

# Music Department Starts With Chorus, 19th Century Band

Music was made an academic subject at the University in 1874. In the fall of 1916 the music department was made part of the liberal arts department, enabling the student to count music credits in gaining a degree.

One of the first choral groups was organized in 1897. It was under the leadership of H. H. Stoecker.

Also at this time, there was much promotion by students for a band, but they lacked the necessary funds to purchase instruments. In 1900 students petitioned the Board of Trustees for the money. The trustees agreed with the principle of establishing the band but could not see their way clear to give the money.

President George W. Atherton and James W. Beaver each subscribed \$50 toward a fund for purchasing the instruments. And General Beaver, who was very interested in the project, wrote to Andrew Carnegie explaining the situation and asking Carnegie for \$100.

### Carnegie Gives \$800

Carnegie wrote: "Please let me furnish the money for the college boys. I have directed my cashier to send you a check for \$800."

Student interest in the band was begun by George H. Deike in the fall of 1899. Deike was ordered to report to the commandant of cadets, Captain T. H. Taliaferro, for a special interview.

At the interview Deike was asked to play all the service calls on his bugle—he was a bugler in the army during the Spanish-American war. This led to his appointment as chief musician on the non-commissioned staff of the Reserve Officer Training Corps battalion.

It was not long before Deike found three more buglers, a snare drummer and a bass drummer.

These students, however, were not satisfied with a drum and bugle corps.

They found 25 other students who had experience in playing band instruments. A dozen of the students had their own instruments.

From this first group which originated in 1899 came the cadet band of 1901, which grew to a military band of 140 pieces. In 1913 it was named the College Band. And in 1923 when new blue uniforms were purchased, it became the Blue Band.

### Thompson Directs Band

The Blue Band, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in the fall of 1949, was directed by Wilfred O. Thompson, retired army bandmaster who came to the University in 1914. Thompson retired in 1939 and was replaced by Dr. Hummel Fishburn, present head of the department of music.

Another musical organization which had an early origin is the Penn State Glee Club. The Glee Club was organized in 1891. It consisted of 12 members, one of whom, the conductor, was a professor. Membership in the club continued to include both faculty and students until 1905 when it was limited to students.

The spring touring tradition of the Glee Club was begun in 1920 when the group sang at Wilkes-Barre, and Binghamton, N.Y.

In 1928 the Glee Club went to

Europe and sang in London, Oxford, Paris, Brussels, Antwerp, and the Hague.

It was because of demands upon the Glee Club that Penn State's school songs came into being. The club was awarded an honorable mention in an Intercollegiate glee club contest held in Carnegie Hall, in 1915. The Glee Club was hampered by the fact that it did not have any school songs, except the "Alma Mater," which was one of the requirements of the contest.

Since that time the situation has been remedied at the request of the University's music department.

### 5 Selections Contributed

There are now five selections which stand as the University's contribution to music. They are: "The Victory Song," "Blue and White," "The Nittany Lion," "Fight on State," and "Hail O' Hail."

Penn State's "Alma Mater" was written in 1901 by Fred Lewis Pattee, professor emeritus of American Literature at the University. Pattee's own story of how he came to write the song appears in his autobiography, which was completed last year.

Pattee writes: "My college life has been passed in a school where songs were a major factor in student activities. I found Penn State without an alma mater, so I wrote an article for the college publication, 'Free Lance', saying there was a need for one and a contest should be run to get one."

### Hymn Music

The music for the "Alma Mater" was that of a hymn appearing in the College hymnal entitled "Lead Me On." The "Alma Mater" was sung for the first time at the alumni dinner that year where it was pronounced the "official song of Penn State" by General Beaver, president of the Board of Trustees and then presiding officer.

"The Victory Song" and "The Nittany Lion" were written by James A. Leyden of the class of 1914. Leyden, who possessed a fine tenor voice, also distinguished himself on the track team.

His "Victory Song" was sung by American soldiers in World

War I and by students in hundreds of schools across the country.

"The Nittany Lion" was first sung by Leyden at a concert of the University Glee Club in New York City in 1924. The program was one of the biggest musical features of the New York season. Leyden's song was well received and encores were asked.

"Fight on State" was one of three songs submitted upon the request of the music department by Joseph Saunders, class of 1915. The song was edited by members of the music department and was introduced by the Blue Band in 1935. The band arrangement was made by Olin Butte, class of 1935. A revised arrangement was completed last year by Paul Yoder, national band arranger.

The "Blue and White" is a steal from a traditional folk song, Anne Lisle, according to Fishburn. "Of course the steal was originally made by Syracuse University," Fishburn said, "we merely stole it from them."

### 100 Today—

(Continued from first page) day year. Navy is slated for Homecoming and the annual closing game with Pitt will be played in State College for the first time in many years.

A beard growing contest sponsored by the Student Centennial Committee has been given an added flavor to the Centennial and will culminate with the selection of "champions" during Spring Week.

The Student Centennial Committee is also planning a Centennial song contest. If a suitable choral arrangement is submitted, the committee hopes to introduce the new school song on May Day.

### Parking Problem Solution

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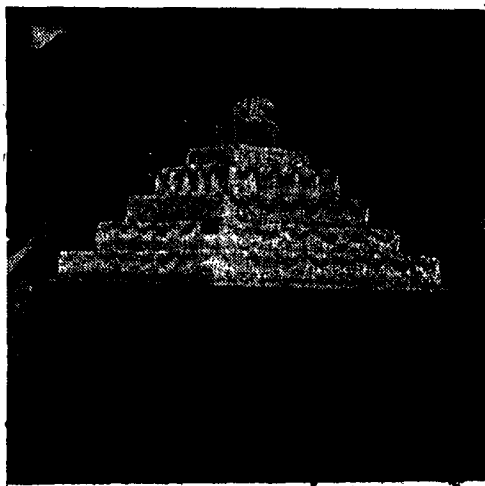


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