

BONDED BY DISTANCE

BAND JUMPS AT OPPORTUNITIES TO REBUILD THEIR BOND AFTER BEING APART DURING PRACTICE

NINE MINUTES BEFORE HALFTIME, as per usual, the marching band made their way down the SM North bleachers and into the endzone of the football field. It was time to debut their halftime performance, and the first of many, with the Lancer Dancers.

Although they were sharing the limelight with the Homecoming Court and the Cheer seniors, this was the moment the band – their “family” – had been waiting for. With only half the “family” present, of course.

Instead of debuting their signature performance on Lancer Day, they performed their piece, “Octopus’s Garden,” for the first time at a boys’ soccer game. Each member put their instrument through the hole in their district-sanctioned mask and started to play.

During their WebEx practices, band members played their instruments along to a recording with their mute buttons on. This gave every individual an opportunity to focus on the sound they were making, rather than being intimidated by a large group.

“Sometimes when you play in a big group, you’re so worried about what you sound like or messing up,” senior Ragan Dutcher said. “This gives you time to focus on yourself and figure out fingerings.”

During the fall, cuts to the practice schedule gave the band a better chance to grow as individuals, but it was more of a struggle to grow as a family. They had always had the closest bond and needed to find a way to repair it due to online practices and less interaction.

Senior drum major Mac Muehlberger missed the camaraderie that in-person practice gave the group, but remained grateful for the opportunities they had to still play.

“It’s good for individualistic music growth,” Muehlberger said. “The only problem with it is there’s really no one there making people actually play.”

Even though the band had been cut in half in performance size, and in competition, they learned to cherish the family it had provided them with throughout life.

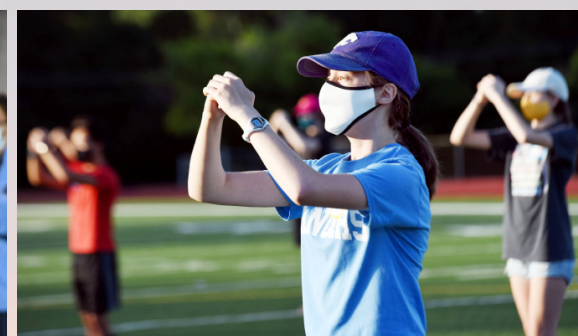
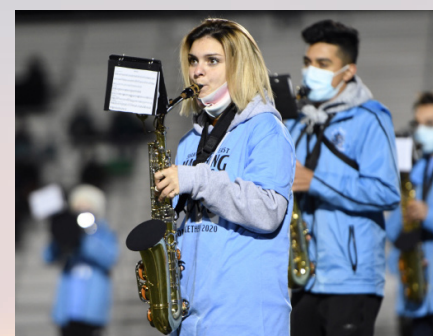
“WE ALL CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER. WE ALL LOVE WHAT WE DO BEST, WHICH IS MAKING MUSIC AND PUTTING ON A SHOW”

MAC MUEHLBERGER | 12

Spending every second they could in the band room – making time to get to know each other outside of early morning practices or masked up games – gave the players the ability to form a bond that would last throughout the year and its hardships.

“We are one big family and all share a common interest in music,” said Muehlberger. “We all care about each other. We all love what we do and do what we all do best, which is making music and putting on a show.”

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MAKING IT WORK **left** Playing the clarinet, senior Megan Collins finally gets an after school practice due to the pandemic. “We have taken all the precautions we can take in order to continue playing together like using masks and HEPA filters,” Collins said. “Although concerts are unlikely to occur, we still get to play music with each other in class.” **photo | Katherine Hamilton**

NOT THE FULL CHANCE **far left** At practice senior Ella Vitt plays her alto saxophone. “We can’t practice all together and even when we were able to play on the football field not everyone was comfortable being there.” Vitt said. “We haven’t been in full band since before March 13.” **photo | Katherine Hamilton**



MARCHING IN MASKS **above left** While playing the sousaphone in a mask, freshman Daniel Scladweiler practices marching and nailing down counting. “It’s hard to play with a mask,” Scladweiler said. “Breathing is one of the most important things in band.” **photo | Ella Miller**

AFTER HOURS PRACTICE **above right** At one of their evening practices, sophomore Sam Hicks rehearses with the marching band. “It felt really different practicing outside of school instead of our regular before school or first hour,” Hicks said. “I feel like there was a dissociation between practice and the actual class I was taking.” **photo | Katherine Hamilton**

EXTRA PRACTICE

BAND MEMBERS USE EXTRA TIME TO PRACTICE

“I started practicing more because I missed playing with people so much that I had to make up for it. I am practicing up to 45 minutes a day compared to the once a week I used to.”

EJ PADGETT | 12



“Lessons have helped me keep goals in mind. I have always had something to work on. I am practicing more with the pandemic, and I have more time to do it.”

MAC MUEHLBERGER | 12



COMING BACK TOGETHER **above right** At the beginning of in-person practice, freshman Kayden Rogers performs “Come Together” by the Beatles. “We didn’t have any practices in-person for the first two months. Those practices were online and we really didn’t do much,” Rogers said. “We had to come together as a band and actually put a screen to a face.” **photo | Katherine Hamilton**

HOW WAS THE FIRST TIME PERFORMING DURING COVID?

IT WAS UNDERWHELMING. AS A SENIOR IT WAS A LITTLE HEARTBREAKING KNOWING THAT MY HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND CAREER WAS GOING TO BE OVER BEFORE IT EVEN REALLY STARTED.

ELLA VITT | 12