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Performer Profile

Wayne Valentine – A Musician Who Puts His Heart in Every Performance

As a native St. Louisan, Wayne Valentine began his music career at a very early age with support from his parents. When he was 12, his father had an organ delivered to his house, and thus began Valentine's life-long passion for music. In high school, he sang in the choir, played trumpet, baritone and tuba in the marching band, and also made time to play the piano in a Dixieland band. He enjoyed studying classical music with a special interest in Bach.

In 1980, Valentine began his military career in the Marine Corps. During his time of service, he played tuba and percussions in the Marine Corps Band. In those days, he didn't write his own music, he says, because he wanted to be part of the team. Then, he was given the opportunity to attend the Armed Forces School of Music in Norfolk, Virginia. It is there that his technical skills were honed.

After leaving the service in 1984, music continued to be the driving force in Valentine's life. He began playing in jazz clubs in and around St. Louis, and learned some of the unique syncopation techniques of the master of ragtime, Scott Joplin. Now, he still enjoys playing at every opportunity and takes particular pride in performing for patients in nursing homes throughout the St. Louis area.

"I entered the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival because I wanted the opportunity to entertain people with my work," said Valentine, who has been involved in music for most of his life. "I am an aspiring artist and vocalist, and write and perform my own material."

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival has given Valentine an opportunity to engage in competition, which is something, he says, "that makes me happy and I enjoy." While he has entered the local competition for the past four years, this is the first national win for this 45-year-old veteran. He entered an original instrumental piece on the piano entitled, "Melodies," which took the gold medal in the national music competition in the original instrumental category. He wrote the piece when he was only 15.

"Music is my work and my love," Valentine says. "It has always been that way and it will always be a part of me."