

Regionals

By **Stephen Scalf**
Staff Writer
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This year, Nicholas County Marching Band is under the direction of Ms. Debbie Hale, assisted by April Hawkins, Jeremy Owens, Alex Wilson, Bethany Cox, Mike Bond, Mark Hopkins, Katie Tyree, and Marcus Lewis, who helped choreograph much of the band's performance. The musical selections are extremely challenging collection of arrangements from Mozart's Ene Kline Nachtmusik, Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, Khachaturian's Sabre Dance, and Tchaikovsky's Trepak (Nutcracker Suite).

The show is entitled "Perfect Form" and tells the story of a ballet student (Adrienne Letcher) who transforms from a half-hearted beginner who makes fun of the other performers - into a beautiful, graceful ballerina under the tutelage of the master (Josie Stamper).

The show is very appropriate for this year's band, which - like the character played by Adrienne Letcher - had to go through a

dramatic transformation to reach this point.

First, this year's band is small in numbers, consisting of only 11 marching musicians, five pit musicians, nine guards and the field commander.

Second, it is an extremely young band. There are no seniors and only four juniors. Over a third of them are middle schoolers, several of whom are brand-new to marching in spite of their relative inexperience, this group of young musicians and performers has shown superior dedication, practicing as long as three hours each school day, often until 9 p.m.

Their hard work has paid off. It is inspiring to sit in the stands and hear such a powerful sound and dramatic visual effects produced by so few. Judges have recognized the quality of Nicholas County's performances throughout this year's competitions. Two weeks ago during the Harrison County Classic, the band received a "Distinguished" rating, a truly impressive feat.

"This group has transformed more than any



Photo by Corbin Jones

Nicholas County High School was the first band to march at "Class A" Regionals, presenting this year's show "Perfect Form." The band played fifth, qualifying for State Semifinals.

other group I have struggled through an unusually wet and windy season. "They're the best and we couldn't have done it without them," added Ms. Hale.

The Nicholas County Marching Band travelled to Madison Southern High School in Berea this past weekend where they participated in Regional competitions to qualify for next week's State competition. Of the 10 "Class A" bands who qualified for Regional Quarter-

finals, only eight can advance to State. Once again, weather was a factor, delaying the competition by an hour and forcing the band to march in soggy, muddy conditions, adding to the difficulty of their performance.

16 "Class A" bands will advance to State Finals. All of Nicholas County joins in congratulating the band on their excellent accomplishments so far, and in wishing them the very best for their competition at State.

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The Road to State

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First row (left to right): Kalesha Blankenship, Ryan Cobb, Ross Honey, Katrina McFarlane, Julia Contreras, Eric Spivey, Lindsay Hall, Logan Fryman, Katie Stamper - Second row: Noelle Luebbers, Waid Jones, Hannah Boykin, Ryder Bray, Zach France, Jacob Fryman, Adrienne Letcher, Haley Blankenship - Third row: Stephanie Gubser, Max Scalf, JT Fryman, Morgan Logue, Ashley Asbury, Josie Stamper - Fourth row: Brittany Kiskaden, Rebekah Bartlett - Not present due to Ill: Michael Anderson

The Kentucky Music Educators' Association (KMEA) marching band season runs from the third Saturday in August until the KMEA Marching Band Championships held this year on Nov. 7. Bands who wish to compete at State are limited to six contests before KMEA Regional Quarterfinals. Bands are assigned to each class based on the size of enrollment (not members of the band) as reported from the previous two years by the Kentucky Board of Education. The schools with the lowest number of students are assigned to "Class A" and those with the highest enrollment to "Class AAAAA." This equates to roughly 36 schools per class. During KMEA-sanctioned contests, bands are evaluated by six judges; two evaluating Musical Performance (Musicianship-50 pts, Technique-40 pts, and Musical Content-10 pts); two evaluating Visual Performance (Technique-50 pts, Form Control-40 pts, and Visual Content-10 pts); one evaluating General Musical Effect (Effectiveness of Repertoire-50 pts, and Performer Effectiveness-40 pts); and one evaluating General Visual Effects (Effectiveness of Repertoire-50 pts, and Performer Effectiveness-40 pts). The judge's scores are combined and weighted as follows: Musical Performance-40 pts; Visual Performance-20 pts; General Musical Effect-20 pts; and General Visual Effect-20 pts for a total of 100 points. Bands receive a rating based on their overall score: Novice (fair) - 0 to 39.99; Apprentice (good) - 40 to 59.99; Proficient (excellent) - 60 to 79.99; and Distinguished (superior) - 80 to 100. To qualify for Regional Quarterfinals, bands must earn a Proficient or Distinguished rating at one or more KMEA-sanctioned contests. Regional Quarterfinals are held in for each class in both the Eastern and Western part of the State. The top eight bands from each Regional Quarterfinal (total 16 bands) advance to State Semifinals. The top four bands from State Semifinals advance to State Finals, held the evening of the same day as Semifinals.

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