Nathan Jared

Cyclone Marching Band Oral History Project

Interviewed by Michael Belding

2023-04-26

Time stamps reference the video recording.

**NJ:** Nathan Jared

**MB:** Michael Belding

[00:00:00]

**MB:** This is Michael Belding, an interviewer for the Iowa State University Special Collections and University Archives ‘Varsity’ Marching Band Oral History Project. Today is Wednesday, April 26th, 2023. I'm interviewing Nathan Jared in person in a podcasting studio in the Student Innovation Center on the ISU campus. Nathan, thank you for joining me today.

**NJ:** Yes, it's a pleasure to be here. Thank you for interviewing me.

[00:00:33]

**MB:** Of course. I was wondering if you wouldn't mind beginning by telling me a little bit about your early life, things like where you grew up, what your family was like, that type of thing.

**NJ:** Yes, so I grew up in a city called Marion, Iowa, which is a suburb of Cedar Rapids, just out in eastern part of the state, so a couple hours east of here. Grew up with four siblings, four older siblings. You know, when I was younger, I was really interested in, like, sports a lot, and my whole family is interested in participating in sports and everything. Actually, my first job was refereeing kids’ sports, teaching them how to play sports, and I did that all the way through my senior year of college, actually, even during the COVID year. We still had stuff to do there. Then through high school--actually back in fifth grade, I started playing the tuba. That was the very, very first start. Continued that all the way through high school, actually almost quit after sixth grade. At that point, I wasn't really feeling interested in it. I wasn't really having a good time. And then, the seventh-grade band director at the time took me into his office. We had a good chat about it, and I realized that I didn't want to stop playing and then continued. Continued through high school, where I was introduced to marching band, fell in love with it there and then continued that into college.

[00:02:04]

**MB:** Okay. What made you pick the tuba? Or who, maybe?

**NJ:** Yes. So, our fifth-grade band director took all of us in one at a time and had us play various types of instruments. I tried on flute, clarinet, trombone, trumpet. Then, the very last one, she had me play tuba, and she just told me how to properly play it, you know, starting on it is not really that difficult, and just played one note or a couple notes, and she was really impressed by it. And she kind of just chose it for me.

[00:02:42]

**MB:** Okay. I remember a similar tryout kind of process when I was in fifth grade.

**NJ:** Yes, I remember talking to some people, and some people got to pick their own instruments. But at our school, she got to pick for us, which is fine. I enjoyed it. It's a really nice instrument to play, not really too difficult in my opinion. But you know, I've had thirteen-plus years of playing experience, so I can kind of say that, I guess, now.

[00:03:08]

**MB:** I'm curious--and if you don't want to talk about it, that's fine--but what was the struggle with it in sixth grade the following year, and what did the seventh-grade band teacher say that kept you in it?

**NJ:** Yes. I think just at the time it wasn't drawing my interest. I was just, you know, the music we were playing, I mean, yes, it was only the second year of actually participating in band. I think at the time also, trying to find the right group of friends because usually you're in band a good amount of time, so most time your friends are going to be in band. So, during that time, you know, just finding that right group to be a part of. I don't exactly remember what my seventh-grade band director said, but I imagine it was something along the lines of he saw the talent that I did have and thought that I should continue at least through seventh, maybe eighth grade, or through middle school, and then see from there, which I really appreciated. It was just really nice that he took his time to see that he still wanted me in band. Because tubas, we had maybe five or six my fifth-grade year, and then every single year after that it usually dwindled down. So, by eighth grade, I was the only tuba left. I think that's also part of the reason. We don't have a lot of people as well. So, if I would have left, then more than likely, they would have had to have someone from another instrument trying to learn tuba and join. But I was really grateful still that he took his time and had me continue doing band.

[00:04:53]

