

THE WATSONVILLE BAND STORY

For the past 118 years there has been a musical organization with Watsonville as a part of its official title. These bands have given concerts in the town plaza, appeared in parades, played at fairs, dances, picnics, and traveled to other cities, sharing a special brand of spirited music. One group would disband, and another would form as the community of Watsonville, California grew.

When the people who had been part of the championship Watsonville High School bands of the 1930's came back from service in World War II, they joined with other musicians from central California communities to form a new marching and concert band. The date of this rebirth was February 1947, and the music has continued to be heard from that date to the present with no break.

The Watsonville Band is one of the very few adult community bands in the United States which performs on a regular basis, both marching and concert, and with all performances free to the public. Its membership ranges in age from 16 to 82 years, both men and women from all walks of life.

The current membership includes 90 musicians, 16-women color guard, 12 Barbara Ellen Dancers, 22-person band committee, 45 spouses, and over 500 Booster families and businesses. In a typical year the Band has 47 2-hour rehearsals and up to 20 public performances (12 concerts

and 8 parades). There are groups formed within the Band that perform throughout the year . . . a German Band, Dixieland Band, and an 18-piece Stage Band.

The Band has appeared in almost every major parade on the West Coast of the United States, and has given concerts for a wide variety of audiences—fairs, parks, hospitals, festivals of all types, and television. In its 38 years the Band has given 754 public performances, and amassed 259 first place awards out of the 273 times in parade competition.

Band members have taken their instruments and talent on special tours far from California's central coast. They visited the Seattle World's Fair in 1962, participated in the Lions International Convention in Chicago in 1967, performed at the Montreal World's Fair that same trip, joined the Aloha Week festivities in Honolulu in 1977, and paid a 'good neighbor' visit to Mexico City in 1979. For the Mexico trip the band commissioned an original work which was premiered in Mexico City and then presented as a gift to the Mexican people. A one-hour prime-time television concert was viewed by an estimated 12 million people in Mexico and our Southwestern states.

In July 1982 the Band celebrated its 35th anniversary with another trip to Canada, this time to the Calgary Stampede in Calgary, Alberta. In the world famous Stampede Parade and International Field Competition, the Band won the top awards with \$6,000 in cash prizes and considerable international recognition. The events were covered by national Canadian television and world-wide wire services.

The Band completed its first European Tour in June/July 1985. The 15-day tour included the countries of West Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Hungary. The reception at performances was outstanding. The touring group consisted of 429 Band and Booster members.

The Band celebrated its 40th anniversary with a tour of the South Pacific in the summer of 1988. The group of 563 people, Band & Booster members, toured New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, and on July 4 performed at Expo 88 in Brisbane, Australia, as official representative of the U.S. Government on our day at the World's Fair.

The Watsonville Band's major fund raising project is a French Fried Artichoke booth at the Watsonville Antique Fly-in, Gilroy Garlic Festival, Santa Cruz County Fair and the Monterey County Fair. Most community organization members spend a great deal of their time in fund-raising projects, then they give the money to charitable causes

within the community to make it a better place in which to live.

The Watsonville Band member works very hard to earn operating funds, and to prepare, both individually and as a group, to deliver a very special gift to the community: 'Food for the Soul'—MUSIC! Over the years literally millions of people on the North American continent have received and enjoyed this 'Gift' from the Watsonville Band.

Supporters of the Band can help in several ways: joining the Band Boosters group, volunteering to work in the artichoke booth, making a donation to the uniform and equipment fund, attending Band performances and spreading the word that the Band is always looking for new performing members. The BAND BOOSTERS have three categories of annual membership contributions: INDIVIDUAL or FAMILY, \$15; BUSINESS or SUSTAINING, \$50; and PATRON, \$100. There are no meetings, but each member receives several mailings each year, plus an invitation to go with the Band on major trips. All Booster contributions go into the Band's uniform and equipment fund.

If you are interested in joining the BOOSTERS, choose the membership category, make your check to the WATSONVILLE BAND, and mail to:

WATSONVILLE BAND, P.O. Box 1708, WATSONVILLE, CA 95077

Please include name, address and phone number. For more information, call Band Manager, Edward Pio at: 408/757-9384