

# Bataan piece out Sunday

## Smithfield composer's piece honoring vets is released on CD

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### SMITHFIELD

**S**tephen Melillo knows how to compose music and perform music. When it comes to marketing music, however, he admits to being a neophyte.

The Smithfield resident says that never mattered to him before. With his previous compositions, he drew satisfaction just knowing that he had recorded them and that a certain number of people had heard them.

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But now it's different. When his latest composition is formally published on Sunday, Melillo wants to get it into the hands of

the widest audience possible. He considers "Kakehashi: That We Might Live" — a tribute to the survivors of the Bataan Death March — to be perhaps the most important piece of music he's ever written. The disc is now available on his Web site at [www.stormworld.com](http://www.stormworld.com).

Please see **MELILLO/D8**



Composer Stephen Melillo's musical memorial dedicated to the Bataan Death March of 1942 will be formally published on Sunday.

Michael Holtzclaw... 3 for 3 and batting 1000.

Thanks Mike and Godspeed! S

► **MELILLO** Continued from D1

## Musical bridge to the future on CD

"Up until this CD, I've just done my best and then let it happen," says Melillo, 47. "But because of when this one comes out, and because of its content, I'm really doing what I can to get it out there."

Determined to get the CD into the hands of as many World War II veterans as possible, he has toted advance copies of the disc with him throughout the summer, presenting them as gifts to dozens of veterans and families.

Melillo composed "Kakehashi" in 2003. A group in New Mexico paid him for an eight-minute piece of music, but he told them he couldn't adequately honor the Bataan survivors in that amount of time.

So, for the same fee, he wrote a 65-minute opus for orchestra and choir. A history buff with a particular fascination for World War II, Melillo was driven to compose and record this music while Bataan's survivors were still alive.

He considers the recording itself to be a piece of history. Melillo traveled to Japan this past spring to conduct the



Tokyo Kosei wind orchestra, a Japanese military band. It took months of negotiations and compromises to arrange the recording, but Melillo was determined to create this dramatic gesture — a Japanese military band performing music composed as a tribute to U.S. soldiers who died at the hands of the Japanese Imperial Army.

In order to make it happen, Melillo had to convince the band's commander that the piece would be about reconciliation, not a musical attack on Japan. He agreed to change the title ("Kakehashi" is a Japanese phrase referring to a bridge

### WANT TO BUY IT?

Music by Stephen Melillo, including "Kakehashi: That We Might Live," is available at [www.stormworld.com](http://www.stormworld.com).

to the future) and to end the work with "God Bless America" and a Japanese children's song, "Furusato," about the love of homeland.

"When they were playing 'God Bless America,'" Melillo says, "I was looking over my shoulder at the two American guys in the recording booth, and with my face I was saying, 'Do you believe this?'"

"The reason 'God Bless America' appears here is because American soldiers were bayoneted for singing it on Bataan. Now we had Japanese guys playing it — and not just playing it as a job, but pouring their guts into it. It was a connection, like they were extending a hand, in music, to Americans because they know how important that song is to us." ■