

Eastern Michigan University Fight Song: Eagles Fight Song by Larry Livingston

Section1: Research

The music is global context since it is composed in the US for Eastern Michigan University (EMU) where I am born and live in China. The composer wrote the piece to boost school spirit and engage audiences which I have never experienced before. I would classify this piece as AOI1: Music for sociocultural and political expression because it serves to enhance the sense of unity and boost spirituality within the university.

The Eastern Michigan University (EMU) “Eagles Fight Song” composed by Larry Livingston in 1932 is a march-style fight song for a university marching band combining a brass-led, fanfare-like introduction, a memorable verse, and lyrics supporting participation to school spirit (“Collection: School Songs Collection | Eastern Michigan University Archives”, n.d.).



Fig. 1 Image of EMU's sports stadium("Rynearson Stadium - Facilities - Eastern Michigan University Athletics")

The song is performed at athletic events, pep rallies, to support EMU teams ("EMU Traditions - Eastern Michigan University Athletics", n.d.). Within the context of US college, fight songs like EMU's serve as a way to showcase institutional identity. The EMU fight song thus functions as a branding and energizes the community which corresponds to AOI1.

Musical elements also indicates the purpose of AOI1 and the upbeat atmosphere of the piece.

The score is written for standard marching bands: flute/piccolo, B-flat clarinets, alto and tenor saxophones and so on. The overall texture is homophonic: melody in upper voices (trumpets, clarinets) over chordal inner parts and a rhythmically synchronized low-brass bass line, with percussion articulating the march pulse.

The image shows the first page of a marching band score for "Eagles Fight Song" by Eastern Michigan University. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 144$. The score is for a standard marching band, with instrumentation listed on the left: Flute/Piccolo, Clarinet, A. Sax I, A. Sax II, T. Sax, Trumpet I, Trumpet II, Trumpet III, Horns 1-2, Trombone I, Trombone II, Euphonium BC, Tuba, Belli/Xylo, Snare Drum, Tenors, Cymbals, and Bass Drums. The score is written in 2/2 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is in the upper voices (trumpets, clarinets) and the bass line is in the low brass and percussion. The score is marked with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 144$.

Fig. 2 Instrumentation are indicated on the left side of the score

The score indicates a bright march tempo (BPM 144), aligning with typical marching-band stride tempo and allowing bands to step off cleanly on quarter-note beats.

This image is a close-up of the tempo marking on the score. It shows the tempo of $\text{♩} = 144$ and the instrumentation list on the left: Flute/Piccolo, Clarinet, A. Sax I, A. Sax II, T. Sax, Trumpet I, Trumpet II, Trumpet III, Horns 1-2, Trombone I, Trombone II, Euphonium BC, Tuba, Belli/Xylo, Snare Drum, Tenors, Cymbals, and Bass Drums. The score is written in 2/2 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is in the upper voices (trumpets, clarinets) and the bass line is in the low brass and percussion. The score is marked with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 144$.

Fig. 3 Image of the tempo marked on the score

The meter is a cut time meter in two-two which has a strong beat on beats 1 and 2 in the low brass and percussion and frequent dotted-rhythm figures in the melody that energize the line.

Moreover, this meter also creates a strong-weak, one-two pattern which is like walking and marching where the first beat is emphasized.



Fig. 4 Notes played by low brass instruments mainly emphasize on the first and second beat (Bar9-16)

The “Eagles Fight Song” is written in A flat major, a bright and energetic key that helps create the bold, triumphant sound associated with traditional fight songs and school spirit music.

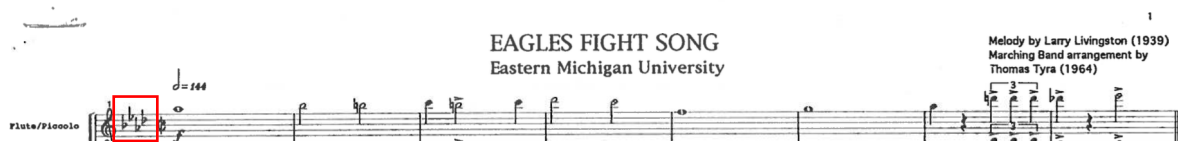


Fig. 5 Image of the A flat Major key indicated on the score

The main verse stays within comfortable vocal range under this key, making it easy for large crowds of fans to sing and follow along. This verse is heard twice, reinforcing the memorable melodic hook and lyrics hence listeners quickly learn and join in, which is immensely effective in fight song writing.

