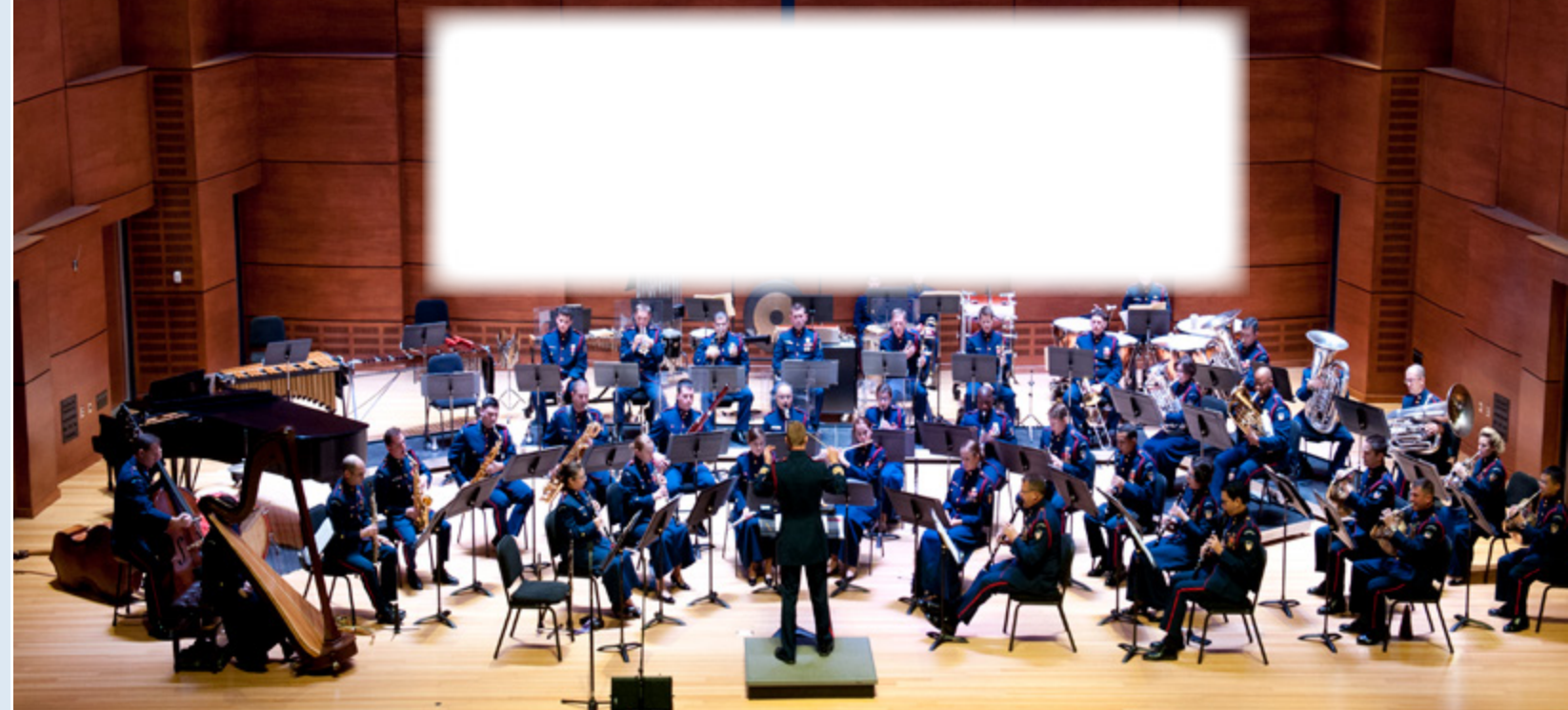
Sunday, December 10, 7:00 p.m., *Leamy Concert Hall*
Enjoy the Band's evening concert of traditional holiday concert music, highlighted by Coast Guard Band Soprano Megan Weikleenget's performance of several well-known holiday carols.

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U.S. Coast Guard Academy
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SPOTLIGHT: MU1 ROBERT LANGSLET, PIANIST, COMPOSER, AND ARRANGER

In performance, the talent and musicianship of Coast Guard Band instrumentalists is always evident to audiences. What is not always known, however, is just how deeply the musical versatility of these players runs. Many musicians “double” on several instruments. Others serve as conductors and music directors for ensembles across New England. For Coast Guard Band pianist and arranger MU1 Robert Langslet, that diversity extends into the realm of music composition.

BEACON: Your collateral duty is as an arranger with the Coast Guard Band. What is music arranging and how is it different from composing?

RL: The two have a close relationship and require roughly the same set of skills. The responsibilities of a composer are straightforward (though difficult to do well!). It involves making every choice, every melody and key, choosing which instruments to use, and on and on. In contrast, an arranger takes preexisting material and arranges it for a specific instrumentation, setting, or approach, often with a defined performance in mind. It's very much a “gray area” how much the arranger is responsible for — they might take great liberty with the source material to the point of arguably creating a new composition, or they might just transfer music from one set of instruments to another. In my case with the Coast Guard Band, my arrangements tend to fall into one of two categories: either 1) writing a creative arrangement using a well-known song as the original inspiration, or 2) arranging orchestral music so it can be played by a concert band (i.e. without strings). It's a tremendously rewarding experience.

