

Federal Brass Bio
October 5, 2016
Word Count: 801



The United States Army Field Band

The Musical Ambassadors of the Army
Washington, DC

FEDERAL BRASS

The newest of The U.S. Army Field Band's brass ensembles, **Federal Brass** brings a unique and innovative approach to chamber music. Drawing on its members' virtuosity and collective experience in symphony orchestras, studio orchestras, big bands, jazz combos, and rock bands, their versatility and focus on new and original music give the Federal Brass a signature style all its own.

Staff Sergeant Kevin Paul, trumpet, is a native of Los Angeles, California and joined The U.S. Army Field Band in 2013. He holds a Master of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree from the Mannes College of Music in New York City. Prior to joining the Army Field Band, SSG Paul served as acting principal trumpet of the China National Symphony Orchestra. SSG Paul has appeared in music festivals across the country from the Aspen Music Festival to the Bang on a Can Music Festival in New York. SSG Paul's primary teachers include Mark Gould, Tom Smith, Vince Penzarella, and Raymond Mase.

Sergeant First Class Phillip Kennedy Johnson, trumpet, earned a Master of Music degree from the University of North Texas, where he served as teaching fellow for the Department of Jazz Studies, and a Bachelor of Music degree from Eastern Kentucky University. SFC Johnson has performed with the Lexington Philharmonic, Dallas Opera, Washington Symphonic Brass, and the Moscow Ballet. He was a member of the Glenn Miller Orchestra from 2004-2005. SFC Johnson is active in the Baltimore/Washington, D.C. area as performer, teacher, clinician, and arranger, and studies Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and Mixed Martial Arts at Maryland Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

Originally from Colorado, **Staff Sergeant J.G. Miller, horn**, holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Southern California, a Master of Music degree from the University of Arizona, and a Bachelor of Music Performance and Music Education degree from the Eastman School of Music. His teachers include Peter Kurau, James Thatcher, Daniel Katzen, and Kendall Betts. SSG Miller has performed with The Who, Mariachi Sol de Mexico, La Sinfonica Nacional De Las America, and Los Angeles area studio orchestras on several major motion picture scores. He was also a performer at the "12-12-12 Concert for Sandy Relief" at Madison Square Garden. SSG Miller has taught as a high school band director and as a clinician at the Kendall Betts Horn Camp and the Colburn Horn Camp. He has also trained as a machinist and welder while working for Lawson Horns, and writes and arranges as co-founder of Veritas Musica Publishing.

Sergeant First Class Wesley Ballenger, trombone, is the bass trombonist with the Concert Band, The U.S. Army Field Band Trombone Ensemble, and the Federal Brass Instrumentalists. SFC Ballenger has performed as soloist with the Concert Band on works by Chris Brubeck, Daniel Schnyder, and Eric Ewazen. SFC Ballenger earned his Bachelor of Music degree from Indiana University in 2005, where he studied with M. Dee Stewart and Peter Ellefson. He also spent four months abroad in Vienna, Austria studying with Ian Bousfield. SFC Ballenger served as bass trombonist with the Richmond (IN) Symphony Orchestra, the Columbus (IN) Philharmonic Orchestra, and the 2004 Disney Collegiate All-Star Band in Orlando, Florida. When he is not traveling all over the country with the Army Field Band, SFC Ballenger enjoys traveling all over the country with his wife, Becky.

Sergeant First Class Carmen Russo, trombone, studied with Per Brevig at the Aspen School of Music and later studied with Don Kneeburg, ultimately earning his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of South Florida in 1997. From 1994-2004 he performed with a variety of professional organizations including, The Florida Orchestra, Florida West Coast Symphony, The Symphony of Southwest Florida, Sarasota Opera, Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, and for the Holland America and Carnival Cruise Lines. SFC Russo also performed with the Grandlink World opening festival band in Qingdao, China, in addition to several traveling off-Broadway shows including The Lion King, Cinderella, 42nd Street, The Producers, Chicago, and Showboat.

Sergeant First Class Robert Marino, percussion, was named the Principal Timpanist of The U.S. Army Field Band in 2006. He began his graduate studies at Boston University and completed his Master of Music degree at the University of Maryland in 2010. He is a 2005 graduate of the Eastman School of Music, with degrees in Percussion Performance and Music Education. SFC Marino has been a featured soloist with the Concert Band at The American Bandmasters Association Convention and The Pennsylvania Music Educators Conference. He is also active in the marching arts and has been an instructor for the nine-time Drum Corps International world champion Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps since 2007. He has also taught the Madison Scouts and Capital Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps. He lives in Baltimore with his wife, Elizabeth.