

Exploring the rich world of the marching arts can open another door for continuing music study and participation. **BY PAUL IRWIN**

How To Teach with *In Tune* MARCHING STORIES

FROM ITS INCEPTION, *In Tune* has been including coverage of the marching arts – the music of marching, along with its history, current culture, business and practices. Each year, in the magazine’s March issue, we deliver expanded coverage of the activity.

We know that not all middle and high schools have a marching band, but as is the case with a cappella groups, students who go on to college will likely have the opportunity to join these ensembles; moreover, the activities offer the chance to join unique and robust on-campus music communities. Accomplished marching musicians may also qualify for acceptance by an elite marching ensemble, such as those of Drum Corps International or Winter Guard International, from whose ranks have emerged world-class musicians and top music educators. Exploring these marching worlds with middle-school and high-school students opens the door to yet another option for continuing music study and participation.

The essential lesson of *In Tune* content about the marching arts is that music moves us. And different kinds of music affect us in different ways. Rhythms can move us to dance, just as certain melodies can evoke romance. But other music can make us feel purposeful and rouse our courage. It is this bold music – music that empowers us – that was originally used to convey rallying cries, “calls to arms,” and it was these sounds that encouraged bravery, thereby

MARCHING 2017

A STORY IN FIVE MOVEMENTS



Right now, tens of thousands of musicians belong to some kind of marching ensemble. Here’s an inside look at an experience that cuts across boundaries of age and ability, from middle school to the military.

BY SUSAN POLINIAK

THE BLARE OF THE BRASS. The rattle of the snare drums. The colorful uniforms and flags. The sight of dozens of hundreds of people marching and playing across a large open field. In these things, we observe a familiar part of life in America. Marching bands aren’t just another hobby; they make up a whole cultural culture more than that, and for many people, participation in that culture can be a lifeline.

While the world of marching music is divided into five main parts, some of them overlap in terms of age, cost, time and skill level, but their central characteristics include repertoire, discipline, membership requirements, an leadership potential—very wide. In this article, we’ll follow the potential career course of a member in 2017, starting with middle and high school bands, moving on to college, and the elite ensembles of Drum Corps International (DCI), Winter Guard International (WGI), Drum Line Battle, and SoundSport (previously marching musicians and color guard members a chance to perform and compete. Some continue marching long after graduation in military bands, all age competitors, and even as pop performers who incorporate elements of marching music into their acts.

But while all these groups march by different rules, they all share something that lasts long after the marching season ends: They’re a place for young people to learn, make friends, and develop skills that will help them in school and in the workplace throughout their lives.

“The March you create in a band may end up being your best friend who hangs out with you time at school,” notes Rich Struble, author of *Marching Music: How to Be Drums, the Marching & Color Guard in the Marching Field* (The Music Library). “Outside of your core classes, the band is where you can spend much of your school time. You and your band mates will be working toward the same goals and being the same tough challenges, and you’ll want to celebrate together as well.”

MARCHING 2018

Whether you’re a band camp rookie or a seasoned player hoping to join the marching elite, here’s...



HOW TO GET IN STEAD

By Danny Miles

THEY POWER DOWN city streets and fan off the heat in a way that is as much a part of the city’s identity as its sports fans and compete in contests of both musical and athletic skill. They follow centuries of tradition yet are also constantly innovating. What are we talking about? Marching ensembles.

Marching ensembles come in many different forms. One of those forms is the traditional marching band found in high school and college programs all over the country, but there are many other related types of marching. Outside of school, such organizations as Drum Corps International (DCI), Winter Guard International (WGI), Drum Line Battle, and SoundSport give young marching musicians and color guard members a chance to perform and compete. Some continue marching long after graduation in military bands, all age competitors, and even as pop performers who incorporate elements of marching music into their acts.

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WHERE IT BE

Marching 2019

Stepping into Styles



Ohio's Arcadia High School corps competing in a Winter Guard International contest.

Indoor Wind Ensembles (WGI): Introduced in 2013, the WGI Winds Division is modeled on WGI Percussion, with both academic and independent organizations competing in a number of divisions. In 2019, a record number of winds ensembles participated.

Eligible Instruments: All winds and sometimes percussion.

Winterguard (WGI): In this indoor color guard competition, the guard performs primarily with prerecorded music.

Traditional Style or Show Band: Most high school and college marching bands fall into this category, which includes both parade-marching performances at football games and school events.

