

Band Echoes

2025



Party Like It's 1995!

Before the digital camera age, pictures were taken with film which was processed at a local store. This picture from 1995 shows the Alumni Marching Band marching east on University Avenue toward campus. This was also before the Alumni Marching Band decided to wear a maroon and silver uniform.

University of Montana Percussion ensemble concert, March 28, 2025



Always a delight are the Percussion Ensemble concerts, which bring in a wide variety of percussion instruments from around the world.

World Percussion ensemble concert, May 2, 2025

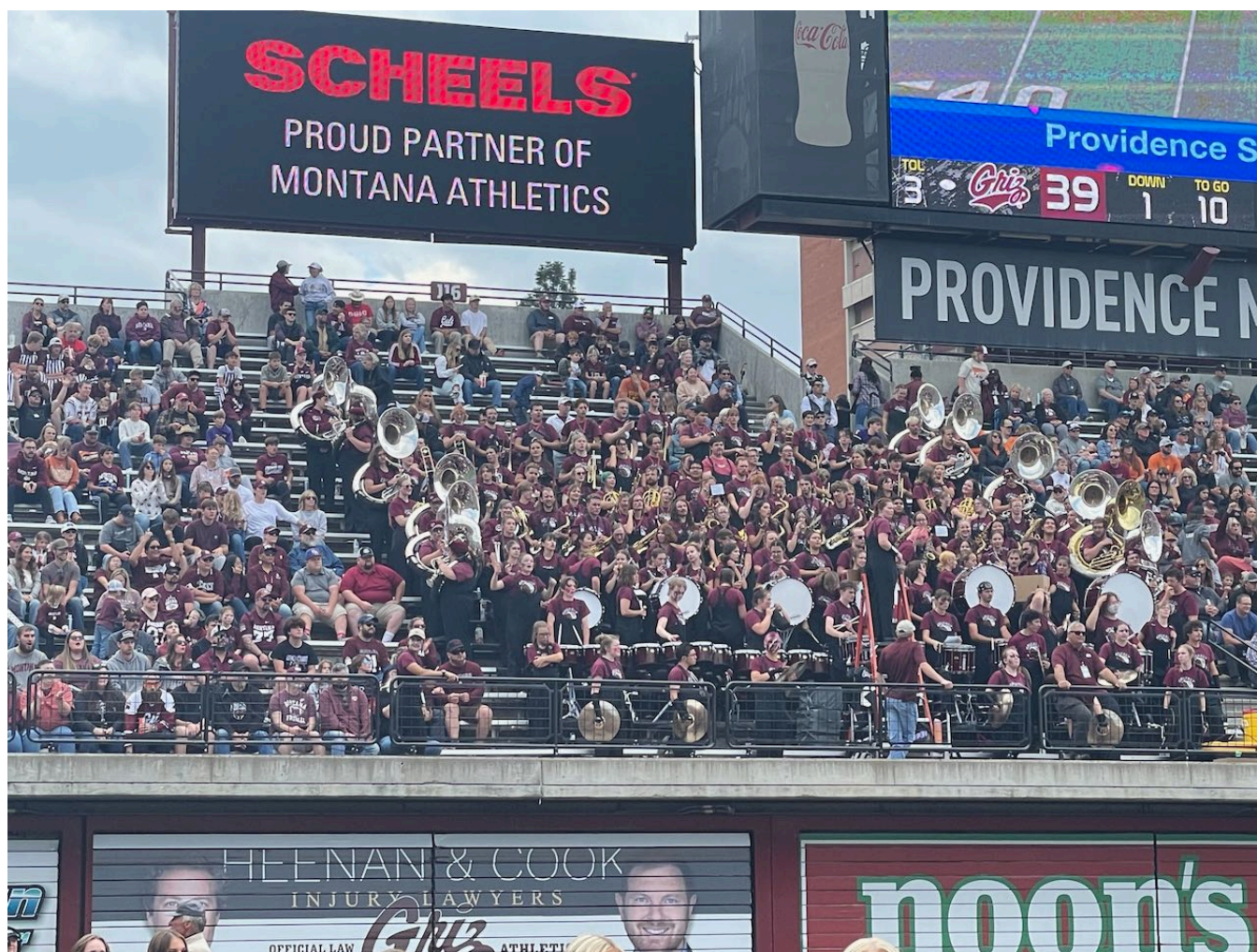


Dr. Robert Ledbetter concluded his storied teaching career with U of M's Music Department with the World Percussion concert this past Spring. Such a delight to listen to the unique rhythms and instruments during this concert. With thanks to Dr. Ledbetter for building such a fine program.

The Grizzly Marching Band

Hello UM Band Alumni!

