

Conductor Leonard Haug and Associate Conductor Robert Ross (Right) scrutinize a proposed band formation. The lead soldiers represent players on a field board which is marked off with "5-yard lines." Some formations don't pass the test. This one didn't

Ask Leonard Haug, O.U.'s band conductor, what makes the "Pride of Oklahoma" click and he'll tell you that it's

Planning and Practice

By John Wagoner, '51

Leonard Haug's fan mail probably doesn't equal the letters Bud Wilkinson receives after a game, but he usually comes up with a hat full. The Pride of Oklahoma—the University's marching band—has the field for only six to ten minutes at half-time. But during that time Haug stages a show that everyone remembers.

The game may be so tense that you don't notice the red and white clad band members have massed at the end of the field just before the half-time siren sounds. Then the voice on the loudspeaker announces: "Ladies and gentlemen! The Uni-

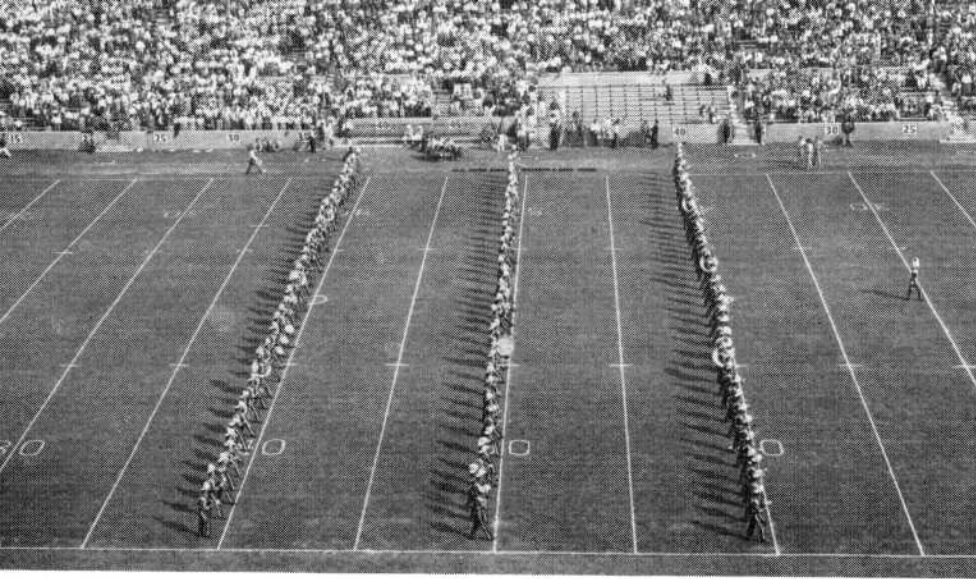
versity of Oklahoma's marching band—the Pride of Oklahoma!"

In a three-line formation the band makes its entrance and the show is on. With machine like precision it executes its series of stunts and formations. The band has turned in top performances so many times that the audience expects it. But what it can't anticipate is the novelty of the show. Every game has a performance planned around a new theme.

Ask Conductor Leonard Haug what makes the Pride of Oklahoma click, and he'll tell you it's planning and practice. Those are the two elements which make a

show that draws applause and fan mail. Planning for the 1950 half-time programs began during a July heat wave which didn't even suggest football.

A program begins with ideas which are advanced at staff meetings. Conductor Haug, Robert W. Ross, associate conductor, and Richard Brightwell, assistant conductor, get their heads together and work out the theme for a program. "Ideas are O.K. if we can get them ironed out to the point where we can chart them on graph paper," says Haug. He has an "idea file" which contains ideas and suggestions, old and new. The file is at all times open to new ideas.

