



Presenting the
Big M in the Midwest—
Marching Mizzou

HERE COMES THE BAND!

By Betty Brophy

As the football Tigers leave for the dressing room at half-time, another highly-trained team takes the field. Like the Tigers, their practices sometimes have been rained out. They also have played in torrential downpours and recently were benched because of a new Big Eight rule banning performances on wet fields. Nevertheless, when "Ladies and gentlemen — presenting Marching Mizzou", is heard over the public address system, the "team" of musicians always comes forth with a winning attitude and a brand new show.

Every minute of rehearsal counts for the marching band because a scant seven hours practice time is allotted to prepare a show for one week.

"Three days of rain can really hurt us," said Alexander L. Pickard, director of bands, "but on Saturday, the people expect to see a show."

Marching practice takes up an hour and a half on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Tuesday night brings a two-hour playing rehearsal, at which time questions about the drills are answered. A short run-through immediately before the game completes the rehearsal of shows each week. One hour of credit is given for the rigorous schedule, and it can be applied toward the required physical education credit, if necessary.

A great many more than seven hours go into the preparation of a show, however. Before the football season, Pickard selects the season's repertoire, choosing from popular music, such as this season's "Aquarius," and "Mercy, Mercy, Mercy," as well as concert and traditional marching tunes. He then chooses a theme for each show and the drills to accompany it.

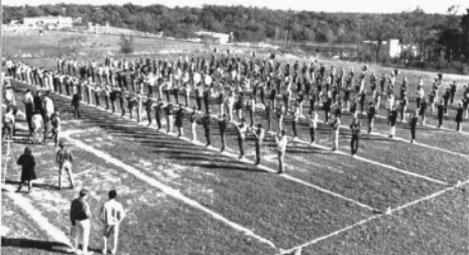
It takes 30 to 40 hours to chart an eight minute show on paper. However, no matter how good a formation looks on the page, once the marchers are on the field, there are sometimes difficulties. "If it isn't satisfactory, I have the students make minor adjustments to make it come out right," the director explained. "They can always do it."

That's rather remarkable, considering that Pickard and the staff must deal with 192 marchers, nine twirlers, one featured twirler, and two drum majors. In addition, 20 or more alternates stand prepared to march for every show and must know each marching routine so they can fill in for any member at a moment's notice.

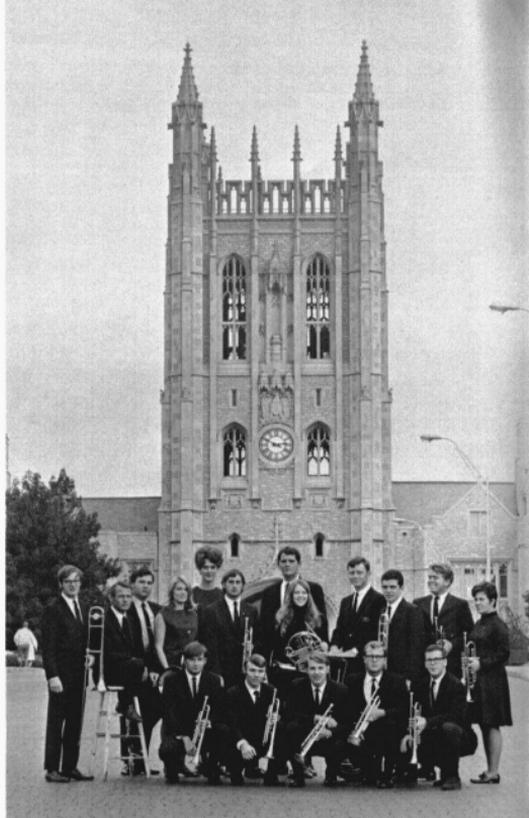
This year Pickard is assisted by Purris Williams, who has much experience with Texas bands, which are highly acclaimed marching units. Ron Dyer, a graduate percussion instructor, also assists, along with a hard-working student staff of seven.

