



# The United States AIR FORCE BAND

WASHINGTON, D.C.



# THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BAND

On the occasion of The United States Air Force Band's diamond anniversary, we are delighted to offer this sonic sampling from our historic recordings. From the dawn of World War II, Airmen musicians have raised morale at home, entertained troops abroad and honored those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. On behalf of The United States Air Force Band, we humbly congratulate all Airmen who have been a part of this remarkable organization and eagerly look forward to the future as we continue the traditions of service, excellence and innovation ALL of our alumni have left for us. Thank you for an amazing 75 years!



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry H. Lang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LARRY H. LANG, Colonel, USAF  
Commander and Conductor  
The United States Air Force Band

## A Brief History of The United States Air Force Band

### A Wartime Birth (1940-1945)

Born out of a nation about to enter World War II, The U.S. Air Force Band started as one of 59 Army Air Force bands activated on October 1, 1941. Diligently taking a census of the draft of eligible musicians who comprised our nation's major symphony orchestras and top dance bands, Lt. Alf Heiberg, the first conductor of The AAF Band, recruited the finest orchestral musicians coupled with the best in swing ... and so was born "The Official Band of the Army Air Corps."

The first recording on this set is a quintessential and distinctly American composition. *Rhapsody in Blue*, composed by George Gershwin and arranged by Ferde Grofé, aired on the Band's radio broadcast in 1943.



*Lt. Heiberg at his desk*

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1942 First coast-to-coast radio broadcast
- 1943 Established first official chorus
- 1943 Produced first Long Playing (LP) recording
- 1943 Performed with Marlene Dietrich
- 1943–1945 Production of 2 short films: "The Army Air Forces Band" conducted by Lt. Heilberg; "Serenade to Britain" conducted by Capt. Howard
- 1944–1945 Two international tours to Canada and Great Britain

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Capt. George S. Howard became the commander and conductor of The AAF Band in 1944. His recordings include a 5-record set with music performed by The AAF Band during its WWII deployment to the European theater of operations. These recordings were sent to radio stations for nationwide broadcasts to promote public understanding and support for the war effort and to keep the American public informed on how their sons and daughters were doing overseas.



*Ottawa, Canada – 1st international tour, 1944*

# 75 YEARS OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

## The Golden Age of Radio (1946-1949)

The earlier radio broadcasts of The AAF Band had a profound impact on lifting the morale of U.S. servicemen during the war. Additionally, they endeared our former enemies to the American way of life through the universal language of music. As head of the Pentagon's radio production branch and chief of music in 1946, Capt. Howard made sure that the legacy of recording and radio broadcasts continued through the golden age of radio.



*The audio shop recording one of the live radio broadcasts*

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Postwar radio broadcasts began with the 18-week series “This Is Your Country” on the Mutual Broadcasting System (MBS) in 1946. That was followed by several successful series, including “On Wings of Song,” a 13-week daily run on MBS, and “Flight into the Past”, which debuted on January 4th, 1947 on MBS for an initial 26-week run. It was so popular, MBS extended the program through January 1948.

With the establishment of the United States Air Force as a separate service on September 18, 1947, the newly named U.S. Air Force Band hit the “big time” on January 18th, 1948 with the first “Air Force Hour” broadcast. This was a groundbreaking show, which was eventually carried by 308 network stations and worldwide by the Armed Forces Radio Network. The “Air Force Hour” eventually transitioned into “Serenade in Blue” and then to “Serenade in Stereo” – one of the longest running and most successful military radio programs in history.



*Maj. Howard (right) with Kate Smith and President Truman*



*“The Mikado” at the Watergate Barge in Washington, D.C.*

## HIGHLIGHTS

1947 Established first 90-member Symphony Orchestra

1948 White House performance with Kate Smith

1949 First Presidential Parade

1949 Fully-staged production of “The Mikado”

# 75 YEARS OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

## America's International Musical Ambassadors (1950-1963)

Under the sponsorship of the Department of State, the Band performed 10 international goodwill concert tours throughout Europe, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. The enthusiasm of the audiences was unparalleled and set attendance records in 40 of 47 countries. Of note, Col. Howard opened the Berlin performance with the *Introduction to Act III* from Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* (transcribed by Capt. Harry H. Meuser), and is highlighted on this CD set, along with two other tour favorites, *Russian Sailors Dance* by Reinhold Glière, and *Boys of the Old Brigade* by William Paris Chambers.

