

Tropea Band heats up the crowd

Jazz front and center for Long's Park series

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The John Tropea Band: John Tropea, Clint de Ganon, Lou Marini, Zev Katz and Chris Palmero, not pictured.

The Long's Park Summer Concert Series received a well-deserved break from the heat on Sunday evening, a week after the last concert saw temperatures reaching into the upper 90s.

Temperatures were in the low 80s by the start of the concert at 7:30 p.m., and families and friends could be found relaxing under a clear sky on a comfortable Father's Day on the Long's Park lawn.

The only heat that could be felt came from the stage, where the John Tropea Band provided a couple of hours of jazz.

"Happy Father's Day to all of you dads in the audience," Tropea said before he began the concert.

Sunday marked the third week of the 13-week free concert series at the park.

The show began with Tropea introducing his fellow band members by giving each a moment for a solo performance.

Tropea, a guitarist from the Original Blues Brothers Band, is from Nyack, N.J., where he began playing the guitar at age 12.

Sunday's concert gave a feeling of the old-style jazz that Tropea himself first began playing more than 30 years ago. He released his first self-titled album "Tropea" in 1975.

Performing in front of thousands of fans seemed comfortable for the smooth jazz guitarist.

Tropea has written for and played with major recording artists from around the world. He has worked with Alice Cooper ("Goes to Hell"), Harry Chapin ("Cat's in the Cradle") and Eric Clapton ("Journey Man"), among many others.

Tropea on electric guitar was accompanied by Lou Marini on saxophone, Chris Palmaro on the Hammond organ, Clint de Ganon on drums and Zev Katz on bass.

The dynamic sound of each instrument balanced the other, and the audience approved in loud applause after each song.

"I'm a fan of Chapin, so I thought Tropea's music would be entertaining. I was hoping for more vocals, though," Steve Fritz of Lancaster, said.

For some in the audience, the concert provided an opportunity to relax in the park on Father's Day.

"We normally always come out here for concerts. This is our first one we have attended this year," Tom Zimmerman of Lancaster said.

A father of two, Zimmerman was at the concert with his family and friends.

"I listen to a lot of jazz," he said. "I enjoy listening to the Blues Brothers, so having Tropea here is great."

For others, just Sunday's weather was a relief.

"The heat prevented us from coming last week. But tonight's temperature is perfect," Devin Yohn of Manheim, said.

This is the Tropeas Band's last performance before Tropea joins the Original Blues Brothers Band on June 25 to begin a monthlong tour in Europe.

The veteran jazz band capped off the evening by performing the song "Ol' School" from its most recent album Take Me Back to the Ol' School.

By the time the band reached the final song, the amphitheater's dance floor, which had been fairly empty most of the evening, was filled with audience members clapping their hands and tapping their feet.

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