**MB:** Okay. So, when did you begin your time at Iowa State, and what was it that drew you here?

**NJ:** Yes, so I started my freshman year in the fall of 2017. So originally, I was interested in aerospace engineering, and Iowa State is the only in-state university that has an aerospace program. So that was one of the big reasons. Eventually, I would switch majors to mechanical, but at the time, aerospace was my main focus. I really loved space, rockets, stuff like that. But yes, I switched over to mechanical at the end of my freshman year. And, you know, my family came from kind of a more middle-class family, not a whole lot of money sometimes, so originally, I wanted to go out of state. I was looking at universities such as the University of Colorado, Purdue University, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, because they had really good both engineering programs, especially aerospace programs. Eventually, my parents convinced me to stay and stay because the tuition is lower, especially it's lower for out-of-state students for surrounding states as well. So, I decided to come here, decided--it wasn't until my second day of orientation that I decided to actually do marching band. They had a meeting during the afternoon, and they wanted you to register for the class if you were going to do it. It was kind of right before I registered for classes that I kind of made an impromptu decision to do it. Previously my high school band director was trying to convince me for several months to consider doing it because he knew I was going to go to Iowa State. Kind of knew some of the people in the band program, and he thought it would be a good fit for me. He knew that I would fit well in there with the culture and with the talent in the band as well. But it wasn't until that second day of orientation I'm like, Yes, I'll try this. And I remember one of my friends who was a year above me, I saw him at a high school graduation party. So he just finished his first year of marching band, and he told me that I should do it my first year because if I try to do it, you know, my sophomore through senior year, it might be a little more difficult because you're not used to classes. So, starting out right away, you can kind of get band into your schedule, see how it works, and then go from there.

[00:07:35]

**MB:** Some other narrators have discussed the band as kind of a recruitment tool for the university in some ways. Did the marching band figure into your decision to come to Iowa State?

**NJ:** Iowa State, no. I guess I also looked at University of Iowa. I grew up in eastern Iowa, grew up a Hawkeye fan.

**MB:** Sorry.

**NJ:** That's just, yes, that's just how it was over there. If you weren't, you’d kind of be ridiculed for it. So, I remember--

**MB:** I'm from Ames, so I grew up a--

**NJ:** Yes. Yes, one of my old roommates grew up in Cedar Rapids, and his family went to Iowa State, like he's a diehard Iowa State. So he would get ridiculed because from Cedar Rapids, eastern Iowa, if you wore anything but black and gold and kind of made fun of sometimes. But originally marching band, no. However, when I wanted to go the University of Iowa, because I still had that feelings towards the university, I didn’t want to do marching band there. But Iowa State, no, it didn't make a decision. It was more towards what I wanted to do for a career. Then when I joined marching band, I was kind of icing on the cake.

**MB:** Okay. So, it seems to me that you selected the most demanding major and the most demanding extracurricular as well. Did your advisor say anything when you spontaneously added marching band to your strenuous schedule during that orientation?

**NJ:** No, not that I remember. One of the things that we love saying about marching band is--I believe it's still this number--but it's a little over 50 percent of the band are engineering majors. So that's one of the things we like to boast of because, you know, Iowa State is a big engineering school, and so a lot of smart people tend to play instruments, and usually, they're like, Oh, how am I going to adjust to classes, do band on top of that, being able to practice my music or my drill, get homework done, stuff like that. It is demanding, I'm not going to lie and say it's not, but I also like saying that it's going to--you got to put effort into it. And you got to find that right—trying to think of the right word--I guess your schedule needs to be pretty set for you to be able to do everything, but once you find that rhythm to your schedule, everything just starts coming into play.

I always say the hardest thing about marching band, in my opinion, is band camp. It's a week-long experience where you're basically rehearsing sunup to sundown. Probably within the first couple of days of band camp was when I when I actually made the band, I also almost quit, I thought it was going to be too much, but the other sousaphone leadership talked to me and told me that I should wait until after the first football game. That gives you basically all the experience that you need to do band and see what it's really like, which I'm so happy that they talked to me about that, because once you get past band camp, the rehearsal schedule during the week, it's about an hour and a half every single day, except for the weekends. Then you have football games on the weekends, which take basically the entire day. But just being able to participate in band and get the experience that, you know, being a part of a Division I, Power Five football program and seeing Jack Trice [Jack Trice Stadium] with sixty thousand plus fans all the time and just being able to be a part of that atmosphere just made it so worthwhile, and I'm so happy I kept doing it.

