



PRE-DRILL CAMP 2026 · LEADERSHIP SEMINARS · DAY 1

The Hampton Sound

"The Best of Both Worlds"

Dr. Thomas L. Jones, Jr.

Director of University Bands · Instrumentalist Session, Saturday, August 1, 2026

The Hampton University Marching Force

HAMPTON'S HEARTBEAT

Hear It First

Three recordings, in order—raw power, then power under control, then the two combined. That combination is The Hampton Sound.



RAW POWER

Southern University Human Jukebox, live at UGA

youtu.be/PbQ8uJCJpq8

Watch · 2:46



POWER WITH CONTROL

Phantom Regiment (DCI) — Elsa's Procession

youtu.be/QUkNJMIItsc

Watch · 1:51

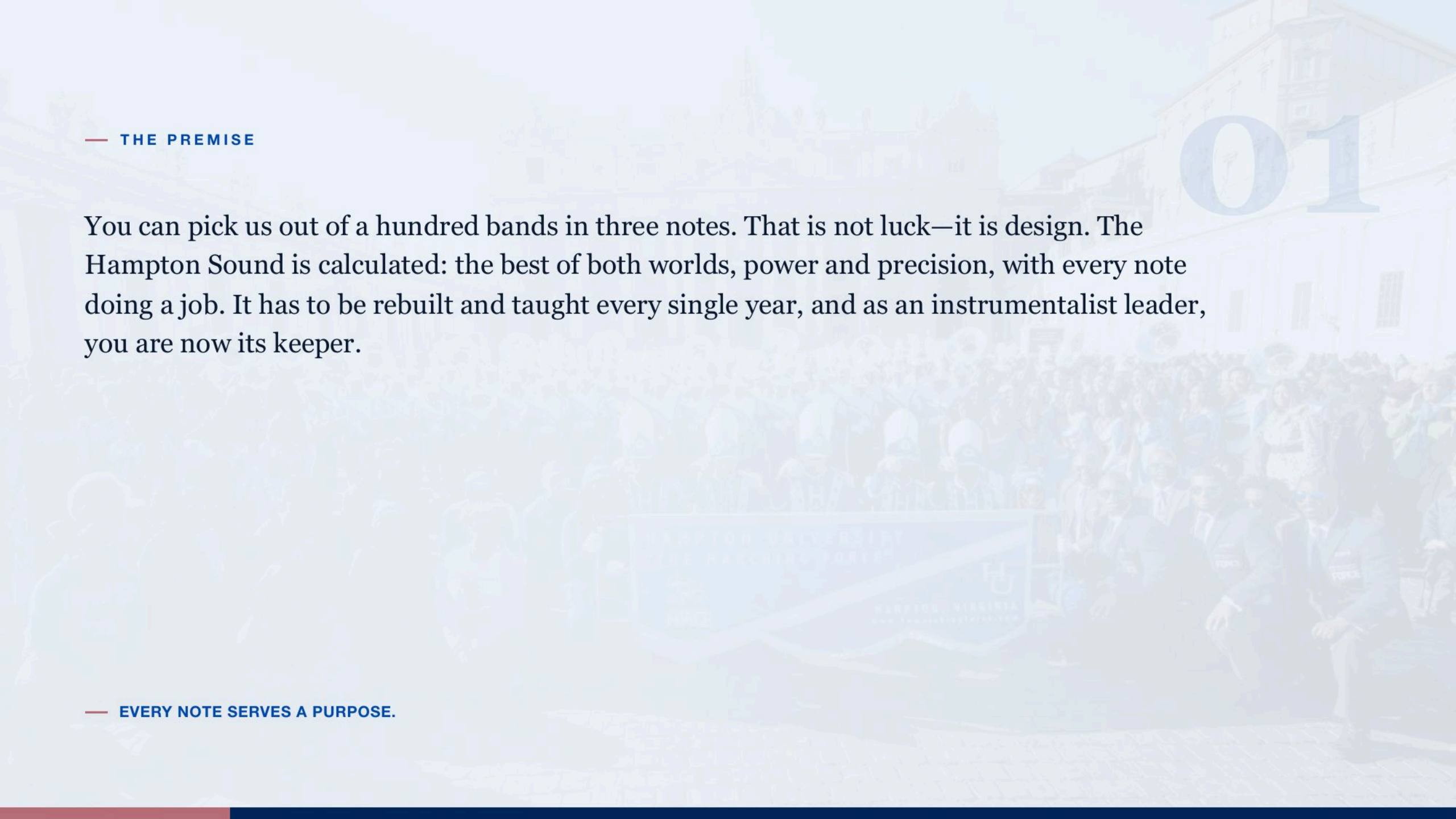


THE COMBINATION

North Carolina A&T — Love Don't Live Here
Anymore

youtu.be/Q_euU6ZgHsk

Watch · 2:49

The background of the slide is a faded, light blue image of a large crowd of people, likely students, gathered for a university event. In the center of the crowd, a banner is visible with the text "HAMPTON UNIVERSITY THE MARCHING FORCES" and "HAMPTON VIRGINIA". The banner also features the university's logo and the website "www.hampton.edu/mf".

— THE PREMISE

You can pick us out of a hundred bands in three notes. That is not luck—it is design. The Hampton Sound is calculated: the best of both worlds, power and precision, with every note doing a job. It has to be rebuilt and taught every single year, and as an instrumentalist leader, you are now its keeper.

— EVERY NOTE SERVES A PURPOSE.

What The Hampton Sound Is

Not one or the other—both, at the same time.

POWER *volume and intensity*

- ◆ A sound that **carries across the whole field** and packs a punch.
- ◆ Aggressive projection—the section the stands **feel in their chest**.
- ◆ Full commitment on every note; nothing timid, nothing held back.

PRECISION *balance, blend, intonation*

- ◆ **In tune** from the bottom up, every chord locked.
- ◆ **Balanced**—no one buried, no one sticking out.
- ◆ Blended into **one voice**, not fifty separate horns.

