



A photograph of a stage performance. The scene is lit with vibrant blue spotlights that create a dramatic atmosphere. In the background, a whiteboard is visible with the word "DRAINMAKER" written on it. The overall setting appears to be a rehearsal or a performance space.

# WHAT DOES SHOW CHOIR MEAN TO YOU?

A DECEMBER REFLECTION ON A YEAR OF SPARKLE,  
SWEAT, AND THE UNMISTAKABLE SOUND OF  
SOMEONE YELLING “*FIVE, SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT!*” IN  
THEIR SLEEP

by Ed Bauer

If December is a time for reflection, then show choir folks—directors, students, boosters, choreographers, parents who “accidentally” became costume coordinators, and communities who have memorized a competition set without meaning to—should probably sit down, take a deep breath, and congratulate ourselves for surviving another glorious, glitter-filled year.



But let's go deeper than "surviving."  
Let's talk about meaning.

Real meaning.

That big, philosophical, end-of-the-year,  
hot-cocoa-by-the-tree, let's-get-sentimental-and-maybe-cry-a-little stuff.

So let me ask you a question—the same  
question that titles this article:

### **What does show choir mean to you?**

And before you answer, let's take a  
moment to appreciate that this question  
will get very different responses  
depending on whom you ask... and  
what time of year you ask them.  
Because emotions are seasonal in show  
choir. Just like pumpkins in October  
and peppermint mochas in December,  
certain feelings peak at specific points  
in the show choir calendar.  
Let's take a look.

### **To the Directors:**

*Show choir means... The noble fusion  
of art, chaos, and the unpredictable  
nature of human teenagers.*

If you ask a director what show choir  
means to them in early September,  
they'll likely say:

**"Possibility! Creativity! A fresh start!"**

They will be glowing with optimism,  
armed with new charts, new choreog-  
raphy videos, and brand-new students  
who still believe they can keep their  
backpacks organized.

But ask that same director what show  
choir means in *November*, and they may  
say something closer to:

**"Why is no one on the correct foot?"**  
or  
**"Who took the prop sword home?"**  
or

**“If we don’t stop losing hats, no one gets to have a hat. Ever.”**

And yet—despite all the chaos—directors will inevitably return in December to what they always knew deep down:

Show choir is magic.

It’s the moment the ballad finally locks.

It’s the moment the kids cheer when they nail the key change.

It’s the moment the shy freshman finds their voice.

It’s the moment you see a group of teenagers transform into a family in real time.

And whether they will ever admit it out loud or not, show choir directors are the holders of that magic—guardians of the glitter, keepers of the key changes, herders of the most gloriously loud and passionate cats the world has ever known.

### **To the Students:**

*Show choir means... Everything from “my best friends” to “why are we doing this dance break again?”*

If you ask a student in January what show choir means to them, they might say:

**“This is going to be our year.”**

If you ask them in March, they might say:  
**“I haven’t slept in three weeks and I’m thriving.”**

But if you ask a senior in May?

Grab a tissue.

Because they’ll likely whisper something devastatingly heartfelt like:

**“This is the place where I grew up.”**

Show choir is where they learn teamwork.

Where they learn endurance.

Where they learn how to fix a false eyelash with one hand while adjusting

a mic pack with the other.

Where they learn that confidence isn’t something you’re born with—it’s something you rehearse, refine, and repeat until it becomes muscle memory. Show choir students learn how to hit the final pose even when their lungs are questioning their life choices.

**Show choir is where they learn teamwork.  
Where they learn endurance.**

They learn how to be bold, brave, loud, soft, emotional, comedic, powerful—all in the span of an eight-minute set.

And if you ever doubt what show choir means to a student, watch them backstage right before they go on.

Watch their trembling hands interlock as they circle up.

Watch the tears in their eyes when they realize their season is ending.

Watch the way they cling to these moments like they know they won’t get anything like this again.

That is what show choir means.

### **To the Booster Parents:**

*Show choir means... A year-long exercise in logistics, fundraising, and staying calm when sequins explode in the dryer.*

Boosters deserve sainthood.

Every one of them.

Show choir boosters don’t have seasons—they have cycles:

- **The Fall Fundraiser Phase** (featuring the annual debate: candles, cookies, or coupon cards?)



- **The Costume Hemming Rush** (in which no one sleeps and everyone prays for bobbin tension)
- **The January Pep-Talk Season** (“Yes, honey, you’ll make it through tech week. I believe in you. And also here is a protein bar.”)
- **The February Fuel-Up Circuit** (where thousands of dollars are spent on bagels)
- **The April Emotion-Firestorm Finale** (“How is this the last show already?!”)

To boosters, show choir is a lifestyle.

A commitment.

A second job with no paycheck but plenty of hugs, thank-yous, and memories worth

more than any paycheck could ever be. Show choir means watching their child transform—

from nervous to confident, from timid to fearless, from “I can’t do that” to “watch me.”

