



Victor Motta, 17, practices with the rest of the Port Chester High School marching band in the auditorium.

PORT CHESTER

Marching band to travel to Bermuda

Students to celebrate island's anniversary, teach musical clinics

Alison Bert
The Journal News

The Pride of Port Chester will perform in Bermuda this spring, invited to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the island's discovery.

The 120-member marching band of Port Chester High School has played various high-profile venues over the years, including the Orange Bowl in Miami and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade and the St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City, and it appeared in the 1994 remake of "Miracle on 34th Street." But this year, fundraising didn't quite pan out for a spring appearance at Disney World in Orlando.

"A lot of students were kind of bummed out because we didn't have a trip," said band president Randy Lesko, 17, who plays saxophone.

Their spirits were lifted when they learned they were heading to the British territory May 20 to 24, with most expenses paid by the host government.

"I happen to think it's a lot better," Lesko said. "Bermuda's such

a great place — I mean, it's a trip outside the country."

For him and some of his bandmates, it will be their first experience traveling abroad.

Few members have been to Bermuda. Freshman xylophone player Jessica Westerman, who visited the island with her family in second grade, told them what they could expect: "The sand is really pink, the water is clear and the houses are really colorful."

Some students, like freshman Katie Marino, said they looked forward to the camaraderie of traveling with bandmates and the chance to play for 15,000 people.

In a rehearsal this month, Marino and fellow color guard members spun flags and sabers as band members rapped drums with crisp, sure rhythms and pointed horns to a horizon not visible inside the school auditorium. Marching in place, they played a rousing rendition of a century-old British march called "Mechanized Infantry." Band director Robert Vitti referred to its composer, bandmaster David McBain, as "the John Philip Sousa of England."

In Bermuda, the band will play the march as part of a tribute to British composers, interspersed with American classics such as "Stars and Stripes." Their uni-



Photos by Ricky Flores/The Journal News

Port Chester High School marching band members practice in the auditorium March 11.

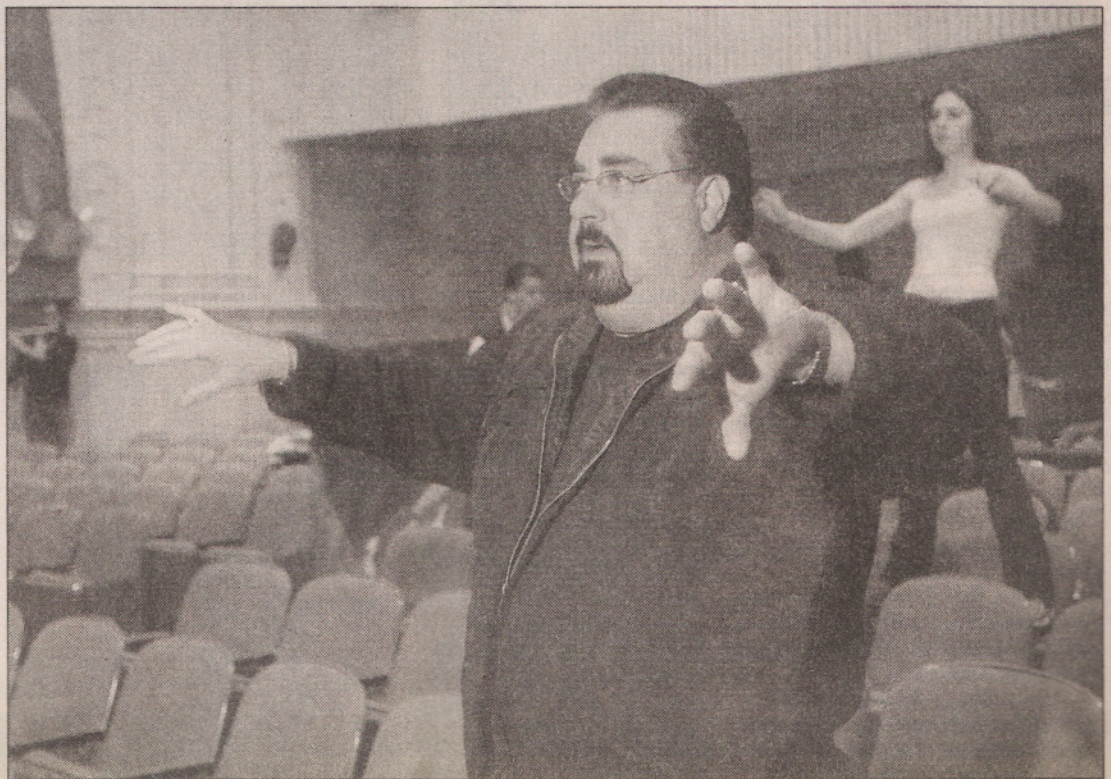
forms, replicas of the Royal British Marines', also pay homage to the British.

Vitti said that despite the island's British heritage, however, the style of his band was distinct from that of Bermudan marching bands. Port Chester takes a "drum and bugle corps approach ... augmented by intricate marching and maneuvering," Vitti said, while Bermudan bands take more of a "concert approach." The Port Chester band will give clinics at Bermuda high schools as part of a musical exchange.

For junior Chris Romero, 16, who has played drums since fourth grade, something else sets his band apart — the crisp, distinctive rhythmic cadence his drum line plays between numbers.

"When they hear Port Chester play the 'street beat,'" he said, "they know who's coming down the street. Everyone knows Port Chester."

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Band director Robert Vitti leads the Port Chester High School marching band at practice.

pital Center in Sleepy Hollow and the
Ossining Open Door Family Medical
Centers in Ossining and Sleepy Hol-

will present a floral arrangement
demonstration after the luncheon.
Tickets: \$15. Reservations should be

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