

Getting the Band Back Together: History

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Nov 3, 1956 BC Bee Band Article

Peggy Wilkins

Bimb Bamb Band

During the last two years the B.C. band has grown into a very fine musical organization. This is due to the hard work and interest of Professor Roger Cole and a group of enthusiastic members.

The band is divided into two parts during the year—the football season band and the concert band. Two years ago at the Homecoming football game the band marched twenty-four members, last year twenty-eight, and this year at the Homecoming game thirty-six members performed. The concert band two years ago was made up of a group of twenty-eight, last year thirty-six, and this year the band expects concert membership of forty-four.

So far this year the band has played for one Chapel program, three pep rallies, and has been in the stands playing for two home football games. The band also gave a very enjoyable Homecoming show during half-time. On Saturday, October 27, the band left bright and early to go to West Virginia Wesleyan where it put on a half time show for "Wesleyan's" Home coming.

The future activities of the band this season should provide pleasant listening for all concerned. The band is going to play for two more chapel programs. It will give concerts for various high school assemblies and for several church organizations. One of the main features to come is the band's Spring Concert, to be given on May Day or other appropriate occasion.

The student body should be proud of their band for many various reasons. The band is the backbone at pep rallies and it adds much to the excitement of football games. During football season the band encourages school spirit, and during the concert season the band provides very worthwhile and entertaining musical programs. The B.C. band has received many compliments this year by young and old in all walks of life. Most satisfying are those coming from the student body themselves. These commendations are the ones that really give the band a boost.

Being in the band isn't all play, as everyone well knows. However, band practice can be lots of fun, and band members receive real satisfaction during and after every performance. On Monday, October 29, the band started its concert season. It still needs a flute player, one BB bass, an E Bass, and one or two cornets or trumpets. If you are interested and want to be in the band, the band really wants you. Remember, the BC band has come to be one of the most successful groups on campus. Its future growth and importance depends on your support!

History of the Old BC Marching Band

Although there was a pep band to spread school spirit and a concert band for formal performances in the 1940s, the official Bridgewater College Marching Band did not debut until October 28, 1950. The Bridgewater College Marching band made its first appearance at that year's Homecoming game against Randolph-Macon Academy. The marching band was comprised of 25 members, all of whom came from the concert band. It was directed by Professor Paul B. Sanger Jr.

The historic Bridgewater College Marching Band would spend the next 20 years rousing school spirit. They did this at sports events and pep rallies through uplifting music and the enthusiastic collaboration of cheerleaders, shield-bearers, and majorettes. There were performances at College half-time events and band members travelled with sports teams to games at other institutions. The band's bright red, black, and gold uniforms added to the appeal of the group. The 1959 edition of the Bridgewater College yearbook Ripples describes the marching band as accompanying the cheerleaders through residence halls to rouse the student body into a grand march to pep rallies. Residents of Bridgewater would often see the marching band leading the charge down Main Street during Homecoming. When the football season ended, the marching band reorganized and performed concerts at Christmas and in spring.

A part of local history as well as campus history, the original Bridgewater College Marching Band won first place in the Harrisonburg Veterans' Day Parades from 1966 to 1968. The band also occasionally performed at local high schools to raise interest and appreciation for music in the next generation of college students.

The saying goes that all good things must come to an end, and the original Bridgewater marching band was no different. After twenty years of hard



work and dedicated service, the marching band was dissolved in 1970 by Dr. Robert C. Monroe, the new director, who wished to focus the band on concert performances. However, various other reasons are often given by contemporary sources for the ending, such as personnel changes, unpopular new uniforms, and the shifting focus of the music program. Whatever the case, the marching band was missed! Enjoy these images from the Bridgewater College archives with artifacts on loan and from the Reuel B. Pritchett Museum Collection as we explore how Bridgewater College is Getting the Band Back Together!

BC Band's First Public Appearance



The marching band's first public appearance outside of performing at College events was the November 11, 1966 Veterans' Day Parade in Harrisonburg, VA, in which the band won first place. The band numbered just 34 members and included shield-bearers and majorettes. The band would go on to win first place at the Veterans' Day Parade in 1967 and '68 as well.

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