



THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY'S
45TH ANNUAL

Summer POPS

SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2026

AT 8 PM

RAIN DATE JUNE 21

PRE-SHOW AT 6:15 PM

WILCOX PARK, WESTERLY

PERFORMED BY

THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY
THE POPS FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA
ANDREW HOWELL, CONDUCTOR

SPECIAL GUESTS

TENOR BRIAN CHENEY

PRE-SHOW ARTISTS

PIANIST BOB MALONE
THE WESTERLY MORRIS MEN
THE KNICKERBOCKER ALL STARS

GRAND FINALE

FIREWORKS BY GRUCCI
THE ARTILLERY COMPANY OF NEWPORT
THE BELLS OF CHRIST CHURCH

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

BOB ELMER



WESTERLY LIBRARY
& WILCOX PARK



FIREWORKS PRESENTED BY
ROBIN MARVEL &
THE MARVEL FAMILY





The Chorus of Westerly

Andrew Howell,
The Marion & Bill Palm Music Director
George Kent, Music Director Emeritus

George Kent Performance Hall • 119 High Street
Westerly, RI 02891 • 401-596-8663
chorusofwesterly.org • westerlypops.org

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE

Due to an extensive sprinkler system throughout the park, by park regulation, nothing may be driven into the ground to anchor blankets or other items. You will be held responsible for any damage incurred to the system by such disregard of this regulation. Remember that the park is owned by the Memorial & Library Association and we are guests in this wonderful site. Please abide by the rules.

RESTROOM FACILITIES

Portable restrooms, including handicap accessible units are located in the parking lot to the left as you face the stage. These are located at the end of the parking lot nearest the Library. Follow the posted signs along the sidewalks in the Park. There is no access to these facilities by going over the hill. There are no public facilities behind the stage area. Please respect Wilcox Park and restricted areas!

POPS WEATHER UPDATES

In the event of a weather related postponement, listen to WBLQ 1230 AM, check chorusofwesterly.org, or check our Facebook page facebook.com/westerlypops, or our Instagram @chorusofwesterly - if there is no update, there is no postponement!

BUYING MERCHANDISE INSIDE THE PARK KEEPS THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY SINGING!

Official Summer Pops sweatshirts, t-shirts, and other event merchandise is available at the official merchandise tent at the end of the center aisle.

In addition, food items (including hot dogs, pizza, popcorn, pretzels, water, soda) are being sold at the Rotary tents, also at the end of the center aisle. All proceeds generated from sales of merchandise at the Rotary tents are contributed back to the Chorus of Westerly in support of Summer Pops.

Please note that street vendors outside the perimeter of Wilcox Park are not affiliated with Summer Pops or the Chorus of Westerly.



RESERVING YOUR SPOT IN WILCOX PARK

Seating for Summer Pops is first come, first serve, but there are regulations you need to be aware of for the event. By 5 pm on Friday, June 19 (weather permitting), all audience seating areas, the fireworks safety zone, and other restricted areas will be cleared and marked off with color-coded lines, security fencing or barrier tape, and other crowd control mechanisms. Restricted areas that are not available for the public to put blankets down or sit in will be marked with red barrier tape or fencing. Aisles and general seating areas will be demarcated with yellow lines with supports.

Restricted areas must be respected and are subject to enforcement. Violators may be subject to ejection from the park. Restricted areas for the public include but are not necessarily limited to: the area directly in front of the stage, the sides of the stage, the stage itself, the backstage area, the fireworks zone. **Members of the public may not come backstage or go on the stage for any reason.**

Members of the public may put their blanket down in the seating areas of the park in the meadow or on the hills (and then leave them unoccupied) beginning at **5 pm on Friday, June 19, 2026**. Nothing else may be left in any spot in the park unattended at any time. All concert patrons and anyone entering

Wilcox Park should note and be fully aware: The Chorus of Westerly and Westerly Library and Wilcox Park - including all of their respective staffs, boards, volunteers, performers, members, and anyone else affiliated with the event or these organizations **ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE** for assuring your location or property left in Wilcox Park at any time.

Please note that the areas in the center meadow directly in front of the stage, on both sides of the center aisle (clearly demarcated with yellow lines) are reserved for blankets for individuals/families/group to sit on and **LOW** sand chairs only. Taller chairs are restricted to areas outside the two center sections or on the hills. Taller chairs will be permitted in the specially reserved and designated front row boxes with permission.

Note that any blanket or item placed in undesignated areas are subject to removal in accordance with Westerly Police directives. Please also note that due to the fireworks being launched from the north side of the pond in Wilcox Park, no blankets or other items may be placed in the pond area. Security zones in these areas are subject to shift the morning of June 20, 2026, and the Summer Pops staff reserves the right to relocate any blanket that may be impacted by any necessary security zone shift.

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WELCOME TO SUMMER POPS

Since the first Summer Pops in 1981, more than 700,000 New Englanders (and some from even further away) have come to downtown Westerly on a summer weekend and gathered together for The Chorus of Westerly's Summer Pops. It is perhaps the beauty of the setting, Wilcox Park, that sets the tone for this grand summer event. Wilcox Park is a private park owned by the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly. Each year, this pristine setting is turned into a huge outdoor concert hall, complete with an enormous stage, professional lighting and sound, special security forces, and extra sanitary facilities. Within twelve hours of the event's conclusion, Wilcox Park is quickly returned to a downtown park by a hardworking group of professionals and volunteers. However, this could not be accomplished without a few rules and the miraculous cooperation of you, our audience. To make this year's historic event happen,

here are some items to be aware of:

Enjoy with your dinner - You can bring your dinner to Pops. It can be simple or fancy, whatever you think you'd enjoy best under the stars. But, if you want to purchase food onsite, the Rotary Club of Westerly has it for sale at the end of the center aisle. Remember, regardless of how you dine, alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the park. Fires, be they wood, charcoal, hibachi, or propane, are also not allowed.

Enjoy the music - Be courteous to those around you and keep talking to a low volume. Over 300 musicians will sing, play, and perform for you tonight. You do not want to miss a moment of it and you want to make sure your neighbors in the park can hear just as well as you can!

Feel free to use portable restrooms - There are ample portable restroom facilities located in the parking lot nearest the library and post

office. Please feel free to use them during the concert. Please note that the portable restrooms behind the stage are ONLY for the performers.

Do not sit, stand, or walk directly on the stage, in front of the stage, on the sides of the stage, or backstage. For security and safety and health reasons, members of the public MAY NOT go into any of the stage zones. Stage and backstage access will be enforced this year and only ID personnel and performers will be allowed in this area.

