

Show band steps into spotlight to say howdy

BY MARLIE BEST

Sometimes the show band, Platinum, can get lost behind all the glitter and sparkle of the show choirs, but the instrumentalists are always there backing up all four groups: Titanium, Radiance, Titan Express and the new treble group Titan Revolution.

The choreographers of Radiance's show this year had a new idea: featuring some show band members up front. In the varsity treble group's show opener, "Daddy Lessons," several show band members – senior trumpet Logan Magnier, junior trumpet Logan Greer, senior bari sax Jackson Baker, junior alto sax Andrew Wilson, junior trombone Tyler Holter, and freshman trombone Joshua Westbroek – move to the front to join in a hoedown.

"I mean, we're really fortunate to have really good band students and really good players," choir and show band director Brian Johnson said.

"Any time that we have a situation where we can feature them a little bit... I'm totally on board doing it."

Having a hoedown is nothing new to featured show band members with this fall's marching band show being themed "Neon Cowboy." The show band members that come to the front try to add their own touches to their performance and fit the cowboy theme.

"I have to go up there and look like I'm having fun, because I am

having fun," Greer said. "I have to move and get out of my shell, grab my belt buckle."

The culture of energy from the crowd during performances at show choir competitions also helps reinforce confidence in performers.

"The show choir environment is... all really positive, and it's expected to support all the groups around you," Greer said.

Feedback on the featuring of the show band has been perceived positively, with judges saying they enjoyed the group's opener.

"It helps set the mood for the show," Greer said. "This last clinician said that we as a band actually performed instead of just standing there playing music."

For the first time since the 2019-

and working on their singing and their dancing and performing," Johnson said. "We were looking at the numbers and we just decided that it would be more beneficial for us to go ahead and add a fourth group and allow those kids in that group to continue to work and continue to get better."

Previously, Revolution was a mixed ensemble, with tenors and basses. With not enough tenors and basses auditioning this year, the directors decided to go with a second all treble show choir.

"It's been a lot of fun... The girls are really improving and they're getting better each performance that they do," Johnson said. "It's been fun to watch them grow and get better as the season has gone on."



Infographic: Marlie Best



Logan Magnier and Isaak Nilson perform Radiance's opener. (photo: Alicia Fraley)



Jenna McVicker and Kendra Reid in Radiance (photo: Alicia Fraley)

The addition of a fourth show choir makes competition days run faster – especially for Platinum.

"You have a group warm up, perform, critique, have a little bit of a break, then do that over again," Johnson said. "Instead of doing that three times spread out throughout the day, now it's four times."

That doesn't seem to bother the musicians.

"Obviously, during the competitions there are the performances, but there's a lot of time to just interact with people and have fun," Ciavarella said.

Auditioning for Platinum happens soon after marching band season ends, near the end of October. This year with the increase in show choir groups, there was a need to have 23 members in show band, but only have 20 on stage at a time. Switching out players at certain times makes playing

more manageable and provides more opportunity.

Many people join show band because the idea gets passed down through instrument sections.

"I joined show band sophomore year because a lot of the trombone players ... were also in it. They said out of all the band activities you can do in high school, show band was their favorite," senior Gabby Leahy said. "So I was like, OK, I kind of have to do it next year and be with my other trombone players."

Show band is liked by some because of the style and type of music played.

"I enjoy playing loud and playing rock music, so that was kind of why [I joined]," Wilson said. "I also was told that it's really fun, so that definitely had an influence."

Overall, the environment of show band is different because the band is not the focus, unlike marching or jazz.



Tyler Holter, Jackson Baker, Logan Greer, and Andrew Wilson perform "Daddy Lessons." (photo: Alicia Fraley)

"You're the background and you're playing for this other group," Leahy said. "You're a really important part for somebody else, so it makes it more worth it showing up sometimes."

The first step in integrating the band and choirs after their initial separate practices is a singalong with the show band playing their parts.

"It's usually pretty seamless because they've usually been rehearsing for a long time, and we have a couple of rehearsals," sophomore bassist Owen Ciavarella said. "It's pretty much just running through what we've been given, and then they've been rehearsing with tracks, so we just replace the track."

Platinum practices with Revolution on Tuesdays 7-8 a.m., Radiance and Titanium on Tuesdays 6:30-9 p.m., and Express on Wednesdays 7-8 a.m.

Needing to play loud during dance breaks and quiet when the choir sings, it can be hard to find the balance between performing for the show choir and just being a musician.

"I definitely would say Ti Ex's 'Troublemaker' is my favorite, especially for the trombones," Leahy said. "It's so fun to play, because once you hit the dance break...it's insane."

Show choir competitions usually start around 5 or 6 a.m. and go until around 11 p.m. Platinum earned Best Band at Elkhorn South's Crystal Cup and Ankeny's Mid-Iowa Show Choir Championships, and the choirs regularly make the band feel valued.

"I was expecting them to be like, 'ugh, you're in Platinum, you don't do anything,' but no, they're very appreciative," Wilson said. "They say thank you after every rehearsal, like 'thank you, thank you.'"



Ariel Landeros, Leah Rathke, Ava Winkler and Leo Duhs in Titanium. (photo: Alicia Fraley)



Kylie Ortiz, Audrey Evans, and Skylar Rae Griffin in new fourth show choir, Titan Revolution (photo: Lucena Hanna)



Gabe Parrish in Titan Express (photo: Bailey Martin)

ARTIST STATEMENT

I started with a Canva template that was blue and only had a song list with simple vinyl record graphics on the side. I took the idea of musical elements along with the title font of the original infographic into a different concept that had more harmony with my overall concept. The process took at least four days of fine tuning the details, moving pieces around, adding group titles and song lists, sifting through student photos of our show choirs, adding photographer credits, and playing with the color to work with the actual magazine design. With the design, I was trying convey to the reader that this is a story about a show band and people playing music, but also the extensive amount of music played by this one group. The musical touch of the buttons plays into the soundtrack idea. Adding the photos gave the opportunity to include more student images into the magazine. All the colored backgrounds of the pictures went together, and the pictures of the show choirs point readers to the songs on the right, making the page more cohesive and eye-catching.