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## LAPD Band

by Michael Ellington

This month's Band member profile spotlights a man who stopped playing his chosen instrument for a number of years and didn't pick it up again until a young player needed help mastering it.

Stan Levine was very young when he had seen pictures of an oboe, even younger than he was when he finally picked one up for the first time. He was in a seventh-grade "Beginning Instruments" class when he selected it because he loved oboe music, especially compositions by a particular German composer. Stan also picked up a facility for piano along the way, playing in the Rosewood Elementary School Orchestra and at Canterbury Avenue School.

Oboe began to command more of his attention in junior high school when he performed at Fulton and Pacoima junior high schools.

Stan grew up in Los Angeles, and his family wasn't particularly musical. His mother played a little piano. As he grew up, along with playing his main wind instrument, he also learned to play saxophone, banjo, ukulele, piano and synthesizer.

High school musical pursuits found him playing his oboe and wearing the uniform of Francis Polytechnic High School. He said he remembers that time fondly as "the perfect combination of students with the right talents that blended perfectly with the teachers. We all came together at the right time and

made being a band geek cool before its time."

As a San Francisco State University student, he gained oboe chairs in their woodwind quintet and concert band. Later, at CalArts, he played oboe in their orchestra as well as saxophone, djembe (a West African drum) and shakuhachi (a Japanese bamboo flute) in various ethno-music ensembles. He also counts his time there as special in that he was able to study with Leonard Stein, a protege of renowned musical pioneer Arnold Schoenberg.

Every musician has had a day job of one kind or another. Stan's supporting occupations have included creating electronic music and synthesized effects for film and video games, giving private electronic music lessons, and teaching humanities, music and cinema at Mission Community College.

Stan cites the music of German pianist/composing genius Ludwig van Beethoven as his first love. There is a small cadenza in the composer's "Egmont Overture" that showcases the oboe. It moves him to this day. He particularly enjoys Beethoven's writing for orchestra.

He might not have been born into a musical family, but his certainly is. He never forced the pursuit of music on his children, believing they should love what they do. That said, his daughter, Heidi, was a dancer, but now teaches music. His oldest granddaughter, Samantha, was in the East Carolina University Marching Band. And his oldest grandson, Kevin, was in several choral groups. Of his youngest two grandchildren, Theo is majoring in music and also marched in the Francis Polytechnic Band, and Lucy wants to major in music and one day star on Broadway.

Why does he play? "No one has ever asked me what I get out of playing music," Stan said. "I stopped playing the oboe regularly sometime in 1985. It wasn't until my grandson was in the high school band and I was helping out a new oboe



Stan Levine as a youth.

student that I picked up my oboe again. I feel whole again. I play the oboe because it is part of who I am."

For more information about the Band, see our website at [www.lasown.com](http://www.lasown.com) and contact Jim Starr, executive director, at [sngcop@aol.com](mailto:sngcop@aol.com). For greatly appreciated donations, please go to [www.lapolicefoundation.org](http://www.lapolicefoundation.org), and in the comments box, put "for the Band." ❖



Stan Levine and grandson.



Stan Levine playing clarinet.

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