Unattended personal property of ANY kind (including unattended coolers, backpacks, bags, chairs, anything besides a blanket) WILL be removed without warning by the police. These may be recovered from an area in the parking lot near the portable restroom facilities but are not our responsibility to protect.

Trash and Recycling - Look for Summer

Pops trash and recycling containers located throughout the park. Please pick up after yourself and even after those around you when necessary.

Please take everything you bring with you back home again when you leave. This includes any rocks or other items you may bring to hold down the corners of your blanket.

Take care of the park and the grass. When you come to put down your blanket, do not use spikes or similar items to anchor your blanket; irrigation pipes may be damaged. Any damage caused by such activity will be your responsibility. There is a new and extensive sprinkler system throughout the park. Although a plastic tarp may do a good job keeping your blanket dry, it also does a good job killing the grass. Plastic tarps or plasticized materials are prohibited and will be removed.

NOTICE TO ALL ATTENDING SUMMER POPS

Summer Pops is a free event open to the entire community. The event is presented, produced, and performed by The Chorus of Westerly and is free every year thanks to the contributions of more than 200 individuals, over 50 businesses, grants from the Towns of Westerly and Stonington, and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. It is also possible thanks to the volunteerism of several hundred more individuals from our community and beyond. We are able to keep Summer Pops safe and a family event year after year thanks to the support and dedication of the Westerly Police Department, the Westerly Fire Department, the Westerly Ambulance Corps, Westerly Hospital - Yale New Haven Health, the Westerly Department of Public Works, the Stonington Police Department, the Pawcatuck Fire Department, and so many other public service and safety organizations. We cannot thank everyone involved in making this concert "go" enough!

The Chorus of Westerly is able to offer Summer Pops year after year thanks to the generosity of the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly who has let us use Wilcox Park every year since 1983. We are especially grateful to the staff and volunteers of the Westerly Library and Wilcox Park for all they do to support this event.

Wilcox Park is a private non-profit park that has owned and operated by the Memorial and Library Association of Westerly, that is been so beautifully cared for and available and open to the public for more than a century. The music of Summer Pops and the beauty of Wilcox Park are such a magical pairing and, together

with all of you in the audience, bring such unique life to our beloved community event.

We do remind all attending Summer Pops, though, that while this is a free and open community event, and there are some risks and notes the Chorus of Westerly would like everyone to be aware of before and while attending Summer Pops.

First, please be advised that all members of the public entering Wilcox Park on the day of Summer Pops are doing so voluntarily at their own risk. Those entering the park on this day do so willing and with the full understanding of the normal and regular risks of attending a free outdoor performance with a very large (anticipated) crowd, with open seating, with potentially loud music, with fireworks and cannons, and other related concert items. If you attend the concert or come into the park on Summer Pops Day, you accept these risks. The Chorus of Westerly, Westerly Library and Wilcox Park (Memorial and Library Association of Westerly), and their staff, affiliates, contractors, musicians, volunteers, trustees, directors, and vendors make no assurances of zero risk to anyone attending, working, or entering the park especially in regards to possible spread of a virus or illness, or of incidents or accidents one might experience while in the park on this day or attending the concert. All of those involved in Summer Pops mentioned above are not liable to you or anyone in these matters if you chose to come into Wilcox Park for the event/day of the event voluntarily. Again, you attend the performance and/or enter the park understanding these risks.

If you are currently sick, feeling sick, or have recently tested positive for any contagious virus or illness such as both not limited to Covid-19 and/or any of its variants, any type or variant of a coronavirus-type illness, any type or variant of hantavirus, influenza of any type, measles, any type of pox, RSV, or other contagious conditions, or you have been directed to stay away from others or quarantine by a medical professional, do not come to Summer Pops and stay out of Wilcox Park the day of the performance and the especially during the event. If you are concerned about your own health or a family member's health or anyone else you are in close contact with, or if you are concerned about catching a virus or similar at Summer Pops, you should not attend the performance as there are always risks of infection while attending an event of this kind.

Be advised that facial coverings (and masks) are not required at this time to attend Summer Pops in Wilcox Park. Audience members, volunteers, staff, and performers are not required to wear facial coverings (masks) and the vast majority of said individuals will not be wearing one in Wilcox Park for Summer Pops.

Be advised that facial coverings and masks are not required at this time to attend Summer Pops in Wilcox Park. Audience members, volunteers, staff, and performers are not required wear a mask and the vast majority of said individuals will not be wearing one at the performance.

NO BACKSTAGE ACCESS

Please note that no one is allowed backstage or on the sides of the stage except

for performers, technical staff, and production staff, and volunteers with particular clearance. Backstage restrooms are for these individuals only.

SUMMER POPS IS BEING RECORDED AND PHOTOGRAPHED.

All guests entering Wilcox Park and attending Summer Pops should be aware that the entire Pops show day and evening (including soundchecks, rehearsals, the pre-show, the main show, and the fireworks) are being recorded by both video and audio devices located on/near the stage and in public open areas throughout the park. In addition, event photography will be taking place throughout the Pops day and evening. This includes but is not limited to recording and/or possible photography in and around the audience and event attendees. Be alerted that your image, sound, or likeness may be captured in these various media forms and be used or a part of future promotional or artistic outputs of the performers or producers involved or in press/media coverage of the event or future events. If you or your family are entering the park voluntarily for this event, you are doing so with this knowledge and do so freely understanding you are attending an open space public event and are allowing yourself to possibly be photographed, filmed, or recorded as part of the event festivities with no compensation or other benefit. If you do not agree with this permission and terms or do not want to be potentially recorded or photographed at the event, please do not attend the event or enter Wilcox Park.

WELCOME TO THE 45TH *Summer* POPS



WELCOME *Welcome to the historic 45th Summer Pops!*

On a warm Sunday night 44 summers ago, on the eve of their first-ever international concert tour in 1981, the Chorus of Westerly assembled on the steps of the post office in Dixon Square. Under the baton of George Kent, the Chorus joined with the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra, the U.S. Coast Guard Band, and the Artillery Company of Newport. Together, the performers presented a first of its kind performance in Westerly that night - a major outdoor choral and orchestral "Summer Pops" open to all in the community.

This post office steps concert was not intended to be an annual occurrence nor did the Chorus anticipate the interest from the community. The Pops concert was intended to be a celebratory send-off concert and special one-time "thank you" event offered as a gift to the community for its support of the Chorus of Westerly's forthcoming Great Britain tour.

