AMERICA'S BIG BAND
Celebrating 50 years with the Jazz Ambassadors

SOUNDTRACK OF THE AMERICAN SOLDIER
A new album featuring Army-inspired music from film, TV, and video games

BERNSTEIN AT 100

NATIONAL ANTHEM TEAM

HONORING OUR VETERANS

Spring 2019
A NOTE FROM THE COMMANDER

The United States Army Field Band has had an exciting year filled with opportunities. The unit performed hundreds of inspiring live programs for the American people throughout the West Coast, Southeast, and upper Midwest of the United States, represented America in the Norwegian Military Tattoo, and performed for the people of Puerto Rico. The Army Field Band has performed with the Cleveland Pops Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, been featured at the Heartland Choral Festival, the International Trombone Festival, and the 50th International Horn Symposium. With the help of innovative multimedia concert programs like “The Army Story” and “America the Beautiful,” the Army Field Band’s outreach and audience engagement is becoming one of the Department of Defense’s most effective tools in connecting with the American people.

In 2018, the Concert Band and Soldiers’ Chorus released The Legacy of Leonard Bernstein, a tribute album to the great American icon, and recorded Soundtrack of the American Soldier, an album featuring new music from leading composers in the industry, produced by the leading audio technicians and producers at Skywalker Sound. Six-String Soldiers recorded exciting new music from the best songwriters in America at Muscle Shoals Sound Studio and in Nashville to serve their loyal and growing fan base. The Jazz Ambassadors released a new album celebrating its 50th anniversary as America’s Big Band, rolled out its new concert program “The Greatest Generation” in a PBS broadcast from Topeka, Kansas, and is busy preparing for an exciting year of performances at iconic venues.

Thank you for supporting The United States Army Field Band. We will continue to serve America’s Army with great commitment and a spirit of service in keeping with the Army’s traditions. The Commander of the Army Field Band, Colonel Jim Keene, has long believed that music from film, TV, and video games is a great vehicle for reaching wide audiences. “With this project, we’re thrilled to be building real collaborative partnerships with composers, engineers, producers, and executives,” said Colonel Keene. “These are people who are able to reach the public en masse, and influence the perception of our great military.”

Soundtrack of the American Soldier features many audience concert favorites like “March from 1941” and “Hymn to the Fallen,” new arrangements of such well-known movies as Patton, The Great Escape, and American Sniper, and several newly-commissioned works by leading film and TV composers. These were true collaborative relationships, with countless phone calls, emails, and video chat sessions between performers, conductors, and composers. One such work is “Brass Ceiling” by Grammy award-winning composer Laura Karpman, which is a musical portrait of the Army’s first female four-star General, General Ann Dunwoody. The band and chorus also recorded an arrangement of Jeff Beal’s music from The Long Road Home, the National Geographic miniseries chronicling the events of “Black Sunday,” an ambush on Soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division in Sadr City, Iraq in 2004.

The Army Field Band continues to find new, more effective ways to bring the Army Story to the American people, and looks forward to the upcoming release of Soundtrack of the American Soldier: Follow the Army Field Band on social media for updates!

Left, recording engineer Leslie Ann Jones and producer Dan Merceruio at Skywalker Sound; right, Staff Sgt. Trent Urquhart operates video at an Army Field Band concert in Folsom, CA.

THE ARMY FIELD BAND IS BACK from the recording studio! The Concert Band and Soldiers’ Chorus Fall Tour 2018 included a week at the famed Skywalker Sound studios in Marin County, California, where they recorded Soundtrack of the American Soldier, the upcoming album featuring music from the most beloved military-themed films, TV shows, and video games.

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AMERICA’S BIG BAND, the Jazz Ambassadors is proud to announce the release of its latest album: Jazz Ambassadors-50 Years, a commemorative album celebrating the band’s 50-year legacy of service.

