



WATSONVILLE COMMUNITY BAND

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WATSONVILLE COMMUNITY BAND FAMILY HISTORY – 75TH ANNIVERSARY

02/07/2022

February 23, 1947

The first rehearsal of the “Watsonville Sciots Band” was in the Watsonville High School band room, 15 musicians attended. Ralph “Slip” Bohnett was the Conductor.

July 4, 1947

The first performance: Watsonville’s Independence Day Parade.

August 10, 1947

The first concert: Watsonville City Plaza

June, 1949

The first chartered flight, a Southwest DC3 from the Watsonville Airport to the famed All-Western Band Review in Long Beach, California.

May 19, 1953

Our first appearance on television – KSBW-TV in their Salinas studio.

August, 1954

Performed in San Diego at the national convention of the California-Nevada-Arizona Sciots, as the official band of the Pharaoh.

September, 1959

With a new name, the “Watsonville Band” made the first of many concert and marching performances at the California State Fair in Sacramento.

July, 1962

Designated as the official representative of the California State Fair, the band performed in concert at the Seattle World’s Fair and marched in the popular annual Sea Fair Parade, taking First Place in competition with over 40 other bands.

July 1967

The band was the official representative of the California-Nevada Lions Clubs at the International Convention of Lions Clubs in Chicago. We marched down Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago in competition with over 100 bands from around the world, and were awarded the highest score of any band in the parade, by professional judges. After four days in Chicago the band traveled to Montreal, Canada. We had marching and concert performances at the World’s Fair, Expo ’67, officially representing the City of Watsonville, Santa Cruz County, the California State Fair, and the United States.

May 1976 – August 2004

The Watsonville Band French Fried Artichoke Booth provided funding for the band’s travels, appearing at all local fairs, community events, the Watsonville Antique Fly-In, and the world-famous Gilroy Garlic Festival. The booth was operated entirely by band members – up to 25 per shift.

July, 1977

Our first trip to Hawaii was for the King Kamehameha Parade in Honolulu, and several concerts.

August, 1979

We traveled to Mexico City, Mexico, for performances in the Zocolo, where we played the Mexican National Anthem for the raising of the huge Mexican flag in front of the Presidential Palace and the National Cathedral (the only foreign band to do so up to that time!), plus a one-hour concert on live prime-time television, and others in City parks and a nearby resort. For this trip we commissioned new music from a Mexican composer, called *Mosiaco Mexicano*, which we performed at our concerts and gave as a gift to all musicians in Mexico.

July, 1982

Traveled to Calgary, Alberta, Canada to perform in the huge Calgary Stampede Parade and field competition, where we took First Place honors and earned \$10,000 in prize money.

June, 1985

Our first trip to Europe: West Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Austria, and Hungary. We performed for U.S. military personnel in Mainz, Germany; with a community band in Switzerland; in Vienna, Austria, and a specially-arranged concert on Castle Hill, overlooking the Danube River in Budapest, Hungary. We were the first amateur group ever to perform behind the Iron Curtain. We also enjoyed a special performance of the Strauss operetta *Wiener Blut*, at the Imperial Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna.

September, 1987

We performed a 45-minute concert for Pope John Paul II at Laguna Seca during his visit to Monterey

July, 1988

South Seas Tour to New Zealand, Australia, Fiji, and Hawaii. We paraded through downtown Auckland, NZ, and performed in concert with the World Champion New Zealand Brass Band. In Australia, in addition to a concert with the Port MacQuarrie community band, we represented the California State Fair and the United States with a concert at the U.S. Pavilion at the World's Fair, Expo 88, in Brisbane.

July, 1992

Our second European tour: England, France, Spain, Portugal, and Morocco. We performed concerts in Covent Garden in London and in the premier concert hall of Madrid; played a concert at the opening of Disneyland outside of Paris, and were tourists on the Spanish Riviera, Lisbon, and Expo 92, the World's Fair at Seville, Spain.

September 1995

As part of our nearly two-hour performance before a large crowd, we were honored to play for President Clinton at the dedication of California State University, Monterey Bay, the former Fort Ord.

July, 1996

Our first trip to Washington, D.C. – In the morning we marched in the National Independence Day Parade. In the evening played a two-hour concert on the White House lawn to an estimated crowd of 8,000 (with a 20-minute visit from President Clinton and Chief of Staff Leon Panetta). Watched the largest fireworks display in the country above the Mall from our concert seats on the White House lawn.

June 1998

we performed at the National Oceans Conference at Cannery Row, Monterey. Before a worldwide television audience and President and Mrs. Clinton, Vice President Gore, five Cabinet Secretaries and a large crowd we played a concert, culminating in *Hail to the Chief*. (*Hail to the Chief* announces the President, and the CNN announcer said that he had never heard it played better.) Normally a recording is used if the President's Own U.S. Marine Band is not present, to ensure appropriate quality. An advance man came to our rehearsal to hear us and give the okay to play. It's a "big deal" to be allowed to play *Hail to the Chief* for a Presidential appearance.

2005

The band reorganized into its present form, a 501c-3 non-profit organization, and changed its name to "Watsonville Community Band." Our commitment to performances in all of our communities continues. (We are proud of the statement that, though we are *The* Watsonville Community Band, we are not *A* Watsonville Community Band. We strive to equally serve all the residents of Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito Counties.)

May, 2017

Our second trip to Washington D. C. - We performed concerts at three venues: WWII Memorial, Air Force Memorial, and the Veteran's Retirement Home. As tourists we explored several of the Smithsonian museums and attended the National Memorial Day Concert on the Capitol lawn.

2020-2021-2022

During the Covid-enforced hiatus from March 11, 2020 to May 19, 2021 the band remained active in different ways. Monthly newsletters, weekly Zoom meetings, and email communication kept us as together as possible in the shutdown, plus virtual performances for Veteran's Day and the Holidays. Rehearsals resumed with great enthusiasm in May, with appropriate Covid protocols in place. We were thrilled to be able to march in the Aptos World's Shortest Parade on July 4th, and to play a concert in the historic Watsonville City Plaza. The advent of the Covid Delta variant forced a short break, with full rehearsals resuming in mid-September. Protocols continued as well, plus proof of vaccination required. Planning is underway to reinstitute a full performance schedule as conditions and venue availability allow. We look forward to celebrating our 75th Anniversary in 2022!

The band is one of very few adult community bands in the country that is still a marching band as well as a concert band. The band has marched in 518 parades, in competition in 397, winning 362 First Place awards, 24 Seconds, and 11 Thirds.