With Dixon Square closed for the day to traffic, a stage and risers were constructed, microphones and speakers put in place, and 500 chairs were set-up for the audience. By concert time, not only was every chair

filled, but several thousand more people were standing or sitting on the pavement throughout Dixon Square and also on Broad Street and High Street. By all accounts, the concert - both musically and as a community event - was a huge success and the Chorus headed off on their tour to Great Britain.

While the Chorus toured, back home, the volunteer organizers of Pops '81 started receiving dozens of phone calls asking when Summer Pops '82 would take place. It was clear that community interest was high for another Pops concert. As such, the Chorus decided it was worth attempting Summer Pops again in Dixon Square in 1982. When that Summer Pops ultimately happened, the crowd was even larger than the year before. It stretched down every street off Dixon Square including on and over the Pawcatuck River bridge into Connecticut. The audience was estimated to be between 5,000 and 10,000, many of whom could not even see or hear the performance.

There was no mistaking it after Summer Pops 1982 - Pops was now a town tradition and the Chorus of Westerly added it to its annual concert season. However, with the crowd sizes growing so large, a new venue was needed for the performance. In early 1983, Chorus leadership approached the Memorial and Library Association of

Westerly with a proposal to move Summer Pops from Dixon Square to Wilcox Park. Thanks to the support and care of the Library's leadership and staff, Wilcox Park has now served as the home of Summer Pops every year since (with the exception of the one year without Summer Pops, 2020).

Saturday, June 20, 2026 (rain date June 21) will mark the 45th performance of Summer Pops. Since 1981, more than 700,000 people have now attended a Summer Pops. Approximately 2500 area residents - children and adults - have performed in Summer Pops as a member of the Chorus of Westerly. Approximately 500 different musicians have joined us as members of the orchestra. The guests and artists have included musicians and bands of all types and multiple Grammy-award winners. For every show since 1981, the Artillery Company of Newport has faithfully participated in the spectacular grand finale along with the ringing bells of Christ Church. Since 1983, as each Summer Pops ends, the skies over the park have been filled with the spectacular Fireworks by Grucci. And, we should not forget, the pre-show has always had music, dance, and joy provided by The Westerly Morris Men!

Overtime, the leadership of Summer Pops has been one of its most important reasons for success and growth. Artistically, only two

individuals have ever conducted Summer Pops. Chorus founding director George Kent, who passed away last June, began, grew, and nurtured Summer Pops from 1981 through 2012. Andrew Howell, the Marion & Bill Palm Music Director of the Chorus of Westerly, has conducted every Summer Pops since 2013. Each conductor has brought careful attention and excellence to the performance and to our artistic community.

THE MAIN SHOW PROGRAM

The Chorus of Westerly and Pops Festival Orchestra, conducted by Chorus of Westerly Music Director Andrew Howell (now concluding his 14th season with the Chorus of Westerly), will be the featured performers throughout the show. The finale will feature the Artillery Company of Newport, the Bells of Christ Church, and Fireworks by Grucci.

This year's Summer Pops program will feature great music for chorus and orchestra from many genres and a tip of the cap to America's 250th Anniversary with The Armed Forces Salute. The program will also feature three exciting medleys of music arranged by John Tafone: a Taylor Swift Medley, a Broadway Musical Medley, and a reprise of his beloved 1980s-Music Medley. Additionally, there will be music

from Hamilton and Les Mis, Raiders of the Lost Ark, and more. Special guest, Brian Cheney, tenor, will sing music from opera and Broadway including music from Hamilton and the Greatest Showman. And, as always, the grand finale will feature the 1812 Overture.

THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY

Since 1959, the Chorus of Westerly has presented over 800 performances to an audience of 1.8 million people across the United States, Germany, France, England, Scotland, Wales, Italy, the Czech Republic, Austria, and Hungary, as part of six international concert tours. Over 2,500 area residents have been members of the Chorus with 1,200 singing as children or teenagers. When the Chorus was founded by George Kent in 1959, one of its primary missions was to become an organization where children and adults could sing major works of the choral repertoire in a setting of the highest artistic merit. Today, the Chorus has become nationally recognized as unique in its practice of having children sing a full concert

season of challenging repertoire with adult singers.

The Chorus of Westerly now offers several choral and music paths. Its main symphonic chorus program (members of whom are singing Summer Pops) includes children and adults who sing all the major concerts on the Chorus's subscription/symphonic season. Adult singers are auditioned for the symphonic chorus and are expected to have a certain music competency. Child and teen singers are admitted to the symphonic program without expectation of any advanced musical training. Once a child/teen joins the Chorus of Westerly, they are then placed at the appropriate training level in order to teach them their musical fundamentals and singing skills and prepare them for performance with the adults. The Chorus recently began a second choral program for adults – the Foundations Chorus – which is designed for singers who may not yet qualify for the symphonic program, singers who wish to sing in a less intense program than the symphonic, or adult singers who simply wish to learn singing/music fundamentals. The program is open to any adult singer without audition.

For those children interested, during

the academic year, the Chorus of Westerly now offers a free after-school training choir program in every elementary school in Westerly and Stonington. Interested kids/parents, should speak to their music teachers once the school year begins for more program information.

In addition to the above programs, the public can now join several other new initiatives of the Chorus of Westerly. This includes a non-auditioned, daytime, Senior Encore Choir program on Friday mornings at Kent Hall, a Senior Encore Choir program on Thursdays for those living at Stoneridge in Mystic, CT, a summer-time morning chant program called 'Dawn Song,' and the Westerly Threshold Singers, a program to singing to individuals in their final days and hours.

THE GRAND FINALE

Since 1983, Summer Pops ends with a bang thanks to Fireworks by Grucci. The Grucci family, known around the world as the "First Family of Fireworks," has provided fireworks for the inaugurations of six American presidents, national

celebrations of the bicentennial and the U.S. Constitution, and the wedding of Sheik Hazza of Abu Dhabi. Joining Grucci during the grand finale are the cannons of the Artillery Company of Newport and the church bells of Christ Church, rung by Ryan Saunders. The Grucci fireworks show is launched nearby to the Pops audience from the Pond Area in the park. Please be aware that the fireworks, bells, and cannons are very loud.

FIREWORKS SAFETY

With the fireworks launching from within the park, we ask that all audience members and guests in and around Wilcox Park stay out of the marked Fireworks zone near the pond. The Fireworks by Grucci performance and show will be very safe, but to be extra cautious, we ask that you stay out of the fenced in area at all times and do not tamper with any fence, security tape, or signs in that area or any area in the park. Thank you for helping us spread the word. We ask also that no audience member or guest go backstage during the pre-show or performance.