[00:11:29]

**MB:** Okay. Were you only involved with the marching band or were you involved with other bands as well?

**NJ:** Yes, so I did almost all the athletic bands at Iowa State. So, Cyclone Marching Band was my first one. And then I also did basketball pep band. So, for our basketball pep bands, we have two pep bands, one for men's basketball, one for women's basketball. All four out of my five years, I did the women's pep band. That was the first one I did my freshman year, and I just kept continuing to do that one because you can choose to do either/or. Typically, they tell you to do either, because then you have the higher chances of making a band in general. But I found that the women's basketball pep band really liked heckling a lot. And especially with Hilton not being as packed compared to men's basketball games, everybody can hear you a lot better. Especially the teams. We've been told that we're one of the better heckling bands in the Big 12, so I really like taking that to heart. I appreciate that. The one year I didn't do women's basketball pep band was during COVID. So, during that we actually had three bands that were on a rotation between men's and women's basketball, gymnastics, and wrestling. We just did a rotation through all that. Otherwise, I more likely would have still been a part of the women's basketball pep band. Then, my junior and senior year, I was the assistant and head director of our volleyball pep band. Again, my senior year was when COVID--the COVID year, I call it--so when classes were still in session, but mostly everything was online. So, we had to really adjust for that. Just making sure everybody was safe in the stands, being able to properly play. We tried to make it as similar as possible as previous years, but still had to enforce COVID rules with that.

[00:13:35]

**MB:** Okay. You've talked about this question a little bit already, but how did you balance the band with academics and work or whatever else you, you know, spent your time with doing? And again, you've talked about it generally, so if you feel like you've answered this question, then we can move on, but is there anything more specific, I guess?

**NJ:** Yes. So, I guess with band being in the evenings, it usually went from five to six-thirty. That was mostly when all the classes were done. By that time, hopefully, you at least got some homework done or some studying done, but even that, like, it was at a good time within the week that you can still work on stuff before or after, which made it pretty easy to balance school and band. We did have time for students who might need to take a class or two during the week, during that time, they were able to miss that day. If you were in the band for over a year, you were able to miss two days a week. Our first years were only able to miss one day a week just so they get more experience in the band so they can get used to how we operate. But since it was at that really nice kind of time frame, in my opinion, I thought it was pretty easy to balance everything okay.

[00:15:00]

**MB:** What exactly is the difference between a tuba and a sousaphone?

**NJ:** So, in terms of musical playing, it's the exact same. The only difference is tuba is typically going to sit on your lap, while sousaphone is going to wrap around your body. Sousaphones are mostly going to be for marching band while normal tubas are going to be for concert band. However, there are marching tubas called contratubas. Basically, they look like regular tubas, but you put them on your shoulder, so the piping goes to your mouth still. Some high schools have those. Usually, they will be used in drum corps as well, but typically, for college or collegiate marching bands, you will see sousaphones.

**MB:** Okay. I had eight years of piano as a as a child, and piano training is very piano-focused.

**NJ:** Yes.

**MB:** And sousaphones and tubas and whatever brass can go over there.

**NJ:** Yes. [laughs]

**MB:** I don't need them anyway.

[00:16:12]

**MB:** So how many Sousaphones were there in the ISU Marching Band, and what was it like to be--you know, what was that subset of the group like and did you have any traditions of your own and that sort of thing?

**NJ:** Yes. So typically, we have thirty-two in our varsity band. We do have another football band called State Storm. They're a smaller group. Typically they're made up of first-year members who might not have gotten the high enough score to be in ‘Varsity’ Band, but they still got a score that they could be a part of this other band, this other band's directed by the assistant marching band director, assistant of bands at Iowa State, Javan Shields [Javan Shields, Assistant Teaching Professor and Assistant Director of Bands (2018-present)]. Basically, they rehearse twice a week. They do football games with us, but they don't march. They're in the stands most the time. They do some other special things, so they might go play for different lots at football games. They are also the band who does gymnastics, wrestling, soccer games. Yes, so typically, in State Storm, there's between two and four typically--more likely, around two is the right number. My sophomore year, they had four. Because it used to be in Storm that if you were a fifth-year, you could opt to do Storm because it's less work for you to do and trying to finishing up school. So, there were two fifth-year tuba players that were a part of that and then two first-years as well. But yes, so thirty-two is the right number. Last year, I believe they had thirty-three in ‘Varsity’. Don't know the reason why the extra one was there, but yes, they had, I believe they had thirty-three.

But the section as a whole, when we're all together, I just like to think of it like, we're just super weird. And because band kids, in general, are probably more awkward and weird, but when we're together, everything just clicks. One of the things I liked about my section is we had--well, we still have it--we have a tuba house. So sometimes each instrument might have, like, a house where or an apartment where it's made up of, basically, the members of the section, like our house my freshman year was five tuba players. Now, there's only three or four that live there. They're actually getting a new house next year. Not too far away from the old one, but it was nice because we would go there and we would just hang out, watch movies, just get to know each other more. When we first made the band, we would go there, and they would cook dinner for us. We do just a big getting to know each other kind of night before we have to go through band camp the next day. So, it was just really nice, and I like to say that the section is my second family. I made so many friends. I still am in contact with a lot of them. They’re the ones who I tailgate with during football games now. But yes, they were my second family growing up, and they helped me through a lot of college and a lot of stuff that went good, as well as a lot of stuff that went bad, just being there for me and really grateful for them.

