



## Director's Letter

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Greetings from MRH!

First, we are happy to welcome Clark Hubbard back to Vanderbilt as the Assistant Director of Athletic Bands. Clark dove into the position, taking on several tasks the moment he walked in. I hope you get a chance to welcome him in person when you are back on West End.

In the last edition of the Watchword, I mentioned that basketball season looked different. I am proud of how well the students adjusted to the changes caused by the pandemic. Since SEC regulations only allowed percussionists for basketball season, we expanded Dore Slam (drumline) and taught woodwinds, brass, and guard members how to play drums. It was such a hit (no pun intended) at the final basketball game of the year that we scheduled performances twice each for the spring seasons of soccer and lacrosse. Every game we attend the Commodores won! One of the coaches commented to me, "When I saw the band walk in, I knew we would win. You bring the energy."

While details are still being finalized, the 2021 season is shaping up to be an exciting year. Camp is scheduled to begin in mid-August. The football schedule brings four home games in the first five weeks of the season. With the goal of performing a new halftime show each week, the Spirit of Gold will be busy. Keep an eye on the website for upcoming themes and events throughout the season.

Always feel free to drop by any time you are on campus or say hello when you see us around.

Anchor Down!  
Dr. Doug Morin

## Meet New Assistant Director, Clark Hubbard

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Clark Hubbard is returning to his alma mater as the Assistant Director of Athletic Bands. Mr. Hubbard, a 2018 graduate from Vanderbilt's Blair School of Music, returns to West End after earning two Master of Music degrees from the Michigan School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, and working with the Michigan Marching Band.

Current Vanderbilt Director of Athletic Bands, Dr. Doug Morin, cited several qualities that made Mr. Hubbard the right fit for the job. "Clark brings a wonderful combination of skills that will benefit all athletic bands, especially the Spirit of Gold Marching Band." Morin stated. "Because he was a member, he comprehends how students balance course work and time spent rehearsing and performing as a member of an athletic band. He can immediately connect with the students and brings a strong musical background."

"As an alumnus of Vanderbilt and the Spirit of Gold, I am honored to return to Nashville as part of the athletic bands staff." ...continued on page 3.



## Introducing the Spirit of Gold Drum Majors

Vanderbilt University Athletic Bands has selected two senior members to lead Vanderbilt's Spirit of Gold Marching Band forward into their 2021 season as Drum Majors. Each year, student members must complete a rigorous audition to be chosen by Spirit of Gold directors and staff for this vital and prestigious leadership role.

"Megan Dernberger and Trae Stroud are students who exemplify personal leadership in all of their daily activities," according to Spirit of Gold Director, Dr. Doug Morin. "They have earned the respect of their fellow band members through their years of work and commitment to the group. I have every confidence that they will be fantastic leaders and ambassadors for the Spirit of Gold on the Vanderbilt University campus and beyond."

**Megan Dernberger**, VU '22, will return for her second season as Head Drum Major. Megan is a Nashville native who was Drum Major previously at John Overton High School. A four-year member of the Spirit of Gold and the band's Outstanding Sophomore in 2019, Megan's dedication extends to her extracurricular activities in Tau Beta Sigma National Band Sorority, as President of the Spirit of Gold Executive Leadership Board, and as the Co-Chair of the Vanderbilt Marching Invitational. Off the field, Megan is a Mechanical Engineering major and member of the Vanderbilt Institute for Nanoscale Science and Engineering's Undergraduate Technical Crew. She also enjoys membership in Sigma Phi Lambda Christian Women's Sorority.

"I am so thankful for another season as Head Drum Major for the Spirit of Gold," says Megan. "I can't wait to build on the momentum of our leadership from last season. And, I am very excited to be working alongside Trae. He's a wonderful friend who I've known throughout our years together in the Spirit of Gold."



*Trae Stroud, drum major*



*Megan Dernberger, head drum major*

**Trae Stroud**, VU '22, will step into the role of Drum Major for the first time. Originally from Birmingham, Alabama, Trae also enters into his fourth year as a member of Vanderbilt's Spirit of Gold Marching Band. "I'm honored and excited to help lead an organization that has been such an important part of my Vanderbilt experience," says Trae, "The Spirit of Gold is more than just a musical group, it's a group of friends, and I hope to enrich the band both musically and socially."

Trae has enthusiastically served the Spirit of Gold as Trombone Section Leader, Junior Class Representative on the band's Executive Leadership Board, and as Co-Chair for the Vanderbilt Marching Invitational. In 2019, Trae was honored as the Spirit of Gold's Hornline Member of the Year. A double major in Asian Studies and Communications of Science and Technology, Trae's creativity extends outside of band and classes where he develops online and social media content including a web comic.



## Band & Twirler Day

For the first time in Spirit of Gold history, we are hosting Band Day. High school students are invited to perform with SOG at the game versus Kentucky on November 13. Highlights of the day include rehearsal and sectional time with current SOG members and the halftime performance. Registration and additional information will be available on our website – [www.vanderbilt.edu/vuband](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/vuband). This event is open to both full bands and individual high school students accompanied by a chaperone.

## New Sousaphones

Please welcome the newest addition to the Spirit of Gold brass family – 3 new sousaphones! For Vanderbilt Giving Day 2021, we unveiled our goal to purchase new sousaphones. Between generous gifts from supporters on Giving Day, donations throughout the spring, and a contribution from Vanderbilt Athletics, we surpassed our goal. Instead of just two instruments, we are able to purchase three. The new sousaphones will be in the hands of Spirit of Gold members this fall. Thank you to everyone who helped us exceed our goal!

## Retired Uniform Pillows

One of the projects we have worked on for many years is turning the previous Spirit of Gold uniforms into memorabilia. While supplies last, by contributing a cumulative \$250 or more to the Spirit of Gold Excellence Fund, donors will receive a pillow as a thank you. For a link to the SOG Excellence Fund, [click here](#) or visit [www.vanderbilt.edu/vuband](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/vuband).



## Meet New Assistant Director, Clark Hubbard *from pg. 1*

...“Many of my fondest musical memories were made at Vanderbilt University and I look forward to making many more.” said Mr. Hubbard about his return to Vanderbilt. “I am excited to help build upon the traditions of the Vanderbilt Athletic Bands.”

Among Mr. Hubbard’s duties, he will arrange music for the Spirit of Gold Marching Band. In the past 4 years, he published over 20 pieces for a wide variety of ensembles. His accolades include winning the Iron Composer competition and the Duo Cortona composition competition. In addition, he has performed nationally and internationally, from Columbia to Denmark.

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