ATLANTIC AUDIOLOGY



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Cranston Office: 1150 Reservoir Avenue, Suite 305 B, Cranston, RI



SEARCHING FOR HIS VOICE BRIAN FOUND HIMSELF

By RONA MANN

Special to The Westerly Sun

A lot of kids know what they want to be when they grown up. An astronaut. A famous basketball or football player. A rock star.

Big dreams for little people are actually good things. It helps them to make plans, encourages them to dream bigger, forces them to reach higher. But sometimes the young person growing up just isn't sure. They are searching, they first need to find their voice.

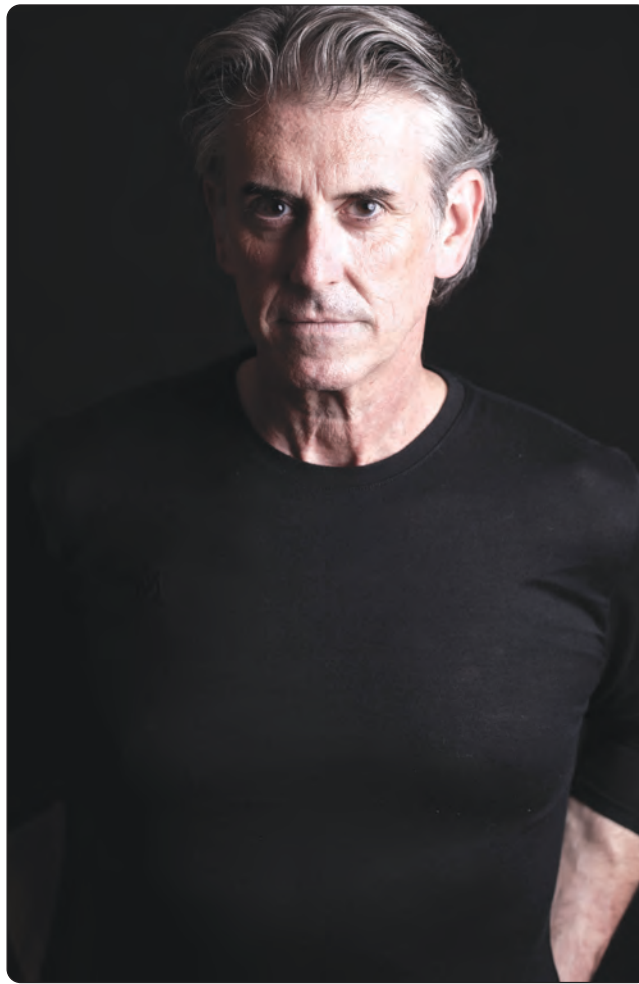
This is the story of a man who not only found his voice, but along the way, his voice found him, opening up a whole new world of opportunity in the arts, and now, Brian Cheney is lapping it up with all the gusto of a hungry cat. Brian Cheney is not afraid to laugh at himself, to label himself a "real ham," and to leap forward with all he's got, even into uncharted territory.

Aren't we lucky, therefore, to have him as the featured performer at this year's Summer Pops? In fact, just wait till you get a load of this guy and his incredible pipes!

Cheney played just about every instrument in both middle school and high school, "All the brass and woodwinds," he says. When others in his class decided to sing in the choir, he chose the other direction, so when a teacher suggested he learn to sing, he questioned, "How do you do that? I can read music for any instrument, but how do I do that for singing? How do I phonate the music? I was always searching for my real voice."

Brian took the first step by auditioning for the high school production of "The Wizard of Oz," and was immediately cast as the Tin Man. "Turns out, I was a real ham," Cheney laughed. "I loved musical theater, and I was good at it."

He then moved on to opera which he studied at the famed Manhattan School of Music. He quickly learned that singing opera or classical music to an audience of thousands meant singing unamplified...no microphones...



and also it meant having to learn new languages. "The three main languages you must know to sing opera are Italian, French, and German, but on occasion I've also sung in Czech and sometimes even in Russian."

Cheney went on to talk glowingly about his mentor, Jerry Hadley, a protege of the great composer and conductor, Leonard Bernstein. "Hadley was undoubtedly the greatest of all American tenors and meeting him at a

rehearsal one day, he invited me to dinner, took me under his wing, and taught me everything. I owe so much to Jerry."

Jerry Hadley believed in crossover. He learned that skill from Leonard Bernstein and passed it on to Brian Cheney who embraced it and has gone on to tremendous success. "It meant I could sing opera, as well as I could sing musical theater. It gave me the strength to pivot which I did during Covid. When I lost my work opportunity, I just took a leap right into film and TV, and am currently starring in my first feature film and becoming a favorite on the American Horror network. It's the only thing that's selling big now to audiences."

"I'm having a great time now. I'm concentrating just on TV and movies, only singing at special concerts like Summer Pops." Based on all he's heard, he can't wait to partner with the Chorus and perform in Wilcox Park for an event now in its fourth decade and famous worldwide.

"At Summer Pops I will be singing two arias, then I'll move on to musical theater and team up with the Chorus on a medley of musical theater hits, featuring a special version of the music from "Hamilton" coupled with much loved songs from "Le Miz." No doubt our local wunderkind, John Tafone will have had a hand in that as he has every year in making the music so very special.

Speaking by phone with Brian Cheney, you immediately sense his energy, his passion for the music, and that bit of the ham in him that all add up to one consummate professional who simply cannot wait to perform and show off his many talents!

He wants us all there at Summer Pops because he's bringing it: loud, proud, and unabashed. A lifetime body of work trained, educated, and curated by the best in music, but with his own personal stamp firmly placed on the work. All from a man who found his voice, found himself in that calling, and wants to share it with every audience everywhere.

Next stop: SUMMER POPS!

Versatility is the cornerstone of Brian Cheney's artistry. Hailed by KUSC Los Angeles as the "next great tenor", Brian has gained international acclaim for his versatility as a true crossover artist. Whether Guest Starring in hit shows like AMERICAN HORROR STORY: NYC or performing sold out concerts at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Brian is the ideal performing artist as evidenced during his National Philharmonic debut performance of a concert celebrating the music of Leonard Bernstein:

"Cheney is a sultry tenor who excelled with the operatic and jazz stylings of 'Mass' and the traditional musical theatre sound of 'West Side Story' and 'Candide.' His ability to switch genre so effortlessly was astonishing and his performance of "Maria" was riveting." (MD Theatre Guide)

Upcoming Feature Films appearances include a starring role in the Hockey Horror Film, BENDERS, and a supporting role in SUMMERHOUSE starring Malcolm McDowell.

