

Salvation Army Week celebration at the Ambassador Auditorium

A celebration at the Ambassador

The New York Staff Band and special guests celebrate National Salvation Army week in the West

Within the shadows of the majestic San Gabriel mountains and under a giant Red Shield floating above the stage of Pasadena's magnificent Ambassador Auditorium, the Pasadena Tabernacle Corps of The Salvation Army led over 1100 members of the community and fellow Salvationists in a festive musical gala recognizing the Army's multiple roles within the community.

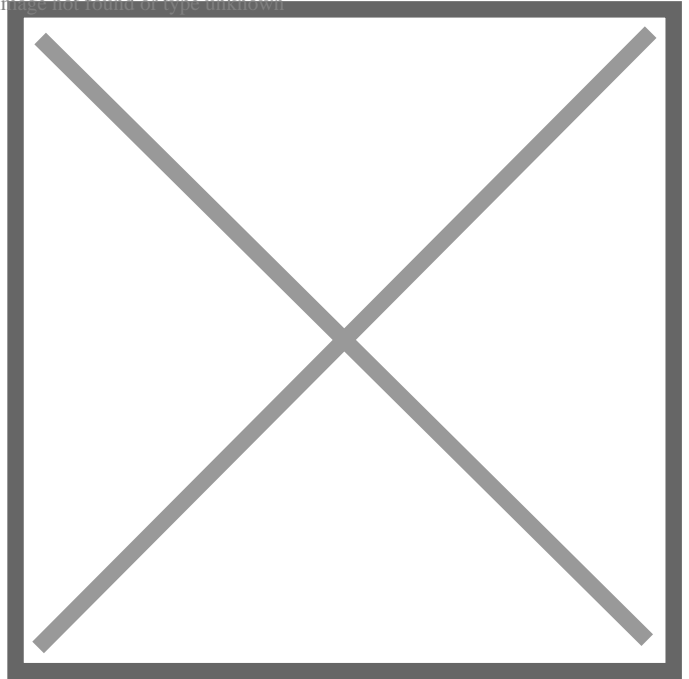
Marvelous music became the focus of the evening with the Army's New York Staff Band providing a backdrop for the amazing trumpet wizardry of soloist Allen Vizzutti, the pure and graceful soprano voice of London Salvationist Annika Scutt, and the contemporary and enthusiastic rhythms of the Pasadena Tabernacle Youth Chorus.

Staff Bandmaster Ron Waiksnoris selected music from a wide range of genres. From the band's initial notes of Dorothy Gates' beautiful fanfare *All Glorious* the band revealed its precise and highly disciplined musicianship evoking sensitivity and power. They were able to shift easily into different musical styles as evident in the crowd pleasing rendition of Goff Richard's *Breezin' Down Broadway* – a collection of highly recognizable Broadway show tunes.

Vizzutti's dramatic and commanding performance of Del Staigers' *Carnival of Venice* revealed dimensions of artistry only dreamed of by enterprising and hopeful young musician participants in the Tabernacle's Youth Music Program, the principal beneficiary of the evening. Some notes he played seemed beyond the scope of the instrument's original design. He demonstrated his mastery of different styles with Dorothy Gate's arrangement of Simon and Garfunkle's *Bridge Over Troubled Waters* and Ron Holz's arrangement of Clifton Williams' *Dramatic Essay*. His flawless technique, his range on the instrument and his sensitivity to the demands of the composition revealed his genuine artistry.

Soprano Annika Scutt, a native of Sweden now living in Britain, favored the audience with Nicole Nordeman's *Every Season*. Accompanied by classical guitarist Favio Simoes, a soldier of the Redondo Beach Corps, she brought a perceptive and insightful interpretation of God's work in every

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season of the year. There is a richness to her voice amplified with precise pitch and warm tonality.

The fifty member Tabernacle Youth Chorus, led by Barbara Allen, held the crowd's attention with a range of musical styles. Accompanied by Venus Wood on piano, Steve Allen on bass guitar, and a drafted NYSB percussionist, Robert Jones, along with occasional brass contributions from Tabernacle band members John Docter, Martin Hunt, Clarence White, and Larry Lycan. Shalini Henry John was a featured soloist in the group's rendition of *Start It Up*, and she was joined by her sister Sarai and Thandiwe Gregory in *He Made the Difference*. These young singers sang their testimonies with eagerness and passion – singing “No matter what comes my way, my life is in your hands.”

The band's presentation Ray Steadman Allen's dramatic interpretation of John Bunyon's remarkable poem *The Holy War* brought tremendous variation in mood in the ever present battle within the human soul of good and evil – from discord and chaos to peace and hope as one's life identifies with Christ..

With the scene described by Executive Officer, Major Richard Munn, the band presented an arrangement by Goff Richards of a beautiful a melody from the movie “Student Prince” titled *I'll Walk with God*. The music illustrates that this walk is not always easy – moving sensitively through torment and difficulties to the quiet of contemplation and then growing through a dynamic crescendo to full assurance with God.

Three movements from Peter Graham's *Call of the Cossacks* almost had the audience dancing in the aisles and brought smiles to faces as the program neared completion. Once again the skills of individual instrumentalists was evident in the demanding work that seemed to move like diesel train down a steep grade. The vocal exclamation by the band at the end of the piece was a relief by the band and a joyous echo from the audience.

The final item on the program, *Glorious*, featured all the program's participants: the NYSB, the Tabernacle Youth Chorus, Annika Scutt and Allen Vizzutti. Before it ended the audience stood to its feet in high praise and acclamation.

Following the benediction, offered by Lt. Colonel Paul Bollwahn, k divisional commander, the band struck John Philip Sousa's *Stars and Stripes for Ever*.

A great evening with some wonderful people and exciting entertainment wrapped up in a rich blessing.

The New York Staff Band goes to school

What a feeling it was to have the New York Staff Band play at *my* high school chapel. The look of the faces in the crowd as we started our first piece, anxious looks and excited faces just waiting to see what the Salvation Army had to offer. From the first note to the last, it was evident that the music from the staff band was touching and calming to the stressed out students. The biggest honor for me was being able to say that's *my* church and this is how I worship. Also, being invited to play with the band

gave me a great deal of pride, showing my classmates that I have been blessed with a gift and showing them how I was going to use it. The message presented by Major Richard Munn was like nothing ever presented to my school before. The students seemed so locked in to the message and taking every word in. Hearing from classmates and friends, they have all said that they really appreciated how the message was directed to them specifically. Not just to Christians, but to Christians at Maranatha High School. Major Munn's challenge was not just to seek Salvation, but to role up their sleeves and do something for the Kingdom. This opportunity for the band to play and Major Munn to speak gave Maranatha High School a bigger and better view of our Army and changed many views regarding the Army's service in the world. To students at Maranatha we are no longer just a thrift store, but an Army fighting together with them on God's side.