

The Marching Strings Of Branciforte



SCHOOL NEWS

By Jean Baker

Sentinel Staff Writer

Attention, John Phillip Sousa! You forgot one part of your band music.

And Meredith Wilson, eliminate 56 of those trombones! We're marching in.

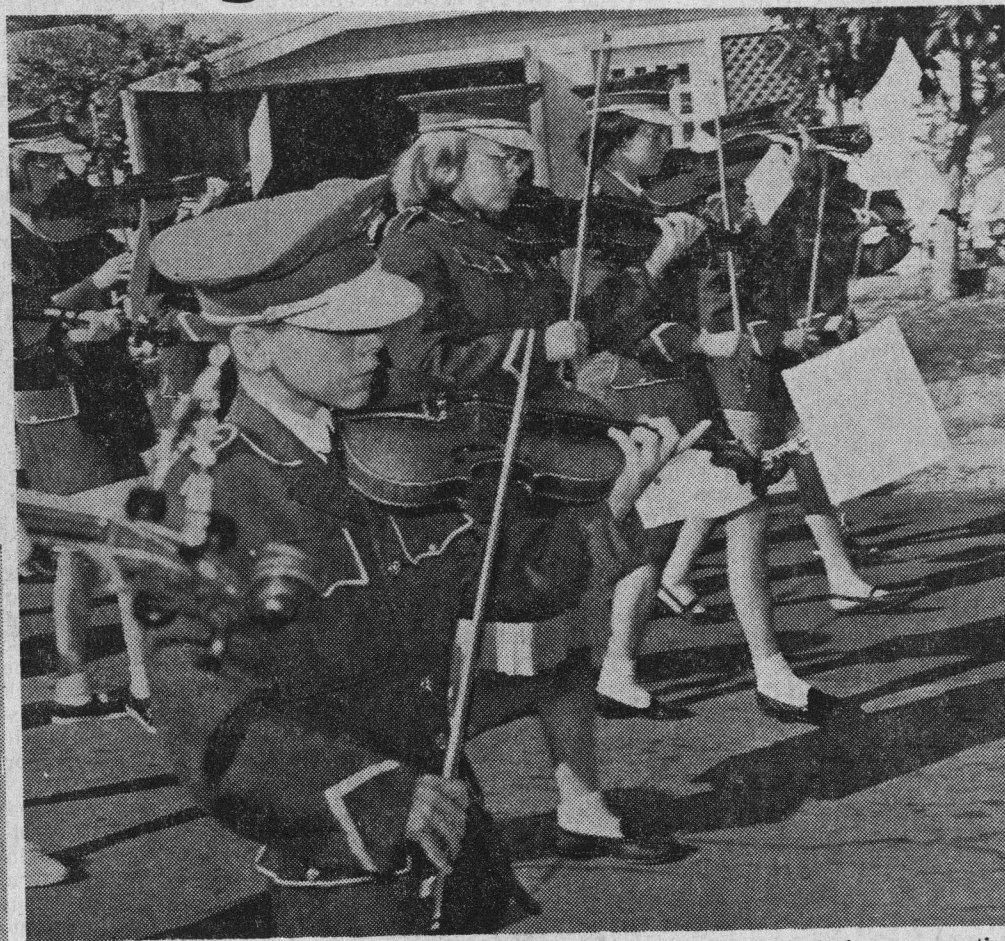
So you always thought the violin and viola belonged in the orchestra pit or on the concert stage? Not so, not now.

It may strike those who prefer their music "long hair" as absolutely revolatory, but the violinists and violists at Branciforte Junior High school are on the march, and not in protest!

They're in the band, only it



Ruth Mueller



The Branciforte Junior High school marching band

—with strings, including violins — parades in the neighborhood during a practice march.

can't be called a band because violins aren't band instruments, and they're marching, but this is not the customary position assumed by them. So Ruth Mueller, instrumental instructor at the school, has instituted the "pep symphony."

In this 80-piece pep symphony there are about eight violins. Two of them are played by seventh grade boys, Mark Beesley and Tom Gilbertson. Both began playing in elementary school orchestras. Tom said he, too, had played drums for a

short time. Of the marching symphony, Tom said, "I think it's going to be okay. Maybe I'll play violin in high school, too, but I wish they'd let us march."

"It's like Miss Mueller said, violinists always sat inside while

brass and woodwinds had the fun," Tom added as he marched away fiddling.

Miss Mueller, herself a string major, admits that up until the past year or two she was opposed to marching bands, but now she says, "I'm a disciple. This is what the kids want and when you do things they enjoy, you've got them with you."

Fine for the small strings, but where does this leave the cello and the bass? Well, it may take a bit of seeing to believe, but they've gone mobile.

Joe Merkel, metal shop teacher at Branciforte, has mounted the cellos and bass on blocks of wood set on wheels. Now Peggy Collins and Brian Carter, eighth graders, can push their cellos along as they play the Branciforte school song.

A few "bugs," yes. Things were going quite rhythmically when Peggy lost her wheel. She couldn't hoist her instrument on to her shoulder and keep marching, so while the band passed her by, she remounted the instrument. It required a fast step but she soon caught up.

Katy Nolan and her bass were right with the band as together they made a beautiful square corner, but Katy's bass pivoted in its block of wood and there it stopped in a twist. And the band played on!

These are small problems and will be ironed out before the week is over with the help of Merkel, Principal Roy Bergassi, and Miss Mueller. Anyone have an idea as to how the strings are going to carry their music? Maybe an upside-down lyre



Katy Nolan, left, Peggy Collins and Brian Carter give music Junior

suspended out from their caps?

Jerry Lynch is the drum major for this unusual symphony, possibly the only one of its kind. Jim Bull, drum major at Soquel High school, has been helping Jerry and the pep symphony members

with their marching.

Residents living near the school have been pouring out of their homes each afternoon this week as the band passes by, but all Santa Cruzans will have an opportunity to see this uniformed group perform on

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