Col. Howard embarked on 12 international tours, including three to the Far East in 1956, 1957 and 1960. During the first tour, he was invited to conduct the Boy's Band from Hiroshima, Japan. With memories of the two atomic bombs dropped 12 years earlier, Col. Howard and the Band were instrumental in building a new alliance between the United States and Japan.

### HIGHLIGHTS

### INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE COUNTS

Santiago, Chili – 60,000 • Beirut, Lebanon – 70,000  
Naples, Italy – 80,000 • Berlin Olympic Stadium – 130,000  
Manila Luneta Park – 200,000 (world record)



Berlin, 1951



Austria, 1951



Paris, 1954

# THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BAND

## The Force of Destiny (1964-1985)

In 1964, Maj. Arnald D. Gabriel was selected by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Curtis E. Lemay to become the next commander and conductor of The U.S. Air Force Band. Not only a highly successful Air Force bandleader, Maj. Gabriel served as an enlisted combat machine gunner with the U.S. Army's famed 29th Infantry Division in Europe and landed in Normandy, France with the 29th on D-Day, June 6, 1944. For his service on and after D-Day in Europe, he received two Bronze Star medals, the Combat Infantry Badge and the French Croix de Guerre.



Promoted quickly through the ranks for his outstanding leadership, Col. Gabriel elevated the Band's stature through exceptional performances and recordings, continued national and international touring, and created a new guest artist concert series in 1966. The series feature noted musicians and actors from across the country, including Doc Severinsen, William Conrad, Peter Graves, Marilyn McCoo and Melba Moore; guest conductors Aaron Copland, Karel Husa, Leroy Anderson, Morton Gould and Henry Mancini; performing groups The Statler Brothers, The Lettermen, The Gatlin Brothers, Manhattan Transfer and the Dave Brubeck Quartet.

# 75 YEARS OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

Under Col. Gabriel's leadership, the Band established a vibrant commissioning program and premiered many new compositions. He also continued the ever-popular "Serenade in Blue" radio broadcasts, which were retitled "Serenade in Stereo." Three of Col. Gabriel's most popular LPs were: "Favorite Overtures", "Favorite Overtures, Vol. 2" and "Warhorses" featuring some of the best orchestral transcriptions for wind ensemble. *Il Guarany* by Antonio Carlos Gomes and *Masquerade* by Carl Nielsen are featured on this compilation, along with the *Strategic Air Command March* by Clifton Williams.



Col. Gabriel - Usher Hall, Scotland, 1969



## HIGHLIGHTS

1968 14-nation tour of South and Central America  
1968 12-nation European tour  
1964–1985 84 LPs recorded

# THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BAND

## Hands Across the Sea (1985-1990)

In 1985, the Band's new commander, Lt. Col. James M. Bankhead, initiated a Foreign Band Leader Exchange Program to foster personal contact with international military band counterparts. The first three guest conductors were from Brazil, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

Lt. Col. Bankhead created an innovative revue show in 1998, combining members from the Air Force Strings, Airmen of Note and Singing Sergeants. This group was named *Serenade in Blue* after the radio program that was so successful in the 50s and 60s. *Serenade in Blue* toured in 1989 and 1990 in South America.

Lt. Col. Bankhead also continued the Band's music commissioning program, generating several compositions that have become standard band repertoire, including *Te Deum Laudamus* by Ron Nelson and *Danse Folâtre* by Claude T. Smith, both featured on this CD set.



*Lt. Col. Bankhead makes presentation during Foreign Band Leader Exchange concert*



*Lt. Col. Bankhead, China vTour 1987*

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 1985 Established Foreign Band Leader Exchange
- 1986 Released first CD "America!"
- 1987 First U.S. military unit to tour China

# 75 YEARS OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

## Golden Anniversary Celebrations: The U.S. Air Force Band and V-E Day (1991-1995)

Lt. Col. Alan L. Bonner, assigned as commander and conductor of the Band in 1990, organized and presided over important events such as the Band's 50th Anniversary celebration in 1991 and the premiere of Ron Nelson's award-winning composition *Passacaglia (Homage on B-A-C-H)* at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.



*Lt. Col. Bonner - 1992*

Lt. Col. Bonner was also an active participant in the Foreign Band Leader Exchange Program, fulfilling guest conductor engagements with bands in Australia and Eastern Europe. In 1994, Lt. Col. Bonner recreated the Glenn Miller AAF Orchestra, comprised of members from the Air Force Strings, Airmen of Note, Singing Sergeants and Concert Band for several concerts commemorating the 50th anniversary of V-E day. He conducted the Concert Band and Singing Sergeants on recordings including "A Fresh Air Force Christmas," "Our Martial Heritage," "The Wall" and "The Last Full Measure of Devotion." Two selections from his discography, *Tulsa* by Don Gillis and *Celebration* by Philip Sparke, are included on this set.