As we approach another season we've had some exciting developments in the Grizzly Marching Band and UM Pep Band. This past fall, the marching band enjoyed its biggest enrollment ever. We ended band camp with over 150 students and finished the season with 145. It is a trend that I hope will continue so that we can more effectively bring live music to our incredible stadium of over 26,000 fans.



Griz Marching Band in the south bleachers, September 2024

As of this writing, the numbers are looking good for this fall and I will continue to reach out to potential GMB members to invite them to join us.

In the fall, we had married couple, who are UM alumni, approach me with a question and offer. They had attended the 2025 National Championship Game in Frisco and wanted to know how we could boost the number of trumpet players in the band. I told them that the two most effective methods would be

scholarships and new instruments. They agreed to do both, setting up a scholarship endowment and purchasing 24 brand-new, matching trumpets. I managed to get a remarkable deal from Conn-Selmer to acquire 24 silver, Bach Stradivarius trumpets. We tested them during the basketball tournaments this spring and they are going to be amazing!

On the heels of that donation, we had another donation to purchase 12 silver, King Marching French Horns. These are a new design by King that feature a French Horn sound in the key of F rather than Bb.

It will complement the new trumpets perfectly and should make an immediate impact to the brass sound of the band. For future planning, I hope to purchase matching trombones, baritones, saxes and clarinets.

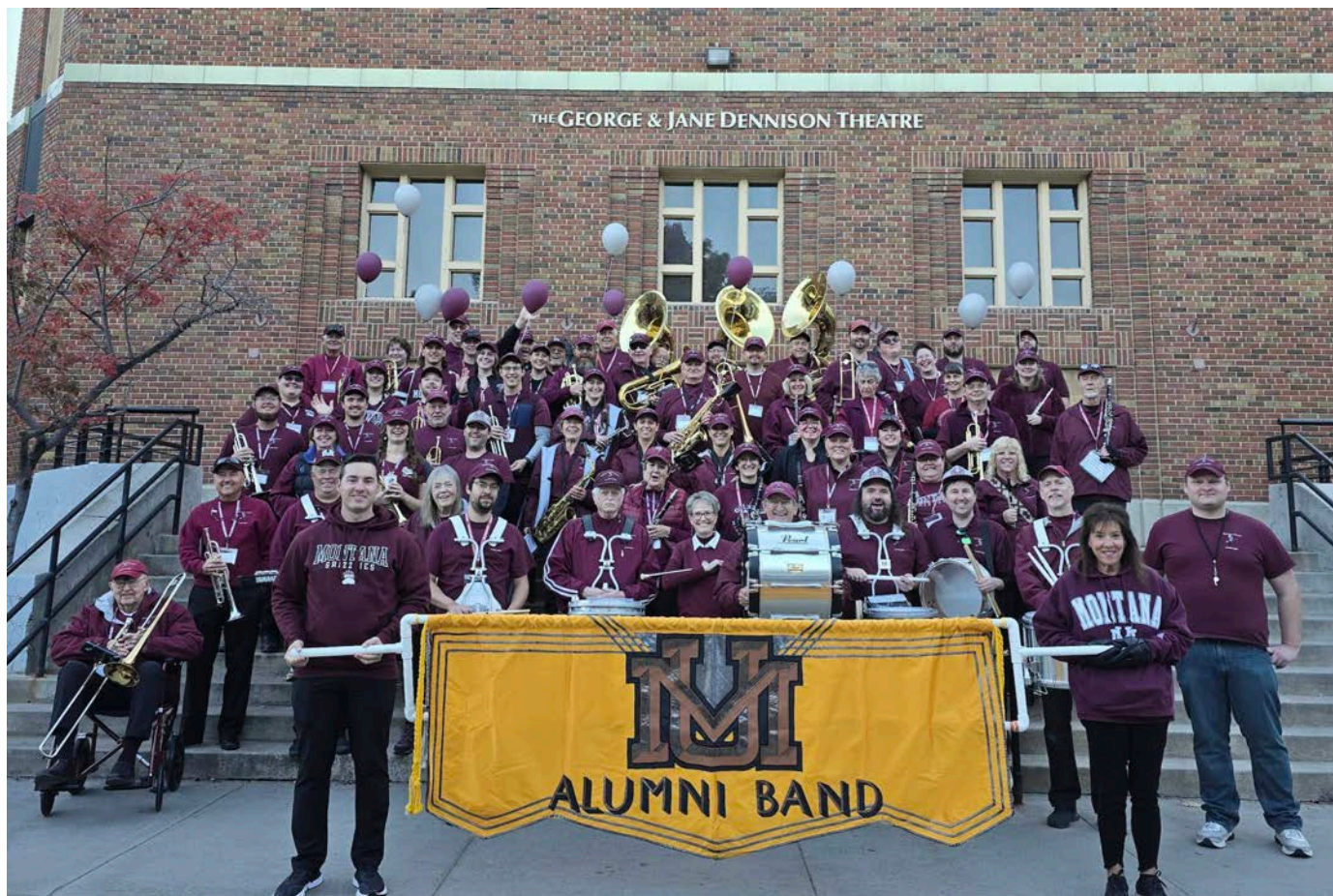
Dr. Kevin Griggs
studying the game,
listening to the
band.
September 2024



