

Pep band jazzes up many events

Matthew Bates
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

With only twelve band members playing, it's hard to believe that anyone could hear music over the din of fans screaming for their favorite women's volleyball team at McArthur Court.

But this is no ordinary "pep band." The few instruments emitting those powerful and varied sounds belong to members of the University of Oregon Green Garter Band.

While this student-run band has entertained audiences with its high-powered music and enthusiasm at sporting events for years, its music reaches far beyond the confines of Mac Court. From recruiting at high schools to playing at weddings, the Green Garter Band seems to do it all.

"It is very time consuming," said Jason Garcia, the group's director and lead trumpet player. "We usually have two to three gigs a week."

The Green Garter Band was created in 1983 by a group of marching band members who were in a Dixie band that would go to the other side of the field after halftime to play for the crowd. During one game, a fan came down from the stands and offered the members \$50 to play "Happy Birthday" for his friend. Since then, the band has slowly grown to perform a number of functions for the University.

The Green Garter Band plays at a variety of athletic department events, including all of the women's home volleyball and basketball games. But in addition to these gigs, the band also performs at private functions, such as dances and weddings.



GARY GRASS/Emerald
Jason Garcia, director of the Green Garter Band, leads a practice session Tuesday in Esslinger. The band is made up of some of the top players from the Oregon Marching Band.

The proceeds they earn from these outside events go towards the Oregon Marching Band.

Since the group is only able to practice two days a week, it is extremely important that each member remains committed. The small size of the group makes each member's presence paramount to the band's overall sound.

"When you only have two hours a week to rehearse and you play so much, you have to have your act together," said Dave Keller, one of two alto saxophonists in the group.

With a full tuition waiver on the line and the only prerequisite for auditioning being one year of experience in the Oregon Marching Band, the competition to get into the Green Garter Band is tough. However, the competition contributes to the band's high standard of musicianship.

Vacancies only open when a

current member leaves, so music and non-music majors alike must be ready when the opportunity to join comes along.

"The stress is incredible," said trumpet player Joe Billera, a member since 1993. "I was a mess before the tryout but when you get in, it is great!"

Once in, members are required to learn up to 200 pieces of music and to play in both the Oregon Marching and Basketball Bands. Sometimes, these tasks can seem daunting.

"There are lots of expectations for the group and it requires a high degree of professionalism," said Nick Papador, the group's bass guitarist.

To go along with their dedication and puritan-style work ethic, Garcia also stressed the long standing tradition of having fun and enjoying the music. A

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