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## A New Home and Milestones (1995-2002)

On September 15, 1995, Col. Lowell E. Graham became the commander and conductor of The Air Force Band. His first year in command included several highly successful performances: 1995 Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic, Chicago; Florida Music Educators Association, Tampa; and the 30th anniversary of the Guest Artist Series, Washington, D.C. In June 1996, Col. Graham conducted a concert titled "A Duke Ellington Portrait" featuring The U.S. Air Force Orchestra at Lincoln Theater in Washington, D.C. The repertoire included some of the Duke's seldom played large-scale symphonic works, and the release of the CD "Duke Ellington: The Symphonic Portrait" that same year, celebrated the centennial of the composer's birth.



The Air Force Band returned to the tradition of performing Fourth of July concerts at the National Air and Space Museum, along with an expanded Christmas concert schedule. In December 1996, Col. Graham led the Concert Band and Singing Sergeants in a Christmas concert at the famed Avery Fisher Hall in New York City.

Col. Graham also reinvigorated the Band's recording tradition; during his tenure, the Band released 42 CDs featuring all flights within the organization. From this impressive discography, *Cloudsplitter Fanfare* by Jack Stamp, *Harrison's Dream* by Peter Graham and *Concerto for Orchestra No. 1 (Naughty Limericks)* by Rodion Shchedrin are part of this set.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1996 Sweden and Norway Tattoos
- 1997 53rd Inaugural Parade
- 1997 Air Force 50th Anniversary
- 1998 High Flight support to Bosnia
- 1999 European tour with recreated Glenn Miller AAF Orchestra



# 75 YEARS OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

## Born of Dreams: What is Past is Prologue (2002-2009)

Col. Dennis M. Layendecker became the commander and music director of The U.S. Air Force Band in 2002. The Band was still extremely busy following an archetype left by previous commanders which included daily support for congressionally mandated missions at Arlington National Cemetery, presidential and DV support, two national tours per year, 8–12 Guest Artist Series performances, music conventions, recordings, Summer Concert Series and annual holiday concerts and parades.

Looking back in time, Gen. Henry “Hap” Arnold endorsed the production of a Broadway musical entitled “Winged Victory.” This 1944 Broadway production was so successful, it was made into a 20th Century Fox movie. In 2002, with a nod to this historic footnote, Col. Layendecker embarked on a new project — “Born of a Dream,” the first Broadway-style musical by a premier service band. The Air Force Band musicians comprised the cast of actors, musicians, scriptwriters, composers and production team.

Much like its beginning during WWII, the Band was deeply involved in supporting U.S. diplomatic relations and troop morale during the Global War on Terrorism, deploying seven times to Southwest Asia. The ensembles brought a touch of home to the forward deployed servicemen and women. Additionally, the Band continued to highlight the excellence of all American airmen via internet broadcasts, DVDs, ceremonies and concerts.



*Col. Layendecker presents Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne with “Wild Blue Yonder,” commissioned for the 60th anniversary of the USAF and featured with Debussy’s “The Engulfed Cathedral” on this set.*

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## Off We Go! (2009-2012)

“Off We Go!” is a medley arranged by retired Air Force Band member Chief Master Sgt. Mike Davis. This narrated medley represents a culmination of events started under Col. Layendecker and seen to fruition by his successor, Lt. Col. Alan C. Seirichs who brought the history of The U.S. Air Force Band and Air Force music to light.

Lt. Col. Sierichs also commissioned composer Julie Giroux to write “To Fly”, a suite celebrating the 100th anniversary of powered flight. *They Touched the Sky* from that suite and Giroux’s equally powerful fanfare from her composition, *To Walk with Wings*, are featured on this set.

Col. A. Philip Waite became the commander of the Air Force Band in 2010. With a significant personnel reduction in the Band just a few years prior, he took on the challenge of reshaping the administrative work assignments of the band members which was critical to the Band’s operation. He was also the first commander to send the Ceremonial Brass on an American concert tour, reaching over 6 million worldwide via live performances, television, radio and internet broadcasts. This tour honored the accomplishments of the Tuskegee Airmen through the world premiere of *Red Tail Skirmish*, a commission composed by Bruce Yurko for the Ceremonial Brass. At Col. Waite’s request, Senior Master Sgt. Bob Thurston, chief arranger for the Band, composed a march dedicated to all of the chiefs of staff of the Air Force, also included on this compilation.



