Marching Pioneers...

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soloist Autumn Lock and clarinet ensemble Molly Greer, Allyson Lay, Jessica Griffin, Rebecca Welch and Marlene Perez.

In the opening notes of this tune, the color guard will shed the black dress revealing the pearl white unitard with soft, whispery feathers on their shoulders to signify the passing from the pain of death to the comfort of the "arms of an angel." Further emphasizing the beauty of this ballad, the guard will spin white, angel-wing shaped swing flags. Guard soloist for this number is Jessica Tanner.

Paradise, the desire for all who leave this earth, finds its appearance in this final selection. "Fly to Paradise" by Eric Whitacre is eerily beautiful as it portrays the desire for the lost loved ones to fly toward peace, health and wholeness once again. Each band member arrives back to their designated angel while the guard completes the theme of the show with a silk that has various hues of gold and an open gate symbolizing the hope for an entrance into heaven. As the doxology begins, a single guard member will appear with full body-sized flowing angel wings to symbolize the beauty, hope and need to believe in the "unseen" among us.

Explaining the rationale for choosing this year's show, GCHS Band Director Jeremy Tate revealed, "Whenever I started brainstorming about a show, I watched random stuff until I came across a 1990s movie 'City of Angels' with Nicholas Cage and Meg Ryan in it. The central plot of the movie is that Nicholas Cage plays an angel, who is unseen by Meg Ryan, who is a doctor. During the whole show, he is there helping guide her through life even though he is unseen. The plot of that movie is what drove the thought process behind our show, which is called 'Unseen.' It involves all of the things in life that drive us and take us places that are out there even though we can't see them with our eyes. At the end of the show, they reveal themselves, but I will leave to you as to what they are."

Tate

The reigning Tennessee State Champion Band, Color Guard, Percussion and Drum Majors are excited about this production and the beauty, emotion and excitement it promises to provide to all who will experience it.

Directors and staff for the 2018 production of "The Unseen" include Director Jeremy Tate; Assistant Directors Joseph Agee and Trevor Mayhall; Tico Parson and Brent Jones, Percussion; DeDe Johnson, Color Guard; Sharon Lee, Drum Majors; Bill Laarz, Music and Frankie Congiardo, Music/Marching. Additional practice staff includes Laurie Valentine Baker, Woodwinds and Haley Earls Mallard, Guard. Summer Staff includes David Koelz, Drill Writer/Music, Emily Brown, Saxophones, Leah Jean Rollins, Flutes, Reese Gardner, Mellophones, John Glenn-Hoekstra, Trumpets, Trice Mayhall, Front Ensemble, Keith Baumgardner, Trumpets and Samantha Dobson, Guard.

Examining the 102-member band, Tate informed, "We have a relatively young band with about 30 freshmen, which is about a third of the band. So, it is a little more than a quarter, which is what we typically like our freshman class to be. Being young, we will have to build on that, but we have really strong numbers in our brass section, especially our low brass. This is the first year in my 13 years here that we have had seven tubas. I am excited about having that many tubas. The school district was gracious enough to buy us two additional tubas that we needed to fill out that section. I was excited about that, because those things cost about $5,000 apiece."

The strength of the band is expected to be its low brass section, just because of numbers and experience. The music program returns state championship percussion and guard sections and drum majors. The color guard is young this year, with nine new girls out of the 11-member section. "That will be a building process, which will be both a strength and weakness, just because of age," noted Tate.

He continued, "Also, I usually have to say the heat is a concern, but this year we have been blessed with having good weather. So, just the youth and getting the freshmen up to the same level as the seniors and the competitiveness we are accustomed is probably my biggest concern."

Asked about Gibson County's chances of repeating as state champion, Tate explained, "Our goal, as always, is to leave our best on the field during the finals of the state contest. If that is first place or fifth place, I always tell the kids whatever their best is leave it out there. Keys to having a successful year are accomplishing that goal of having the best performance possible every time we step on the field. Just like a football coach tells his kids, I tell mine that they need to show up and perform better than the day before. That is our goal, to get a little bit better each day."

GCHS COLOR GUARD – Members of the Gibson County Marching Pioneers Band color guard section are (front row, from left) Madalyne Tanner, Jessica Tanner, Chastity Staples, (middle row) Nikia McMullins, Jakayla Craig, Rebecca Morris, Avery Eakes, (back row) Alexis Halbrook, Victoria Mcadory and Elly Garrett. Not pictured is Breanna Matheny.