Enjoy McQuade's Prepared Foods at *Summer* POPS



Pick-up Salads, Fresh Fruit, Sandwiches, Snacks and Cold Drinks for the Pops!



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Pre-Show Special Guests



THE KNICKERBOCKER ALL-STARS

BLUES / JAZZ / JUMP / SOUL

The Knickerbocker All Stars are a 9-piece ensemble that pays tribute to the great innovators of American roots music, including blues, jazz, jump blues, and soul artists. Their music features a mix of classic blues shuffles, swinging jump tunes, and deep-pocket soul grooves, delivered by a powerhouse lineup consisting of top-tier horn and rhythm sections and soulful vocalists. The band draws its name and spirit from the historic Knickerbocker Café in Westerly, Rhode Island, an iconic venue that hosted many of the world-renowned Jazz and Blues legends from the 40s to the present day. The All Stars have recorded and performed with such popular musicians and vocalists as: Marcia Ball, Jimmie Vaughan, Sugaray Rayford, Thornetta Davis, Darcel Wilson, Curtis Salgado, Duke Robillard, Al Copley, Dave Maxwell, Sax Gordon, Johnny Nicholas and virtually all the alumni of the legendary Rhode Island band, the Roomful of Blues. The All Stars have climbed to the top of the Living Blues Charts, placed on the Grammy Nomination List, and were nominated for Soul Blues Album of the year by the Blues Music Awards in Memphis.

Willie J. Laws Jr. - *guitar and vocals*

Darcel Wilson - *vocals*

Arthur Migliazza - *keyboards*

Paul Loranger - *bass*

Osi Brathwaite - *drums*

Rich Lataille - *alto and tenor saxophone*

Doc Chanonhouse - *trumpet*

Rob Funk - *trombone*

Doug James - *baritone saxophone*



THE WESTERLY MORRIS MEN

The Westerly Morris Men are a traditional Cotswold English Morris Team founded by Peter Leibert in 1974. Peter's involvement with Morris Men began 70 years ago and he continues as a squire and musician. The Westerly Morris Men have toured England and Scotland as guests of other traditional teams. They practice in Westerly and are available to perform for events and organizations in the New England area. They welcome new recruits, young and old. For further information contact Peter Leibert at (860) 887-9184 or Norm Dudziak at (401) 437-0240. The Westerly Morris Men have performed on the Summer Pops pre-show since the event's beginnings in 1981.

MUSICIANS

PETER LEIBERT, *Squire*
MAYADA WADSWORTH
BECKY NOREEN

DANCERS

NORM DUDZIAK,
Asst. Squire
IAN PATTON,
Bagman

KURT HANSEN,
Foreman
HANK CHAPIN
ALLEN LAWTON

SCOTT PATTON
FREDERICK RIVARD
BEN ROSENKOETTER
LOU TERRANOVA

JOHN TREFRY
HAL WALKER
KATRINA BERCAW (*Ringer*)

Pre-Show Special Guests



BOB MALONE

bobmalone.com

Called a “*keyboard wizard*” by The New Yorker, and “a genre-crossing master” by the Tallahassee Democrat, singer/songwriter/pianist BOB MALONE has amassed a loyal international fan-base through twenty-five years of touring and nine critically acclaimed album releases. He played keyboards for John Fogerty for 13 years, and has done sessions and tour dates with Ringo Starr, Avril Lavigne, Rickie Lee Jones, Danny Seraphine’s CTA and Mindi Abair. His duo shows with fellow keyboard wiz and multiple BMA award winner Deanna Bogart are legendary. Bob’s recording of “You’re A Mean One, Mr. Grinch” was the theme in the 2018 Illumination/Universal movie trailers for The Grinch, streamed and heard in theaters by millions.

Along with the best of his catalog of bluesy rockers and cathartic piano ballads, Bob’s live shows feature classic anthems by Fleetwood Mac, The Band, CCR, Bob Dylan and others transformed into foot-stomping displays of keyboard pyrotechnics, pulling in elements from classical, soul, blues, rock, funk and jazz into a glorious fusion that’s pure Bob Malone.

Bob’s last four albums, including his latest (“Good People”), have been in the top-10 on the Roots Music Report radio rock and blues charts, #1 on the IBBA UK Blues Chart, and his piano-driven take on Fleetwood Mac’s “Oh Well” spent two years on the SiriusXM Bluesville Top-50 Most Heard chart.

His songs and piano playing have been heard on NCIS New Orleans, Entertainment Tonight, Lucifer, and The Hallmark Channel.

“From complex turbo-charged polyrhythmic soul-jazz excursions to the most fundamental folk-rock anthems, Malone knows how to light it on fire.” - American Songwriter



SUMMER POPS BEGINS LONG BEFORE THE FIRST CANNON FIRES

By GAGE CUBA III

For many, Summer Pops is all about the grand finale: the soaring strains of the 1812 Overture, fireworks lighting up the night sky, and the unmistakable boom of the cannons. But longtime attendees know that the party starts well before the renowned Chorus of Westerly takes the stage.

This year's pre-show lineup invites audiences to settle into Wilcox Park early and enjoy an evening filled with music, tradition, and community. From the colorful dances of the Westerly Morris Men to the soulful sounds of the Knickerbocker All Stars and the high-energy piano stylings of Bob Malone, these three acts showcase the blend of local heritage, artistic excellence, and musical discovery that has made Summer Pops one of the region's most beloved summer traditions.

For more than fifty years, The Westerly Morris Men have been part of the fabric of our community. Founded in 1974 by Peter Leibert, the group keeps alive the centuries-old English tradition of Morris dancing through lively performances featuring bells, handkerchiefs, music, and plenty of good cheer. Over the years, they have represented Westerly throughout New England and abroad, performing in England and Scotland while building lasting friendships with fellow dancers and musicians. Yet despite their international travels, one of their favorite stages remains right here at home. Their annual Summer Pops appearance has become a cherished tradition, delighting generations of concertgoers and helping kick off the festivities in unmistakable style.

From folk tradition to hometown rhythm and blues, The Knickerbocker All

Stars celebrate another important piece of local history. Named for Westerly's legendary Knickerbocker Café, the nine-piece ensemble pays tribute to the great traditions of blues, jazz, jump blues, and soul music. Featuring an all-star lineup of musicians, powerful horns, and soulful vocals, the band captures the spirit of a venue that has welcomed some of the biggest names in American roots music. Their accomplishments include national chart success and recognition from the Blues Music Awards, but what audiences will remember most is the joy and energy they bring to every performance.