*Lt. Col. Sierichs during a guest artist series performance*



*Col. Waite with all members of The United States Air Force Band*

# 75 YEARS OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE

## Innovations, Awards and the Diamond Anniversary Celebration (2012-2016)

If there had to be one word to describe the Band during the years of 2012 to 2016, the word would be innovation. During a time of austere budget constraints coupled with the unpredictability of sequestration, the Band had to come up with new ideas and methodologies to carry on its mission. Under the leadership of their new commander, Col. Larry H. Lang, the Band brilliantly accomplished this by tapping into the members' tremendous intellect and diverse skillsets which have always been vital to the success of The Air Force Band.

One of the Band's innovative triumphs included the first ever "Flash Mob" by a premier service band in 2013 followed by two more in 2014 and 2015. In fact, the 2015 "Flashback" celebrated three simultaneous events including the Band's annual holiday show, the celebration of the service and sacrifices of our nation's World War II veterans and the commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the end of World War II. The total reach of all three events to date has been an astounding 45 million "hits" via DoD servers, YouTube and other media outlets. These videos alone have ensured the Band's mission as "America's International Musical Ambassadors" will continue for years to come.

The Advancing Innovation Through Music Program (AIM) was launched under Col. Lang in 2013 and has proven to be one of the most successful new initiatives. This program was created to meet the Secretary of Defense's national community outreach objectives. In 2015, AIM provided first-class music education and mentorship, reaching over 23,000 students and teachers at 116 events across the country.

The Band's Washington, D.C. premiere of John Luther Adams' *"Sila: the Breath of the World"* and participation in national and international events continue to put the Band and the United States Air Force on a world stage: events which include The Midwest Clinic, the American Bandmasters Association Conventions in Alabama and Nevada, NBC's TODAY, Maryland Public television's Salute to Veteran's broadcasts and Armed Forces Network broadcasts.

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Audio recordings have taken on a different character and reflect a new direction for the Band with most recordings being released online then to compact discs, as the budget allowed, including: “Air Force Blue” (2013); “Departures” (2014); “American Voices” (2015), and “Journeys” (due in late 2016). The last three selections on this 75th Anniversary compilation set, *Asimov’s Aviary* by Joel



*Col. Lang and Col. Gabriel at the Midwest Clinic, 2012*

Puckett, *Affirmation* by Wayne Oquin, and *Ringmaster’s March* by John Mackey, represent the Band’s continued dedication to commissioning and performing the finest music for bands.



