

Cantare Bio  
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# The United States Army Field Band

The Musical Ambassadors of the Army  
*Washington, DC*

## CANTARE OF THE U.S. ARMY FIELD BAND

**Cantare** is comprised of classically trained Soldier-Musicians from the Soldiers' Chorus, and is committed to performing opera and song for various settings, including educational outreach, recitals, and chamber music shows. These versatile musicians, all of whom are highly regarded performers in their field, strive to bring fresh characterizations and a dramatic flair to their spirited performances.

**Sergeant First Class Rose Ryon, soprano**, is a native of Southern New Jersey and now resides in Hanover, Pennsylvania with her husband and son. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at West Virginia University. She formerly served as a broadcast journalist with the 10th Mountain Division and as featured soloist with the 10th Mountain Division Band. MSG Ryon's vocal teachers and coaches have included Inci Bashar, Brian Gill, Augusto Paglialunga, and James Benner. When she is not performing, MSG Ryon is reading, decorating cakes, and spending time with her family.

**Staff Sergeant Teresa Alzadon, soprano**, earned a Master of Music degree from the University of Tennessee as a Knoxville Opera Studio artist. Originally from Auburn, Washington, SSG Alzadon holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music and Theatre Arts from the University of Puget Sound. She has performed with Opera in the Ozarks, New York Opera Studio, Knoxville Opera, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, and Sacred Winds Ensemble. Opera roles include Violetta in *La Traviata*, Anna Maurant in *Street Scene*, the Governess in *The Turn of the Screw*, Despina in *Così fan Tutte*, and title roles in *The Merry Widow* and *Dido and Aeneas*. Professional theatre credits include Marian in *The Music Man* and Rosa Bud in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. She is the recipient of a Mary Levine Career Performance Grant, an Encouragement Award from the Metropolitan Opera National Council, and a Lori Mayer Fellowship.

**Sergeant First Class Meghan Pilar Whittier, soprano**, earned a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from George Mason University, where she was also an adjunct faculty member. She is the Assistant Enlisted Conductor and Assistant Accompanist of the Soldiers' Chorus. A versatile soloist, musical collaborator, and arranger, SFC Whittier has performed as a soloist with the Concert Band, members of the Volunteers and the Jazz Ambassadors, as well as small groups Cantare, Recess, and the Women's Ensemble. SFC Whittier co-produced a tour to Puerto Rico with Cantare in 2015, performing in opera scenes and giving masterclasses to college and high school students.

**Staff Sergeant Katherine Lehr, alto**, holds a Master of Music degree from Boston University and a Bachelor of Music degree from Baylor University. Prior to joining the Soldiers' Chorus, SSG Lehr performed in operas, music theatre and outreach programs throughout the country. Her Soldiers Chorus highlights have been singing the national anthem at the Houston Rodeo, and traveling to Puerto Rico with the opera outreach group, Cantare. SSG Lehr has been honored to be a featured soloist with the band throughout the country and hopes to bring joy to all who attend. In her spare time, SSG Lehr loves singing at church and spending time with her loving husband and family members.

**Staff Sergeant Jeremy Cady, tenor**, hails from North Branch, Minnesota. He is currently a candidate for the Doctorate of Musical Arts degree at the University of Kentucky, where he also received his Master of Music and Bachelor of Music degrees. Before joining the Soldiers' Chorus in November 2009, SSG Cady appeared as apprentice artist and guest artist with the Central City Opera, the Minnesota Opera, the Minnesota Orchestra, Cincinnati Opera, the Lexington Philharmonic, and the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre. While apprenticing with the Minnesota Opera during the 2003-04 season, SSG Cady was a Midwest Regional finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. SSG Cady loves spending all of his free time with his wife and three beautiful little girls.

**Staff Sergeant Benjamin Hilgert, tenor**, most recently performed principal operatic roles with Theater Goerlitz (Germany), Lyric Opera Kansas City, Central City Opera, Cedar Rapids Opera, and the Aspen Music Festival. SSG Hilgert earned his Master of Music degree from Chicago College of Performing Arts and his Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Indianapolis.

**Sergeant First Class Samuel Chung, baritone**, attended Shenandoah University and earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Southern California. He is Group Leader of the vocal ensemble Cantare, and is one of the designated national anthem singers for the Soldiers' Chorus. SFC Chung has performed with Washington National Opera, the Wolf Trap Opera Company, the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra, Fairfax Choral Society, and the Washington Korean Symphony Orchestra.

**Sergeant First Class Mark Huseth, bass-baritone**, pursued doctoral studies at the University of Kentucky, earned a Master of Music degree at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and earned a Bachelor of Music degree at Benedictine College. Prior to his enlistment with The U.S. Army Field Band, SFC Huseth performed principal and supporting roles with many opera companies, including Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Utah Opera, Opera Omaha, and Shreveport Opera. He has also appeared as soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, the Nashville Symphony, the Kentucky Symphony, and the Utah Symphony. SFC Huseth has been a district winner in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, and is a student of renowned voice teacher Inci Bashar.

**Staff Sergeant Darren Lael, piano**, is originally from Hickory, North Carolina. He earned a Master of Music degree from the University of Maryland and a Bachelor of Music degree from the North Carolina School of the Arts. Prior to joining The U.S. Army Field Band, SSG Lael was the keyboardist and conductor for touring productions of *Grease!*, *Smokey Joe's Cafe*, *Godspell*, *Oklahoma*, and *The Full Monty*. He has also served as a faculty accompanist at Elon University and Grand Valley State University, and is a member of the American Guild of Organists.