The Hampton Sound is efficient and calculated—**every note serves a purpose**. It is the best of both worlds: power and precision, married.

The Color: Dark and Resonant

Depth and core—never thin, never brittle.

- ◆ We chase a **dark, resonant** sound: full of core, rich underneath, with real weight behind every note.
- ◆ Our model is the great **DCI drum corps of the 1980s and 90s**—the era of the big **G bugles**.
- ◆ Those horns were **larger and harder to play**, but they packed a punch and the sound **carried across the entire field**.
- ◆ Chase that depth. A dark, resonant core projects farther—and ages better—than a bright, thin edge ever will.

Tone at Volume

Volume is easy. Tone at volume is the whole craft.

- ◆ Anyone can play loud. The standard is your **best characteristic tone at full volume**—full, centered, and controlled.
- ◆ Move **more air, not more force**. Open the throat, keep the core; projection, never distortion.
- ◆ Play **louder for longer**. Endurance is part of the sound—the wall cannot sag in the fifth quarter.
- ◆ The instant tone breaks into blatt or spread, you have left The Hampton Sound. Back off to the core and rebuild.

Balance, Blend, and Intonation

This is where the sound is actually built.

- ◆ **Balance:** listen across the whole band so no voice is buried and no voice sticks out—every part heard in proportion.
- ◆ **Blend:** match your tone, pitch, and volume to the players around you until the section rings as one. When it truly locks, you hear overtones no one is playing.
- ◆ **Intonation:** tune from the bottom up and hold it. Power means nothing out of tune.
- ◆ Colors and timbres **complement—they do not compete**. Each section makes room for the others.

Sources: W. Francis McBeth, *Effective Performance of Band Music* (1972) — the pyramid-of-sound balance concept; Edward S. Lisk, *The Creative Director: Alternative Rehearsal Techniques* (Meredith Music).