Pickard, named director of bands in 1966, is only the fourth director of the marching band in the University's history. George Venable originated the group in 1907, but there was little precision marching done during those early days. In 1946, George Wilson took charge and held the position for 11 years.

When Charles Emmons, now chairman of the music department, came to Columbia in 1957, impressive changes were made. Girls were added to the group in 1958. Although many bands march only males, Emmons found that "we lost many female music majors simply because they didn't get to play until the second semester." In addition, many coeds were among the best players, and



As the football team works out on an adjacent field, Marching Mizzou members practice drills on their own facsimile football field during afternoon rehearsals.



The brass ensemble, above, directed by Purris Williams, who is seated, and the studio band, below, under the direction of Tom Senff, standing far left, are two of the various campus bands.



Studio group features big band jazz and rock à la Herman, Rich

Emmons was able to increase the size and improve the calibre of the marching group at the same time. Today, 94 out of the total of 231 members of Marching Mizzou are females.

Another addition to the marching repertoire introduced by Emmons was the famous Mizzou-Tigers drill which has become a trademark of Marching Mizzou.

Probably the most striking characteristic of Missouri's band which sets it apart from comparable groups is its pace. They march at 180 beats per minute, considerably faster than the 144 beats per minute tempo most bands use for marching.

That pace slows down only slightly for many band members after marching season. After the last football game, the band divides into smaller pep bands for basketball games. There are also auditions for concert band, a smaller, more select group of 65-75 members. This is a top musical group in the same class as University orchestra and University singers. They tour the state, play for conventions, and present an annual spring concert in St. Louis.

For the jazz-oriented, the department also has a studio band which features "big band jazz and rock à la Gerald Wilson, Woody Herman and Buddy Rich," according to Tom Senff, Instructor of Low Brass and director of studio and stage bands. This performing group of 25 is oriented toward reading with improvisation.

Created only three years ago, the jazz group has traveled to various collegiate jazz festivals, such as the one held at Notre Dame. For the past two years, they have won the college competition of the Kansas City Jazz Festival.

This year Senff, who has played trombone on the road with Woody Herman's and Stan Kenton's bands, and has played bass and piano with other groups, plans to take the ensemble to a regional qualifying contest for the Notre Dame festival. They will also return to the K.C. Jazz Festival.

Another goal of the new director is to play as many informal concerts at the Memorial Union as possible. "They played one last year and really drew a crowd. I'd like the band to play more for the students so they find out what this group is doing."

The one-hour course is an elective, and Senff feels that it should not be required, but definitely belongs in the curriculum. To him jazz is a "vital

art form," and this group is the only ensemble which gives the students an opportunity for improvisation. There is also a second stage band which performs in area schools, assemblies, and dances on campus.

A more traditionally-oriented group, the brass ensemble, under the direction of Williams, will polish a repertoire of music from "tenth century compositions to contemporary music," this year, according to the assistant band director and trumpet instructor. A brass ensemble, or brass choir, is composed of French horns, trombones, tubas, and trumpets. Percussion instruments will be included, along with the assistance of Ron Dyer, percussion instructor.

The ensemble, which has about 18 to 22 members, plays music of composers ranging from J. S. Bach and Matthew Lock to Samuel H. Adler and Vaelev Nelhybel. Williams said they will try to stay away from transcriptions and concentrate on music written specifically for brass choir.

A similar group, the trumpet ensemble, also under Williams' direction, already performed this fall at a St. Louis church organ recital. They were featured on a program with Perry G. Parrigin, organist and associate professor of music for the University, and played a madrigal by Palestrina and a composition by De Lassus.

All of the University band groups and ensembles are service organizations and are available to play on request. None of them is exclusively composed of music majors. In fact, the band has members of almost every division of the University, who play for the enjoyment and experience. It's an experience their audiences also enjoy. □



Up before dawn, marching band members board buses at 5 a.m. enroute to St. Louis and the Missouri-Illinois football game.