

Like a good soldier I got out of bed early to ready myself for Day 2 of the BOA Grand National Championships. Lucas Oil Stadium is a GREAT place to hold a band show: Parking was simple and varied; I know some of you may disagree, but I found the CSC Event Staff to be both kind and courteous; the food vendors were ESPECIALLY kind (and speaking of food the stadium food here is amongst the best stadium food I've ever had, everything from the Papa John's pizza to the pulled pork sandwich); the seats were easy to access (with a tad bit of walking, haha!), reasonably comfortable, and you had to search hard to get a "bad" view of the field (or a place where the sound wasn't clear). All in all I felt like I was an "exclusive" guest the whole time I was at Grand Nationals! Thank you, BOA!

Now, I know some of you have been waiting for this thing, so...

DAY 2 PRELIMS

Broad Ripple Magnet H.S., IN

Repertoire: "Avatar," including 1. "Destruction of Hometree," 2. "The bioluminescence of the Night" and 3. "War"

Comments: This group starts off in a blob form in the center of the field. The narration at the start of their show goes on way too long, but it is intriguing. This group does not carry themselves with pride nor care, but individually there is a general sense of rule. Horn angles, form spacing, and even the plumes were every which way. The male and female dancers in alien costume were amongst the strongest of the performers.

My Score: 47.00

My Placement: 42nd

Shortridge Magnet H.S., IN

Repertoire: "Music of Earth, Wind and Fire," including "In the Stone," "Let's Groove" and "September"

Comments: Hey, this band is wearing Carmel's old uniforms. Great uniforms! I like the dark, brooding synth part. I think the narration by the girl in the pit is strong, especially in her fiery interpretation of "fire," but there is little to entice me. Okay, eventually we get to some lively music and then a fun little dance segment. Theeeeere we go! Excellent.

My Score: 50.60

My Placement: 41st

Arsenal Technical H.S., IN

Repertoire: "Music of the Night," featuring "Phantom of the Opera," "Music of thje Night," "All I ask of You," "Think of Me," "Phantom of the Opera" and "Reprise"

Comments: The mock auction going on on the field is amusing, and occurs before the show starts. The synth player playing the organ part is dressed like the phantom in "Phantom of the Opera." Despite the fact this group doesn't move much, they do an okay job of keeping the melody on the mark. There are a few missed notes and cracked notes, but nothing too severe. Lovely vocal segment during which choreography is fulfilled.

My Score:

My Placement:

South Point H.S., OH

Repertoire: "Trapped!" featuring: "Journey Into Darkness" by Craig Fitzpatrick

Comments: NO SHOW

My Score: N/A

My Placement: N/A

Troy Athens H.S., MI

Repertoire: "Each Time You Tell Their Story," including: "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," "Medal of Honor," "Each Time you Tell Their Story," "American Patrol" and "America the Beautiful"

Comments: The swing feel established by the pit is enhanced by the expanding and rotating block forms. There are some timing issues, specifically in the feet. The drums seemed somewhat off. All right, the guard, dressed in military brown cargo pants and shirts handle the rifles pretty well, and recover relatively quickly from drops or mishandles. The ballad was a strong moment for these kids. Fair production!

My Score: 60.90

My Placement: 34th

Avon H.S., OH

Repertoire: "Music for All Seasons," 1. "April in Paris," 2. "Summertime," 3. "Autumn Leaves" and 4. "Hazy Shade of Winter"

Comments: In the jagged arc form it looks like someone is missing near the 30. Great playful moment with the solo guard girl around the excellent trumpet soloist. The music, as exciting as it should be, does not go anywhere. Where are the arrival points? Where are the "oohs" and "aahs" moments? At least this band is showcasing their strength with SOLOISTS. Whoa, nice domino rifle toss, all caught juuust right. Focus more on ensemble than on visual and you should have a much more complete package.

