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HALFTIME!

It is a crisp October day in Columbus, Ohio. Football is the game. Ohio State University (OSU) plays Penn State. The game flies by. OSU leads. The score is 42 to 7. A whistle sounds for halftime. Players run off the field.

Fans stand up to stretch. Some go to get drinks. Others buy food. Then the loudspeaker crackles. A voice shouts. “Grab a box of popcorn! We’re going to the movies!”

A big red O marks the middle of OSU's field. Someone runs into the O. He waves a **baton** in the air. Band members fill the field. They form marching lines. Instruments roar to life.

All heads turn to look. The marching lines start changing. They form a shape. Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No. It is a man. He wears a cape. Instruments make up his body. Each leg is a set of trombones. Drums form his head. Flutes make his cape. The body starts to move. A song plays. It is from *Superman*.





Across the field is a skyscraper. It is made of tubas. The building is falling. Superman dashes toward it. His cape lifts him. He flies across the field. With a single bound, he rescues the falling building. The crowd cheers.

Then the scene shifts. Shapes change. Bodies move. They form a volcano. It is Mount Doom. Music from *The Lord of the Rings* plays. Figures shift again. The shape turns into a broom. Someone flies across the field. It is a quidditch player. He catches a golden bird. The song is from *Harry Potter*.



Fast Fact

A typical marching band field performance lasts five to ten minutes. At OSU, band members practice music and movements for up to 30 hours per week during football season.

Next, the broom grows hind legs. It sprouts a tail. A T. rex roars. The tune changes again. It is from *Jurassic Park*. Finally, two ships form. They raise flags. Cannons fire. One ship blasts the other. Smoke fills the air. The theme is *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

All eyes are on the field now. Ears are tuned in. The crowd is dazzled. But few stop to look closer. Each dot on the field is a musician. Learning each instrument takes years of work. Months of practice go into every move. The result is a work of art.

It is a show of strength. Behind it is the hidden world of the **marching band**. But many don't know the whole story.



Fast Fact

ESPN analysts measured the heart rates of marching band performers. They found them to be the same as athletes running an 800-meter dash.