[00:19:38]

**MB:** What is the process of going from practice to performance? What is the process of learning a show?

**NJ:** Yes, So. There's two parts for it. You've got the music and then the marching. So, with music, typically, we'll start that maybe two to three weeks before we actually perform. It really depends how the previous show is going because we have to make sure we have that ready before we move on. But typically, with music, we have either full rehearsals with the band just running through songs, making sure we understand how the music is supposed to go. Then occasionally, like maybe two or three times a week, or even more depending on what our directors had planned for the day, we would be in smaller sections. These would be by instruments. All the sousaphones would be together. Our captains, who typically were just one person from leadership--my freshman year we had three of them, then my last year we had two of them--but they basically they're in charge of running sectionals, running our music basically like nitpicking what the music needs to sound like for us so we can get it to the best possible--make sure it's performance ready, basically.

Then for marching, we started about a couple of weeks prior to the performance, just like music. If we could get it in sooner, we would. And how those work, so it used to be we would get these things called drill sheets. So, there's pieces of paper. Everyone has a what we call a dot. So, it's a letter or a symbol and a number, and you're assigned to that at the beginning of band camp, and so on the, on the drill sheets, it would be markings on the field or it would tell you like locations. Think of it as like coordinates, right. So, it could say like, Be three steps from the back sideline and two steps off of like the forty-yard line. That would be like one of your dots, and it would have a list of these. So, during rehearsal, we would go dot by dot, trying to get as much done as we can, and we would do repetition. Our director was really good about doing these repetitions, making sure everybody has enough time to understand where they need to go from dot to dot to get our drill done on the field. Hopefully, we would get the drill learned in about a week or so. By the time my junior or senior year came around, we were really good about doing a pretty quickly so we can maybe get it in half a week or so, and usually the rest of the time is nitpicking certain parts of the drill that might be struggling with the form or the shape, and then maybe towards the week before our performance, we would include the music in it and just put all those together, do multiple run-throughs so that we know what we're doing. Yes, that's kind of how the main process goes for it. Then, typically, on game days, we would do similar things. We would practice about an hour and a half in Bergstrom Football Complex over by Jack Trice and just do like some more nitpicking stuff in the morning and then do one, maybe two run-throughs of both our pregame and our halftime show. But yes, that's kind of how the process really works.

[00:23:30]

**MB:** What were some of the more memorable shows you participated in?

**NJ:** I have talked about this with people before, and I guess it really depends on the year. So, for instance, my freshman year, I would say our very first show--just because it was the first show, I think it's the first show that I ever performed part of the marching band, which makes it special to me--we did a tribute to the Summer of Love because I think at the time it was the 60th anniversary of the Summer of Love. So, we did songs like “I Can See for Miles,” “Happy Together,” and we did that show for maybe a month or so. Typically, that's not how it works. But we had multiple performances that it would be easier to just perform that one show than try to quickly learn another show within a week or so. So, freshman year, I would say that. I'll get back to my sophomore year and there's a reason why.

Junior year we did an “Under the Sea” show. And why that specifically was nice, we did “Sweet Victory” from “SpongeBob SquarePants.” And at the time, I remember during the Super Bowl, a lot of people wanted--I think Maroon 5 was doing the halftime show--and a lot of people thought they were going to do it and everything, and they didn't. It's really hard to get the rights for that for that song. Our director somehow got it. I remember at the beginning of it, the trumpets play like a fanfare thing, and I just remember hearing the student section behind us just roaring because they knew what we were playing. So that was pretty cool.

