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EDITOR'S PICK

Santana percussionist to judge Yankee Homecoming Battle of the Bands

Santana member to judge Battle of the Bands

By Jack Shea jshea@newburyportnews.com Jul 25, 2018



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NEWBURYPORT — Local teenage music acts will take the stage in Waterfront Park on Friday during the eighth annual Yankee Homecoming Battle of the Bands, and at the judge's table will be a rock legend who might have played on some of their parents' favorite records.

The contest will run from 5 to 9:30 p.m. and put several bands of local and area high school students head to head for a chance to perform in the Yankee Homecoming Waterfront Concert Series.

But one of the most exciting features of the competition will be its special guest judge, founding Santana percussionist, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame member and Newburyport resident Michael Carabello.

Carabello is best known for his contributions to the first three Santana albums, "Supernatural," "Abraxas" and "Santana III," and to this day he remains the only percussionist in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame for his work with the group.

But Carabello's hand drumming can be detected throughout the classic rock narrative, having recorded or performed with countless distinguished acts, including The Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock, Eric Clapton, Stevie Wonder and Bonnie Raitt, to name a few.

Since moving to Newburyport nine months ago, Carabello said he has been eager to get involved in the area's music scene, and to share knowledge of his craft with young players.

"From my experience in being a musician, I can kind of bring a palate of different colors for musicians to be aware of," Carabello said. "I want to pass on what I know to the music world here."

There are seven bands of varying genres lined up to compete — Fourshadow, Audrey and Company, Maximilian Wentz, Party Day, The Starving Musician's Fund, Leathershark and Ava Bella.

And with styles varying from jazz to pop-country to a few rock subgenres, event Chair Cheryl Munick said the event will be another eclectic display of the North Shore's young musical talent.

"The contest kind of runs the gamut, and these kids every year surprise the audience with the enthusiasm, energy and their ability," Munick said. "They get up there, and they have a great time, and a lot of them bring their own original pieces (of music). It's really cool."

Munick said up to two more acts may be accepted for the competition.

In addition to an opening performance slot in the Waterfront Concert Series, the contest's first-prize winners will be awarded \$100 cash and a paid performance in the Yankee Homecoming Parade.

They will also be given recording time at On the Fringe Studios in West Newbury and an on-the-air appearance on Evolvment Radio in Newburyport.

The runner-up will be granted a headlining performance in Market Square on the last Saturday of Yankee Homecoming, Aug. 4, along with a \$100 cash prize. The third-prize winner will receive \$100 cash.

Admission to the contest is free for the general public.

The judges, who will include Carabello, Pentucket Regional High School music teacher David Schumaker and a representative from the West Newbury School of Music, will grade each band based on different aspects of the performance.

These include musical ability, stage presence and professionalism, among other criteria.

"When I go see these bands, the first thing I look at is how much they're into it, how much they're paying attention to the audience, and if they're bringing something different," Carabello said. "I'm always looking for originality."

And though much of his own work is rooted in the sounds of the 1960s and 1970s, Carabello said he has no trouble embracing new sounds from younger generations.

"There has always been a lot of negativity throughout the ages," Carabello said, recalling how he was scolded by his parents for playing with Santana in the band's early days. "Each era brings a new menu to the table."

Now, as he takes on the role of contest judge and musical mentor, Carabello said he hopes to encourage young musicians to have the same sense of fearless creativity that propelled Santana to worldwide success.

"There's a signature you have with your sound, and I don't think a lot of musicians coming out of school are able to put themselves into the mix to have that," he said. "Music comes from the feelings inside. Reading music doesn't teach you about the feeling. That's the most exciting part, there's no describing it."

Carabello said he is excited to experience his first Yankee Homecoming in a city that reminds him of a 1950s-era Sausalito, California — the close-knit, artistic community just across the Golden Gate Bridge from his hometown of San Francisco.

"Newburyport is very magical. It's very, very great. I love it," Carabello said.

For more information on the Yankee Homecoming High School Battle of the Bands, visit <http://yankeehomecoming.com/event/high-school-battle-of-the-bands/>

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FRI

SAT

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

1

2

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4

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Cookbook Club

Ipswich Public Library

SAT

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MON

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Summer Picnic Concerts

Castle Hill

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

6

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Music at Ipswich Ale Brewer's Table

Ipswich Ale Brewer's Table

SAT

SUN

MON

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12

Seaglass Sinatra Night

Seaglass

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

13

14

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Pete Kilpatrick Band Presents the Music of...

Bernie's Beach Bar

FRI

SAT

SUN

MON

16

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Chris Webb Web Tour

Wally's Pub

TUE

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