

Saluting America's Veterans with Music

Written by Editor
Monday, 30 October 2017 13:57



The Lowcountry Wind Symphony, directed by Donald F. Jemella, invites the greater Beaufort community of friends and neighbors to attend its first concert of the 2017-2018 season
□ □ 'Saluting America's Veterans III.'

LWS is a concert band, which annually begins its performance season with a musical tribute to the women and men who bravely serve to protect and defend our country. For this program the band wishes to invite all veterans and sends a special invitation to those who served in World War II living here in our community. For WWII veterans able to attend, special seating will be made available.

The concert repertoire includes traditional patriotic favorites including Battle Cry For Freedom, God of Our Fathers, America the Beautiful, Armed Forces: Pride of America, Let Freedom Ring, Sousa marches and more.

Also on the program are four selections by American composer, Stephen Melillo. A deeply spiritual and patriotic man, Mr. Melillo has written more than 1150 works for orchestra, band, jazz band, marching band and small ensembles. He has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize for his composition honoring survivors of the Bataan Death March *March of the Living* which was recorded by the Japanese Air Defense Band *March of the Living* as well as numerous Oscars and Emmy nominations.

Here is some information about Stephen Melillo's compositions which you will be hearing on our program:

Finest Hour was written as a tribute when the US commissioned a destroyer named for Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and the first ever non-American to be so honored. Melillo's deep regard for Churchill can be found in these words: "dedicated to those of us who look to the forever stalwart, past and present. In them we find the courage to face the insurmountable again and again and again."

Never Forgotten is one of more than 50 of Stephen Melillo's compositions he refers to as "musical haikus." Though less than 3 minutes in duration, it pays homage to the service and sacrifice of veterans, first responders, and those who put their lives on the line every day.

Those Who Serve begins with "U-S-A" rhythmically stated in Morse code. Melillo combines musical quotes from The Star Spangled Banner and snippets of several other patriotic themes as he honors the men and women who serve in the armed forces.

Star is Melillo's rendition of the national anthem, included on the musical video, "Takehashi: THAT WE MIGHT LIVE." "Star" has been performed at NY Giants football, Brooklyn Nets basketball, and NY Yankees baseball games. The Lowcountry Wind symphony will conclude the concert with this composition, a practice begun by Melillo at its premiere in Roswell, NM.

Maestro Jemella and Stephen Melillo's association continues a friendship which dates back more than 40 years. They first met when Melillo was playing trumpet in Summer Youth Festival Orchestra theatre productions directed by Jemella in Greenwich, CT. Although talented, Melillo did not always envision himself in a life of music. Following high school, he enrolled in a physics curriculum at the University of Connecticut, but soon felt the powerful call of the music he missed. With the encouragement of Jemella, he entered the Boston Conservatory of Music. Following graduation he pursued a degree in composition from Columbia University. Stephen Melillo's musical career includes years as a music educator in public schools, a guest conductor, and of course a highly acclaimed composer. The two friends keep in touch frequently, especially as the Lowcountry Wind Symphony showcases Melillo's compositions - which Maestro Jemella feels are among the premier pieces being written for concert band today.

The Assistant Conductor of the Lowcountry Wind Symphony is Deborah Hamner, a proud

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member of the US Marine Corps, now retired. When not on the podium, she can be found in the LWS clarinet section. She is also on the music faculty of Bridges Preparatory School in Beaufort.

This fall the Lowcountry Wind Symphony celebrates the third anniversary of its founding. LWS concerts are free and open to the public. However, donations are gratefully accepted. Please invite your friends and join these talented musicians in an evening of wonderful music you will not want to miss, as together we "Explore What's Musically Possible."

Area wind, brass, and percussion players who have a sincere desire to play and a willingness to attend regular rehearsals are welcome to join the Lowcountry Wind Symphony. For more information, please contact Chris Raskind 843-838-6744, or Bobbi Logan 843-705-3289.

Saluting America's Veterans III - a FREE concert of patriotic music will be performed at St. Peter's Catholic Church, 70 Lady's Island Dr., Beaufort on Friday, November 10 at 7 pm, and again at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 351 Buckwalter Parkway, Bluffton on Saturday, November 11 at 7 pm.