Then my senior--or, not my, senior because senior year was COVID, so we didn't really have a theme show. It was just kind of songs here and there that we would perform, but my last year we did a video game show, so the beginning was like a video game mashup. So, the beginning sets of drill, we made the Pac-Man map, and we had our color guard and our twirlers be both Pac-Man, and the ghosts, and like the pellets, and just like go through the maze like that. That was pretty cool. We also did “Megalovania” [song from the video game *Undertale*] and *Pokémon*. You know, *Pokémon*, our director got a bunch of Pikachu and Pokéball inflatables. He was obsessed with inflatables for ever since my sophomore year. But it was funny because one of them--he got one of like the red and--Oh, what's the game? The imposter –

**MB:** I don't know. Sorry.

**NJ:** “Among Us.” From “Among Us.” There was one costume that wasn't like the others. I don't know why he put it in there or why he got that. It was just there. Okay, so going back to my sophomore year, and I say this because this show lives in infamy with the band, or at least with me, because we got a lot of exposure from it. But we did a tribute to John Williams [American composer famous for some of the most recognizable film scores of the twentieth century]. So, if you don't know, John Williams music, it's *Star Wars*, *E.T.*, *Indiana Jones*, and *Jurassic Park*.

[00:26:57]

**MB:** Basically, anything that George Lucas and Steven Spielberg [filmmakers famous for creating blockbuster movies in the late twentieth century] were involved with for a really long, iconic time.

**NJ:** Yes. So, I would say what was tough with that show is [that] the two weeks of learning it, both music and drill, the weather was not great. It basically rained all the time. And where our practice field is, if it rains a little bit, the field gets pretty bad, pretty muddy. So, we actually didn't fully run the show until the morning of the game. We had some times that we were able to go in Bergstrom, like during the week or whenever the football team wasn't there, but we spent a lot more time with the music rather than drill, so there wasn't a full run-through until that morning. But with the show, for anybody who remembers, it was the very first show we included any inflatable costumes with it, so we had almost our entire State Storm ensemble wear these inflatable dinosaur costumes. What's funny about that, though, is the two fifth-year tuba players who are part of [it] didn't wear those costumes because they were too big for them. But previously--and they asked our band director if they could do this--but they got these other inflatable dinosaur costumes where it looked like they were riding the dinosaurs, and our director called them the dino wranglers, I think, during an interview. So, if you ever watch like a video of that performance, you can just see these two guys with their phones out, just running on the field through them while everybody else is like doing this dance.

But the reason why this show lives in infamy, for me at least, we did what we call, we tore with the music. So basically, what that means is that--the drum major and the drum line are typically supposed to be together, like the drum line is supposed to watch the drum major and vice versa so the rest of the band can be together--somehow they separated. So, other sections also separated, so nobody really knew, should they listen to the drum line, or should they watch the drum majors? So, if you listen—for people who aren't music people, I doubt a lot of people paid attention, but if you're a music person you kind of see or you can hear what happens. But luckily we got so much attention for the dinosaur costumes that nobody cared. Our director, I remember, like the next rehearsal, he said, I would be a lot more disappointed if we didn't get so much attention. I remember when we were putting our instruments back--so the sousaphones get stored in the Communications Building, which is right next to the band practice field--so we were bringing our instruments back after the game, and someone said, “You know, we have like over a million views on like Fox Sports, on like Twitter.”

I'm like, “What?” Like, I was really shocked because, like, all of us were just kind of sad and disappointed how the show went. But we got so much coverage on this that I wouldn't say it made it go away, but it was it was just really interesting how that all worked out.

[00:30:09]

**MB:** Yes. Well, as someone who saw it and really enjoyed seeing it, I--the world loved it.

**NJ:** Yes. The rest of the show was fine. I actually was really impressed how the rest of the show was. It was just when “Jurassic Park” just--it was about like the back half of the song is when it went kind of bad. But the rest of the show, I thought, went really well. I was really impressed with how the show went otherwise, just because of our rehearsal situations.

[00:30:42]

**MB:** I'm curious, is there a consensus on who you should follow when the drum majors and the drum line get out of sync?

**NJ:** So, really, it should be the drum major. The drum line needs to follow the drum major. I wouldn't say there's a consensus, but really, they need to be together all the time. You know, since the drums are going to give us the beat, basically, they need to be together. I would really say there shouldn't be a situation where you follow either one--they need to just be together.

[00:31:16]

**MB:** Okay. So, what was the culture of the band overall? How was it shaped by people like the director, the members, the drum majors, anyone in kind of a leadership role? What was it, and how was it shaped?

**NJ:** Yes, like I said previously, we always love saying that the band was a family. This starts with our student leadership, because they're the ones who have the most interaction with all the other members. I would say probably starts with our drum majors. They're going to be the face of the marching band, really. And then from there it goes to our leadership amongst the sections. But yes, so the culture itself was a second family for most people. Like I said, it was just really nice that you always had someone to go to if you had any issues. You know, you made lifelong friends, meet each other's spouses. I know several people that I were in band with with that are married or have kids now, and so it was just really that that second family feeling.

