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UHS Bands virtual video concert premiere to showcase student talent

by [Gabriella Brown, The Dominion Post](#) — May 11, 2021 in [Community](#), [Latest News](#) 3 min read



The University High School Marching Band is one of four UHS bands that can be seen performing in the concert video. Photo courtesy of Mark Palmer.

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MORGANTOWN — In-person performances by the University High School bands have been missed, but all 150 members have spent the academic year creating a one-of-a-kind concert to share online.

“It’s really rewarding that during a pandemic, when a lot of band programs haven’t done much, we’ve actually come together and created something that we can be proud of,” said Andrew Dougherty, a UHS senior and band member.

A video concert of the band will premiere on YouTube at 7 p.m. May 12, as an alternative to in-person performances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to the video will be available at <https://youtu.be/ugLewrMGkoo> or by visiting www.uhsband.net.

The video will feature 12 songs, including the marching band’s field show and parade music, as well as music from the concert band, symphonic winds, combined concert band and symphonic winds and the jazz ensemble.

Mark Palmer, UHS director of bands, recognized early last summer that meeting in-person would be unlikely during the 2020-21 school year. He said this year’s ensembles were exceptional and knew he wanted to find an alternative to ensure their talents were heard.

“This year’s senior class is spectacularly good,” Palmer said. “One of the reasons that we’re having so much success is because the senior class is so good.”

That’s when Palmer and Assistant Director of Bands Corey Orban came up with the idea to feature students’ hard work into a video performance. Throughout the year, the UHS ensembles didn’t have the opportunity to meet as a full group. Instead, students worked individually from home, sending in video recordings for review to be used in the video.

“It was a lot different, but at least we got to play our instruments and music and make something for people to enjoy,” Dougherty said.

Pre-recordings of each song were given to students to help guide them through learning each piece independently. Palmer also shared tips along the way about parts of the music he anticipated being challenging.

Once they felt the students’ recordings were ready, Palmer mixed together the audio while Orban produced the video with help from [Blues Alley Studio in Westover](#). Palmer said it was a long and laborious process as they sorted through more than 1,000 submitted recordings, but the product made it all worthwhile.

Orban said the past year has been full of changes and challenges for students and teachers alike. Although they faced hardships, he feels the bands’ work toward this video performance has been

beneficial in giving students a common goal and something to look forward to.

“I think having this little bit of consistency throughout the year has been good for them and I think it’s been good for us as teachers because we’ve had a consistent goal,” he said

Palmer said the video performance will serve a purpose for years to come. He said when band members become adults, this video will become an important illustrator of what a piece of each student’s life looked like during the pandemic.

“I just felt like that was such a powerful motivator and such a powerful idea,” Palmer said. “It made everything worthwhile.”

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