

Lowcountry Wind Symphony Marks First Anniversary

Written by Christine A. Raskind
Tuesday, 03 November 2015 13:54



This month, the Lowcountry Wind Symphony celebrates its first anniversary, under the baton of Music Director, Donald F. Jemella. This has been an exciting year, with the organization growing fast, and now numbering some fifty members.

The musicians are hard at work preparing for the first concert of the season, **‘Honoring America’s Veterans.’**

It will take place Sunday, November 8 at 4 pm at St. John’s Lutheran Church, located at 157 Lady’s Island Drive in Beaufort. The concert is free but donations are gratefully accepted.

Conducting a community band has long been a dream for Jemella, who moved to Sun City from New York in 2007. Now he is excited to see this idea come alive and move ahead so quickly. “The Beaufort area provides a wealth of musical talent, and we have been fortunate that so many quality musicians have joined the LWS. We have also had the good fortune to have found a wonderful rehearsal space at ArtWorks. The Beaufort Arts Council has welcomed the LWS from its inception, and we are most grateful to the Board of Directors and staff.”

Jemella has a lifelong background in music, beginning with Bachelor’s and Masters’ degrees from The Boston Conservatory and an eleven year teaching career. Although he worked as a corporate banker for nearly 30 years, he continued to be involved in music education as a guest conductor and clinician at high school music festivals in the Northeast, and served as an adjudicator at scholastic music competitions throughout the country.

Jemella brings a very positive attitude to each rehearsal. President of the LWS Board, Bobbi

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Logan agrees. "I had played the bassoon in high school and hadn't touched it since – that's more than 40 years! Don put an instrument in my hand and said, 'just play a few notes this week, you'll play more next week'." Bobbi continues, "Some of our members are very gifted, having been part of musical organizations all their lives. Others, like me, have been away from playing for years, only to come back to it now, finding great satisfaction and enjoyment. We work hard, but there is always humor and fun throughout the rehearsal. I love it!"

Although Gemella is not above cracking a few jokes occasionally, the group is very serious about making music of the highest quality together. The LWS has quickly become a close knit, collegial bunch of musicians. One member, who recently returned to playing, noted how quickly he was able to remember the fingerings and get his 'musical chops' back with some regular practice. Those who participate agree there is great joy in making music together!

The Lowcountry Wind Symphony is very fortunate to have a trio of conductors who share its podium. In addition to Maestro Gemella, Steve Giove serves as its Assistant Director. When not working with LWS, Giove is the Officer in Charge of the the Parris Island Marine Band. This partnership led to the musical highlight of the last concert season. In May, LWS was joined by the Parris Island Marine Band and Beaufort High School Band, with one hundred youth and adult players on stage together! This event speaks to one of LWS' most important goals – supporting music education in the greater Beaufort area.

Second Assistant Director, Deborah Hamner, is a former member of the PI Marine band, where she honed her conducting skills, in addition to playing in the clarinet section. Newly retired from the Marines, she is now on the faculty of Bridges Preparatory School, where she is the Band Director and teaches General Music in grades K-8. Having such strong continuity of leadership has meant that LWS is able to meet year round, with no breaks necessary when a conductor is called away on business or is on vacation.

LWS is a concert band and the selected music includes marches, classical pieces, show and movie tunes, as well as original compositions for band. In addition to the November concert, LWS plans to perform throughout Beaufort County, with dates already set in February and April.

The group rehearses weekly on Wednesday nights from 7 – 9 pm at ArtWorks, at 2127 in the Kmart Plaza, off Boundary Street in Beaufort.

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The Lowcountry Wind Symphony welcomes all area wind, brass, and percussion players who have a sincere desire to play and a willingness to attend regularly. Talented high school youth are also invited to participate. Interested players may contact Chris Raskind 843-838-6744 or Anton Ross 843-338-7459.

There is no cost to join LWS. However, donations from the community are welcome at any time. If you would like to become involved in financially supporting LWS, please contact us at info@lowcountrywindsymphony.com

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2015-2016 Concert Schedule

'Honoring America's Veterans'
Sun, Nov. 8, 2015, 4 pm
St. John's Lutheran Church, Lady's Island

'Concert Classics'
Sun, Jan. 31, 2016, 4 pm
Bluffton United Methodist Church

'Stage and Screen'
Sun, April 17, 2016 4 pm
Sea Island Presbyterian Church, Lady's Island

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