Adding a national spotlight to the evening is acclaimed singer, songwriter, and pianist Bob Malone. Hailed by *The New Yorker* as a "keyboard wizard," Malone has spent more than two decades building an international following through his electrifying blend of rock, blues, soul, jazz, and roots music. Many fans know him from his thirteen years as keyboardist for John Fogerty, while others recognize his work alongside artists including Ringo Starr, Avril Lavigne, and

Rickie Lee Jones. Whether performing original songs, reinventing classic favorites, or unleashing the piano virtuosity that has become his trademark, Malone brings an infectious energy that has captivated audiences around the world. His dynamic live performances have been described by *American Songwriter* as everything from "turbo-charged polyrhythmic soul-jazz excursions" to powerful folk-rock anthems, all delivered with remarkable musicianship and showmanship.

Taken together, these three acts tell a story that feels uniquely Summer Pops: honoring tradition, celebrating local talent, and welcoming outstanding artists from beyond our community. They remind us that Summer Pops is more than a concert. It's a gathering of neighbors, families, friends, and visitors who come together each year to celebrate the start of summer through music.

So, pack a blanket, gather your friends and family, and arrive early. The fireworks may close the evening, but the celebration begins long before sunset.

41st Anniversary Celebration



August 7, 8 & 9, 2026

Seafood Festival

Rhode Island's Best Seafood. Arts & Crafts, Cushing Amusements, Car Shows, Fireworks and Live Entertainment.

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CONDUCTOR ANDREW HOWELL THE MARION & BILL PALM MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY

Andrew Howell, conductor and organist, is the second music director in the history of the Chorus of Westerly. In addition to his duties in Westerly, Mr. Howell also serves as music director for Mystic Congregational Church in Mystic, Connecticut, and during the summer months at the Watch Hill Chapel. This coming September, Mr. Howell will begin as organist and choirmaster at Christ Episcopal Church in Westerly.

Mr. Howell received his Bachelor of Music in music education and Master of Music in choral conducting and organ performance from the University of Rhode Island. He has also been on the faculty at the University of Rhode Island, where he conducted the University Chorus and taught ear training, sight singing, and music appreciation.

Since his appointment as music director of the Chorus of Westerly in 2012, Mr. Howell has overseen the expansion of all artistic aspects of the organization, inviting children and adults into choral music in a way that is designed to give people at all levels of experience and all ages the opportunity to make music in a community of singers, simultaneously developing their music literacy and musicianship.

Mr. Howell has worked with numerous choral organizations and churches in Rhode Island and Connecticut as conductor and organist. In addition to his work as conductor and church musician, Mr. Howell has played organ recitals at numerous churches in Rhode Island and Connecticut, and has worked as a harpsichord technician, tuner, and voicer for Zuckermann Harpsichords International in Stonington, CT. Mr. Howell lives locally with his wife, Emily, and their children: Sadie, Rowan, Henry, and Arthur.

JOHN TAFONE COMPOSER/ ARRANGER

Award-winning composer John Tafone grew up singing in the Chorus of Westerly. As a child, he once put on his own Summer Pops in his backyard. Unfortunately, it got rained out, and the event was moved into the living room. Only his parents and his stuffed animal moose were in attendance. He is hoping for a slightly better turnout this year.

John went on to study composition at the Catholic University of America and Oxford University in the UK. He has received numerous awards, including the top prize in the College Music Society's annual composer competition for his chamber work "In Paradisum," and for his musical "The Count of Monte Cristo" (which had its musical premiere at The Chorus of Westerly's Summer Pops!) which won the 2017 BroadwayWorld Award for Best Musical.

His work has been performed at Christ Church Cathedral (UK), the Kennedy Center (Washington DC), PPAC, the New York Musical Theatre Festival, and as part of the True Concord's "Close-Up" series. John has also contributed orchestrations to various film, video game, and theatrical productions, and his work has been featured on PBS and NPR. Currently, John serves as the head of the choral faculty for Greenwich House Music School in NYC, where he teaches songwriting. This week, John released recordings from his musical "The Count of Monte Cristo" (available to stream on all major music platforms!) and also wrote music for the US Open.

For this performance, John created over 2,500 pages of new music for the orchestra. Not including the amount of music that he also wrote for the chorus. He is honored to have the opportunity to write for so many talented performers and to work with Andrew Howell and the incredible Chorus of Westerly. Instagram @johntafone



SUMMER POPS 2026

Master of Ceremonies Bob Elmer

Pre-Show - 6:15 PM

PIANIST BOB MALONE
THE WESTERLY MORRIS MEN
THE KNICKERBOCKER ALL STARS

Main Show - 8:00 PM

TAYLOR SWIFT MEDLEY
Arranged by John Tafone

Celebrating America's 250th

THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER
John Philip Sousa

THE ARMED FORCES SALUTE
Arranged by Robert W. Lowden & Joyce Eilers Bacak

HOMEWARD BOUND
Marta Keen • Arranged by Mack Wilberg

DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE
Arranged by John Rutter

THE RAIDERS MARCH
John Williams

MUSICALS MEDLEY
Arranged by John Tafone
Phantom • Master of the House • Hard Knock Life
Cabaret • Be Our Guest

INTERMISSION

'80s MEDLEY

Arranged by John Tafone
The Final Countdown • Take On Me • Africa
Total Eclipse of the Heart
Don't Stop Believin'
SET WITH SPECIAL GUEST

TENOR BRIAN CHENEY
UNA FURTIVA LAGRIMA
from L'Elisir d'Amore
Gaetano Donizetti

YOU'LL BE BACK
from Hamilton
Lin Manuel Miranda
Arranged by John Tafone

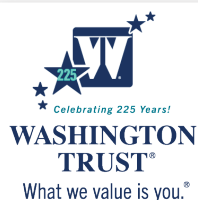
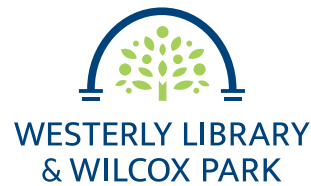
VESTI LA GIUBBA
from Pagliacci
Ruggero Leoncavallo

FROM NOW ON
from The Greatest Showman
Benji Pasek and Justin Paul
Arranged by John Tafone

STORY OF TONIGHT (from Hamilton)
DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING (from Les Mis)
Lin Manuel Miranda & Claude-Michel Schönberg
Arranged by John Tafone

1812 OVERTURE
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
With Fireworks by Gucci
The Artillery Company of Newport
and Ryan Saunders playing the Bells of Christ Church
in memory of George Kent and honor of Doug Rayner

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Summer Pops

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Contributions to this year's Summer Pops or next year's may be sent to:

THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY, SUMMER POPS, 119 HIGH STREET, WESTERLY RI 02891
 or made online at westerlypops.org or scan the QR code below.

