

The Latest News from Your Minnesota State Band

Summer 2022

Memorial Day



Minnesota State Band performing at Fort Snelling National Cemetery on Memorial Day 2013

The Minnesota State Band has always been active during Memorial Day. For many years, going back to the time when Joseph Komro was the Music Director, the Minnesota State Band was the official band at the Memorial Day Ceremony at Fort Snelling National Cemetery. Every spring we would work hard to prepare the appropriate music for the day and always looked forward to being a part of the ceremony. The band would usually rent a bus to provide transportation to Fort Snelling, thereby not taking up parking spots at the cemetery.

Well in the spring of 2015, the volunteer committee that organized the Memorial Day Ceremony at Fort Snelling decided that they would prefer to have a service band provide the music for the

ceremony. While this came as a great disappointment to all of our members, we bowed out gracefully to allow a service band to perform.

But this was hardly the end of the band's participation in Memorial Day. We located another venue and on May 28, 2016 we performed our Memorial Day Concert at Como Park Pavilion in St. Paul, starting a brand-new tradition. We have been there ever since.

This year it was quite a struggle to perform at Como due the wind gusts of over 20 miles per hour. Such winds tend to have the effect of sending sheet music flying into the air and music stands to be knocked over. But we went ahead and had a beautiful and heartfelt performance appropriate to the day, playing songs like ***America the Beautiful, Hymn to the Fallen, Armed Forces Salute*** and ***The Stars and Stripes Forever***.

Lakewood Cemetery also reached out to the Minnesota State Band to provide the music this Memorial Day, and the plan was that the band would perform in the morning at Lakewood and in the afternoon at Como Park. Unfortunately, due to lightning and rain the event at Lakewood was canceled. We hope we have the opportunity to perform at the Memorial Day Ceremony at Lakewood in 2023.

No matter whether we play at Fort Snelling Cemetery, Lakewood Cemetery or at Como Park, we feel very honored just to be a part of Memorial Day every year.

Meet Our Very First Director



Colonel C.M. Selling.
Photo courtesy of J.C. Pennoyer

The Minnesota State Band was founded in April of 1898, under the direction of Colonel Christian Marius Selling. Col. Selling immigrated to Minnesota from Copenhagen, Denmark in 1889. Both his parents were talented musicians and at the age of 15, Christian was admitted to one of the Danish military bands, where he served for 15 years. He was decorated with the Cross of Honor by the Danish government for his service. He came to St. Paul in response to invitations by the Danish community and was employed as Director for the Apollo Society, a Danish singing society. He was proficient on the euphonium and violin and performed as soloist with musical organizations and churches in the Twin Cities. He was also orchestra director at the Grand Opera House in St. Paul. His engagement as director for the newly formed Minnesota State Band was quite a coup.

During his tenure as Director of the Minnesota State Band, 1898 – 1904, Colonel Selling wrote at least thirteen pieces specifically for the band to play at summer concerts. Only one of these pieces has survived to the present day, a march titled *Summer Carnival*. The MSB recently reached out to a grandson of Colonel Selling to ask if the family still had any of the music their grandfather had written for the band. Unfortunately, they no longer have any of his original band compositions. However, they did have twenty-one original plays that Colonel Selling wrote after he moved to New York in 1905. The family offered these plays to the MSB for our archives, and we have gratefully accepted this offer. Eventually, we hope that these plays will be available to the public via our archives at the Minnesota History Center.

The band is very grateful to the family of Colonel Selling, and specifically to his grandson, Mr. J.C. Pennoyer for this very generous donation.