

PROGRAM NOTES



Lieutenant Commander Bruce A. McDonald reported for duty as Director of the United States Naval Academy Band in October of 2012. Previously, he had served as Director, U.S. Fleet Forces Band in Norfolk, VA, Fleet Bandmaster of both the Pacific Fleet Band in Pearl Harbor, HI and SIXTH Fleet Band in Naples, Italy, Associate Conductor of the United States Navy Band in Washington, DC, and as Music Program Liaison Officer to the Chief of Information, also in Washington, DC.

LCDR McDonald enlisted in the Navy in 1989 as a trombonist with the U.S. Naval Academy Band in Annapolis, Maryland. There, he performed with the "Electric Brigade" Top 40 Ensemble, the Brass Quintet, and as principal trombonist with the Wind Ensemble. After promotion to Chief Petty Officer in 1997, he transferred to the U.S. Navy School of Music in Little Creek, Virginia, where he graduated first in his class from both the Ceremonial Conductor/Drum Major and the Enlisted Bandleader/Assistant Director courses. He then transferred to the Atlantic Fleet Band in Norfolk, Virginia, where he was the ceremonial band director and assistant concert band conductor prior to his commissioning in October 2000 and subsequent assignment to the U.S. Navy Band.

LCDR McDonald holds a master's degree in instrumental conducting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The United States Naval Academy Band, "The Navy's Oldest and Finest," has been providing music for the Brigade of Midshipmen and surrounding community since 1852. Located at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, the band is comprised of 68 professional, Navy musicians, who have studied at some of the best music schools and conservatories in the country, and who have extensive résumés in performance and teaching.

At the Naval Academy, the USNA Band performs for dress parades, athletic events, pep rallies and other traditional events. In the community, the band presents concerts, provides music for civic events, and presents instructional clinics and performances for K-12 and university students. The band also plays for military ceremonies and funerals throughout the mid-Atlantic region.

In recent years, the band has supported the Naval Academy Admissions Department, touring throughout the country and performing at admissions forums and high schools. These events have greatly contributed to diversity initiatives and an overall increase in the number of applications to the Naval Academy.

The Naval Academy Band takes pride in representing the Naval Academy's deep heritage of excellence. Performing at the highest professional standard for the Navy, the Naval Academy, and the citizens of this great country remains our ultimate goal.

Visit the USNA Band's Website:
<http://www.usna.edu/USNABand/>

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COMMANDANT'S COMBO

MUCS Blake Cramer, unit leader

SAXOPHONE

MU1 Matt Stuver - Virginia Beach, Virginia

VIBRAPHONE

MUCS Blake Cramer - Davidsonville, Maryland

DRUMS

MU1 Kevin Meyer - Sioux Falls, South Dakota

BASS

MUC Tom Pitta - Eldersburg, Maryland

BIOGRAPHIES

MU1 Matt Stuver is from Virginia Beach, Virginia and joined the Naval Academy Band as a saxophonist in 2011. After graduating from Princess Anne High School in 1998, he attended James Madison University where he earned a Bachelor of Music Education degree. He earned a Masters of Music in Saxophone Performance and Literature and in Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY. Additionally he has attended the Henry Mancini Institute in Los Angeles. MU1 Stuver is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media at the Eastman School of Music. He has studied with David Pope, Chuck Dotas, Ramon Ricker, Walt Weiskopf, Clay Jenkins, and Bill Dobbins.

In 2011, MU1 Stuver was the winner of Downbeat Magazine Student Music Award for Jazz Soloist-Soprano Saxophone. He has played with such artists as Peter Erskine, John Clayton, Bob Sheppard, Maria Schneider, Bob Brookmeyer, Clark Terry, Wayne Bergeron, Chuck Mangione, Rick Baptist, Christian McBride, Clay Jenkins, Rich Thompson, Jeff Campbell, Bill Dobbins, and Walt Weiskopf. He has performed with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Eastman New Jazz Ensemble, Eastman Jazz Ensemble, and All-American College Band in Disneyland. He performed with the Eastman Wind Ensemble during their 2004 Asia Tour and Carnegie Hall performance, as well as on their CDs, Danzante and Manhattan Music with the Canadian Brass. MU1 Stuver has also performed at the Rochester International Jazz Festival and the JVC Jazz Festival in New York City.

MUCS Blake Cramer is from Davidsonville, Maryland and a 1980 graduate of South River High School in Edgewater, MD, joining the Naval Academy Band as a percussionist in 1992. MUCS Blake Cramer attended St. Mary's College of Maryland and subsequently the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts, where he studied with renowned jazz vibraphonist Gary Burton, and in 1985 received a Bachelor of Arts degree in professional music, graduating magna cum laude.

In 2001, after nine years serving as percussionist and mallet instrument specialist with the band, he was appointed pianist for the Superintendent of the Naval Academy, providing exclusive musical support for functions honoring visiting dignitaries and VIPs. He is currently the Unit Leader of the Commandant's Combo.

MU1 Kevin Meyer is originally from Sioux Falls, South Dakota and joined the Naval Academy Band as a percussionist in 2008. He received a Bachelor of Music degree in music education from Brigham Young University in 2004 and a Master of Music degree in percussion performance from East Carolina University in 2007. MU1 Meyer's teachers include Ron Brough, Jay Lawrence, Jonathan Wacker, Kevin Bobo, John Tafoya, Craig Hetrick, and Steve Houghton.

MU1 Meyer has performed as a soloist with the Indiana University Wind Ensemble, Tar River Symphonic Band, ECU Percussion Ensemble and the BYU Percussion Ensemble. He has also performed with the Ballet West Orchestra in Salt Lake City, UT, 2002 Salt Lake Olympics Band Drumline, Eastern Symphony Orchestra, Raleigh Symphony, and as drummer/ percussionist for the Loessin Summer Theater Orchestra. He was the winner of the 2001 Utah Percussive Arts Society Rudimental Snare Drum Solo Competition, and has performed in clinics at the International Association of Jazz Educators and Percussive Arts Society International Convention.

MUC Tom Pitta is from Eldersburg, Maryland and joined the Naval Academy Band as a bassist in 1999. He graduated from Loyola High School, in Towson, Maryland in 1987, and earned a Bachelor of Arts (English) degree from Loyola College, Baltimore in 1991. MUC Pitta went on to study music at Towson University, earning a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Music degree in 1996. While at Towson, he studied double bass privately with Drew Gress and Paul Johnson, and composition with Hank Levy.

As a student, MUC Pitta performed on the critically acclaimed Towson Jazz Ensemble's 1995 recording *The Tiger Speaks* (Downbeat, 5 stars). After graduating, he was in demand as a free lance jazz/ commercial bassist. Having performed and recorded with pianist John Colianni, MUC Pitta appeared with him on PBS's *Meet the Artist*. He also recorded and performed with pianist Greg Hatza in *Shanghai West*, an ensemble that blended jazz and traditional Chinese music using modern instruments and traditional Chinese instruments. He has additionally served as Instructor of Jazz Bass at the Peabody Preparatory.