

Edwardsville Municipal Band Announces 2023 Concert Season

by Cathy A. Hensley
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EDWARDSVILLE – The Edwardsville Municipal Band is ready to take the stage for another season of Band Concerts in the Park, parades and special events. This year marks the 138th season for the band, a musical tradition in Edwardsville that dates back to the late 1800s.

The season officially begins on Monday, May 29, with a performance at Woodlawn Cemetery's Memorial Day Remembrance event, which runs from 10-11 a.m. at the cemetery, 1400 St. Louis Street.

The historic cemetery's annual program honors America's fallen veterans and also will feature speakers and military tributes. Then, on Thursday, June 8, the Band Concerts in the Park weekly series gets underway at the Cleon Etzkorn Bandstand in City Park next to the Edwardsville Public Library.

The band traditionally performs a mix of marches, big band arrangements and show tunes through the course of the season. Visitors are encouraged to bring a lawn chair or blanket to watch the concerts under the stars, which are free to attend and begin at 8 p. m. every Thursday through August 24. Concessions are offered during the concerts at the park as a fundraiser operated by various groups each week. The band, which includes more than 60 musicians, is coming off a season where the members bid farewell to longtime director Jim Kerfoot, who has been a fixture on the bandstand since 1998.

Without skipping a beat, the band has brought on two new directors with a wealth of experience and expertise to share conducting duties this season. John Korak and Rubén Darío Gómez, who are both Edwardsville residents and faculty members in the Music Department at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, will serve as conductors. Korak is SIUE's Music Department chair and has performed with the Mexico City Philharmonic, Illinois Symphony, Texas Baroque Ensemble, Dallas Bach Society, Texas Brass Ensemble, Texas Wind Symphony, the St. Louis Brass Ensemble, the Bach Society of St. Louis, the Bluebonnet Brass, the Kansas City Baroque Consortium, and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

Gómez is SIUE's Director of Bands and an assistant professor in the Music Department. His compositions have been performed and published in Colombia, Europe, and in the U. S. He has conducted bands and orchestras in Colombia, Peru, and the United States.

"We could not be more excited with John and Rubén joining our historic organization to take us to a new level," said Steve Wehling, a musician with the band and the chairman of the Municipal Band Board. "We're excited for the level of professionalism and just plain fun that they bring to the band." Also lending a hand for a few concerts this season will be Rodney Washburn, who retired from teaching after 33 years in the classroom, 30 of those in the Wesclin School District in Trenton. For a complete schedule of concert dates, parades, and events, plus information on the Municipal Band, please visit:

www.cityofedwardsville.com/municipalband