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DANCE TIME

Energy Reunion Put on Hold — Temporarily

by Jennifer Pijanowski

The winter weather is tolerable to polka fans as long as we know polka festival season is just around the corner.

Unfortunately, the first polka festival of 2021 has been wiped off the calendar for this year. **Wheeling Polka Fest** was scheduled for March 26-28th at Oglebay Resort in Wheeling, W. Virginia, but had to be cancelled this year due to state protocols on crowd limitations and live music.

One of the highlights of this weekend event was the return of Energy after a 25-year hiatus. About twenty years ago, when I was still relatively new to the polka world, a gentleman at Fiedor's Grove gave me a CD of Energy. I attended many dances at Fiedor's back then and the friendly folks were always giving me recordings of different bands that they thought I would really enjoy. The CD was *Get Energized* and I played it over and over again for the better part of the year.

Unfortunately at that time, Energy had already disbanded and I was never afforded the opportunity to see them live. Over the years, I have listened to all of their CDs and they remain one of my all-time favorite bands. My husband and I even requested that our wedding band, Touch of Brass, learn "Hey! What Do you Think" for our first song. Clearly you can imagine my excitement when I found out that this band would be reuniting and performing in 2021. I know a multitude of polka fans share the same enthusiasm to witness this stand-out band perform their memorable songs on stage once again.

The original band was started by Randy and Bernie Koslosky, who had been long performing in the Western Pennsylvania area. Their



Musicians from Energy after a recent rehearsal (Bernie Koslosky, Ed Kaczmarczyk, Joe Baranowski, Randy Koslosky, Richie Kois, and Chris Bogdon).



Energy's Joe Baranowski in the pool performing.

previous band's trumpet player Mike Mara, and aspiring musicians Eddie Kaczmarczyk on drums and Chris Bogdon on concertina and accordion joined this creative ensemble. The band decided to completely go in the direction of original polka music working with

songs that Randy had been writing. The guys started rehearsing and prepping their unique high-energy style for their very first recording. Joe Baranowski joined this innovative young polka group on bass and fiddle adding to their unmistakable sound. Richie Kois came on board

in the mid '90s when Mara left the group.

The band performed for many years at festivals across the United States, gaining notoriety for initiating creative interactions and "Energizing" their audience. Energy released three recordings: *Get Energized*, *Pure Energy*, and *Shine a Little Light*. *Pure Energy* received the International Polka Association award for the favorite album in 1993.

The band also achieved popularity outside of traditional polka music when the release of a song written for the Pittsburgh Penguins

decided to rekindle Energy. The group started rehearsing and preparing for the re-launch of Energy in 2021 with festivals and venues eager to book their long awaited return. Energy's 2021 lineup will consist of six musicians who have all previously played in the band. The musicians are Bernie Koslosky (trumpet, saxophone, and clarinet), Randy Koslosky (accordion and bass), Chris Bogdon (concertina, accordion, and bass), Eddie Kaczmarczyk (drums), Joe Baranowski (bass, fiddle, saxophone, and clarinet), and Richie Kois (trumpet and clarinet).



Members of the original Energy band.

ice hockey team, "It's A Great Day for Hockey," was played over the PA system at Penguins games and featured on many Pittsburgh radio stations. The band was even featured in the ESPN highlight film for the 1992 Stanley Cup finals, and in the Penguins' documentary series *Pittsburgh is Home*. Though the band stopped performing in 1996, fans have been begging them to reunite since that time.

To polka lovers surprise in 2020 and after nearly two and a half decades of ongoing discussions about reuniting, band members finally

You can keep up to date on their upcoming events and news by visiting their website: <https://www.theenergyband.com>.

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Fans can also listen to all of their recordings via their website at no cost until March 31, 2021. It is a great opportunity to get reacquainted with this one-of-a-kind polka band.

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Plans were made to perform at this year's Holy Toledo Polka Days on April 16, but that festival, unfortunately, was also cancelled.