

## Entertaining, in-your-face Hampton U. marching and pep bands

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At HBCUs, the marching band is the main reason for fans' attendance and support of the university. It is the heightened feeling of ecstasy and school spirit, the band performance exhilarates that causes a memorable time of love and fellowship. Hampton University brings a unique twist of culture and style that separates them from others.

The Hampton University bands consist of the marching band, the concert band, and the symphonic winds and the pep band, according to information obtained from the **Department of Music**. Each of these organizations strive to provide a high level of musical experience for its members. These organizations provide music for university functions under the umbrella of the Department of Music. The bands are comprised of wind players and percussionists from all academic disciplines around campus. The university bands study and rehearse wind band repertoire that fosters musical growth and human connection through music.



This year **Tory F. Smart** was appointed director of **university bands**. He is the son of the late Barney Smart, who served as the director of university bands for 14 years. It was under the father's guidance that "The "Force" became known as an outstanding college marching band. Tory Smart serves as the director of the HU Marching Force.

He said, "My goal is to uphold the tradition, the pride and increase the size of the band. I want the Force to be aggressive and entertaining this year. I will educate our students and develop them into strong professionals."

"The Force" performs crowd favorites such as "Poison," a 1990s hit by the New Edition spinoff group Bel Biv DeVoe, "6, 7, 9" by Fetty Wap, "SOS" by Rihanna, "This is how we do" by Montel Jordan, "Body Party" by Ciara and the most popular, **"Talking Out the Side of Your Neck."** In 1984, the group Cameo wrote this popular song as a protest against then-President Ronald Reagan and the song has remained a favorite since that time. You can hear this song played by a number of collegiate bands; however, Hampton's version of the song is like no other.

Hampton's version is approximately five minutes long. It is played longer than any version performed by other bands. The musical arrangement also makes Hampton's version dramatically different from others. Throughout the song there is the distinctive sound of the brass and woodwind sections and

the percussion at different intervals during the song.

The marching band currently consists of approximately 200 members that include musicians, flag team members and Ebony Fire dancers. In 1977, the marching band became known as the "The Force" which was a term referenced in the movie "Star Wars." "The Force" was described as powerful energy field created by all living things that surrounds and penetrates living beings. It represented good and combated evil. The marching band performs at all home football games and selected away games.

The pep band is a vibrant and energetic ensemble that plays for both the women's and men's basketball teams. The pep band is open to students who play traditional band instruments that typically consist of brass, woodwinds and percussion.

"We perform at all home and selected away games." said clarinet player Markus Smith, a freshman chemistry engineer major. "I enjoy traveling to the MEAC [Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference] basketball tournament every year and performing in front of family and friends.

"We perform several concerts every year and challenge ourselves to perform musical pieces from different cultures and styles."

The concert band is an ensemble designed to provide opportunities for all Hampton University students to continue playing their instrument after marching season.

The symphonic winds, founded in 1991 by Barney Smart, provides opportunities for outstanding instrumentalists and music majors to perform traditional and avant-garde band literature at the highest level possible.

The Hampton University marching band practices seven days a week from 5 to 9 p.m. Music scholarships are offered to qualified students. These scholarships will not pay the total costs to attend Hampton University, but will help to defray some of the expenses. Initial scholarship awards are based on performance ability, according the Department of Music. Subsequent awards are based on number of factors such as musical growth, commitment and performance ability.

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