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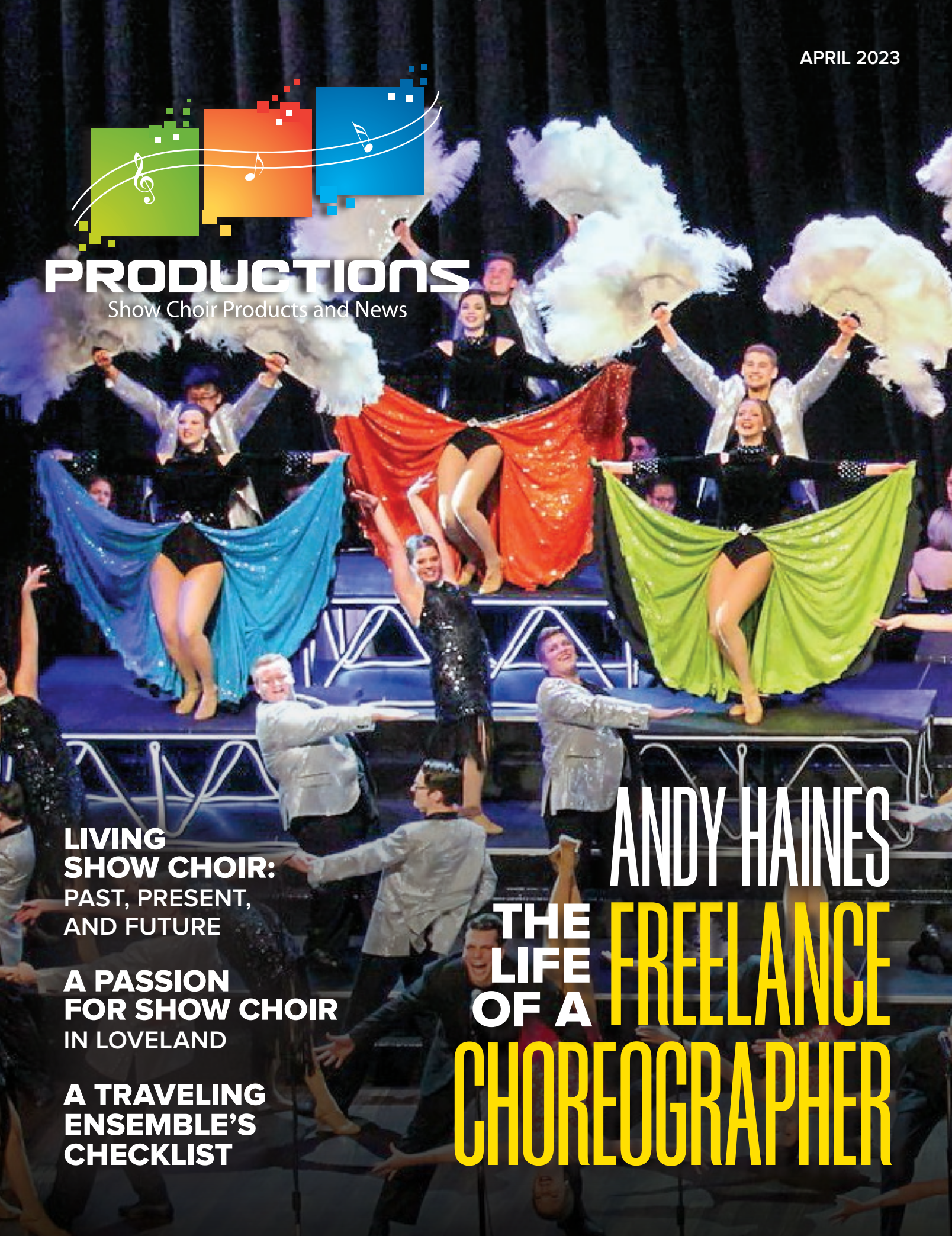
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AND FUTURE**

**A PASSION  
FOR SHOW CHOIR  
IN LOVELAND**

**A TRAVELING  
ENSEMBLE'S  
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**ANDY HAINES**  
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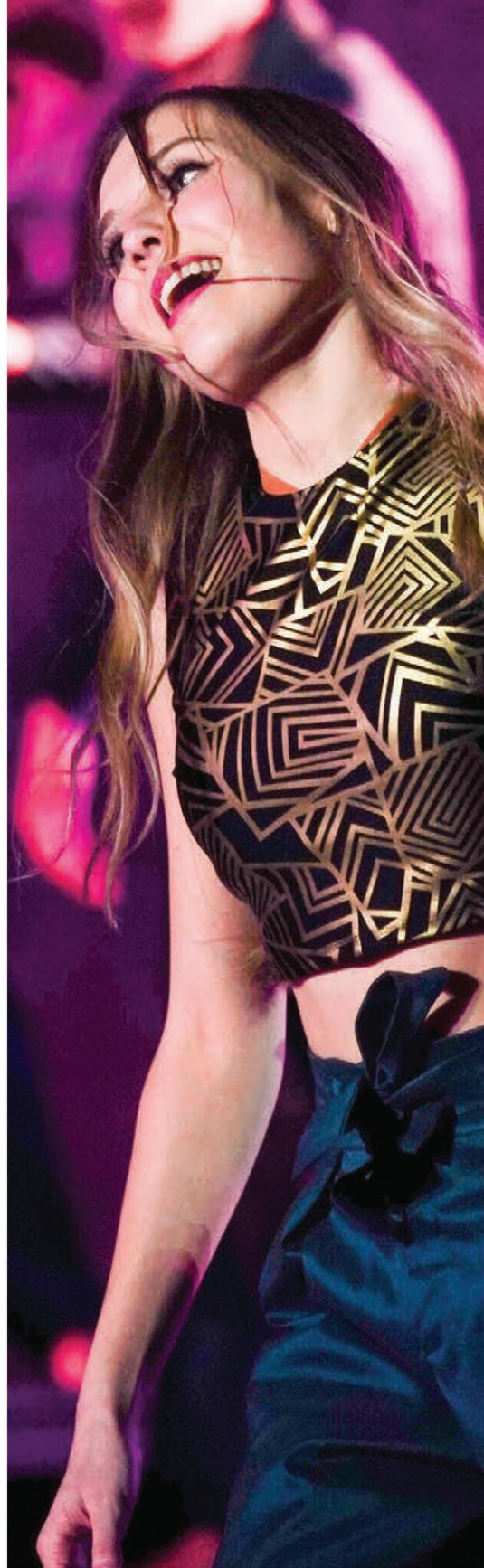
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## ANDY HAINES: THE LIFE OF A FREELANCE CHOREOGRAPHER