My Score: 57.40

My Placement: 38th

Clearview Regional Sr. H.S., NJ

Repertoire: "Memoirs of My Life Through Music," including: "Symphony No. 9 from the New World" by Antonin Dvorak

Comments: The narration was distorted and amatuerish. Well done, baritone soloist and now saxophone soloist, both "presented" by the guard. The heart form is sweet, following the "I love you, Grandpa." (I think she said, "I love you, Grandpa," but the speakers don't project well and...what does this have to do with Dvorak's symphony? I guess I need to listen more, OR...this band could communicate more CLEAR-LY.) Various musical and visual parts could use some cleaning. Way to project UP, guard, especially with those bright orange flags.

My Score: 59.80

My Placement: 36th

Berryhill H.S., OK

Repertoire: "Lead Me Not," featuring the music of David Gillingham, Bill Withers, and Evanescence

Comments: Right from the start the auxiliary grips me with their free form dancing. And then when the winds emerge from behind the black backdrops with maroon stripes I am even MORE engaged. I see a lot of nice things going on with the individual and ensemble technique. Way to let the music flow and build, everyone! Great saxophone feature, with guard taking center stage--the stage WELL set by the winds. Well done, band!

My Score: 71.00

My Placement: 24th

Lebanon H.S., OH

Repertoire: "I LOVE NEW YORK! The Many Moods of the Big City"

Comments: Narration glitch. You guys have got to get the technical aspects sorted out BEFORE this event. Test, test, and test again. I understand unforeseen circumstances, but...? The battery percussion is creating interest mid-field, and the sax ensemble does a standard job of delivering. Ooh, don't lean into the step-offs. Ha! Great LOUD sax solo. I like that these kids are challenging themselves.

My Score: 62.40

My Placement: 30th

McNicholas H.S., OH

Repertoire: "Dimensions in Blue," including: "Rhapsody in Blue," "Afro Blue," "Blue Rondo ala Turk and C-Jam Blues"

Comments: Aaaaah yeah, clarinet soloist...way to warm up into that "Rhapsody in Blue solo," where only a few glitches reside. It sounded like one trumpet player was carrying the ensemble...the weight of the world on his shoulders, ha ha! Most of the marching moves appear locked in. Well done in changing color with the blue plumes and blue shields. Okay, sufficiently jazzy production!

My Score: 60.00

My Placement: 35th

L.D. Bell H.S., TX

Repertoire: "Honor: we will remember"

Comments: A lone snare drummer on a drum from what appears to be the Revolutionary War era leads a sort of progression onto the field. A recording of "Adagio for Strings" plays during the pre-show, and then we are thrust into "America" before chopper sounds are heard and then a theme of war flourishes (with the drums). Wild drill. Watch the forward-to-backwards direction change. Stellar entertainment!

My Score: 94.20

My Placement: 4th

Stephen F. Austin H.S., TX

Repertoire: "Miss Understood," including: "Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture" by Tchaikovsky, "Adagietto" from "Symphony No. 5" by Mahler and "Urban Dances" by Danielpour

Comments: In domino fashion there is bending over by the winds in the back of the field, and then in pairs they make a bridge with their hands for the auxiliary. The auxiliary or "dance team" is elegant. I love the slow-mo lift of the girl and the almost mechanical rotation like a wind-up toy. The ballad is utterly, utterly gorgeous.

My Score: 90.00

My Placement: 8th

Governor Thomas Johnson H.S., MD

Repertoire: "The Museum Will be Closing in..."

Comments: The human body "exhibits" played by the guard in these spandex costumes that look like human flesh with some muscle exposed are creepy, yet stunning. Ha ha ha! I love it--the wind players try to escape the closing "museum," but are locked out and frightened. The musicianship is quite good, and the guard work--with urgency--delivers. The stare-down avoidance moves by the winds and guard is gelling. This whole show is quite amazing, and tres original.