Traditionally, performance movement taken from and named *Patterns in Motion* by "Bill" Moffit, bandmaster of University of All-American and University of Houston. According to Michigan State University, "Patterns in Motion is a changing kaleidoscope of marching styles." **Eligible Instruments:** Marching percussion (all formats), non-traditional percussion and pitched instruments (Drumline/Battle, SoundSport).

TO THE UNINITIATED, "marching band" seems to cover everything—drumline to drum corps and beyond. But people in the activity prefer the term "the marching arts" because it covers the many different styles of ensemble and performance. For students, the most popular styles include:

Drum & Bugle Corps: Rooted in military bands, today's drum & bugle corps trace their roots to the years after World War I, when returning soldiers introduced marching as a youth activity in communities across the country. While the military roots remain, the movement, musical complexity and evolution of the color guard into an expressive force make modern drum corps one of the most demanding musical activities. Drum International (DCI) oversees a summer festival where students, who are

school year, Winter Guard International (WGI) oversees a competition for percussion groups featuring battery and front ensembles in both scholastic and independent divisions, with students eligible through college age. Drumline Battle, an organization launched by DCI, lets drumlines compete in distinctive yet less formal settings. Drumlines can also take part in a similar DCI initiative known as SoundSport.

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MARCHING 2018

GEAR ON THE MARCH



Drum and brass manufacturers are stepping up to meet the evolution of marching music repertoire, movement, and technique.

ONCE UPON A TIME, marching bands walked in straight lines and played, well, marches. And while bands still take part in parades and continue to perform the iconic music of the "March King," John Philip Sousa, the repertoire and styles of music has evolved a great deal in recent years. Much of this movement toward more movement performances of college marching bands as well as Drum Corps International (DCI) and Winter Guard International (WGI) groups, which push past the boundaries of what used to be regarded as the lines of marching band.

To accommodate these evolutions in presentation and sound, the equipment has evolved, too. WGI's experts from the choice of leading marching equipment makers to explain how they have a demanding job. Not only do they carry an instrument that

non-marching drummers get to play sitting on a comfy throne. Which is why designers look at marching drums as a system. "It's the carrier and the drums," says Sharon LaFrance, senior marketing manager at Pearl Corporation, a company that makes drums, percussion, and brass instruments for marching musicians. "We design equipment to suit the player's body as well as the way in which the drum will be used."

"Carriers need to fit different body types," says Tom Heat of TAMA drums. "A carrier designed for an average build needs to be adjustable to high and low extremes." TAMA's Silver Armor line, for example, can be adjusted with a drum key across its entire range of motion—with no latching points in between in order to fit players' shoulders from broad to narrow.

"The options for adjustment include a back tilt and shoulder pads," Heat says. "Also, the belly pad is removable and washable." The goal is not only to fit on the body, but also to distribute the weight of the drums to allow for free movement with as little fatigue as possible.

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UNIFORM vs. COSTUME



Uniform innovations! (Left) Columbus Ohio's Rhythm 2 performs at the 2018 WGI Independent World Class regional in Indianapolis. (Right) The 2017 Cadets Drum & Bugle Corps takes part in DCI competition.

Over the last several years, new printing technology has changed the way uniforms are designed and produced, thanks to the ability to print directly on fabric using a technique called sublimated printing. According to Steve Trull, vice president of sales and marketing at DeMoulin Bros. & Co.—makers of uniforms and costumes for marching music ensembles of all types—sublimated printing has both creative and practical advantages over more traditional stitched decorations.

"The printing process is permanent," he explains. "It won't wash out or clean out. But printing also gives groups much more freedom to express themselves graphically. We see a lot of geometric designs, but also graphic designs. A high school, for example, might ask us to print an image of the school's mascot on their uniforms, and with sublimated printing, we can do that. But printed designs don't have to be outlandish. Some schools will print a very conservative or traditional design. Others are more adventurous."

According to Trull, many schools will keep a basic marching uniform for outdoor use—football games and parades—and enhance the uniform with printed fabrics. Schools that also take part in competitions—such as WGI's indoor Percussion, Winds, and Guard programs—may also opt for a more eye-catching uniform or costume for those uses.

"Usually, these are designed for a single season and have a very specific look," Trull says. "A band uniform, on the other hand, has to last about six to 10 years before a school district will want to invest in a new design." Then again, because they're used for a single season, printed costumes can feature specific elements to go with that season's theme or program.