Every Section Owns a Piece

The Hampton Sound is all of us—not just the brass.

1 Woodwinds

Color and agility up top—piccolos, clarinets, and saxes add brilliance and speed the brass cannot.

3 Low Brass

The foundation and the drive—trombones, baritones, euphoniums, and sousaphones anchor it all.

2 High Brass

Melody and edge—trumpets, mellophones, and flugelhorns carry the tune and the shine.

4 Percussion

Time, pocket, and power—the drumline sets the drive the whole sound rides on.

Four different colors, one sound. Each section is written and played to **complement the others, never to compete** with them.

How It's Built on the Page

The sound starts in the arrangement, long before the first rehearsal.

- ◆ **Voiced from the bottom up.** The low brass lays a wide, deep foundation, and everything else is stacked on top of it.
- ◆ **The instruments talk to each other.** Colors and timbres are voices in one cohesive conversation—each placed to answer and support the others, never to outcompete them for the same space.
- ◆ **Soulful harmonic color.** Gospel, funk, and R&B harmony give the sound its soul over concert-band cleanliness—that marriage is the Hampton in The Hampton Sound.
- ◆ **Hits and call-and-response.** Tutti hits, the silence right before the hit, and sections answering each other give the sound its shape and its punch.
- ◆ **Every note serves a purpose.** The writing is efficient and calculated—nothing is on the page for decoration.

Part Alignments: The Brass

The brass carry the harmony in four voices—high brass and low brass an octave apart. Read down a chart to see each part, or across a voice to see who shares the line.

VOICE	HIGH BRASS		
	TRUMPET	FLUGELHORN	MELLOPHONE
1	1	1	—
2	2	2	1
3	3	3	2
4	4	4	3

VOICE	LOW BRASS		
	BARITONE	TROMBONE	EUPHONIUM
1	1	1	—
2	2	2	1
3	3	3	2
4	—	4	3
BASS	Sousaphone 1 Sousaphone 2		

Trumpet X rides above the section on its own for the high-octave line. The woodwinds double these brass voices—the next page shows where each part sits.

Where the Woodwinds Align

The woodwinds don't hold their own voices—each one aligns with a brass line, part for part.

HIGH BRASS



LOW BRASS



MELODY



Clarinets align with the Trumpets; Alto Saxes align with the Flugelhorns. Because they trace different brass lines, the clarinets and alto saxes never align with each other.

— THE TRADITION

Hampton has owned this sound for generations. It is not automatic—every August a new class arrives that has never made it, and it has to be taught from the first long tone. Learning it takes about a semester. Keeping it takes a career. And one day it will be your job to pass it to the person who takes your chair.

— LEARN IT IN A SEMESTER. KEEP IT A CAREER. PASS IT ON.

02

Your Job: Keep the Sound

As a section leader, you are the carrier of the sound.

1 Model It

Your horn is the reference. Play the dark, resonant, full tone you want the section to match.