“I choreograph and then I come home,” laughs Andy Haines. Home happens to be a 200-year-old farmhouse that was once part of the Underground Railroad. It’s in Columbus, Ohio, about ten minutes from downtown. A tunnel to the river is situated across the road, and a tunnel to a farmhouse is just down the road.

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## LIVING SHOW CHOIR: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Let me start by saying my parents forced me to join show choir in the eighth grade. I loved singing and dancing—“Hannah Montana” was my favorite show at the time—but the idea of doing jazz squares with jazz hands in dorky costumes did not sound like fun to me.



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## A TRAVELING ENSEMBLE’S CHECKLIST

After selecting music, planning choreography, auditioning parts, fitting costumes, constructing a set, and rehearsing your ensemble, you have decided to take the show on the road. Have you prepared for this? Do you have everything? What needs to be done in order to move this musical juggernaut?



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## A PASSION FOR SHOW CHOIR IN LOVELAND

In southwestern Ohio, as the Little Miami River meanders toward the much wider and deeper Ohio River, residents of Loveland enjoy an idyllic setting. Numerous outdoor parks and nature preserves dot the area along with a Rails-to-Trails bicycle path that connects Loveland to Milford and Springfield.

# 30

## sound bites

# editor's letter

Dear Show Choir family,

What a wonderful competition season it has been! We are so proud of the talent and hard work displayed by all the performers, and we extend our congratulations to every one of you.

The past few months have been filled with excitement and anticipation as your show choirs traveled across the country to compete in some of the most prestigious competitions. We witnessed the growth and development of the performers as they worked tirelessly to perfect their vocals and choreography. Your fundraising efforts allowed transportation and accommodation for your performers, ensuring that they had the necessary resources to compete at their best.

In addition to fundraising, you also worked hard to create stunning and unforgettable costuming that perfectly complemented your performers' talents and personalities. The costumes, along with the expertly crafted arrangements and choreography, helped to bring your performances to life and captivate audiences around the country.

Now that competition season has ended, it is time to start planning for the upcoming season. You are already hard at work, developing new fundraising strategies to ensure that your groups have the necessary resources to continue to compete at their highest level. We here at *Productions Magazine* will be looking for new and innovative ways to help you engage supporters and encourage them to contribute to your cause.

As we look forward to the new season, we will be exploring new travel options and identifying the best accommodations for your performers. We understand the importance of having a comfortable and safe environment for your performers to rest and prepare for their performances.

Finally, we will be trying to help you find ways to create new and exciting arrangements that showcase the unique talents of your performers. Our goal is to help you, the directors and all the team members involved, to push the boundaries of what is possible in show choir and create performances that leave your audiences in awe.

Thank you all for your continued support and enthusiasm for *Productions Magazine*. We look forward to another successful season and cannot wait to see what our talented performers will accomplish next. We appreciate the privilege of helping you on your journey. Let us know how we are doing and how we here at the magazine can help in any way, big or small.

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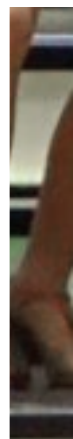
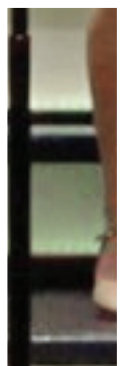
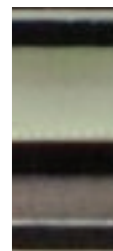
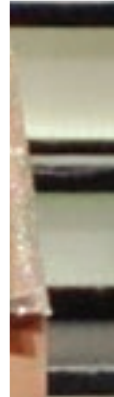
# ANDY HAINES

THE LIFE OF A

# FREELANCE CHOREOGRAPHER

PART 1

by Lisa Gibbs, Ed.D.



# “I choreograph and then I come home,” laughs Andy Haines.



Home happens to be a 200-year-old farmhouse that was once part of the Underground Railroad. It's in Columbus, Ohio, about ten minutes from downtown. A tunnel to the river is situated across the road, and a tunnel to a farmhouse is just down the road. Home is a Federal-style saltbox house, on two acres with five outbuildings. Two “sweet and gentle” greyhounds, rescued from the track and adopted during Covid, roam the two-acre property.

The history of the home is quite interesting, as is the history of one of its occupants. Andy Haines, freelance choreographer for show choirs and regional theater, lives in that house with his husband of twenty-five years. Now in his forty-third year as a choreographer, he agreed to talk with me about his expansive career and his shift toward retiring from choreographing—well, moving into a different type of choreography; more on that in Part Two.

## QUESTION

Your bio found at [showchoir.com](http://showchoir.com) states “As a self-taught dancer, he has achieved recognition for his creativity, wit, and ability to educate through the art of dance.” I firmly believe that activities which made us happy in childhood are clues to what fulfills us as adults. As a child, I would put on my sister’s Emerson, Lake, and Palmer albums or my mom’s musicals and dance what the music sounded like to me in my living room. My mom eventually put me in a ballet class, and I’ve been there ever since. I also “played school” and am now a dance teacher. Is there a memory or two from your childhood that reflects your interest in dance?