In 1968, the Army Field Band’s commander instructed Chief Warrant Officer Charlie Almeida to form a new performing component that could fill local performance requests while the Concert Band was on tour. Rather than form a second concert band, Almeida founded “The Studio Band,” an expanded big band that performed jazz and popular music. The Studio Band recruited some of the top talent in the jazz and studio recording industries, ultimately becoming America’s Big Band, the Jazz Ambassadors. Recorded between 1969 and 2018, the selections from Jazz Ambassadors-50 Years offer snapshots of the Jazz Ambassadors throughout its history, as well as two new recordings that feature the current group.

Also in celebration of its 50th Anniversary, the Jazz Ambassadors took a new program on tour in Fall 2018: “The Greatest Generation,” a themed concert that celebrates Veterans of World War II and the music of the Big Band Era. The concept for “The Greatest Generation” grew out of a multimedia program introduced by the Concert Band and Soldiers’ Chorus, “The Army Story.” It’s a more narrative style of program, with video elements, World War II newsreels, live and pre-recorded narration, and of course, music that epitomizes the Big Band Era. It offers a new way to tell the Army story that audiences have responded to with overwhelming approval.

“I’ve never seen as many people moved to tears in a Jazz Ambassadors performance as I have with the Greatest Generation program,” said Staff Sergeant Hamilton Price, bassist with the Jazz Ambassadors. “It’s a beautiful and effective way to illustrate the American experience during World War II, and has helped us connect with the Veterans in our audience. Even better than playing for our Veterans is meeting them, listening to them. Their stories of perseverance and bravery are always inspiring and uplifting.”

The members of the Jazz Ambassadors, past and present, are proud to have served you as America’s Big Band for the last 50 years, and look forward to serving you for another 50 and beyond. Visit ArmyFieldBand.com to hear the Jazz Ambassadors online, or to find a concert near you!
In recognition of Leonard Bernstein’s contributions to American music, his lifelong dedication to music education, and his humanitarianism, The United States Army Field Band is proud to celebrate his 100th birthday with this recording. Happy Birthday, Maestro.

The Legacy of Leonard Bernstein, As the performing components of the U.S. Army Field Band tour the nation, interactions with our Veterans remain a highlight. The Concert Band and Soldiers’ Chorus recently had the opportunity to meet and perform for Lieutenant Colonel Charles Kettles, who received the Medal of Honor in 2016 for his heroic actions during the Vietnam War. As a UH-1 pilot, he rescued 44 Soldiers under intense enemy fire on May 15, 1967.

“The concert was probably one of the most memorable events I’ve attended in my life,” said Lieutenant Colonel Kettles. “It’s hard to believe that the military has the support of the American people today, as opposed to how it was [during Vietnam]. I was older, so it didn’t impact me the way it did the 18-year-old, but it was hard to see. The support we see now is a welcome change, and an appropriate change.”

Charles Kettles passed away in his hometown of Ypsilanti, Michigan on January 21, 2019, at the age of 89. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, and we are honored to have gotten to know this American hero.

Although the United States Army Field Band is known primarily for its touring mission, the unit receives many performance requests in the National Capital Region, often for the National Anthem. To fill these requests, members of the Soldiers’ Chorus created the National Anthem Team.

The Army Field Band performs the National Anthem for an extremely wide variety of events, recently including a Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony, Fort Meade change-of-command ceremonies, Major League Baseball games, and such NFL events as the 2018 draft and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers/Washington Redskins game. In May, Sergeant First Class Charis Strange sang “God Bless America” for the 143rd Preakness Stakes for eight million live and televised viewers. Recently including a Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony, Fort Meade change-of-command ceremonies, Major League Baseball games, and such NFL events as the 2018 draft and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers/Washington Redskins game. In May, Sergeant First Class Charis Strange sang “God Bless America” for the 143rd Preakness Stakes for eight million live and televised viewers.

March 13, 2019 — President Barack Obama, White House Medal of Honor Ceremony, July 18, 2016

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Performing the National Anthem for local events is one of the many services offered by The U.S. Army Field Band. To request a member of the Army Field Band National Anthem Team or one of the band’s many chamber groups, visit ArmyFieldBand.com.