

ARTS & LEISURE

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THURSDAY

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Encore performance

Harry F. Swanger's Compton Heights Band will return to Cape Girardeau for second concert at Capaha Park. Performance to include fireworks display.

By Bill Heitland
Southeast Missourian

Harry F. Swanger wasn't trying to rain on the Compton Heights 1976 Easter Parade in St. Louis when he chuckled at the manner in which the music was being presented.

He was sure he could do better than a tape recording of a march. Swanger got his chance to show just how much better the following year. From that opportunity sprang Swanger's chance to launch a music career on a full-time basis.

He made sure he didn't squander the opportunity. Swanger pulled together eight musicians to form what would later be called the Compton Heights Band. The band soon abandoned its modest trappings and began to perform to local crowds on "Tuneful Tuesdays" and later "Musical Mondays."

After 17 years, the Compton Heights contingent has evolved into one of the more popular Sousa-style bands in the state. "We got started on a fluke, but now we're busy with so much work it's getting harder and harder to handle," said Swanger.

Swanger is anxious to bring the Compton Heights Concert Band, which includes a group of 40 musicians, back to Cape Girardeau for a Sept. 5, Labor Day

said Swanger. "Robert Ellison is a great singer who receives a lot of praise, but I've never seen a crowd so moved by his performance as the one in Cape Girardeau that day. It was something to watch. They rose almost simultaneously after he finished 'Porgy and Bess'."

This year's Labor Day concert by the Compton Heights Band is expected to be an interesting encore with a varied Sousa-styled program of marches, show tunes and symphonic transcriptions designed to appeal to a wide variety of musical tastes. There will even be some fireworks to sprinkle over the two-hour performance.

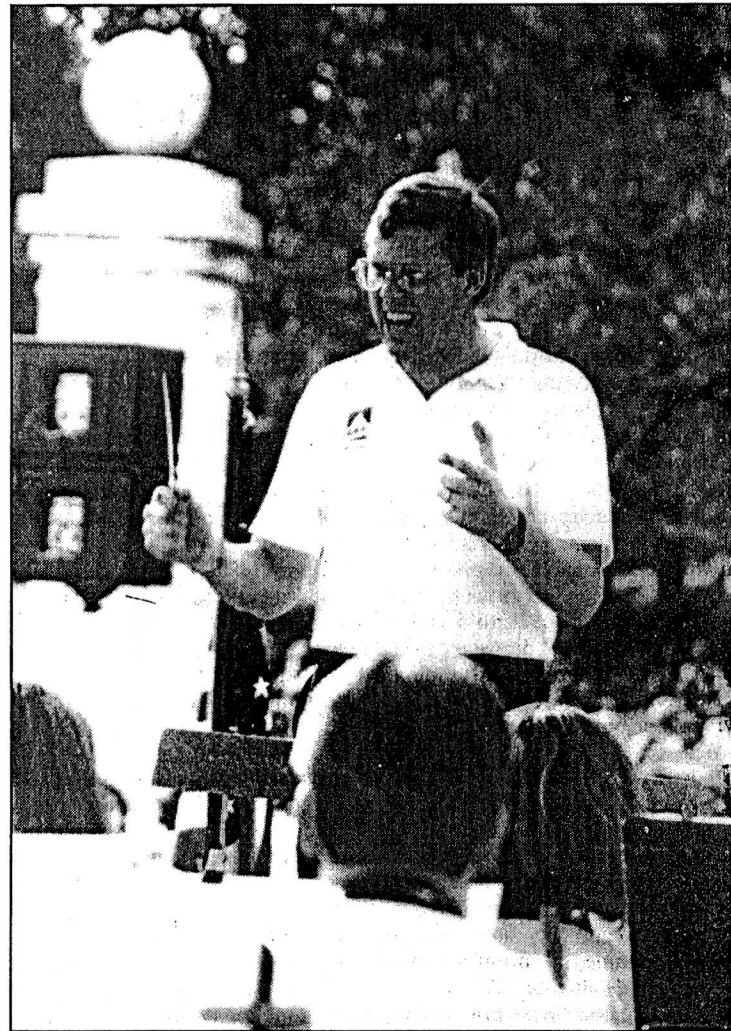
Included in the program are such songs as "U.S. Field Artillery", "The Glory of the Yankee Navy" and "Solid Men To The Front" by Sousa. Included in the program are the "Barber of Seville Overture" by Rossini and highlights from Disney's "Aladdin."

Swanger, who plays a clarinet and bassoon in the band, has grown particularly fond of the music from "Aladdin."

"I just love that music," said Swanger. "It has a special quality to it you just don't hear everyday."

A medley of familiar music by John Williams including songs from "Close Encounters of the Third Kind", "Star Wars", "Superman" and the "Olympic Theme and Fanfare". The music written for the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles will be performed early in the show to get the audience revved up;

When Ellison takes center stage, the concert should be in full swing. Ellison's bass-baritone voice, which has been compared to William Warfield's, will



Compton Heights Concert Band conductor Greg Fox will return to Cape Girardeau for a Labor Day performance Monday.

cians, back to Cape Girardeau for a Sept. 5, Labor Day Concert. "If it's anything like last year, we'll have a great time," said Swanger, who noted that the band played to a crowd of approximately 2,000 at Capaha Park.

"The only way I think the crowd was that big is because that's how many programs we gave out," he said.

The Compton Heights Band will perform under the direction of Greg Fox in the bandshell at Capaha Park beginning at 7 p.m. One of the featured guests will be baritone vocalist Robert Ellison, who literally brought a wave of fans to their feet at last year's event.

"It was like watching a wave at a baseball game,"

which has been compared to William Warfield's, will sing "Candy Man" and a unique version of "America The Beautiful" arranged by David Clydesdale. The Cape Girardeau concert will mark the first time Ellison and the Compton Heights Band will perform this arrangement together. It was especially created for Ellison by Clydesdale.

In honor of the holiday weekend, Ellison will lead the audience in a sing-along of working-class tunes such as "Sixteen Tons" and "I've Been Working On The Railroad."

In addition, the band will bring the concert to a conclusion with a finale topped by Tchaikovsky's "Overture of 1812", complete with a fireworks display.



Guest soloist Bob Ellison, who was one of the stars of last year's concert, will return this year.