If I had to name my teachers, they would be Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Gene Kelly, Cyd Cherise, Vera Ellen, Danny Kaye. I watched their movies all the time, and I would try to emulate them. We would watch variety shows like Lawrence Welk Show and The Carol Burnett Show, and I would emulate them, dancing with my sisters in the living room. My mom said I was always creative and always moving around.

## QUESTION

Did you ever take any dance classes?

No, not really. When I danced in the Miss Ohio pageant, the choreographer would give a ballet barre to warm up and I had to follow along and find it. She always joked that I showed up for my five days of dance class a year. Same thing with musicals—I learned during the warmup to pick up on terminology, watch other people.

## QUESTION

How did you get your start with show choir, and how did that lead to being a choreographer?

In high school we started a show choir my junior year, and right after high school I was asked to come back and choreograph. I also made the Scarlet and Gray Show at Ohio State, where I was a business major, which was a group of ten guys and ten girls who traveled around as ambassadors and recruiters for the university. It was a



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**God was really good to me with an innate ability to create. I can hear a song once and I can choreograph it. I can read a full orchestra score and do a musical. So I don't have to do prep work. It happens organically. I think more of an artist with a canvas who starts painting and sees the picture.**

show choir, and we did about fifty shows a year around the country. Early on, we had two choreographers in, and they both said I should be the dance captain. Then in my sophomore year I was asked to choreograph.

I was always a good dancer but felt much more at home on the side of teaching. I was thinking I was just going to make a little money to get through school and pay for college, and then I started getting more gigs and more work. I did finish my business degree, which I didn't use. Well, I guess I've been in business for the past forty-three years, lol! Ohio State hired me right after I graduated to choreograph the Scarlet and Gray Show, which I did from 1984 to 1988. Then I left to do freelance work.

**Your work as a freelancer really took off. According to your bio, in your thirty-plus years as a freelance choreographer you have "choreographed over 100 musicals, state pageants for the Miss America program, and USO shows overseas"**

**and choirs competing with your choreography have won nineteen national championships.**

When I worked in the Miss America program, that was a long time ago, in the late 80s and 90s. They don't really use dancers anymore. It's changed a lot, but the world has, hasn't it? There was a time way back when I was working at twenty schools and doing regional theater. I'd be on the road thirty and forty days at a time. Eventually I stopped working weekends. I'm sixty-one now and I'd like to be able to retire in a few years and get off the road after forty-three years.

I've cut way back over the years, now doing exclusive work for this school or that and then musicals with regional theater. I'm choreographing only three show choirs right now—Findlay First Edition, Center Grove Debtone, and a group in Iowa called CSI. Findlay First Edition is my oldest job; this is year thirty-nine. They are quite a really nice group; small town and they sing really well and dance a lot."

## QUESTION

If you are working with twenty different groups or ten or three, how do you make them look different?

I'm more of a technician. I've studied and read a ton of ballet books, tap, jazz; talked to friends and the choreographers when I was in a show. I just kept trying to find as much knowledge as I could. I teach with a lot of technique. Some of these kids go on to musical theater programs, which show choir was based on. I've just stuck to musical theater style.

## QUESTION

Do your schools ever compete against each other? If so, what does that feel like for you?

It rarely happens. I asked the directors to try to avoid direct competition with other choirs I worked with. The directors were really good about understanding my side of it. I look at it from a sports angle because I really love college football. I

can't coach two teams that are competing against each other.

## QUESTION

The obvious question: how do you keep your work fresh?

I choreograph very differently than most people, in that I don't ever look at the music or hear it until I get to the gig. God was really good to me with an innate ability to create. I can hear a song once and I can choreograph it. I can read a full orchestra score and do a musical. So I don't have to do prep work. It happens organically. I think more of an artist with a canvas who starts painting and sees the picture. The music tells me what to do. I like that I don't worry about it. I literally show up, and am in it for the three-, four-, or five-hour rehearsal, then walk out the door.

**Wow! That is an incredible gift! I love that you have embraced the innate talent that you have, falling into the work and staying in the work.**

I was so lucky because this career found me backwards. I didn't plan on being a choreographer or even think about it. The earliest choreography I did was in high school when my girlfriend and I would enter disco contests. The clubs in the late 70s had teen nights, with all the lights like the Saturday Night Fever floor, and there was a contest every weekend. I was choreographing our stuff then and didn't know I was a choreographer.

And forty-three years later, Andy is still choreographing. More to come in Part Two—

---

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** *Productions* staff writer Lisa Gibbs earned her Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration in 2018. She is an advocate for arts, particularly dance, in education and for increasing the financial well-being of artists through financial education.