My Score: 70.30

My Placement: 25th

Cedar Park H.S., TX

Repertoire: "GENIUS," music representing Gustav Mahler, Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso and Leonardo

da Vinci. Featuring "Symphony No. 5" by Gustav Mahler, "Symphony No. 1" by Gustav Mahler, "Cloudburst" by Eric Whitacre, "Equus" by Eric Whitacre, "Rhapsody On A Theme of Paganini var. 18" by Sergei Rachmaninoff" and "Feste Romane" by Ottorino Respighi

Comments: I enjoyed the pre-show narrative quotes referring to "geniuses," and the motion--the stop-and-pace from the performers. Yikes, it didn't sound like those tongued trumpet notes aligned. Whoa, they march their butts off, and before they get into that Einstein equation form there is bliss in sound. Oh boy...they challenge themselves with that flamingo leg lift with the foot on the knee back-and-forth freeze motions (and music exchange). Brilliant show!

My Score: 87.40

My Placement: 10th

Bridgewater-Raritan H.S., NJ

Repertoire: "The Colors of Copland: Red, White, & Blue," including 1. "The Red Pony," 2. "Down a Country Lane" and 3. "Simple Gifts" from "Appalachian Spring," music by Aaron Copland

Comments: Varying static poses occupy the field by these black clad musicians, and flowing white by the guard sells a nice contrast. Excellent air control on the move, and yes did these kids MOVE. I embraced their wall of balanced sound during the ballad. The finishing touch to their show seemed rushed.

My Score: 77.50

My Placement: 21st

Dobyns-Bennett H.S., TN

Repertoire: "Into the Light," featuring: "Do Not Go Gentle Into that Good Night" by Elliot Del Borgo and "Aurora Awakes" by John Mackey

Comments: Very nice, band. Very nice. I like how their first formation is spotlessly clean. (GREAT opening impression.) What a stirring, jet-black mood...everything is in it's right place. How morbid that the band would express loss through covering the guard with these white sheets. This group executes quite well, with only a few bumps in the road. There is just not enough velocity or variation in the way this thing was invented, I felt.

My Score: 78.90

My Placement: 20th

Boiling Springs H.S., SC

Repertoire: "THE HUMAN ELEMENT:

Comments: Nice color guard; I really like that pseudo-DNA drill that just rips wide open with square props of elements of the periodic table. The rest of the band heightens the guard's greatness with "HUMAN" spelled out on the field. What a beefy, blocky sound. Uh! Sweet en masse drill changes. Be careful drums--don't power it; ease into things. (More dynamic contrast, please! It may be that this band is used to performing outdoors, yeah?) Wonderful moments, one after the other with this band.

My Score: 85.60

My Placement: 15th

Lewisville H.S., SC

Repertoire: "The Butterfly Effect," by A.J. Pace

Comments: The pit was so loud you could not hear Chuck Henson announce them. Wow, this tiny group was amped...BIG TIME...as microphones faced their tarp stage of wild, sonic-wave-looking designs. The winds wore these bluish body-suits that defied your expectation of "marching band." (Think Jackson Academy.) I loved the beat boxing by one of the guys in the pit. These kids were fearless. At times they seemed a little TOO "hooked up," loud; and I think that how they tried to make up for what they didn't

have backfired a little bit.

My Score: 75.20

My Placement: 23rd

Kennesaw Mountain H.S., GA

Repertoire: "Awakening Angels" I. "Awakening" II. "Rejoicing" III. "Protecting" IV. "Resurrection" and V. "Benediction"

Comments: I am blinded by their massive white tarp. It looks like mist is coming from their white, elevated stage (with spiral ramp). I like how this group eases into the first song and that the guard depicts this. Guitar and flute--what a sweet combination. Oh, these guys are smooth with all of the staged elements. The "Adagio for Strings" segment had minor flaws, and wow that's gutsy to sustain a note on your back and then stand up without breakage!

My Score: 92.80

My Placement: 7th

Metamora Township H.S., IL

Repertoire: "Picture Perfect," including: "Snapshots," "Still Life" and "Capturing the Moment," composed by Dennis Llinas

Comments: I like the loud clicks that made it sound like a camera was shooting. A guy in jeans and a plaid shirt runs around "taking pictures" of sections that need to be showcased. (What a smart concept, as your eyes follow him through the features.) Uh oh, I heard wavering half-air music out there, especially when it counted. Again, great, straight-forward communication.

