



# **The DCAT Purr-spective**

## **The Newsletter of the Drum Corps Alumni of Toronto - May 2026**

*DCAT (Drum Corps Alumni Toronto) is an organization dedicated to the preservation and joy of Drum & Bugle Corps camaraderie, bringing together past members, relatives, friends, and associates in a social environment for the purpose of companionship and musical activities.*

## **41st Reunion Great Alliance of Seniors Williamsport, PA. May 1-3, 2026**

In the fall of 2025, our chorus decided to return to GAS for the 2026 reunion. Wyatt Gill prepared a tentative program for us, and we scheduled regular Wednesday night rehearsals at ATS. Unfortunately, Mother Nature, colds, flu bugs and other vagaries of life limited the number of rehearsals that took place, even into February. Gradually however, after Wyatt did some necessary re-voicing of parts, the show started to take shape. Sunday rehearsals were added to our schedule where possible and by mid-April, we were all looking forward to performing our show for our friends south of the border.

It was determined that 13 singers, plus Wyatt, Ian Hale and Jamie Reilly would attend. Ort Beaumont and Ian Hale did their magic preparing financial plans for accommodations and GAS tickets while June Beaumont arranged for a 50 passenger coach to take us comfortably to and from Williamsport. On April 29th, we gathered at a pick-up spot near 401 and Hurontario Street, ready to head south. Unfortunately, the rainy, cold weather followed us all the way to Pennsylvania, but spirits were high regardless. We stopped at the Duty-Free Shop for snacks(!), crossed the border without incident and continued on our journey, making one pit stop and a

break for lunch. Once we reached the Genetti Hotel, we were welcomed back by the staff and given our assigned rooms, where we were able to unpack, relax and head to the restaurant – and the bar, too!

While we were in Williamsport, the weather, as it was in Toronto, left much to be desired. Instead of gathering on the walkway outside our rooms for chats, songs, snacks and cocktails, we mostly ended up in Wyatt and Doug's room, where it was warm and comfortable. We shared food, stories and laughs, until it was time for a meeting or a rehearsal.

We kept busy on Thursday with rehearsals and sound checks in the upstairs ballroom, a bit of grocery shopping, dinner at the local Bullfrog Brewery and karaoke back at the Genetti!

Friday's activities included more rehearsals and sound checks in preparation for the evening's choral performances by The Skyliners, the Audubon Bon Bons and our DCAT chorus following. Unfortunately, the microphones that were in use gave us some grief for the first part of Alexander's Ragtime Band. But we were able to 're-tune' to each other for the second half and earned great applause from the audience. Some of us believe that 'Over the Rainbow' was probably the best part of our show, although everyone in the audience responded well to the remaining songs, which were 'The People Song' from Les Mis, 'Hallelujah', 'Stars and Stripes' and our finale - 'You'll Never Walk Alone'. June Beaumont had prepared an absolutely amazing banner which depicted various members of DCAT over 32 years at GAS and special memorial photos of Dave Cameron and John Fox. At the end of our show, as a cover was removed from the banner, stating "Thanks for the Memories", Wyatt told the audience that this was probably the final Friday night show for DCAT, although he emphasized that we would be back to take part in other aspects of the next GAS reunion. Our 'friends from the south' swarmed the stage, offering congratulations for our performance and thanks for the many years of entertainment that we had provided. It was a very emotional time for all of us indeed!

Saturday morning brought preparations for the 'Talent Show' back in the "old" ballroom. Everywhere you looked there were drums and brass instruments of all shapes and sizes. Wyatt was the emcee for the show which opened with the two National Anthems. And then – it was time for DCAT's Willie Nelson – ooops, make that Billie Nelson! Performing "Blue Eyes Cryin' in the Rain" was Billie (Doug Johns - vocalist), his brother Billie (Ian Hale – guitar) and his sister Billie (Sandy Hale – harmony and Bass)! The trio had a lot of fun and seemed to make a good impression on the audience! Later in the show it was time once again for the DCAT Whacky Cats and their boomwhacker version of Chopsticks. The ensemble was accompanied by Maestro Johan Sebastian Gill from the prestigious Budweiser School of Music, performing on solo melodica. Sandy Hale, conductor, welcomed the maestro and the performance started out beautifully – UNTIL – the maestro started increasing the tempo and soon all was lost. He finally fell to the floor, unmoving, when help arrived. Jamie Reilly checked for vital signs and declared the performance to be finished, as he grabbed the melodica and ran! Once again, DCAT demonstrated versatility (if not talent) and humour!

The Saturday evening gala and buffet was held back in the upstairs ballroom. DCAT, Skyliners and the Bon Bons combined voices for the 'Lord's Prayer' while the Bon Bons once again sang

the Canadian anthem and DCAT sang the American anthem. The whole evening was full of laughter and music and spirits were high once again. Sunday morning found us all packed up and ready to say goodbye to 'our friends from the south'. Again, emotions ran high but we boarded the bus with lots of good memories of the long weekend.

There will be a G.A.S. Reunion at the Genetti Hotel next spring – that is for certain. Will the DCAT Chorus be there? That decision is yet to be made.

## Thoughts about GAS

***"I have finally gotten over my fear of public speaking!" — Wyatt Gill***

***"GAS was bittersweet for me personally as it is the first one since losing John – however, new memories were made, particularly because of the bus ride. A chance to mingle with everyone, make some jokes, some singing and generally socializing. Same motel setting as the last couple of years which kept us together and have afternoon socials, courtesy of Wyatt and Doug. The Saturday Talent Show was fun and we got to see Sandy and Ian along with Doug Johns do their 'Willie Nelson' stuff. Also our boomwhackers made some comedy with the biggest ham of all. Wyatt and Jamie Reilly (Jennings son-in-law) rose to the occasion for even more comedy. Sadly, our last performance as DCAT Chorus BUT who knows what else is in store for us? TOO GOOD TO LET GO JUST YET!" — Dolly Fox***

***"My favourite memory was at the end of Friday night when we had those standing ovations, felt a gush from that. Then some hugs. "We did it" and good job from various members." — Brian Collingdon***

***"Wyatt has provided the chorus with wonderful arrangements, despite the changing vocal make-up of the group. His energy and conducting skills have help us to not just sing, but to make music of which we can be proud.***

***I am constantly in awe of members of DCAT and their commitment to performing well. Each member takes their part very seriously and works to contribute as much as possible to the chorus.***

***I am thankful for the whole chorus and especially Wyatt, Doug, Ian and Jamie Reilly for going along with my "crazy ideas" for the 'talent show'. The Whacky Cats once again showed their versatility as musicians! Next year – The Pink Panther! I have said many times in the past and truly believe that making music with friends is about as good as it gets! — Sandy Hale***