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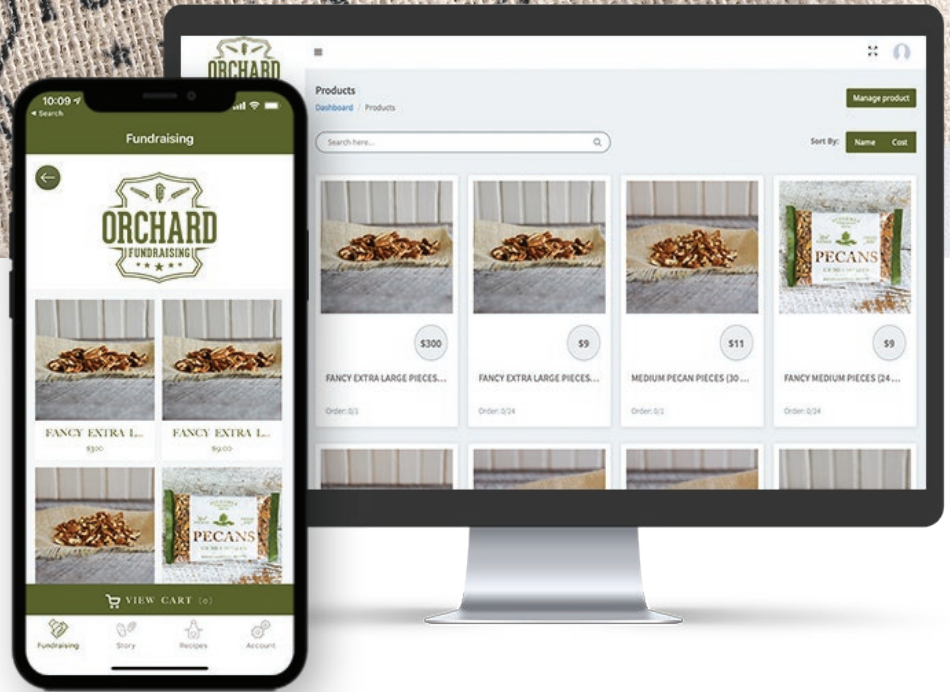
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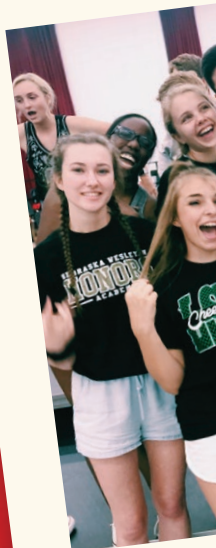
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**The author in high school.**





# ING SHOW CHOIR

## PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE IN 2018 WITH A 2023 UPDATE

by Hannah Johnson

### Let me start by saying my parents forced me to join show choir in the eighth grade.

I loved singing and dancing—“Hannah Montana” was my favorite show at the time—but the idea of doing jazz squares with jazz hands in dorky costumes did not sound like fun to me. I did end up attending the first informational meeting; the group wasn’t auditioned, so seventy-three other eighth graders at the meeting and I officially signed up for Watts. My story doesn’t really follow a past, present, and future format, so we’ll stick with Past-Past, Past, and Present, Looking into the Future, plus a 2023 update.

I had no idea at the time that the program I had just entered had a long reputation of excellence and high achievement. My hometown of Ankeny, Iowa, went from one high school to two the year after I graduated, so things are a little different now. But back then there was a non-auditioned, eighth-grade ensemble, an auditioned ninth-grade ensemble, and then at the high school there was the varsity,

mixed prep, and single gender prep. In any ensemble you’ll hear talk of “family,” but there’s another level of “family” when you’ve all been in the same ensemble on and off for five years.

Eventually, I did figure out the expectations that came with carrying the Ankeny name at competitions and even within each ensemble: to be the best. There was a lot of competition to have solos and get blocked on center or the floor; while I was fortunate enough to have a few solos during my time at Ankeny, I was not as #blessed with blocking. My junior year I was blocked off stage as a swing during the opener and then farther and farther back once I actually made it on stage. I’m not going to lie—I cried about it.

However, we ended up being undefeated that year, so it all felt worth it. And all the hard work (by soloists, dance captains, and back-row buddies alike) that had





## The author in 2023.

culminated over the course of the previous four years had paid off senior year. We worked extremely hard, and I swear to you, I didn't take a single rehearsal for granted. Regardless of where I was blocked, I was determined to give my best and love every second of it, because it meant a lot to be in the varsity group.

That was the culture. We had a rough patch at the beginning of the season—painful losses, missing first place by mere points, judges' placement averages that defied logic—but fortunately we were able to pull out a grand championship at FAME in Orlando and then second runner-up at FAME Nationals, behind two performing arts schools from California. I mean ... come on, we were good!

I didn't go right into my undergrad after graduating high school. Alan Menken was a huge idol of mine, and I had originally wanted to study music composition. I wanted to be Alan Menken. For non -Disney geeks, Menken is the composer behind the music of *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Aladdin*, and so many more. I wanted to write and use music to move and inspire my audiences. Unfortunately, the one school I applied for waitlisted me, so I was not able to pursue that in the way I had planned, and I ended up staying home for a year, but it was in that year I had a front-row seat to my siblings starting their journey in their own "show choir family." It was then that I realized how much people need that feeling of connection and teamwork in their lives, especially when they have grown accustomed to all the emotional benefits that are part of being in a show choir family.

### **Past: Conflicting Values in College Show Choir**

Joining Big Red Singers at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was a culture shock. It is similar to how

you are raised by the values of your parents, but then you experience people with varied value systems when you go away to college. Like families, different programs have different values. Further, my central lowan show choir values and experiences were totally different from my new Nebraskan “family.” Being in rehearsal with so many different show choir cultures was one of the most life-altering learning experiences that I’ve ever had, and it’s where I understood the difference between good values, bad values, and no values.

As of right now, there are no competing collegiate show choirs, so the motivation to be great, or even good in any capacity, isn’t always there. As a junior in high school in the back row, knowing no one would even see me, I still gave my all at every rehearsal because that was the expectation—that was what my family valued. I joined BRS at a time where the performers assumed that any show choir consisting of older performers—in this case, college-aged versus high-school aged—was automatically more talented; unfortunately, that was not necessarily the case.

I made several attempts to bring new ideas to the group. If this ensemble was truly attracting the best of the best from all over, then why weren’t we using our resources to be innovative, push the envelope, and be an ensemble that all high schoolers could be inspired by? I was met with reminders that we were in Nebraska and questions about what I was trying to “do to this group.” What I wanted didn’t fit into the culture of BRS, and I realized that all show choir is not the same, and one person alone (especially if that person isn’t in charge) cannot carry the values for the group.

I don’t mean to negate all the good that came out of my time in the Big Red Singers. Some of the more negative experiences, ironically, were some of the best learning tools—and that is the case for anyone in show choir. I gained

friends that I will cherish for the rest of my life, people who continue to inspire and push me, and I am very happy to say that BRS is now a thriving and very successful ensemble. But my time as a performer was coming to a close, and it was time for me to step into the role of a director.

