Black Bexar Pipe Band

http://www.blackbexar.com/

Black Bexar Pipe Band of San Antonio, Texas is a Grade IV pipe and drum band that competes at Highland games in Texas and surrounding states.

Originally formed in 1994, the band was incorporated in 2002 and currently has an application pending with the IRS for non profit status. Pipers, bass drummer, tenor and snare drummers make up the band which rapidly earned a reputation as a quality, professional corps. Many of its members also compete solo in piping or drumming. The band proudly wears the Flower of Scotland tartan. It performs at many special events, parades, and music festivals. The band may also be hired for events such as weddings, funerals, dedications, and parties. Piping/Drumming Workshop Black Bexar Pipe Band continues to sponsor a workshop for pipers and drummers, especially to help those in the central and southern portion of Texas who may not have the opportunity for continual lessons. Normally held on President's Day weekend, the workshop brings in top-level piping and drumming instructors to help everyone from beginning students to experienced pipers and drummers. The workshops give participants the opportunity to hone their skills, learn new tunes, and pick up tips on pipe and drum maintenance and performance, all in a relaxed and friendly environment. Practice and Lessons Black Bexar Pipe Band meets on Tuesday evenings at Northwood Presbyterian Church, 518 Pike Place. For a nominal membership fee, members receive instruction in everything from pipe or drum assembly and maintenance to playing tips and competition readiness. Pipers and drummers practice separately, then join together to refine the sets. Classes are set up to accommodate all levels of playing ability, so whether you're a first-time player or have years of experience, there is a place for you with Black Bexar. The Great Highland Bagpipe The Great Highland Bagpipe, once used as an instrument of war by the Scots, is now a favorite of fans of Celtic music around the globe. The instrument's haunting tone can add atmosphere and evoke lasting memories at weddings and memorial services or funerals. The same instrument can also provide toe-tapping entertainment at a party or dance, where lively jigs, reels, and hornpipes create a vivacious atmosphere. The Pipe Band Side Drum The drum that most Americans call a field, or marching, snare is referred to as a ‘side drum’ in pipe band drumming. Black Bexar's drum corps is proud to use the latest Premier HTS700 as its standard line drum. The side drum’s history closely parallels the incorporation of martial music into British Army regiments. When the Scottish regiments formed in the 18th century, they naturally turned to the bagpipe for their music source, and just as naturally, adapted the percussion instruments from the other regimental bands to provide the rhythm and cadence for marching. Those instruments were the side drum, bass drum, and tenor drum, and all are still in use today. Of those three, the side drum has evolved the most radically. The first pipe band side drums were colorfully painted wood shells with calfskin heads held taut by ropes tying the top and bottom head-retaining rims together. Catgut snares stretching across the bottom head provided the ‘scratchy’ sharp sound so essential and effective for projecting to the farthest soldiers in the formation. (Those ropes are still seen today, though vestigial and just for show, dangling from some band’s drums.) With the introduction of cast-metal lugs installed on the shell, tension screws from the rims to the lugs replaced the rope tensioning system, and allowed considerably tighter heads. Similarly, wire strand snares replaced the catgut, and this further enhanced the crispness already improved by the higher tensioned heads. Recently, a second snare assembly (then-unique to pipe band drumming but now embraced by some high school and college bands, and drum and bugle corps) was added to the top head, to boost the crispness yet another notch. This was soon followed by an even stronger head tensioning system pioneered by Premier Percussion, wherein the top and bottom rims are not attached to shell lugs, but instead ‘float’ across the shell on a unified rim structure. This made possible such incredibly high tension that Premier actually launched a new line of drums designated HTS, for High Tension Snare. Probably 90% of the pipe bands in the world now use a Premier HTS, either the original HTS200 or the newer HTS700.

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