And yes, show choir also means hauling garment bags through parking lots, surviving bus chaperoning assignments, and pretending to understand when their child says, “We’re changing the closer again.”

To boosters, show choir means belonging.

Being part of something bigger.

Being part of a family they help fuel, feed,

and cheer for.

### **To the Community:**

*Show choir means... Pride, Tradition, and the Joy of Supporting Their Own*

Communities love their show choirs in a deep, hometown-loyalty, this-is-our-team kind of way.

They show up.

They clap loudly.

They buy tickets whether or not they understand what “transitional formation” means.

They talk about last year’s competition season like sports fans relive championship plays.

They remember the solos.

They remember the tears.

They remember the victory bus coming home with police escorts and kids pressed against the windows, waving triumphant glowsticks.

To the community, show choir means that something joyful is happening at their schools.

Something musical.

Something inspirational.

Something that shapes kids into confident young adults.

It’s pride.

Pure and simple.

### **But What Does Show Choir Mean to All of Us Together?**

Let’s zoom out.

Let’s look at the year as a whole—the full calendar of triumphs, mishaps, rehearsals, road trips, costume fittings, emotional peaks, and late-night taco runs.

When you step back, you start to see the bigger picture.

**Show choir means tradition.**

From the first summer choreography camp to the final awards ceremony, show

choir is a ritual.  
A cycle we look forward to every year.

### Show choir means hope.

Every new season is a fresh start.  
A blank canvas.  
A chance to create something unforgettable.

### Show choir means discipline.

It's sweat.  
It's repetition.  
It's the art of giving your all—physically, vocally, emotionally—while smiling.

### Show choir means creativity.

Directors arrange.  
Choreographers choreograph.  
Costume designers conjure imagination into fabric.  
Musicians weave sound into architecture.  
Students pour heart into movement.

### Show choir means opportunity.

For friendships.  
For leadership.  
For growth.  
For confidence.  
For those “I did it” moments that define adolescence.

### Show choir means family.

This word gets used often in show choir, but not casually.  
It's real.  
You see it backstage.  
You hear it in pep talks.  
You feel it every time a student falls apart and five others gather around to pull them back together.

And for all of us...  
no matter our role...  
**show choir means purpose.**

Purpose in the work.

Purpose in the music.  
Purpose in the connection.  
Purpose in the joy.

And yes—purpose in the glitter.

## A Year in Review: What We Laughed About, Cried About, and Will Definitely Do All Over Again

December is a time to reflect on the year—and the year did not disappoint.  
We laughed when:

- A prop malfunctioned in a spectacularly theatrical way.
- Someone's mic pack did that “pop-pop-static-BOOM” thing during rehearsal.
- A director tried to demonstrate choreo and immediately regretted it.
- A costume revealed it needed approximately 400 more safety pins than previously estimated.

We cried when:

- A freshman got their first solo.
- The seniors hugged after their last performance.
- The group had that perfect run-through—the one that reminded everyone why they do this.

We celebrated when:

- The show finally clicked.
- Scores went up.
- Students found their confidence.
- Schools reopened their auditoriums to roaring crowds.
- Communities rallied around the arts as a point of pride.

And yes—  
we stressed more than any reasonable group of people should,  
but we did it together,  
and we'll do it again next year.  
Happily.



Joy in doing something that makes the world a little brighter.

As we wrap up this December issue, I want to invite you—yes, you—to share your answer with us.

Send us a story.

Post a memory.

Tag us in your favorite photo.

Tell us what show choir means to you, your students, your boosters, your directors, your town.

Because at the end of the day, show choir isn't just something we watch.

It's something we feel.

Something we share.

Something we carry.

And that meaning—the personal, emotional meaning—is exactly what keeps the lights bright, the microphones on, the costumes sparkling, and the music alive year after year.

## So, What Does Show Choir Mean to You?

Think about it.

Feel it.

Celebrate it.

Live it.

And get ready—because next season, we begin again.

Happy December.

Happy reflecting.

And happy show choir.

## The Question Comes Back to You: What Does Show Choir Mean to You?

Before you close the magazine, I want you to think about it—really think about it.

Is it the music?

The movement?

The people?

The thrill of the spotlight?

The teamwork?

The discipline?

The memories?

A combination of all of the above?

Is it something you can explain?

Or is it something you can only feel?

Maybe it's this:

Show choir is where passion meets performance.

Where hard work meets applause.

Where young people discover who they are and adults remember why the arts matter.

Or maybe it's even simpler:

Show choir means joy.

Joy in community.

Joy in creation.

Joy in cheering for one another.

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Ed Bauer has been in publishing for over twenty years. He was introduced to Show Choir by his daughter and he is forever grateful to her for this wonderful gift.



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