**I had no idea at the time that the program I had just entered had a long reputation of excellence and high achievement. My hometown of Ankeny, Iowa, went from one high school to two the year after I graduated, so things are a little different now. But back then there was a non-auditioned, eighth-grade ensemble, an auditioned ninth-grade ensemble, and then at the high school there was the varsity, mixed prep, and single gender prep. In any ensemble you’ll hear talk of “family,” but there’s another level of “family” when you’ve all been in the same ensemble on and off for five years.**

My senior year, no longer in BRS, I found my love of teaching. I didn’t become Alan Menken, but I was starting to see the same light in the eyes that I had—as a six-year-old listening to the soundtrack of Aladdin and a seventeen-year-old winning first place at FAME—in my students, as they grew over the course of my time student teaching. My frustration over the complacency in BRS was cured by the budding curiosity and desire to grow displayed by these students, taking my expectations, my values, and my culture with stride and effectively renewing the love I have for show choir and what it meant to me. Students give back as much to their directors as directors can give to their students.

### **Present, Looking into the Future**

Flashing forward a bit, I moved to Oklahoma—yes, the same Oklahoma that was in the news for a ten-day teacher strike. I am starting my first year of teaching at Oliver Middle School in Broken Arrow, and while the

state doesn't have the best reputation for its schools, the fine arts program at Broken Arrow has certainly made a name for itself with the Pride Broken Arrow marching band having more than a few successful seasons competing at Bands of America. Tiger Rhythm, the varsity show choir, is only a few years old but already creating waves by placing first at UNL's Midwest Cup this last season. There is a district-wide devotion to success and a high standard of excellence.

Another reason I was so motivated to move all the way down here was that there wouldn't be anyone to tell me, "This is Oklahoma," meaning, they wouldn't say that Oklahoma does show choir a certain way, and my way didn't fit. Show

**Having written the previous portion of this article not even a full semester into my teaching career, it really has me giggling. One, because "cringe." Two, because I could not have even fathomed what the last five years have brought. And three, I can say that on most accounts, I would still agree with 2018 me. The stuck up, isolated attitude I definitely had about my white picket-fenced show choir experience was the first thing to go.**

choir still isn't a household activity in the area, so there are not many competing values. No one will be asking me, "What are you trying to do to this group?" This program is only a few years old, so no outstanding culture has been cemented; so far, I have had nothing but support in my ambitions. I'm bringing in a choreographer that I hope raises the bar for my surrounding schools and districts that have show choirs. There is already one ensemble in my school, but I have plans to add a second.

### **Lessons from A Back-Row Baroness**

As a back-row baroness myself, I don't like the idea of leaving middle school show choir auditions to the select few students who can already dance and sing. I want to give all students the opportunity to learn and grow, and especially

to those who wouldn't have made it otherwise. I want to cultivate a program that values and includes all members of all skill levels. Some of the best teachers and motivators I had as a middle schooler and high schooler were those kids I saw every day in rehearsal. Many first-year teachers get their first job already planning where they want to move after a few years. I made a vow to myself not to think about when I can get out, but instead how I can set this program up for success year after year. How can I give my students the same culture, the same values, the same family that I had at their age? I want to see my students develop the values of their show choir "family," as they progress through the program.

## **2023 UPDATE**

### **Five Years Later**

Having written the previous portion of this article not even a full semester into my teaching career, it really has me giggling. One, because "cringe." Two, because I could not have even fathomed what the last five years have brought. And three, I can say that on most accounts, I would still agree with 2018 me.

The stuck up, isolated attitude I definitely had about my white picket-fenced show choir experience was the first thing to go. My show choir students are also in my advisory and we are spending a lot more time watching show choir videos from all over the country than we are on late homework ... sorry, core teachers. Oddly enough, being in a show choir desert, my students spend more time on showchoir.com than I ever did, looking up competition lists, ensemble records, and watching live streams on their own time. What is really sweet is when the high schoolers, my first batch of students, came back after competing at Mid-Iowa and saying "I'm so glad you forced us to watch [Linn-Mar] 10th Street Edition when I was in seventh grade. I can't believe I just saw them live!"

I have to remind myself of those sweet moments when it's the fourteenth time in a row that we've had to correct the blocking because middle schoolers generally have no spatial awareness. The frustration I felt in college over the

lackadaisical attitude in rehearsal was but a glimpse into my entire existence as a middle school choir director. Attempting to get thirteen-year-olds to “transition with haste!” to “smile!” or to “hit that final pose so hard your arm feels like it’s going to jump right out of its socket!” is a battle I fight every day. Our set this year follows “A Day in the Life at Oliver Middle School” and our opener is “Revolt Children” from Matilda the Musical. Whatever image you have of thrashing, screaming children is probably an accurate depiction of what is going on in my classroom most days.

After 2020, there has definitely been a shift in priorities. Trading out rigorous cleaning sessions for mental health laps around the football field. Focusing on show design that meets my students where they’re at, rather than idealizing a specific style of “show choir success.” One thing that has stayed the same, however, is the familial connection we gain from being a part of an ensemble. There is a

vulnerability that is shared when you are part of a performing ensemble, even more so when you’ve taught some of these students for multiple years in a row. In the age of isolation and school related trauma, our students are facing life challenges I never could have imagined as a thirteen-year-old. Now, more than ever, my focus is cultivating a space that supports my students, gives them an outlet when the weight of the world is weighing them down, and encourages them to rely on each other.

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Hannah Johnson has long been part of show choir-as a performer with an award-winning, nationally recognized show choir in Ankeny, Iowa, and then a member of the college-based Big Red Singers in Nebraska. Hannah began teaching at Oliver Middle School in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma in 2018.

