

Lafayette Band Presents Another Great July 4th Concert

Lafayette Band Music Director, Joe Pelosi, leads the band during 2008's Fourth of July Concert at Lafayette Bandstand, North Kingstown, RI.

2008's Fourth of July Concert by the Lafayette Band was one of the most elaborate and successful in recent years. Musicians, Director, guest artists, Color Guard, and the band's publicity and production volunteers all performed at their highest levels. Once again, locally owned supermarket, Dave's Marketplace provided the financial support for the production and preparation.

Thanks to beautiful weather, a big pre-concert publicity effort and the draw of a spectacular fireworks show, a large and enthusiastic audience gathered on the Lafayette Bandstand field next to the North Kingstown Town Beach. They were treated to a superb musical show by the band that included several new and updated pieces selected by Director Pelosi.

The Hummingbirds vocal trio warm up before singing with the Lafayette Band at this year's Fourth of July concert. (left to right) Megan Leibovitz, Celia Tafuri and Erin Maughan. The evening featured a broad variety of music performed by the band, a guest appearance by the Hummingbirds vocal trio, a VFW Color Guard, professional sound production and 35 musicians. The concert got off to a patriotic start with Presentation of the Colors by a contingent from VFW Post 152, of North Kingstown. The Hummingbirds led all in reciting the "Pledge of Allegiance", before combining with the band and audience for the "Star Spangled Banner".

The band deftly handled the challenging variety of musical genres posed by nineteen selections. The crowd was entertained by a selection of marches, "olde tyme" songs, show tunes and good ol' rock n' roll.

Musical features included special segments by Paul Dennewitz on euphonium, trumpeter Chuck Perhamus, alto sax man Steve O'Connell, jazz and rock rhythms laid down by drummer Mike Grant, and the band's flute septet.

As the band took a breather, The Hummingbirds, snappily attired in red white and blue outfits, recreated the sounds of the forties era Andrews Sisters and of the more contemporary Manhattan Transfer. The young ladies, who recently graduated from North Kingstown High School, later returned to the stage to help kick off the Grand Finale, joining with the band to lead the audience in singing "God Bless America". With this, the band roared into its signature closing piece, the rousing "Stars and Stripes Forever", as an earth shaking fireworks show began booming overhead during the majestic final section.

The audience's enjoyment of the show was heightened by the amplification provided by the professional sound system brought in, set up and operated by Pete Mc Donough, owner of BTI Recording Studios, and his wife, Carolyn. The music could be clearly heard at the farthest reaches of the sweeping lawn. Pete was pulling double duty that night, also playing trombone with the band.

This year's concert also marked multiple records of astonishing longevity of service. Music Director Joe Pelosi is celebrating 45 years at the band's podium! Not to be outdone in matters of longevity of service, clarinetist Ted Johnson turned "musical senior citizen", with 60 years as a Lafayette musician! Ted's era is within a blink of half of the band's 126 years of operation! Fittingly, Ted recently received an award from the Chamber of Commerce as the Band's "Volunteer of the Year".

The Lafayette Band greatly appreciates the efforts made by many to produce and support a great show. In particular, we recognize Dave's marketplace for generous financial assistance, The Hummingbirds for delightful vocal entertainment, VFW Post 152 for presenting the colors, BTI Record's Pete and Carolyn McDonough for sound engineering, Deb Goodwin for tireless promotion of the concert, Bonnie Dynon and Matt Sears for street banner redesign, Joe Pelosi for music selection and John Armstrong for stage announcements. The audience, in turn, showed its appreciation for a great musical evening with generous free will donations, which will help the non-profit band meet necessary operating expenses.