



LBJ Band
7309 Lazy Creek Drive
Austin, Texas 78724

The One, The Only

September 2002

An Open Letter to Band Parents and Directors:

A major part of life in high school is about balancing the many academic, extracurricular, and personal interests that can compete for a student's time. Of all these possible pursuits, marching band is one of the most rewarding and worthwhile. With the marching band comes many good times, Friday night football games, and a lifelong circle of outstanding and talented friends. However, at some point in their high school career, some band students and their parents will find themselves forced to weigh these perks against the time commitment and effort that marching band requires. But before making a final decision, I hope that you will consider some additional words based upon my experience in the LBJ Band. Since my time in the LBJ Band, I have been fortunate enough to walk down many exciting roads as a Stanford student, a Fulbright Fellow in Finland, and now a physics PhD student at Harvard. Although music is now only a hobby for me, the lessons and experiences that I gained from the band have pushed me very far in all my later endeavors.

On general terms, it is widely known that as university admissions become increasingly competitive, many selection committees now target well-rounded students who have demonstrated interests outside of academics. Many studies also show positive links between involvement in music and things such as SAT scores, grades, and academic honors. More important than these trends and statistics, however, is what participating in the band taught me about on a personal level. Teamwork, self-discipline, craftsmanship, demand of excellence, rewards of sustained effort, public performance skills, and passion for my work. The experience of working and rehearsing together, putting in the time and effort necessary to create a finished musical product, and the diligence required to do this has immensely affected my approach and work ethic as a student and a physicist. Also, marching on a football field in front of many onlookers proved to be valuable experiences to draw upon in later interviews and as a public speaker. And in an education system that concentrates so much on minimum requirements and passing standards, the band was one of the few venues in high school that pushed for excellence, showed me the rewards of working hard, and taught me about the significance of having passion for what I do. While my time as a musician in the LBJ Band was short, the impact of this experience will be lifelong in all of my pursuits.

Darrick Chang

Darrick earned first chair as a Texas all-state flutist. He is a two-time all-stater, and valedictorian of his Science Academy class of 1997. Bachelors in Physics at Stanford, Fulbright Scholar in Finland; presently enrolled at Harvard for his PhD in physics.