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# A PASSION



# FOR SHOW CHOIR

## IN LOVELAND, OHIO

by Lisa Gibbs

In southwestern Ohio, as the Little Miami River meanders toward the much wider and deeper Ohio River, residents of Loveland enjoy an idyllic setting. Numerous outdoor parks and nature preserves dot the area along with a Rails-to-Trails bicycle path that connects Loveland to Milford and Springfield. The trail is an integral part of the charm and allure of downtown Loveland as it runs alongside the river, with restaurants, bars, shops, and offices scattered about. A tenth century style castle built in the early 1900s from stones found along the river, Castle Leroche, sits across the river from the trail.

Not far from a bend in the river, the fifty-eight members of Loveland High School's By Request meet daily to prepare for the show choir competition and performance season. This auditioned mixed ensemble includes students from all four grades and has been led by Shawn Miller since 2006. I interviewed Mr. Miller to learn more about show choir in a city of less than 14,000 residents.

**Let's start with a bit of history. I read in your bio on the Loveland show choirs website that you started your teaching career at Loveland Middle School, where you founded the middle school show choir, Revolution. Tell us a bit about that.**

I graduated from Northern Kentucky University in 1996 with a bachelor's degree in music education and started as the director at Loveland Middle School for the 96-97 school year. At Loveland Middle School, I had sixth, seventh and eighth grade choirs as well as general music. We also had a show choir that didn't have a name and performed at school concerts. By the end of my first year, that show choir was named Revolution.

During undergrad, I was fortunate to have a great student teaching experience at Glen Este High School under the direction of Dan Kruger. I had not had any exposure to show choirs before my student teaching. While at Glen Este, I was able to attend my first contests at Ada High School and Findlay High School and started to understand why students really enjoyed going to them and performing. Revolution started competing shortly after I started at the middle school, which was the jumping off point for the look of today's Loveland Show Choirs.

### QUESTION

**In 2006 you became director of the existing Loveland High School show choir, By Request, and almost ten years later founded the high school's female choir, Allure. How did the decision to start a female choir come about?**

Allure was established due to the amount of talented kids that were trying out. We wanted to continue to support and grow the talent that we had, but were turning away a large number of women, so we decided to establish Allure. We did make one promise, and that was to always strive for strong female shows that would showcase the power of the women in our program.



### QUESTION

I came across a 2017 Local 12 news story that said, “At Loveland High School, show choirs and show band are the cool groups.” That brought a smile to my face. Would you like to expand on that?

That was a neat story they put together. We have been very fortunate to have many different types of kids in our program. We try to be as inclusive as we can, which we hope allows a student the comfort to be themselves. We have had many athletes go through our program. A big part of that has been the relationship with our athletic department. We are both big on the idea that kids should have the opportunity to be a part of as many things in high school as they can.

I’m sure that can make scheduling after school hours rather tricky.

As long as all of the adults want the best for kids, schedules can work.

### QUESTION

One of the football players, who had been in your show choirs since age twelve, was featured in the same story and regarding you said, “he teaches us every day not just work hard, work hard for each other.” Are there any techniques you use, or team building activities to assist with that concept, or is that idea woven into your teaching?

Our philosophy is all about students and being the best you can be. Trophies and winning are not the focus. We start that philosophy with the students in the sixth grade. When winning is not the primary focus, that allows room for people to look for a deeper purpose of being in a high-functioning group. The flip side is that once these kids really start working for each other, success tends to follow.

### QUESTION

It must be heartwarming to see and feel that energy build as the school year

progresses. In September of 2022, one of the show choir members, who was also a cross country and track team member, was named Scholar Athlete of the Week. How does show choir complement your students’ other middle and high school activities?

I feel that there is a lot of carry-over from what we do to students’ other activities. We also have the mindset that during their season, that is their priority. So during the Fall athletic season, I am very flexible with the student athletes, and they have always been good about being at everything they can.

### QUESTION

Humans are certainly diverse, and it’s good to see participation in both sports and the arts being supported and encouraged. To what do you attribute the success of your Show Choir Band, who “consistently earns Best Band,” according to your school website?



We have a great instrumental program, and that has been a big part of our Band's success. Up until about four years ago, I was directing the band, but since then have been blessed with some great show band directors, including a former show band member. The other side of the equation is we want the show band to be a part of the group and not just a backup ensemble. We encourage the singer/dancers and band to spend time together and not just on stage.

### QUESTION

A deeper relationship and connection to each other cultivated outside of rehearsals most certainly can show up when they are on the stage. During the 2021-2022 season, By Request became champion of Show Choir Madness, an event hosted by Barstool Show Choir as an "NCAA Basketball March Madness style Bracket, but with Show Choirs." What was that event like for you and your students?

Barstool Show Choir Madness was a fun event that was driven by a very organized and dedicated parent group and social media. The parents would send out reminders and let everyone know where to vote and when to vote. That event demonstrates that we need the support of our parents, and when they are highly motivated, they can get anything accomplished.

### QUESTION

You host an event called Showfest, where other schools come to Loveland and compete. Tell us a bit more about that event and what it means to the community.

Showfest has been since around before I started at Loveland. It started as four or five schools getting together and performing and then had a dance at the end for all of the schools involved. It has always taken place the weekend before Valentine's Day, buying into the Loveland name. It has changed since we moved to a contest format back in the early 2000s. We now typically have between twenty to twenty-seven groups that attend our event each year.

The goal has stayed the same: to keep it student focused and make sure that the kids have a great day. We offer great food at reasonable prices and spend a lot of funds turning our stage into a fun space to perform with professional lights and sound. We host our middle school groups on Friday and our high school groups on Saturday. We have been very blessed with a supportive parent group that works so hard to make the event run smoothly.

Yes, I read in the Loveland Beacon that Show Fest "is known to be a very well-run event and is a favorite among many of the schools who come back year-after-year to compete here." Events like that certainly do take many hours of work before, during, and after.

### QUESTION

Loveland looks to be a beautiful place to live! The river, the bike trail, the castle, population of about 13,000, restaurants, etc. What is your favorite part about living in Loveland?