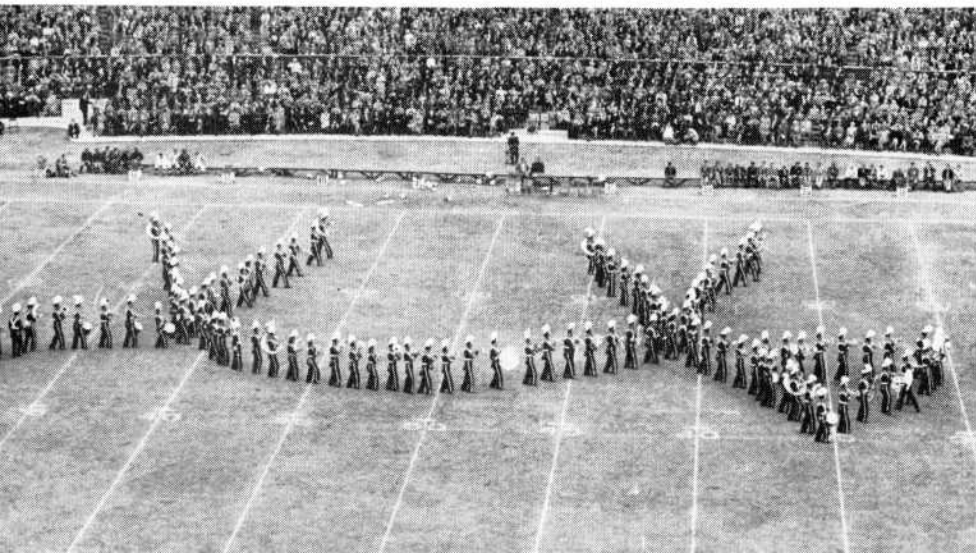


The first time we tried this band entrance, there was so much applause that we have kept on using it," Haug says. The band makes its entrance from the end zone and marches the length of the football field. White field lines serve as guide marks.



At this year's Sugar Bowl game the band formed an outline of the official trophy while they played "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans." In the foreground is Haug, who conducts the band from a portable podium during the half-time performances.

As a salute to the Wildcats of Kentucky University, the band formed a wildcat at the Sugar Bowl game. To the strains of "On, On, U of K", the cat walked down the field with its tail wagging and its legs moving. The job took hours of planning.



And many good ones are submitted by members of the band.

Once the theme and idea for a show have been decided upon, Haug starts to work on charting positions, and Ross begins writing a script for the narrator. Releases are secured from publishers of all the music to be included in the show. A work plan is sent to Baird Jones, '38, director of the highschool band at McMan, Oklahoma, who prepares the musical score.

Before the ideas reach the graph paper stage, the field board is brought into use. The board, eight by four feet, is marked off as an exact replica of an official football field. Haug uses 120 lead soldiers—that's the number of bandsmen in the marching band—to check each idea. When a formation passes the board test, it is virtually assured of meeting with the approval of the football fans. The formation is charted on graph paper, then copied on a mimeograph stencil, mimeographed and finally distributed to the band members. Each half-time show involves eight to ten mimeographed sheets for each player.

But before anything can be done toward a performance there has to be a band. Each September the band is revamped and new members are added to replace those who have graduated or who have dropped out. Prospective members are auditioned and those who measure up to rigid standards are accepted. Haug requires that band members be able to attend at least 75 per cent of the rehearsals. The first class performances which he turns out demand that band members work hard and consistently.

Getting the band into uniform and properly equipped is the first of the big jobs each season. A student quartermaster takes care of a lot of the detail work in this department. Instruments are usually provided by the members themselves, but the University supplies instruments, such as tubas and drums, which normally are not owned by students.

Rehearsals for a Saturday show begin on the Monday preceding the game. During the first practice period the band plays through the music and the entire program is recorded. The tape recording is used by the narrator to synchronize his script.

On Wednesday afternoon and subsequent afternoons the band moves onto its own "football field" and starts polishing the formations. The band's practice field, east of Owen Stadium, is marked off with five-yard lines each week. Those lines are important because they guide the movements of each player as he goes into a formation. "A heavy rain during a game could spell tragedy for one of our shows," Haug says. If the lines were washed out until they were

not clearly visible, the formations might turn into a milling mob.

Practicing the new formations with 120 band members is more difficult than manipulating a like number of lead soldiers. So the band is split up, usually into four or five parts, with Haug, Ross, Brightwell, the drum major and occasionally an outstanding band member sharing in the supervision. Each is responsible for his segment.