[00:32:36]

**MB:** Did you receive any key advice or key mentorship from fellow band members when you were joining or even throughout the process?

**NJ:** Yes. So, for me--I guess, do you want to know more like during the audition process or--

**MB:** Any of it.

**NJ:** Any of it, so yes, audition. They always told you, just be confident because a lot of times you're stressing out because you have to learn the marching sequence that you have to audition on, which you're learning the day before auditions, that’s just how everything works for that, but you also have a music audition that you do for our directors, and usually you do that prior to coming to Iowa State, get some practice in there. Some people, like with tubas, a lot of us don't have our own instruments. They can get really expensive. So sometimes, you know, you're doing all your music stuff right when you get there. They told us, just be confident in what you're doing. You know, we've had a day and a half to really nitpick stuff and really learn what we're doing. To find out later with the sousaphones--and it's not like this way anymore, typically not anymore--but we wouldn't always fill our section all the way to thirty-two. I think my freshman year, my incoming class, we had ten people audition on sousaphone, but we needed three more, so we took three people from the piccolo section who were their best marchers and converted them to play tuba. Our captains would basically teach them how to play tuba. In terms of musicality, not a lot was expected for them because two vastly different instruments. However, both tuba and piccolo deal with about the same amount of air that's necessary, which is also why they're typically the ones that convert.

**MB:** I would not have guessed that.

**NJ:** Yes.

**MB:** Like the smallest instrument and the largest one.

**NJ:** Yes. They typically require the same amount of air. And usually, the piccolos are also the section that gets a lot of people but won't take a whole lot, so there's usually a lot of leftover people. So, usually, our director would ask, “Hey, would you be comfortable if we need you to switch over to tuba or to another instrument?” And if they say yes, then they'll be on our list and our director would go through and pick whoever. Last year was a rough year for them. I think they had seven or eight--not piccolo players, they did have some, a couple of piccolo players. They had some saxophones, some baritones just switch over. But yes, so the process itself is just, you know, be confident with what you're doing. By the end of your freshman year, hopefully you're somewhat of an expert on how we do everything. I was lucky enough that I felt confident to try and go for a leadership role after my freshman year, which I did achieve, so I was a marching guide, is what we called them. In each section, basically, everyone's a marching guide, so their role is basically with drill and teaching how to march, stuff like that. Then usually one, two people, maybe three, depending on the section, would be your captain. Their role would also include music as well. I did that for three years, all the way through my senior year, and I didn't do it in my last year because I wasn't actually sure I was going to come back and do marching band, just with grad school. I didn't know how that time would fare, but when I decided to come back, I was just a normal member and got to [inaudible]. There's definitely a difference with being part of the leadership and just being a normal member, in terms of like meeting the first years and getting to know them, because a lot of times they're looking at you on a leadership position as, you know, the authority figure. You know, you try to be friends as much as you can. Sometimes you need to be, you know, more strict. And while a normal member, you're just like kind of there and all there together, and not having the authority figure is definitely a difference I noticed.

**MB:** Yes. Was there any key advice you imparted as a senior, more experienced person?

**NJ:** I think it was mostly the same advice that I had gotten. You know, just be confident in what you're doing. Because we're all in this together. If someone's struggling, then we're all going to help them and so that we can be the best that we can be.

[00:37:34]

**MB:** Okay. Are you in the marching man still as a PhD student?

**NJ:** No. I did it my first year as a grad student, so first year as a PhD student. Mostly, the main reason was my true senior year was during COVID, so we didn't do a lot of the traditions that we used to do just for our health and safety. And I was also living with three other people who were still going to do band. So, you know, it took until maybe April, May of the year before my last year to really decide to do it again. I was really happy that I did that. Got to have that quote, unquote, true last season, kind of do the traditions that we typically do just throughout the entire season. Got to travel one last time to a bowl game.