Loveland is a wonderful community and has always been very supportive of the music programs. Loveland is cut in half by

the Little Miami River which runs through the center of our town. It is paralleled by the beautiful bike trail which is the life center of our town. It is a great place to visit but an even better place to live. My favorite part of Loveland is the fact that we were able to raise our two children in this wonderful town.

### QUESTION

Anything else you'd like to share with us?

I have been married to my wife, Stacey, for the past twenty-four years, and our kids, Paige and Gavin, both went through the show choir programs in Loveland. One of the things we promote heavily is the idea of show choir kindness.

Kindness is a beautiful virtue to promote. Thank you so much for your time!

---

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** *Productions* staff writer Lisa Gibbs earned her Ed.D. in Higher Education Administration in 2018. She is an advocate for arts, particularly dance, in education and for increasing the financial well-being of artists through financial education.





# A TRAVELING ENSEMBLE'S CHECKLIST

by R. Adam Clark

After selecting music, planning choreography, auditioning parts, fitting costumes, constructing a set, and rehearsing your ensemble, you have decided to take the show on the road. Have you prepared for this? Do you have everything? What needs to be done in order to move this musical juggernaut?

Let's all face it, we would travel a lot more with our ensembles if it were as

easy as, "Okay, get on the bus and let's go!" But it's not—not even close. There are two major logistical areas to consider when it comes to off-site performances: administration and travel. The first area is always your responsibility, but the latter is only yours if you are a glutton for punishment!

You will need to handle the administrative responsibilities associated with

the trip, and while you are busy trying to ready your ensemble for the performances, you will need to be sure that you have covered your bases. The logistics for moving a group to a performance may be handled by a travel professional; taking this route will significantly lighten your workload. The following checklist is designed to help guide you in preparation for travel.



## Administrative

### Administrative Permission

These tasks are probably the most logical first steps in all travel. It's good to have your principal/headmaster on board with your travel plans, and also have them put it on the calendar. Taking these steps can help build support for your efforts as well as offering credibility for student absences in other academic areas.

### Paperwork

Some of the initial paperwork for your central office may include travel approval, field trip request forms, out of state travel forms, and means of transportation forms. You will also need the emergency contact forms, insurance forms, and indemnity forms from all travelers.

### Financial Account

Depending on your system, you should generally separate your travel funds from general operating funds. If you are not using a travel company, you will become an accountant. Work with your school bookkeeper or booster club treasurer and set up a separate account.

### Fundraisers

If you are going to raise funds, you will likely need permission for that. Select a profitable fundraiser with a proven track record for success, then complete the necessary forms with your administration.

### Chaperones

With any travel, wrangling students in foreign places is better not done alone. A good ratio is one adult per six students, but check your school's policy. Have student/chaperone groups assigned in advance.

### Housing List

This list is often needed by hotels in advance. You should never put adults in rooms with students who are not their own children.

### Contest Registration

If your ensemble is preparing to compete, be sure and complete the application; the process may include submitting your program, a picture of your ensemble, and possibly a recording.

### Traveler List

One week prior to departure, a final list of all travelers should be provided to school administration, faculty, and staff. Also, make sure to communicate with a school nurse to help make you aware of any medical concerns.

### Meetings

While everyone is busy, sometimes planning meetings are necessary. An initial meeting should be held to present the trip to the families and students. A price and payment plan, including specific deadlines for money collection and a cut-off date for sign-ups, should be presented at this meeting. Another meeting should be held about one week prior to departure in order to go over what to pack, chaperone identification, form collection, review of the itinerary, and a clear presentation of rules. If you are using a travel agency, they will most likely attend and present at both of these meetings.

## Travel

### Transportation

If you are traveling by air, you will want to find a carrier with nonstop service if possible, or a large enough layover to reorganize your group between flights. Don't be surprised for larger groups if you travel on two separate flights. All groups will need bus service. While some groups meet at the airport to cut out one element of cost, once you arrive at the destination, you will want a reliable bus company ready to pick up your group and transport them to the hotel, or contest venue. You may also need their services as you sightsee, tour, shop, and eat. The complete itinerary will be due to the bus company prior to departure.

### Performance

If you are competing or performing, you will want to know the logistics of where to meet any performance representative, the timeframe, the flow of the contest, and the departure procedures.

### Entertainment and Dining

While on any trip, you will want to experience all a great location has to offer. Tickets to sightseeing attractions, exhibits, and amusement parks should be sorted

out prior to arrival in order to maximize time at the venue. Finding a place large enough to accommodate your group can be a challenge when selecting dining options; you should also consider whether the chosen dining establishment can meet the dietary needs of your group. Food courts, buffets, and continental breakfasts are always a great idea; otherwise you will need to evaluate menu options. Make sure to budget adequate time between locations for traffic, along with sufficient time at the various locations to experience the venues. A tour guide is always a good idea—they know the area and can make a trip into an experience.

### Lodging

Where to stay is quite possibly the most important decision when housing a group; lodging can make or break a trip. The location of the housing site is almost as important as the quality of the facility. Placing your group too far from the venue can cost you valuable time in the commute, but a hotel in the wrong part of town can be a constant security risk. Finding a place to stay that will be comfortable, accommodating, and clean yet affordable is the most important decision for the trip outside of your destination choice.