Donations to The Chorus of Westerly for Summer Pops are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed.
 Please consult with your financial advisor if you have questions.



THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY

ANDREW HOWELL, *The Marion & Bill Palm Music Director*

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DIANE GUILLEMETTE
LEANNE RABESA
JOHN BIATOWAS

Cello

DANIEL HARP
MEGHAN KOCH
JOHAN SOULTS
ROB BETHEL
FAARES DEEB
JESS PAERATAKUL

Bass

JOE HIGGINS
ELIOT PORTER
MARK MCCORMICK
JORDAN CALIXO

Flute

ALLISON PARRAMORE
ALISA SMITH

Piccolo

MARY ELLEN KREGLER

Oboe

JANE MURRAY
DONNA COBERT

English horn

JOHANNA LAMB

Clarinet

MARGO MCGOWAN
JIM FORGEY

Bassoon

KRISTEN POWELL
GABRIEL RAMEY

Horn

KEVIN OWEN
MARINA KRICKLER
ROGER CARUK
LIZ GATES

Trumpet

JON CLARK
JESSIE WILLS
KATIE DRISCOLL

Trombone

ADAM HANNAH
MARK WEAVER

Bass trombone

TOMMY CHIU

Tuba

GARY BUTTERY

Timpani

MICHAEL IADEVAIA

Percussion

PIERO GUIMARARES
CHARLIE KALAJIAN
DAN HANN

Guitar

STEVE MARCHENA

Keyboard

GARY CHAPMAN
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Keyboard Programming

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YOUTH EDITION



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CASEY CARLE

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TAKE ON ME

Talking away, I don't know what I'm to say, I'll say it anyway.
Today is another day to find you.
Shying away, I'll be coming for your love okay.
Take on me. Take me on. I'll be gone in a day or two.

So, needless to say, at odds and ends but I'll be stumbling away,
Slowly learning that life is okay.
Say after me, it's no better to be safe than sorry
Take on me. Take me on. I'll be gone in a day or two.

AFRICA

I hear the drums echoin' tonight,
she hears only whispers of some quiet conversation.
She's coming in, twelve thirty flight.
Moonlit wings reflect the stars that guide me toward salvation.
I stopped an old man along the way,
hoping to find some old forgotten words or ancient melodies. He
turned to me as if to say, "Hurry, boy, it's waiting there for you."

S'gonna take a lot to drag me away from you
There's nothing that hundred men or more could ever do
I bless the rains down in Africa
Gonna take some time to do the things we never had, ooh, hoo.

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART

Turn around. Every now and then I get a little bit lonely and
you're never coming round.
Turn around. Every now and then I get a little bit tired of list'ning
to the sound of my years.
Turn around. Every now and then I get a little bit nervous that
the best of all the years have gone by.
Turn around. Every now and then I get a little bit terrified and

then I see the look in your eyes.

Turn around, bright eyes. Every now and then I fall apart.

And I need you now tonight, and I need you more than ever.
And if you only hold me tight, we'll be holding on forever.
And we'll only be making it right, case we'll never be wrong.

Together we can take it to the end of the line.

Your live is like a shadow on me all of the time.

I don't know what to do and I'm always in the dark.

We're living in a powder keg and giving off sparks.

I really need you tonight forever's gonna start tonight.

Once upon a time I was falling in love, but now I'm only falling
apart.

There's nothing I can do a total eclipse of the heart.

Once upon a time there was light in my life,
but now there's only love in the dark.

Nothing I can say a total eclipse of the heart.

DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'

Just a small town girl, livin' in a lonely world.

She took the midnight train goin' anywhere.

Just a city boy, born and raised in South Detroit.

He took the midnight train goin' anywhere.

Some will win, some will lose,

Some were born to sing the blues,

oh the morning never ends it goes on and on and on and on.

Strangers waiting, up and down the boulevard,
their shadows, searching the night.

Streetlights, people, living just to find emotion hiding some-
where in the night.

Don't stop believin' hold on to the feelin'

Streetlights people...





THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY

SEASON 68: 2026/2027
SUBSCRIPTION SERIES/SYMPHONIC CHORUS EVENTS

KENT HALL MASTERS SERIES: CHANTICLEER
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2026, 4 PM

HODIE (THIS DAY): A CANTATA FOR CHRISTMAS
RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2026, 6 PM
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2026, 3 PM

CHRISTMAS POPS '26
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2026, 6 PM
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2026, 3 & 5:30 PM

KENT HALL MASTERS SERIES: LYYRA
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2027, 3 PM

THE CHORUS ONLY - CHORAL MUSIC THROUGH THE AGES
SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2027, 6 PM
SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2027, 3 PM

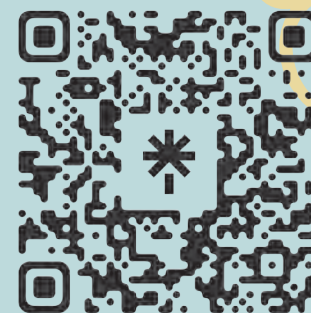
REQUIEM - ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK
SATURDAY, MAY 22, 2027, 6 PM
SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2027, 3 PM

SUMMER POPS '27 - WILCOX PARK
SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 2027, 8 PM (PRE-SHOW 6:15 PM)
RAIN DATE, SUNDAY, JUNE 20

THE FOUNDATIONS CHORUS - 2026/2027 CONCERTS
MONDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2026, 7:30 PM
MONDAY, MAY 3, 2027, 7:30 PM

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THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY EXTENDS

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RYAN SAUNDERS, THE DOUGLAS AND EUGENIA RAYNER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ANDREW HOWELL, THE MARION AND BILL PALM MUSIC DIRECTOR
NICOLE DiMATTEI, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & POPS PROJECT DIRECTOR
DOUGLAS RAYNER, SUMMER POPS CHAIR, EMERITUS