[00:38:33]

**MB:** How do you feel the marching band has changed over time?

**NJ:** I definitely think that--there's a lot of good things that have changed. I think it was my senior year our director decided to create a kind of diversity–I can't think of the right word--diversity group. Because, you know, the band is typically your, kind of, White college students. There was a thought that, you know, because we don't have a lot of, I guess, diversity amongst that people who are of color or gender, might not feel comfortable with how our group is. So, we wanted to create this group outreach to people and make sure that everybody would be included. I think that was a good thing to have because it did bring up some good points. But I would say in general--I don't like using the word “woke”--but that's probably the best way to describe it. Because when I started out, there was a lot of things that traditionally shouldn't have been said or done. Just, you know, college students are going to say and do stuff, and there's definitely been a lot more stricter thing of what the band says, what the band does, because we do represent the university--or they do represent the university, the largest organization on campus. We want to make sure we represent the university to the best of our ability. So, there's been just nitpicking things here and there throughout the years, which I also think that was a good thing to do because, yes--just making sure that if something’s said and there's, you know, a little kid nearby, you don't want that to happen. Because a lot of people look to us and love us and everything. I remember one of my years, one of my good friends--Zach Johnson, this is a guy also from Cedar Rapids--there's a picture of him, or maybe it was a video of him like kneeling, and there was like maybe a two, three-year-old just like with him. He's having him, like, push the buttons and like, just being there with him. I thought that, like, that's what this band should represent--is being there for the fans. Because a lot of people think that we're really cool--and maybe one day he'll remember that experience and want to join the band, and that's kind of what we're usually going for, is giving people that great experience and just being the best that we can be.

[00:41:22]

**MB:** What does the band mean to you?

**NJ:** It means a lot. You know, like I said, I did five years of it. I'm still involved with Alumni Band, and they're just, like I said throughout this, they are my second family still, and made so many memories, had so many great experiences that I'm just going to remember forever. I'm just so grateful that I got to be a part of it.

[00:41:51]

**MB:** Do you have any favorite traditions in the band?

**NJ:** Yes. So, when you're a senior, during the end of the season, you get recognized at a few events. So, we do this thing called Band Extravaganza. So that's the marching band, our Wind Ensemble, and our Jazz Band I, I believe. So marching band goes last, and at the end of it, they have all the seniors come up, they get introduced, and usually they play, and the fight song, and then they're sing the fight song together. Usually, the next game day, which should be that following Saturday, they--at the end of our halftime show, they will go up to the front of the field and they will spell out I-S-U. They take off their marching shoes, so that's still spelled out, and then they will play the fight song, marching off the field in just their socks. It's kind of a tradition that we've done for a while, kind of their last goodbye to the stadium and to the to the group at Jack Trice, and just like leaving your shoes on the field. Just a really cool tradition that we do.

[00:43:08]

**MB:** Okay. Did you ever perform at other events aside from the football games?

**NJ:** Yes, so--

**MB:** And basketball games, I guess, since you said you were in pep band.

**NJ:** Yes, so being part of this group, though, we would go to high school band exhibitions. So, every three years we're on a rotation with University of Northern Iowa and University of Iowa to go to Cedar Rapids and Marion at an event called the Metro Marching Band Competition. It's not really a competition. I think it's six or seven schools that just do their halftime shows, and then they have the college band there to do performances as well. I did that when I was in high school at Marion High School. That’s one thing. We do other high school exhibitions, whether that's in Ankeny or Des Moines. One, we went to Akron, Ohio, for an away game, and we did a high school exhibition out there, which was really, really neat that we decided to do one outside of that.

But when we're traveling, you know, with the football team to bowl games, we would do other performances for fans that are down there. My junior year we went to Orlando for the Camping World Bowl. So, we got to march at Disney World, Magic Kingdom, and Disney World--which I did that in high school, my senior year of high school. So, it was just neat to do that again, and seeing the difference between doing like a parade like that in high school versus college, because it's a lot different. I would say college is a lot more fun than high school to do that because you do, you know, you have different chants or you do like different moves, say different things, while in high school, it's more like you got to be precise and play the song, march like that. So, you kind of have a little bit more fun with it.

[00:45:10]

**MB:** Okay. What is it like to travel with the band?

**NJ:** Yes. Besides, when I traveled with the women's basketball pep band for the Sweet 16 in North Carolina, which for that we flew with the basketball team there--every other time I've traveled with any athletic band, we’ve bussed. So just imagine driving from Ames to Orlando or Ames to like, San Antonio. It's a long time. I think to Orlando, it's probably maybe twenty-six, twenty-seven hours if we're on time. I think my junior year, we were five or six hours behind just because of driver switching and weather up north. But yes, so we would bus and typically people would be like, Oh, you bussed, like, sorry to hear that, and everything. But really, bus trips are really fun because there's even more memories that you can make on that compared to just having a quick, you know, three, four-hour flight. I don't know, there's just a different vibe, I guess, on a bus compared to being a part of being on a plane with everyone.

