

The Annual Bangor Band Members Memorial Concert

Why We Do a Memorial Concert that's NOT for Memorial Day

As many of you know about your Bangor Band, there is a rich history that comes with being one of the oldest, continuous community bands in the United States. The Band has been performing concerts at various venues throughout the greater Bangor area, ever since its inaugural season in 1859. What many of you may not know, is the reason why we do this memorial concert. It isn't Memorial Day - it isn't even always in May (since we sometimes perform it in late April). Many of our members have been playing together for decades, forming friendships and bonds with one another, not just through music, but being there for each other through life's ups and downs. Our musical family is much like any family. We celebrate the weddings, birthdays, new babies and we stand by each other to mourn when members pass. It is that heritage of friendship which makes Bangor Band unique. As it was in the 1800s, so is it still today when we remember those friends who have passed on, because we know they were the foundation, the roots and the strength that built this Band to be what it is today. This is why in 2005, our own Billy Miller suggested the Band do a special concert, a memorial concert, to honor those treasured members, and to thank them for their gift that keeps on giving every time we gather together to play music for our audiences and community.

And as we end our annual Members Memorial Concert, we always play a certain march to remember one person in particular who gave decades of his talent and heart to the Bangor Band. Fondly remembered as "Tuba 1", Sergeant Major Samuel D. Wyman, Jr. was a member for 60 years, 17 of which he served as President. Out of all the marches he played during his career, his favorite was Old Comrades by Carl Teike. After 43 years in the Army National Guard, this march reminded him of the bonds he formed during that time with his service men and women. Sam always asked that it be played at his funeral. In 1999, the Band gave him this wish and for the Summer Season of 2000, we played Tieke's march many times in his memory. Since the first Members Memorial Concert in 2005, Old Comrades has become for the Band a reminder of the bonds we share with each other and with those who have passed before us.

Dianna Wyman'
Secretary
Bangor Band