*Midwest Clinic, 2012*

## HIGHLIGHTS

2012 Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade

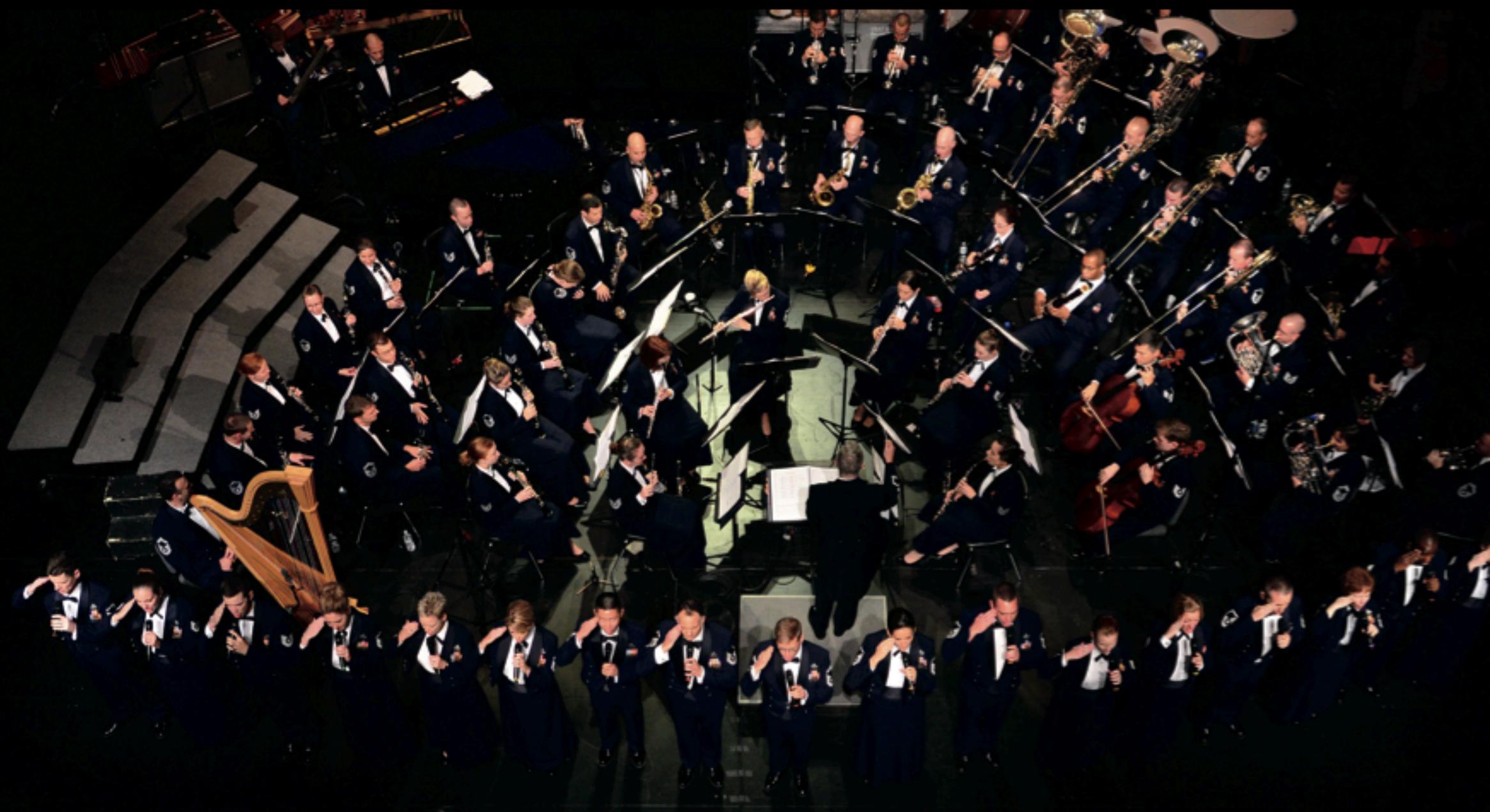
2014 NASCAR

2015–2016 Macy’s Fourth of July Spectacular

2014–2016 Super Bowl appearances

2012–2016 37 televised sporting events

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## DISC 1

### HEIBERG

1. Rhapsody in Blue (8:32) *George Gershwin / Grofé*

### HOWARD

2. Introduction to Act III from *Lohengrin* (3:32)  
*Richard Wagner / Meuser*
3. Russian Sailors Dance from *The Red Poppy* (3:21)  
*Reinhold Glière / Leidzen*
4. Boys of the Old Brigade (2:35) *W. Paris Chambers*

### GABRIEL

5. Masquerade (4:46) *Carl Nielsen / Boyd*
6. Overture to *Il Guarany* (7:32) *Carlos Gomes / Clark*
7. Strategic Air Command (3:14) *Clifton Williams*

### BANKHEAD

8. Te Deum Laudamus (13:33) *Ron Nelson*
9. Danse Folâtre (9:22) *Claude T. Smith*

### BONNER

10. Tulsa (10:17) *Don Gillis*
11. Celebration (10:34) *Philip Sparke*

## DISC 2

### GRAHAM

1. Cloudsplitter Fanfare (1:22) *Jack Stamp*
2. Harrison's Dream (13:34) *Peter Graham*
3. Concerto for Orchestra No. 1  
(Naughty Limericks) (8:53)  
*Rodion Shchedrin / Pappajohn*

### LAYENDECKER

4. The Engulfed Cathedral (6:11)  
*Claude Debussy / Patterson*
5. Wild Blue Yonder (8:17) *James Barnes*

### SIERICHS

6. Fanfare from *To Walk with Wings* (1:13)  
*Julie Giroux*
7. They Touched the Sky (5:24) *Julie Giroux*

### WAITE

8. Chief of Staff March (3:21)  
*Senior Master Sgt. (Ret.) Robert Thurston*

### LANG

9. Asimov's Aviary (5:36) *Joel Puckett*
10. Affirmation (9:43) *Wayne Oquin*
11. Ringmaster's March (2:49) *John Mackey*

# 75 YEARS OF MUSICAL EXCELLENCE



## CREDITS

*Colonel Larry H. Lang, Executive Producer and Conductor*

*Major Matthew Henry*  
Senior Producer

*Mr. Bruce Leek*  
Senior Digital Editing/Mixing/  
Mastering Engineer

*Master Sgt. James DeVaughn*  
Digital Editing Engineer

*Technical Sgt. Karl Sweedy*  
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*Chief Master Sgt. Jebodiah Eaton*  
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**75 YEARS OF  
MUSICAL EXCELLENCE**



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