



Relive “Mighty” Band Performances Through Videos

From the days of tall fur “Q-Tip” hats and high-stepping formations, much has changed for The Mighty Sound of the South marching band. Now those band performances have been preserved for future generations to view.

Members of The U of M Band Alumni Chapter have unearthed nearly 40 years of recordings of The Mighty Sound of the South. They are using the films to produce a set of videos of band pregame and halftime performances from the past four decades, showcasing different marching styles, musical selections, uniforms, hairstyles and traditions.

The videos are being packaged in 10-year collections. The first volume is on sale now. “It shows different drills, types of music, how traditions have evolved, like spelling out ‘TIGERS’ at the end of halftime,” says chapter past president Chris Darr (BA ’93, MBA ’01). Sue

Lynn Perry (BA ’86, MA ’98), also a band alum, edited and produced the video.

The earliest film of the band was taken in 1963, Darr says. Some films were shot at Crump Stadium, where the Tigers played before Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium opened in 1965. The earliest 16mm films were shot in black and white and have no sound, but are in good condition. By the 1970s and ’80s, most recordings were in color. Betamax videotaping replaced

16mm film in 1981. In the early 1990s, the band purchased a VHS camera.

The videos illustrate changing expressions of music and style. In the ’60s, band members sported the tall fur hats worn by British palace guards and did mostly block and straight line drills. That evolved to military-style Shako hats and curved drills.

“It will let everybody go back and relive their days in the band,” says Darr, who played tuba for The Mighty Sound of the South from 1989-92. “They can say, ‘I remember that drill.’”

Proceeds from video sales will help to support

various band alumni activities, including the Homecoming alumni band performance and the Sidney J. McKay Fellowship for graduate students in instrumental music education.

By transferring the performances to video, Darr says, they will be preserved much longer than the delicate film



Chris Darr (BA ’93, MBA ’01) and Sue Lynn Perry (BA ’86, MA ’98) work to preserve performances of The Mighty Sound of the South on video.

they were on. The video also will provide young band members a feeling of continuity. In the past four decades, The Mighty Sound of the South has only had three directors — Thomas Ferguson, Arthur Theil and McKay. “It can give new students a feel for tradition, make them feel they’re a part of something so they can take pride in it,” Darr says.

For information on ordering the videos, e-mail alumni@tigerbandalumnti.com.