Friday afternoon drill is required attendance for all band members; the whole show is rehearsed and perfected for the next day's performance. The show has been incubated from idea to sheet music, and the final drill is the end of the carefully plotted process which makes the Pride of Oklahoma click.

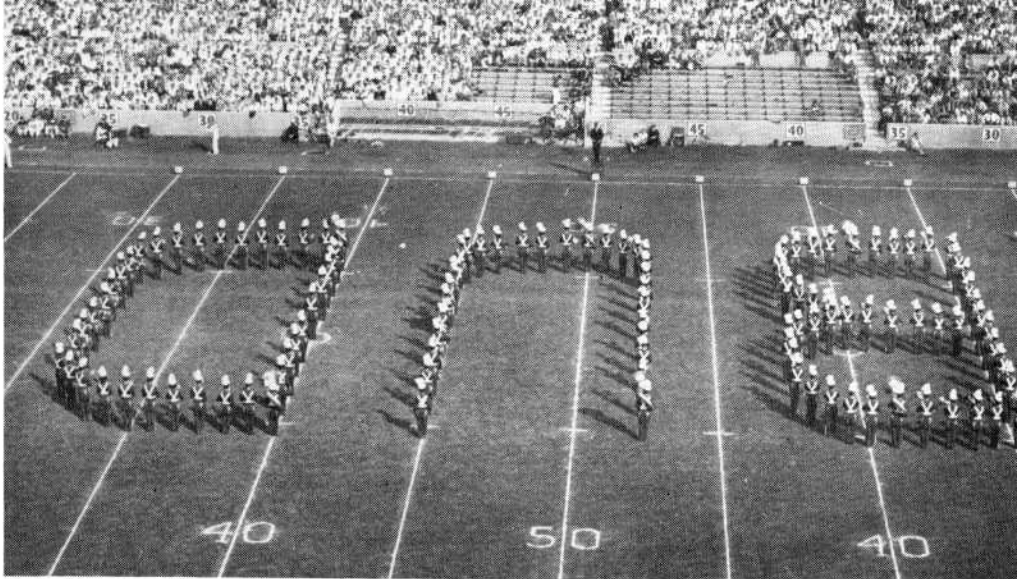
The planning goes on at such a rapid pace that two to three shows are in preparation at all times throughout the football season. By the time one performance has been completed, music, charts and instruction sheets are ready to be issued for the following show. It takes only six to ten minutes on the field, but it requires hours of behind the scenes preparation to make the show click.

The technique used in the band's productions is wielded by Haug. But he lays claim only to some variations in the process. "I owe a lot to Raymond Dvorak, who is band director at the University of Wisconsin," he says. Haug was assistant band director at Wisconsin until 1938 when he came to O.U. to take a similar position. Then in 1945 he moved up to the position of director and started his spectacular run of Saturday afternoon shows.

The band members get nothing in return for their work other than applause and the opportunity to play Boomer Sooner when Big Red makes a touchdown. Several interesting trips are thrown into the season's performance, but actually anyone would have to want to be in the band to put in all the afternoon hours of rehearsal which are necessary to make the show a good one.

Haug normally isn't worried about running out of potential band members. "There are youngsters in highschool bands all over the state who will want to audition for the O.U. band when they come to the University," he says. But right now losses to the Armed Forces are cutting into his manpower. He estimates the band has suffered a 10 per cent loss since the Sugar Bowl trip in January.

Whatever Haug's problems are, he probably will manage to solve them. The key to his technique is planning. "We are already thinking about next year's shows," he says.



Spelling out "Bud", the band saluted the 1950 football team at the Boston College game while it played "My Hero." A special feature of the formations is that they are understandable whether they are seen right side up or from the reverse side.



Oklahoma's 700 Millionaires came in for a lot of panning during the past football season. In a salute to the School of Business Administration, the band played "We're in the Money" while the card section completed the stunt with a large 700 figure.

Using a "Red River Valley" theme, the band commemorated the American cowboy at both the Texas Aggie and Texas games. Song for the number was "I've Got Spurs That Jingle Jangle Jingle." The spur rowel rotated while the band was playing.

