

Now In Week 5 The Alton Municipal Band Features Gospel Ensemble

July 6 2021 10:29 AM



ALTON – The Alton Municipal Band saw one of the largest turnouts in a long time at the Haskell Park July 4th Celebration Concert. All-ages spread out across the park to enjoy an evening of music and fun.

Kids participating in the parade during the kiddie march all received patriotic souvenirs which they proudly waived as they followed parade organizer, board member and horn player Adam Rodgers. Thank you to everyone who attended the concert.

Now in WEEK 5 the Alton Municipal Band is excited to feature a GOSPEL ENSEMBLE at the gazebo in Riverview Park as part of its Concerts in the Park summer series. This group better known as “Blancas” was born after Brenda Lancaster was hired as music director for a brilliant play “Andy” presented by 3 Purple Coats in 2018.



The ensemble has performed at events including the Illinois State Humanities Bicentennial Celebration podcast and Madison County Historical Society's reenactment of Mark Twain. The core members are music director and organizer Brenda Mack Lancaster, vocalist Brandi Jenkins, vocalist Carol Young, vocalist Monique Clark, and band members Ralph Monroe on piano, Willie Taylor on bass, and Matt Tepee on Drums. Lancaster is also director of the Gospel Choir at Lewis and Clark Community College.

With a mission to bring all cultures, ethnicities, and belief systems into harmony through music and stimulate the spiritual awareness of all people, this talented group of musicians promise a truly blessed evening of music overlooking the Mississippi River at Riverview on Thursday, July 8th at 8pm.

The full Alton Municipal Band will then return to Haskell Park near the Lucy Playhouse on Sunday, July 11th at 7pm themed CHOREOGRAPHY performing some wild numbers like Thrash by Randall D. Strandridge, Galop by Dmitri Shostakovich, Where the Wild Things Dance by Joseph Benjamin Earp, and Circus Days by K.L.King.

Members of the YWCA will be on hand to help organize the kiddie parade, asking any young participants to bring a pot or pan to practice parade drumming skills during the traditional march around the park. With a playground nearby, the band is happy to offer some extra fun to young families attending the park with their children.



Alton Municipal Band member and trumpeter Will Schmalbeck will be featured with his ensemble the second half of the program. Schmalbeck is an aspiring professional trumpet player born and raised in Alton and proud 2015 graduate from Alton High School. He went on to receive his bachelor's degree in jazz performance from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and is currently a graduate teaching assistant in the jazz department working on his master's degree. At UIUC Will had lead trumpet and soloist roles in the Concert Jazz Band, Latin Jazz Ensemble, and performed at various festivals and clinics in Chicago, New Orleans, and Dallas. Will has also been an active sideman and band leader on the Illinois jazz scene, performing at venues in Champaign, Urbana, Alton, Bloomington, Decatur, and most recently in Springfield with Tito Peunte Jr.'s Latin Jazz ensemble.

The ensemble tonight includes fellow jazz artists Tim Jarden, Chris Jarden, Kenneth King, and Andrew Schmalbeck. Grab your lawn chair because its going to be a hot time at the park. You will hear the likes of Voyage by Kenny Barron, Ceora by Lee Morgan, The Next Chapter a composition by Will Schmalbeck, Someday My Prince Will Come by Churchill, and Sandu by Clifford Brown.

Starting July 15th, WEEK 6, with the theme LET'S GO, the full band will return to Riverview Park! The band will be under the direction of David Drillinger with guest vocalist Susan Parton Stanard. With the band returning to its normal two concerts per week performance schedule for its final four weeks, the Alton Municipal Band will perform the same concert at the Gazebo in Riverview Park at 8:00 pm on Thursdays and at Haskell Park, near Lucy's Playhouse, at 7:00 pm on Sundays.

WEEK 7, themed AN EVENING WITH ERIN, will feature guest vocalist Erin Bode, from Nashville, Tennessee; WEEK 8 will be our ever-popular CHILDREN'S CONCERT, featuring STL TV/Radio personality Heidi Glaus narrating the playful story "Peter and the Wolf;" and WEEK 9, themed SO LONG, FAREWELL, will feature guest vocalist Robyn Brandon.

Now in its 131st consecutive season of summer concerts, the Alton Municipal Band welcomes and encourages the community to visit the parks for some quality outdoor time together with family and friends and bring a lawn chair to listen to some of the best music around. Audience members are still encouraged to follow the state and city health and safety guidelines for social distancing and mask wearing particularly for those who are non-vaccinated.

The city's continuing support for these FREE outdoor concerts is a wonderful Alton tradition dating back to 1891. Anyone interested in making a donation to further support expanded ensemble performances and concert activities in other parks and venues can send a check to city hall payable to the Alton Municipal Band Special Fund or make donations on-line through the Alton city website at www.cityofaltonil.com. Join our Friends of Alton Municipal Band group on Facebook to stay up to date on the latest happenings, and feel free to share your memories, pictures and best band moments. If you have other questions, let us know at info@altonmunyband.org and thank you for your support.

Alton Municipal Band - WEEK 5 CHOREOGRAPHY and JAZZ
GOSPEL CHORAL ENSEMBLE at the GAZEBO Thursday 8pm
CHOREOGRAPHY and JAZZ at HASKELL PARK Sunday 7pm
131st Consecutive Season of Concerts in the Park.