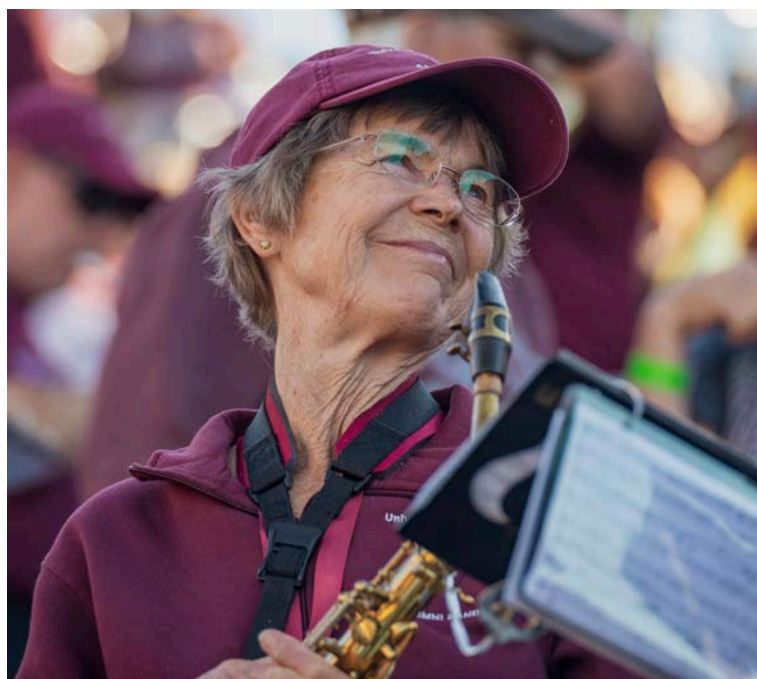
For the first time, the UM Pep Band was able to attend the Big Sky Basketball Tournament in Boise, ID. President Bodnar made a request that the band be represented at the tournament and private donors and UM Athletics made it happen. The band performed well and ended up traveling to Denver, CO to attend the NCAA Basketball Tournament when the team won the Big Sky Tournament. The UM Pep Band did an amazing job of representing UM, even though our team played Wisconsin which has a storied band tradition. We showed that we favorably match up with even the biggest names in college band.

This fall features 8 regular season home games so we will have plenty of opportunities to support the team. Add in what I assume will be a great playoff run and I'm looking forward to an exciting season. I hope I will see you all at Homecoming on Oct. 10-11! See you this fall! GO GRIZ!!

Alumni Marching Band pictures, Homecoming, October 2024



Blixen and Mary Moe



Kathy McCaughey

The UM Jazz Bands

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA JAZZ PROGRAM NEWS

What another fantastic year for all of us in the School of Music and our Jazz Program as we gear up for an incredible 2025-26. We hosted the Buddy DeFranco Jazz Festival, the Jazz Arrangers Concert, our Annual Holiday Swing at the Wilma, a fantastic tribute to Lance Boyd as well as many fantastic guest artists. We are so thankful for our community helping us raise over \$40,000 for the program and our incredible trip to California with some of our musicians.

HARTSE JAZZ GIFT

We are incredibly excited to have recently received a \$101,000 gift to the Jazz Program from the Hartse family – folks with a deep connections to our school. We are very excited about this donation as it will help both current and future student musicians in numerous ways. With a goal to match the \$26,000 portion of the gift we are unveiling a “*Come Swing with Us*” campaign and with your help are looking to reach this goal by the 2025 Holiday Swing in December (with Grammy nominated L.A. based vocalist Jamie Shew).

SPRING OUTREACH TO WASHINGTON & CALIFORNIA!

Members of the University of Montana Jazz program traveled to Spokane and California in May to perform with seven Middle Schools & High Schools as well as recorded and had the opportunity to see and hear the John Daversa Band in Hollywood and the very last performance of the Bill Holman Band.



Creator of U of M Music School's Jazz program and founder of the UM/Buddy DeFranco Jazz Festival **Lance Boyd** enjoys his get together with five decades of jazz program alums.