BEACON: What got you interested in composition and how long have you been writing music?

RL: It's something that appealed to me from an early age. I remember my piano teacher Dave Carter helping me write my first piece when I was maybe five or six years old. The manuscript has since been lost but I know that I was putting together little tunes and ditties way back then. I think the interest for me came from the desire to build things. A musical composition can be like a big piece of architecture, with all these interlocking pieces working together in the service of some big overarching idea. I think that I was always temperamentally attracted to things like that.

BEACON: Can you talk about your composing process?

RL: With composition, I always start with the idea. In other words, answering the question, “what's the point of this piece? What's it getting at?” I believe that must be answered right from the beginning. Otherwise the piece will lack focus. There's a lot of craft and technical knowledge and stylistic awareness that will get you over the finish line, but I believe that great music, and great art in general, happens when all of the craft and technique is working in service of some singular, coherent idea. That's what makes a piece compelling to an audi-

ence, regardless of their familiarity with the technical side of music. They can always feel the earnestness of a work.

Once I have that established, I might sketch out a sort of rough ordering of events. Sort of like a storyboard for a movie. And from there I'll rely on technical knowledge to fill in the gaps, making sure musical transitions are orderly and logical, that the part-writing is good, and so on. But it always starts with good ideas! Development is an important thing to me, and if I really believe in my starting ideas, then I'll have confidence developing those ideas, which makes a piece leaner, more focused, and hopefully more intelligible to the audience. An old teacher once told me “if you believe in a musical idea, repeat it!”, and that's really stuck with me. Young and inexperienced composers want to make a single piece about everything. It takes a lot more guts to make your piece about one or two things. So that tends to be my approach.

BEACON: What music have you recently finished and what are you working on now?

RL: As far as upcoming works, I have a piece for chamber woodwinds that's been in the works for a while now, and a wind ensemble piece, though I can't get into specifics yet! Those are both quite far from completion. As far as recently completed works, I just finished two new pieces. “Underway” is a vocal medley of songs from the late 60's, early 70's, centered around the theme of sailing, and “Marche Jeune” is an original composition that is a kind of commentary on the March form itself. Both were premiered on the Band's July 2nd concert. The March is a real tongue-in-cheek take on a very old musical form—great fun to write and to perform. “Underway” was a real treat because I got to explore these feelings of sailing and what it represents to different people in different places. I wanted to present sailing as a different sort of patriotism or love of country, a chance to connect to the physical environment that we all call home. So it was a great treat to write a piece that captured all of those feelings.



MU1 Langslet received his Master of Music degree from The Manhattan School of Music and his Bachelor of Music degree from William Paterson University, summa cum laude. He hails from Portland, Oregon, and joined the U.S. Coast Guard Band in June 2012.

AWARDS, ADVANCEMENTS, AND ACTIVITIES



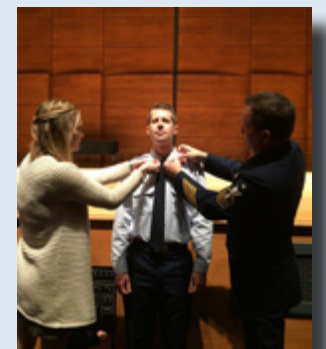
The **Director of the United States Coast Guard Band, LCDR Adam Williamson**, received the Coast Guard Commendation Medal for leading the ensemble in high-profile performances in Grand Haven, Michigan, on tour in Puerto Rico, and at the 2015 National Christmas Tree Lighting in Washington, DC.

MU1 Nathan Lassell, percussion, received the 2016 Colonel Finley R. Hamilton Outstanding Military Musician Award for musical and leadership excellence. In addition to his exceptional efforts as section percussionist, he is also the drum set player for the Dixieland Jazz Band, the Jazz Combo, and the Guardians Big Band. For the 2016-2017 concert season, MU1 Lassell participated in the Band's Conducting and Leadership Program, studying with eminent conductors in preparation to lead the Band in noteworthy wind ensemble and chamber music repertoire.



The **Assistant Director of the Coast Guard Band, CWO Richard Wyman**, received the Coast Guard Commendation Medal for outstanding achievement managing the unit's educational initiatives that reached over 17,000 students from nearly 200 Connecticut schools from April 2013 through August 2016. During this timeframe he also led 15 Chamber Players' recitals across New England and was instrumental in securing an annual recurring budget for the Band.

Chief Musician Sean Nelson was advanced from Musician First Class to Chief Petty Officer in April, 2017. Following his advancement, he attended the Coast Guard Chief Petty Officer Academy for a four week leadership course in Petaluma, California. Chief Nelson is originally from Dallas, Texas, and joined the Coast Guard Band in 2011.



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