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Sing along with the Victory Song

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THE LAST WORD



Sing along with the Victory Song

FRED WARING was known as “The Man Who Taught America How to Sing.”

With his chorus, the Pennsylvanians, Waring toured the world for decades, performing pop hits, standards and big band music. From 1949 to 1954 he headlined a television variety show on CBS, and from the late 1930s to the mid-’40s he hosted a popular NBC radio show, “Chesterfield Pleasure Time.”

According to the University of Connecticut’s online “Yesteryear Archives,” the radio show had up to “20 million listeners each week and featured a glee club of former college singers. Schools throughout the nation competed to have Waring write fight songs for their teams by collecting Chesterfield cigarette packs.”

Furman was one of those schools. And thanks to Pete Peters ’76, *Furman* magazine has a copy of the “Furman Victory Song,” written in 1942 by Waring and Charles Gaynor, who would later pen music for Broadway. Peters found the sheet music in the papers of his late mother, Winifred Bahan Peters ’39.

Having never heard of the song, we went looking for information. The James B. Duke Library had a copy of the music, as did the Furman Singers archive. But that was all — no explanation of the song’s origin, no back story, no record of it being performed at Furman.

Further research uncovered the March 1942 issue of *The Furman Bulletin*, which noted the song’s “Pleasure Time” debut in eight blurbs scattered throughout the publication. Touted one, “Fred Waring’s ‘Pleasure Time’ will be more pleasant on Friday night, March 20, because Furman’s song will be a feature of the program. Hear it!” Another said, “Purple and White — ‘Christo et Doctrinae’ — The Tolling of the Bell in the Tower — all will have a part in Fred Waring’s song written especially for Furman and broadcast over the N.B.C. network on Friday night, March 20, 7 o’clock.”

The March 20 *Greenville News* also included a short announcement, saying that the song “was written by Mr. Waring in response to a petition signed by students of the university.” The brief added, “Waring wrote the song to student specifications, familiarizing himself with traditions of the university.” (At the time Furman was all-male, and the football team was called the Hurricane.) The paper reported that about 40 students and alumni were to attend the premiere.

Perhaps, almost 70 years later, a repeat performance is in order. The snappy lyrics are on the right.

— JIM STEWART

Hail to men of Furman,
Hail to her fighting crew;
Let ev’ry man determine
to carry the battle through.
The Purple Hurricane of Furman
is dauntless and brave and true;
So get in there and fight
fight with all of your might
for the Purple and White of Furman U.

Give a Shout, give a yell, give a cheer,
Give a cheer for the team of the year.
Furman will stop the assaulter,
Her men are firm as Gibraltar!
See them run, see them fight, see them go
to the fore as they score on the foe.
Furman men will ring the bell,
Furman men will give ‘em hell!
Give a cheer for the team of the year.

Hear those bells a-ringing,
Ringing a roundelay.
Good news they’ll soon be bringing
for victory is ours today.
And when they’re ding dong ding dong
dinging, our hearts are singing too.
For we’re bound to defeat
any foe that we meet
when we turn on the heat for Furman U.

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