2025 UM/BUDDY DeFRANCO JAZZ FESTIVAL – “THANKS LANCE!”

The 2025 festival featured over 50 groups participating along with once again some of the finest educators and jazz musicians in the business. We celebrated Lance Boyd - one of Montana's most dedicated and passionate jazz educators -with THREE alumni jazz bands over the two days. Thank you for all who were a part of this wonderful tribute to Lance and the UM Jazz Program



2026 UM/BUDDY DeFRANCO JAZZ FESTIVAL

We are so excited to have a phenomenal crew of artist/clinicians this year on March 12-13. Molly Redfield (bass), Barb Catlin (piano), Kris Johnson (tpt), Erik Hughes (tbn), Lauren Ellis (dr) and Amanda Gardier (sax). Great music and incredible jazz education.

JAZZ BANDS, FACULTY AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS

The Jazz Program continued to run on all cylinders with three big bands and six small groups (combos).

We are grateful to have some amazing Jazz Faculty helping to mentor our student musicians including Owen Ross (guitar), Dylan Bautista (piano), Tommy Sciple (bass) and Sam Purvis (drum set). We are excited to have such great jazz education happening in Missoula!

We have two wonderful Teaching Assistants helping out with the jazz, band program and brass offerings. Jake Baron (trombone) from Lawrence University is a phenomenal musician and will work with the trombone studio, coach a small group and direct a big band along with helping the Athletic Bands and Concert Band Program.

Joining us also will be recent UM graduate Owen Cleary (bass). Owen is a phenomenal musician and will be working on jazz arranging/composition and coaching a small group and co-directing a big band. We are excited to have Owen

JAZZ EVENTS /JAZZ ARTIST SERIES

The Jazz Ensemble I and Jazz Band II will perform along with guest artist and grammy-nominated vocalist Jamie Shew at our 14th Annual Holiday Swing & Swing Set for a wonderful day held at the Wilma – we will raise over \$40,000 for the program. **DON'T MISS THIS!**

JAZZ ARRANING RESIDENCY 2026

We are so happy and honored to have composer/pianist/educator Michele Fernandez with us for the 14th Annual Jazz Arrangers Residency working with our student arrangers. All three of the UM Big Bands along with Sentinel HS Jazz Band (Lewis Nelson – Director) will perform numerous student arrangements with some spectacular music by Michele.

I want to thank all of the Band Alumni, School of Music supporters and current UM student musicians (some are now Alums!).

See you in the Fall!

Looking forward,

Rob

Alumni Marching Band Scholarship and Music Building Improvements

by Steve Armstrong

The Alumni Band Scholarship is now endowed with \$50k-plus generating at least one scholarship per year to a UM Music student. Ideally, the Alumni Band should strive to increase this endowed fund to \$100,000 over the next few years. Once the fund reaches \$100k, the Alumni Band can be assured that at least one scholarship, perhaps two scholarships, will be awarded each year.

Scholarship recipients are certainly grateful for this financial assistance. I personally was a recipient of the Music School scholarship through a fee waiver even though I was a history and political science major. This reduced my yearly registration and tuition costs by half, which was quite the savings way back in the late 1960s and early 1970s!

The process for Alumni Marching Band Scholarship donations is for the member to write a donation check payable to the University of Montana Foundation, designating in the memo and ideally a note, the purpose of the donation. If the donation is to the Alumni Band Endowed Scholarship fund, then that

would be noted in your message. The same would apply if the donor wanted the gift designated to the general fund of the Music School.

The 2025 Montana Legislative Session appropriated a significant \$7.25 million for the continued updating of the Music Building. The Music Building was constructed in the 1950s, and while the bones of the building are in decent shape, there is a real need to upgrade the practice rooms and classrooms.

As President Bodnar stated, the funds provide “a major renovation of the Music Building to modernize practice rooms, teaching spaces, improve accessibility, and update critical mechanical and HVAC systems.”

When this Legislative session approved this appropriation, there was caveat, which is that U of M’s Foundation and Music School must match the \$7.25 million, raising the total amount to upgrade the Music Building to \$14.5 million. The Foundation will be actively seeking donations to raise these additional funds.

Donations by Alumni Band members **at or above \$1,000.00** will have their name placed on the **Alumni Band “Band of Honor” plaque**. In the picture below from 2017, Alumni Band members Steve Armstrong and his wife Linnea (RIP, 2020) were given this honor in 2017. Presenting is Carl Smart. Steve and Linnea were joined by Alumni Band founder Fred Nelson (RIP, 2019) and Carl Dix, both who also had their names added to the **Alumni Band “Band of Honor” plaque**.



Alumni Band donations

by Steve Armstrong

When you register for Homecoming, a special plate will be added to your name tag if you write a separate donation check payable the "University of Montana Alumni Band."



\$20.00 donation = silver plate added to your name tag.

\$10.00 donation = copper plate added to your name tag.

\$50.00 donation = gold plate added to your name tag.

Alumni Marching Band halftime, Homecoming - 2014