"One of the big advantages of print is that it gives us a much larger canvas for your design," Trull says. "And you can blend and shape color in a way that's impossible with stitching." A process called ombre (pronounced om-bray) lets designers gradually change the shade or depth of a color over the material. "We saw a lot of ombre in Olympic uniforms this year," Trull says. "Where, for example, you see a dark red on the shoulder get lighter until it's almost white the end of the sleeve—that's ombre. And it's only possible with printing."

As for materials, most companies making apparel for marching music have taken a cue from the makers of athletic wear, using new materials that are cooler, dry faster, and allow for easier movement. "We do use traditional band uniform fabrics, but we also use Lycra, knits, and lightweight stretch wear," Trull says. "Fabric technology itself has evolved, and the fabrics geared towards sports are desirable for band as long as they're durable enough."

placing horns and drums on the earliest battlefields. Although Archibald Willard painted *The Spirit of '76* almost 100 years after the *Declaration of Independence* was adopted, the image of fife, drum and flag, side by side on the march to battle, has become one of the most iconic symbols of the American Revolution.

So, marching in parade and on football fields, the playing of marching music in sports arenas, and the sophisticated musicality and pageantry of elite performance ensembles have an important history, along with roots in physiology and psychology. This all provides an opportunity for great interdisciplinary lessons. But the music to which we march also has discreet qualities, worthy of investigation and explanation.

The instruments used to play marching music operate in the same fashion as their orchestral brethren, but are designed differently. They are lighter and louder and, in some cases, produce markedly

different sounds. The drum-corps "pit" has become a well-spring of technological wonder, inspiring wider use of marimbas and other pitched and hand percussion instruments. Also, marching music is played in competitive environments, and there are independent contests between marching ensembles, generating a spirit of creativity in performance and presentation that drives the activity to constantly evolve.

Marching bands and ensembles perform in indoor competitions, in gymnasiums or arenas during basketball games, and in various outdoor venues. This adds another dimension to the performances, as weather has an impact on players and their instruments. The fact that music sounds different outdoors—because sound carries differently outside—allows for yet another music lesson, this time involving physics. Anyone who has marched in the Texas summer heat, or down New York City's Fifth Avenue in the Macy's Day Parade in November, or at the University of Nebraska's Memorial Stadium in winter can tell you how distinct those musical experiences are. Discussing these and other performance environments with young music students can help prepare them for their own playing situations, as well as inform their listening.

Another element of the marching arts is that, like those who sing and dance, or sing and play an instrument, marching musicians need to move, and move in tandem with others. The training to march demands a certain fitness born of specific practice that goes beyond learning to play one's instrument or any piece of music. Marching music's lessons add a layer to musical training like few others. Learning to play another style of music and in various collaborative groups can certainly inform a player or singer's musicianship, but learning to march develops mind-body coordination and musical discipline that goes a step beyond.

Like much *In Tune* content, the magazine's coverage of the marching arts highlights

opportunities for student participation. Stories detail the process of auditioning for collegiate bands and elite ensembles. They break down the elements of marching and discuss classic marching music and the way music is created or chosen for marching ensembles today. How those ensembles prepare for their performances—how they learn their pieces and steps—pulls back the curtain on those highly choreographed performances. The *In Tune* stories, and your lessons using them, can provide a "you can do this" sense among younger students. Moreover, coverage of how the members of marching bands and ensembles started, what it's like to participate, and stories of their growth from first auditions to when they "aged out" can be particularly inspiring.

So, whether you teach band, orchestra, chorus or general music, your interest in providing students with a well-rounded music education can be served by supplying them with coverage of the marching arts via *In Tune*. Band directors with marching bands can assign these readings and use them to highlight core curriculum. Those teaching general music can detail the elements of marching music and intertwine lessons of musicology, history and science. Choral directors can simply assign the content to enhance students' overall exposure to the wider world of music. In any case, the marching arts are a rich musical pursuit, and like musical theater and ballet, represent a special and spectacular blending of music and movement that all students can enjoy and benefit from knowing more about. **T**

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Unlike DCI—in which each group consists of brass, percussion, color guard, and front ensemble—WGI groups are smaller and more specialized. There are three divisions: Winter Guard (color guard), Percussion, and Winds.

Within each division are a number of classes, with separate competitions called Academies (for ensembles of different sizes and skill levels. As with DCI, WGI's top divisions deliver professional-quality performances. Often, the ranks of the elite ensembles are filled by current or future music majors—but you don't have to be a college student to participate.)