3 Hold It at Volume

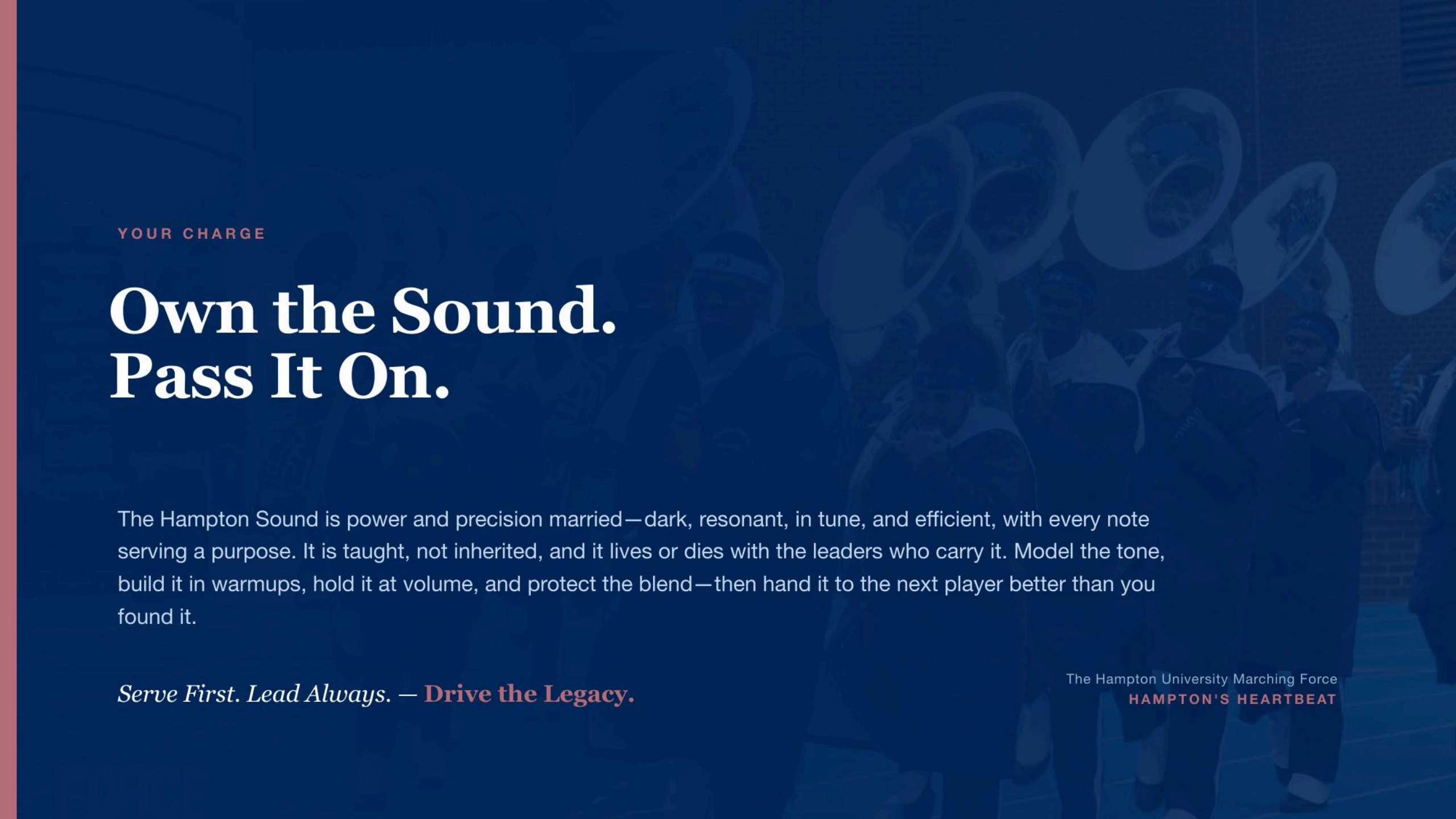
Push full projection—and stop it the instant tone breaks. Loud is not the goal; tone at volume is.

2 Build It in Warmups

Open every sectional with long tones and lip slurs. The core tone is built before the music starts.

4 Protect Balance and Blend

Tune from the bottom, keep colors complementing not competing, and make the section ring as one.

A blue-tinted background image of a marching band. Several tuba players are visible in the upper right, and drum majors in the center and left. The band is wearing dark uniforms with white accents.

YOUR CHARGE

Own the Sound. Pass It On.

The Hampton Sound is power and precision married—dark, resonant, in tune, and efficient, with every note serving a purpose. It is taught, not inherited, and it lives or dies with the leaders who carry it. Model the tone, build it in warmups, hold it at volume, and protect the blend—then hand it to the next player better than you found it.

Serve First. Lead Always. — **Drive the Legacy.**

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