



COL. DENNIS M. LAYENDECKER | FESTIVAL CLINICIAN

Dr. Dennis M. Layendecker holds George Mason University's Heritage Chair in Music and is the Director of Orchestral Studies for the School of Music within the College of Visual and Performing Arts. From June 2010 through May 2016 he served as Director of the School of Music. He now serves both as George Mason University Symphony Orchestra conductor and as a classroom instructor. A native of Springfield, Illinois, Dr. Layendecker was raised in a family of musicians and began formal musical studies at age 7. He is a United States Air Force full colonel (retired) who honorably served 26 years on active duty. Prior to joining the faculty of the School of Music Colonel Layendecker was the senior commissioned officer/musician in the Department of Defense. During his final assignment on active duty - July 2002 through June 2009 – he served as the Commander, Music Director and Principal Conductor of The United States Air Force Band, Washington, D.C. Later he continued to serve in that role concurrent with additional duties as Chief of Music for the Air Force from December 2007 until his retirement in September 2009.

Commissioned in October 1983, then Lieutenant Layendecker was selected by Colonel Arnard D. Gabriel to join The United States Air Force Band, in Washington, D.C., as Director of The Air Force Strings and Associate Conductor of The Air Force Symphony Orchestra. In 1988, he was selected as Commander / Conductor of the Fifteenth Air Force Band of the Golden West at March Air Force Base, Riverside, California. In 1993, he was promoted two years early and competitively selected to attend the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama as a unique honor offered exclusively to the top 10% of commissioned officers in his peer group worldwide. Upon graduation, he served on the ACSC faculty as a certified Air Force instructor, teaching Theater Operational Warfare, winning superior accolades from faculty and students, and rated in the top 1% of teaching staff by the school's Commandant. In July 1995, then Major Layendecker assumed command of the United States Air Forces in Europe Band at Sembach Air Base, Germany. In 2002, he returned to the United States promoted to full colonel four years ahead of his peer group and appointed by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force to lead that service's premier musical organization.



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Throughout his conducting career, Dr. Layendecker has performed across America, the United Kingdom, Western and Eastern Europe, and Japan—from Los Angeles to New York, Vienna to London and Oslo to Tokyo. As a participant in U.S. diplomatic efforts overseas, he has guest conducted the most prestigious foreign military ensembles from Great Britain, Russia, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Japan. He has conducted top flight American and foreign musical units in such notable venues as the Semper Opera, Dresden; Neues Gewandhaus Leipzig; Royal Albert Hall in London, Beethovenhalle in Bonn; and The Cirque Royale in Brussels. He has conducted for numerous world leaders including seven American presidents, Queen Elizabeth of England, Pope John-Paul II, U.S. Cabinet Secretaries and members of Congress, American Ambassadors and other senior government and military officials around the globe. His radio and television broadcast and recording credits include appearances on BBC, German Radio and Television, Polish National Radio, Radio Luxembourg, RAI Italy, public radio, American Public Television, PBS, national television stations from coast to coast, and Armed Forces Radio and Television (AFRTS) globally, and 40 plus CD recording productions, many of those commercially distributed on the Altissimo label. A few of his more notable ceremonial appearances included conducting all music for the official dedications of the United States Air Force Memorial, the Pentagon Memorial honoring the victims of 9/11, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, and Mount Rushmore ... 50 years after the originally planned ceremony was superseded by America's entrance into World War II.

Dr. Layendecker is a graduate of the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago where he completed a Bachelor of Music Education degree in 1975, including applied studies in piano and instrumental emphasis in lower brass. During the 1976/77 academic year, he served on the music faculty of Glenbrook North High School, Northbrook, Illinois under the supervision of Dr. David Walter and Peter Herr. Through Herr, Layendecker met John Paynter and was soon playing euphonium in Northwestern University's summer band program. Inspired by this introduction and experience, he returned to the American Conservatory in the autumn of 1976 to begin conducting studies in earnest with Steven Larsen, orchestration with William Ferris, and piano studies with Miss Grace Welsh. Subsequently, in autumn 1977 he was awarded a two-year Belgian State piano scholarship to attend the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels where he studied with renowned pianist Robert Staeyaert ... and conductor Ronald Zollman. Following Zollman's encouragement, he pursued summer master classes in conducting with Maestros Witold Rowicki at the Vienna Academy of Music and Franco Ferrara at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy. In 1980 Layendecker was awarded a full conducting assistantship to attend Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois where he earned a Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting in 1981 under the tutelage of Frederick Ockwell. In 1988, he completed the Doctor of Musical Arts in Orchestral Conducting mentored by Maestro Donald Thulean and Dr. Robert Garofalo at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Interspersed throughout his collegiate career Dr. Layendecker studied composition with composers Raymond Keldermans, Irwin Fischer, Stella Roberts, Alan Stout and Eugene O'Brien.

Beyond his civilian collegiate credentials, Dr. Layendecker is a graduate of the United States Air Force's Air War College, a distinguished graduate of the Air Command and Staff College, and a graduate of the Air Force Academic Instructor's School and Squadron Officer School at the Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. His military decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Force Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with three oak leaf clusters, Air Force Organizational Excellence Award with oak leaf cluster, National Defense Service Medal with bronze star, and the Global War on Terrorism Medal.

Prior to his Air Force career, Dr. Layendecker served on the conducting and piano faculties of The American Conservatory of Music, Chicago; as Orchestra Director, Eastern Washington University in Cheney; and as Music Director/Conductor of the Spokane Junior and Youth Symphonies, Spokane, Washington. In addition to both his official military and civilian duties, he has remained active as a choral conductor, church musician, and pianist both in America and in Europe, and he currently serves as Music Director of Our Lady of Victory Catholic Parish in Washington D.C.

Following a courtship begun during a Dutch language class at the Royal Conservatory of Music, Myriam Tartari of Brussels, Belgium kindly married Denny Layendecker in the summer of 1979. Celebrating 42 years together, they continue to raise the last two of six children and are very proud grandparents.



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