MARISSA BERARDO
HARVEY BLANCHETTE
ERIN HOULIHAN
ISOBEL MCCULLOUGH

ARTHUR MIGLIAZZA
STEVE MORGAN
SANDY NILES
EMILY STODDARD

JOHN TAFONE
SCHANE TALLARDY
PAMELA YOUNG

Special Thanks

WESTERLY TOWN MANAGER
Shawn Lacey

THE WESTERLY POLICE DEPT.
Paul Gingerella, chief

THE STONINGTON POLICE DEPT.
Jay DelGrosso, chief

WESTERLY AMBULANCE CORP.
Rachael Jones, chief

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THE ROTARY CLUB OF WESTERLY

THE BLUE MITTEN THRIFT SHOP

THE VOLUNTEERS OF SUMMER POPS
THE SINGERS, STAFF, BOARD, AND
VOLUNTEERS OF THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY
THE ORCHESTRA AND ALL OUR GUEST PERFORMERS

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THE TOWN OF STONINGTON
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JOHN S. WILKS
PAMELA YOUNG

THE CHORUS OF WESTERLY & SUMMER POPS

Administration

Summer Pops is a fully produced and presented event of The Chorus of Westerly

ADMINISTRATIVE

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*The Douglas and Eugenia Rayner
Executive Director*

Nicole DiMattei, *deputy executive director*
Isobel McCullough, *manager of advancement services*
Samara Desrochers, *community coordinator*
Harvey M. Blanchette, *facilities manager*
Erin Houlihan, *box office manager*
Marissa Berardo, *social media associate*
Emily Kiss Stoddard, *special projects and events*
Carrie Guiney, *bookkeeper*
Douglas Rayner, *Pops chair, emeritus*

ARTISTIC/EDUCATION

ANDREW HOWELL

*The Marion and Bill Palm
Music Director & Conductor*

Kathryn Aaron, *artistic associate,
Foundations & Threshold conductor*
Audrey Cardany, *director of education*
Kailey Shea, *music faculty*
David Gilliland, *collaborative pianist*
Gery Elliott, *Foundations pianist*
Jane Murray, *orchestra personnel manager*
John Tafone, *resident arranger/composer, keyboard programmer*
Pamela Young, *librarian*

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Susan Maguire, *vice-chair*
Tracey Datson, *secretary*
Christopher Fusaro, *treasurer*
Ryan Saunders, *ex officio*
Andrew Howell, *ex officio*

Johanna Danaher
Deborah Dunham
Sara Isaacs
Uma Kuruganti
Sarah Starkweather
Aaron Simmons
Louise Thorson

Michael Anderson
Timothy Blevins
Jennifer Brinton
Andrew Burnap
Betty-Jo Cugini

Advisors
Douglas Rayner

SUMMER POPS - TECH, SOUND, & LIGHTS

PROVIDED BY



Rotary



The Rotary Club of Westerly

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Summer Pops Concession Stand

On the park's center walkway

**PIZZA from MARIO'S NORTHEAST PIZZERIA, HOT DOGS, POTATO CHIPS, POPCORN
HOT & COLD COFFEE, DEL'S LEMONADE, SODA, BOTTLED WATER**

All proceeds generated through these sales are contributed to Summer Pops to help make the show possible!

The Rotary Club is grateful for donors of food, beverages, service, and funds from Navigant Credit Union, Bogue's Alley, Honey Dew Donuts, Open Water, Shoreline Cinema Group and Rashmi Hauser, McQuade's Hardware, Grey Sail Brewing of RI, Stonington Ice, Avie's Ski/Sport, and the Westerly High School RI Honor Society Student volunteers.

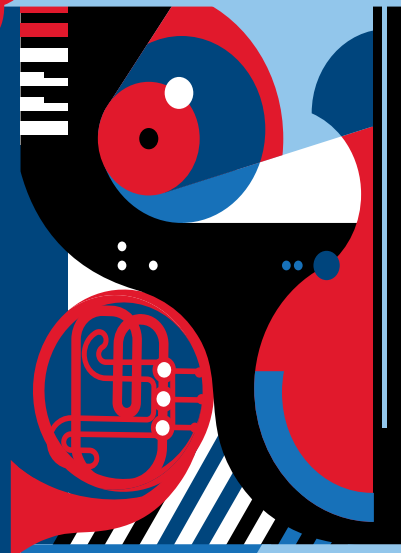


Please note, except for the Rotary Food Tent, the Chorus/Summer Pops merchandise Tent, and Grey Sail's Pints for Pops, no other vendors are authorized to operate in the park. All proceeds of sales in the park of Pops/Chorus merchandise, Rotary items, and/or Pints for Pops, go directly back to Summer Pops.

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SUMMER POPS

WESTERLY POLICE

ANNOUNCEMENT

The 2026 Summer Pops is scheduled to be held on Saturday, June 20, 2026 with a rain date of June 21, 2026. As such, the following restrictions will be enforced.

Grove Avenue and Wilcox Avenue will be closed to all vehicular traffic as of 5 pm on June 20th (June 21st if the rain date is needed). Exceptions will be made for those needing handicapped parking until all spaces are filled. Other motorists will be detoured onto Newton Avenue or other adjacent streets.

Handicapped parking will be available on Grove Avenue, Broad Street, across from the Westerly Town Hall and extending to the Westerly Public Library, as well as parking areas in front of the United States Post Office.

PARKING RESTRICTIONS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.

Blankets are the only items to be left in the park prior to the event. This will only be allowed to be left unattended after 5 pm on Friday, June 19, 2026. Unattended,

chairs, coolers and/or any other items WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE LEFT within the park prior to the event. THESE ITEMS WILL BE REMOVED. If items such as these are to be brought to the event, they must be brought with those attending at the time of the event. Also, any coolers and/or any other items left unattended during the event WILL BE REMOVED.

Due to the Fireworks being deployed from inside the park (next to the pond) there will be no one allowed within the area of the Fireworks around the pond. This restricted area will be clearly marked and cordoned off.

Please note no bicycles, scooters, skateboards, or similar riding devices are permitted in the park. Dogs are also prohibited in the park for the event. At the conclusion of the event, all vehicular traffic will be delayed for approximately ten minutes to fifteen minutes to allow pedestrians to freely return to their vehicles. Motorists on Railroad Avenue heading south will be directed onto Canal Street in a westerly direction. Motorists on Canal Street heading east will be directed onto High Street in a northerly direction in order to alleviate the congestion in the Downtown Westerly area. Officers and/or traffic control signals will control all other traffic.

Chief Paul J. Gingerella
Westerly Police Department





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