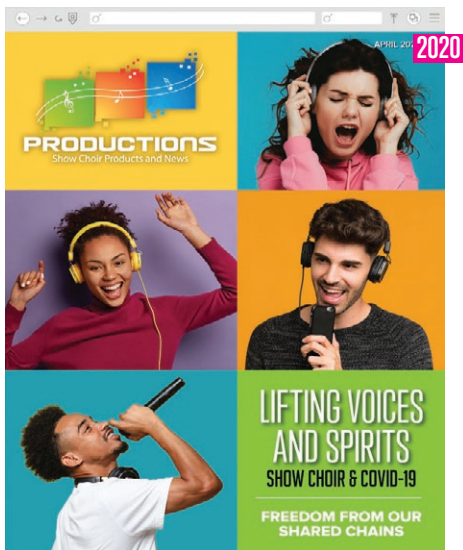
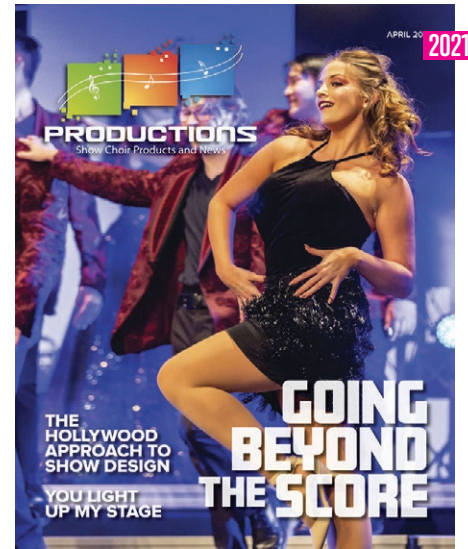
Clearly, when it comes to travel, there is so much to consider before you even set foot on the bus! Travel professionals can lighten the workload of the director. While directors can manage the travel logistics, they have enough to think about, with the work of rehearsing the ensemble to make them performance-ready, coupled with the administrative work to prepare for departure. For these reasons, off-loading the extra labor to an experienced professional can be the best option for a wonderful travel experience.

---

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** R. Adam Clark is both a band director and a travel specialist with Main Street Travel Co. Owner Jana Smith and R. Adam Clark have helped several groups travel, perform, and experience world-class performances since the company's founding. For more information on hiring a travel specialist visit [www.mainstreettravelco.com](http://www.mainstreettravelco.com) or call 800-593-1262.

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## SHOW CHOIR NATIONALS 2023

### MIXED DIVISION

#### GRAND CHAMPION

##### 10th Street Edition, Linn-Mar High School

- Best Vocals
- Best Choreography
- Best Band
- Outstanding Male Soloist [Prelims] (Tejas Gururaja)
- Outstanding Male Soloist [Finals] (Grant Galloway)
- Outstanding Female Soloist [Finals] (Kyra Kanz)
- Outstanding Male Performer [Finals] (Tejas Gururaja)

Trent Buglewicz, director

April James, Lexi Robson Buglewicz, and Braxton Carr, choreographers

10th Street Edition also won first place this year at Ankeny Centennial Mid-Iowa Show Choir Championships, Prairie Premiere, Cedar Rapids Washington Mo Show, and Marion Masquerade

#### 2nd PLACE

##### The Network, Homewood High School

- Outstanding Female Soloist [Prelims] (Alyssa Culverhouse)
- Outstanding Female Performer [Finals] (Alyssa Culverhouse)
- Music Educator Lifetime Achievement Award (Scott Thorne)

Scott Thorne and Byron Mosquera, directors  
April James, Randy Sage, and Kelly Gudell, choreographers

The Network won first place this year at Tallassee Capital City Classic, Albertville Diamond Classic, Opelika Southern Showcase, and Auburn Show Choir Showdown

#### 3rd PLACE

##### First Edition, Findlay High School

Deborah Morgan Best Crew Award [Prelims]

#### 4th PLACE

##### Riverside Company, Hastings High School

- Deborah Morgan Best Crew Award [Finals]
- Outstanding Male Performer [Prelims] (Nathan Barker)

#### 5th PLACE

##### Counterpoints, North Central High School

#### 6th PLACE

##### Swingsations, Mt. Zion High School

### WOMEN'S DIVISION

#### GRAND CHAMPION

##### The Muses, Oak Mountain High School

- Best Choreography
- Outstanding Soloist (Emily Mardis)
- Outstanding Performer (Ari Hammons)

Michael Zauchin and Gavin Dover, directors  
Farlanda Buchannon, Tay Stinson, Kellis Oldenberg, JJ Butler, and Lauren Butler, choreographers

The Muses also placed first this year at the Tift County Peach State Invitational

#### 2nd PLACE

##### Nexus, Homewood High School

- Best Vocals

Scott Thorne and Byron Mosquera, directors  
Randy Sage and Kelly Gudell, choreographers

Nexus placed first this year at the Albertville Diamond Classic

#### 3rd PLACE

##### Les Femmes, Mt. Zion High School

- Deborah Morgan Best Crew Award

#### 4th PLACE

##### Descants, North Central High School

#### 5th PLACE

##### She-Notes, Olentangy High School

- Best Band

#### 6th PLACE

##### Hi Fidelity, El Paso-Gridley High School

#### 7th PLACE

##### Esprit, Enterprise High School

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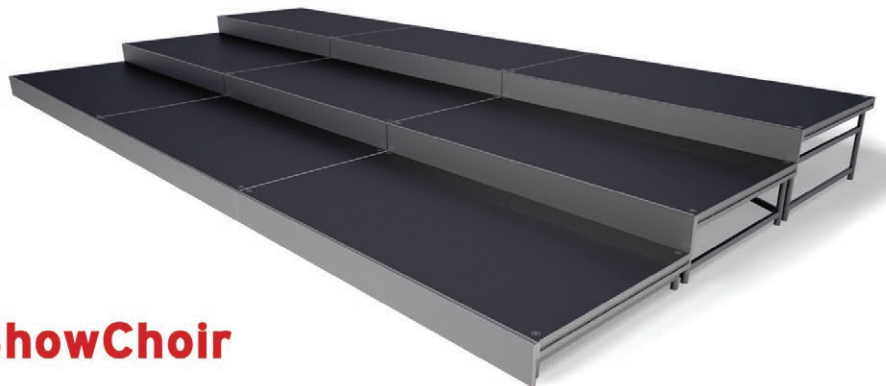


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