

Seminole Warhawk Band kicks off Music in the Park series



By KELAHA LEHART, Tampa Bay Newspapers Sep 24, 2024



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Music in the Park kicked off the first of four concert events with a performance by the Seminole Warhawk Band. Photos by KELAHA LEHART, Tampa Bay Newspapers



SEMINOLE — The Music in the Park concert series kicked off the first of four concert events on Sept. 20 with an unforgettable opening night featuring the Seminole Warhawk Band.

Community members gathered at Seminole City Park to support their local high school musicians.

“We are so excited to be here tonight to kick off another Music in the Park series,” said Recreation Director Becky Gunter, addressing both newcomers and returning attendees.

City Manager Ann Toney-Deal followed, praising the hard work and dedication of the Seminole High School students. “These kids work very hard to bring you the quality music you’re going to hear tonight,” she said. Deal also acknowledged the city’s elected officials and sponsors who made the event possible.

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Rally for the Roses

The night held extra significance as the community rallied to support the Warhawk band's upcoming journey to the prestigious Rose Parade in Pasadena, California. The band, known for its excellence in performance, is raising funds to cover the cost of sending 153 students to the parade.

Gunter encouraged the crowd to support the band's fundraising efforts, noting that proceeds from parking, concessions, and drink sales would go directly toward the trip. "We are trying to get these guys to the Rose Parade, right?" she said, prompting cheers from the audience.

The cost is about \$3,300 per student to get to the Rose Parade, totaling \$500,000.

"We're basically down to our final \$20,000, which is incredible that we've been able to come to this far," said Band Director Gerard Madrinan.

Madrinan spoke with pride about the students' dedication, highlighting the long hours they put in. "They're extraordinary and hard-working students, and they're excited to perform for you," he said.

The evening opened with a stirring rendition of the National Anthem, followed by a series of performances by the Warhawk woodwinds, brass, and drumline.

The band played a mix of traditional tunes including selections from the 1985 movie "The American President."

The highlight of the evening was the drumline's performance, which showcased cadences that will accompany the band during the Rose Parade. They performed renditions of "Oakridge" and "Ohio," giving the audience a preview of what's to come in California.

In addition, the school's two jazz bands — including the High Noon Jazz Band — kept the energy high with their dynamic sets. They performed swing tunes like "Five Note Blues" and groovy favorites such as the Commodores' "Brick House" and their finale, "Run Away Baby" by Bruno Mars.

During the performance, Jazz Band Director Steve Harris signaled to the students to play solos, allowing them to showcase their individual talents. The audience applauded as each student shined in the spotlight.

Night of community, celebration

Ashley Frydrych, special event coordinator for the Seminole Recreation Center, introduced Leah Hoffman, president of the Kiwanis Breakfast Club of Seminole. Hoffman presented a \$1,000 donation to support the band's trip, further highlighting the community's investment in its young musicians.

"We are very honored to be part of this Seminole community," Hoffman said, emphasizing the pride everyone shares in the Seminole High School Band's achievements.

Madrinan thanked the Kiwanis Breakfast Club of Seminole for their generous donation and reflected on the moment the band submitted their application for the Rose Parade. He shared the excitement of receiving the call a year ago from Pasadena announcing their acceptance into the 2025 Parade.

He told the students there was a possibility they wouldn't be accepted for four to seven years, but asked if they would do it for the program's legacy, paving the way for future members to have a chance. After that, the students agreed to apply.

"When we're teaching ... we're trying to create better people ... the ones who can see beyond themselves, who can understand that they're making an investment for the future," he said. "These students are not only going to represent the Warhawk band that came before them, but they're also representing me, and they're representing you."

Madrinan gave a special shout-out to the administration, parents, and volunteer chaperones.

"You take a community who cares about performing arts that wants them to be the best, and that's why we have magic," he said. "Thank you for helping us create magic."

To round out the event, the entire Warhawk band and color guard came together for a grand finale. The full marching band of 153 students performed "Rock Around the Clock" and "Gangnam Style," previewing the performances that will soon be seen by millions worldwide during the Rose Parade in 2025.

Music in the Park continues every Friday for the next three weeks at Seminole City Park with performances lined up from Twinkle & Rock Soul Radio, Midnight Joker, and Smooth D and the Boyz.

For more information on the Seminole High School Band, visit www.seminoleband.org.

For more information on upcoming events in the Music in the Park series, visit the Seminole City Center website.