Based on the background, context, and function of the song along with various musical features, the purpose of enhancing school spirit and augmenting engagement is achieved. Henceforth, these elements make the song AOI1: Music for sociocultural and political expression.

Section 2: Statement on the Creating Excercise

Exploring EMU's fight song "Eagles Fight Song", I learned typical features and choices in fightsong compositions. I then implemented and explored such features in my composition "Let's Fight Together!"

Implication	Process Journal
Time Signature	 Fig. 1 Image of Time Signature I initially experimented a 4/4 time signature before selecting 2/4. However, the four-four time signature slows the speed. It also does not fit well with my main melody as the composition includes longer notes. Contrastingly, 2/4 suits the melody well and provides a pregressive sense reflecting fightsong genre. This implication gives the fight song a driving, march-like pulse that feels energetic, fitting the spirit of competition and unity.
Tempo	Let's Go Together! Subtitle  Fig. 2 Image of Tempo Initially, the tempo is 120, where most typical fight songs set their tempo at. The outcome was not pleasing as it does not fully excites the listener. After increasing the tempo to 132 beats per minute for the quarter note, it places the fight song in an lively but controlled range that matches walking and marching speeds, making it feel naturally energetic. The even pulse allows drumline patterns, clapping, and shouted responses lock tightly with the band.
Articulations & Accents	 Fig. 3 Accents on Melodic Instruments (Bar 1-5) Accents on melodic instruments at the beginning or each phrase emphasize the musical "attack," which grabs attention and underlines key beats of the melody that the crowd can remember.

--	--

Fig. 4 **Accents** on Percussion Instruments (Bar 1-5)

While **accents** in percussion instruments acts like a mark that both keeps the tempo fixed for other marching band players while also grabs the listener’s attention. These strong marks mirror the impact and aggression of athletic play, making the music feel more decisive and combative.

Instrumentation

Soprano	Flute	
Alto	Clarinet in Bb	
Melody line	Alto Saxophone	
Tenor	Tenor Saxophone	
Tenor	Baritone Saxophone	
Melody line	Mellophone	
Soprano	Trumpet in Bb 1	
Alto	Trumpet in Bb 2	
Tenor	Trombone	
Bass	Tuba	
	Snare Drum	
	Tenor Drums	
	Bass Drums	
	Cymbals	

Fig 3. **Instrumentation** and correspondence to SATB

As I compose, I started from a SATB (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) score to maintain clear structure among all parts. Then, I integrated it into a typical full scale marching band consisting of wind instruments in different range and percussions instruments with different texture. Each instrument plays a distinct role corresponding to the SATB scale. This largely ensures the overall texture being balanced, allowing the main melodic lines to project clearly while the supporting voices reinforce harmony and rhythmic drive.

Section 3: Bibliography & Full Score

“Rynearson Stadium - Facilities - Eastern Michigan University Athletics.” *Eastern Michigan*

University Athletics, 2025, emueagles.com/facilities/rynearson-stadium/2. Accessed 8 Dec. 2025.

Youtube.com, 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=hllm5hnlqAA. Accessed 30 Nov. 2025.

“Collection: School Songs Collection | Eastern Michigan University Archives.” *Emich.edu*,

2025, aspace.emich.edu/repositories/2/resources/403#:~:text=The%20school's%20fight%20song%20was,in%20response%20to%20a%20contest. Accessed 2 Dec. 2025.

Let's Go Together!

$\text{♩} = 132$

Flute
mf *f*

Clarinet in Bb
mf *ff*

Alto Saxophone
mf *f* *ff*

Tenor Saxophone
mf

Baritone Saxophone
mf

Mellophone
mf *f* *ff*

Trumpet in Bb 1
mf *f* *mp*

Trumpet in Bb 2
mf

Trombone
mf

Tuba
mf *f*

Snare Drum
mf

Tenor Drums
mf

Bass Drums
mf

Cymbals
mf

[illegible]

46

Fl.

Cl. in B $\flat$

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Mello.

Tpt. in B $\flat$ 1

Tpt. in B $\flat$ 2

Tbn.

Tba.

S.D.

T.D.

B.D.

Cym.

ff

ff

ff

ff