[00:46:41]

**MB:** So, what is it like to perform in Hilton or Jack Trice?

**NJ:** Yes. So, Hilton, because it's so much more condensed, people are closer together. It gets pretty loud. Now, unfortunately, if you were a part of the band in 2020, you know, the team went two and twenty-two, which is unfortunate. So, we tried to--we kept the spirits up. But, you know, when the team is good, and they're playing good, especially if they're beating a really good team, like a top twenty-five or top ten team, it can get really loud. Just hearing the roar of, like, when big plays happen, big moments happen, it's just really, really nice to hear that. Then Jack Trice, I've heard different things from people who were in the band before me, because, again, those teams typically weren't great either.

I think the year prior to myself coming, I think they went 3-9 or something like that. I think my freshman year, I would say it was a very special year. That was the first time we made a bowl game since 2011, 2012, I believe. There was just a very magical season. I would say for that, that specific year we played TCU [Texas Christian University]--they were number four in the nation at the time. So, we just came off of –I think we were we were 5-2 at the time, they were coming in undefeated--so we just needed one more win to go to a bowl game. This was Homecoming, like everybody coming back, seeing this big-time game, and we ended up winning. Now, the game itself, I would say, was pretty boring. Final score ended up being 14-7. We scored our fourteen points in the first half, and TCU scored their seven on a kickoff to start the second half. The rest of the time it was a major defensive game. And just hearing the roar after everybody realized that we're going to win this game and then having everyone rush the field was just a really cool experience because I never thought when I came to Iowa State that I would see anything like this, especially three times during my time at Iowa State--once my freshman year, once my sophomore year, which I'll get back to that one, and then once my last year.

My last year, we played Oklahoma State, they were coming in at number six at the time. I think they were also undefeated. We won that game on a fourth-down stop. They had maybe a few inches to go and they didn't make it. I remember watching like a video replay of that and just having the announcers of the game just saying, Oh, I hope the camera's like held down because you could see the screen was shaking because everyone was so hyped. I would say my sophomore year--so we played West Virginia. This was the first home game of probably one of the greatest quarterbacks in Iowa State history, Brock Purdy’s, first home game. West Virginia's coming in undefeated, they’re--I think also top five in the nation, maybe six--and we obliterated, we, like, dominated West Virginia. And this was actually the first time that “Juicy Wiggle” was played, so now that's a big tradition at Iowa State. That was the first time everybody put their flashlight on their camera on, so you could see the entire bowl of the stadium was just lit with people's cameras while “Juicy Wiggle” was playing. I don't think I'll ever experience anything like that. There was just like--it still gives me goosebumps to that day because that was such a cool experience and being part of the band for that, being able to witness stuff like that. You know, you have bands that are a part of really traditionally good football--like SEC [Southeastern Conference] schools, or basketball schools like Kansas—they see this all the time. Like, they expect their teams to win. Knowing what Iowa State is like in terms of sports, especially with football, and just having these moments like this, I think is just truly special and just really cool to experience.

[00:51:19]

**MB:** What has been your involvement in the Alumni Band?

**NJ:** Yes, so really my only involvement--I've only done Alumni Band for one year. Typically, that starts the Friday nights before the football game. Usually, we do like a mixer, just like have everyone--or you could sign up for--usually they have food, drinks, just like people can go there, kind of catch up and everything. Then you do rehearsal the next day with the band. It's not as intense as the marching band because you're typically we don't march with them. We will march on the field, play one song during the halftime performance, and then we will march off the field playing our fight song. Then the rest of the time is just in the stands. For sousaphones, we typically take six, maybe seven, sousaphones into the stands to play, just because we are in a more condensed area, and that's as many as we can get. So typically, we like trying to take--they're usually with our older tubas that are, you know, decades old, so they're not in the greatest shape in the world. So typically, we try to take the best--ones that sound the best and also look the best to be in the stands. Typically, we'll try to get on a rotation for people to play and not play, so you're not playing the entire time.

[00:52:42]

**MB:** Okay. Is there anything you would like to add before we conclude? Anything I should have asked about but didn't, anything that's come across your mind in the course of talking today?

**NJ:** I think for the most part, we we've covered mostly everything, so I don't think I have anything else.

**MB:** Alright. Nathan Jared, thank you for your time today.

**NJ:** Yes, thank you for having me.

**MB:** Of course.