My Score: 64.90

My Placement: 29th

Tarpon Springs H.S., FL

Repertoire: "Paranormal," including: 1. "I Know I Am Not Alone," 2. "Those We Don't Speak Of," 3. "This is No Ordinary Dream," 4. "Those We Can't See" and 5. "This Is The End, Let Her Go In Peace"

Comments: Welcome to the ultimate theatrical experience...on a football field, of all places! I am just spellbound (pun intended). Shivers good, shivers! The lines on the main tarp stage to start the show were not as straight as they could be, but look at me nit picking! My only complaint is that there is so much going on that it is very easy to miss something.

My Score: 93.90

My Placement: 6th

Winston Churchill H.S., TX

Repertoire: "Coliseum"

Comments: I like the clacking wood to get that marching, roman-soldier approach feel, and the strong arm chords--sublime! There were quite a few rifle drops, and the kids that march are not quite on the ball with form and timing. That oval form with the toe-first stepping is sharp, and while this is happening the music takes your breathe away.

My Score: 86.00

My Placement: 13th

Desoto Central H.S., MS

Repertoire: Selections include: "Distorted" from "La Nouba," "Incantation" from "Quidam," "Flight and Battlefield" from "Ka"

Comments: Their circus theme was enhanced with the handing out of what looked like cotton candy by

one of the guard members in the pit. I see some flat feet out there--the black on black lower half doesn't fool me. Hmm, if you're going to differentiate the lunge move really differentiate it...don't make it a dull question mark. Mmm, brass feature--that's tasty...and guard spotlights, good. Yes, they nailed the ending. Excellent work.

My Score: 79.50

My Placement: 18th

Mount Gilead H.S., OH

Repertoire: "In Search Of..." including: "Hide and Seek" by Imogen Heap, "Wild Nights" from "Harmonium," by John Adams, "Steady As We Go" by Dave Matthews and "Finding Our Meaning" by Scott Hickey

Comments: The beginning was problematic. I heard the air stopped with the tongue and a lone mellophone (even though there were two mellophones). I must say that I'm glad these folks had no reservations about playing out. Those ramp props were a nice touch, ramping up the dimensionality of this concoction.

My Score: 59.70

My Placement: 37th

New Philadelphia H.S., OH

Repertoire: "CONNECT," "CONNECT Pt. 1," "Cannon," "Grace" and "Connect Pt. 4"

Comments: The lead snare drummer is elevated, literally, on an orange platform held by his comrades--kind of a dangerous looking situation haha! Ooh, scary moment there, as a tuba player takes a spill on the go...but niice recovery. Bravo rifle toss, with classy shoulder positioning amongst cheery music. I like the creative use of the platform props that become holders for lengthy ribbons. That was an abrupt ending, I felt.

My Score: 61.00

My Placement: 33rd

Lakeland H.S., MI

Repertoire: "Scream," featuring: "Motion" by Brian Balmages and "Do Not Go Gentle In To That Good Night" by Elliot Del Borgo

Comments: Let the music build more, people. Way to hang tough! Accuracy counts, and I hear a lot of crisp, clean notes. Uuuh, I just paid you a compliment and then you go off and disappoint me. Easy with those notes--don't throw them into the blender! Spectacular red, dark yellow, and yellow silk background changes, followed by a uniform plume change--hot colors also added. Too many intonation issues, guys. PLEASE listen to each other or don't play.

My Score: 61.50

My Placement: 32nd

Western Brown H.S., OH

Repertoire: "Are You Afraid of the Dark"

Comments: I had a laugh at how the tuba player on the 50 knocked on the coffin, summoning the DM who promptly gave us her salute. I was a little impressed by the marching direction changes--crisp, but could use some more flair in exactness. Musically they were blah, though I must admit that I liked the fueding PVC pipe music a la Blue Man Group.

My Score: 55.60

My Placement: 39th

Jenison H.S., MI

Repertoire: "Pipes"

Comments: They got off on the right foot with leg spreads perfectly together. The only qualm I have with this wide symmetrical staging is that I can't see the synchronicity on both side of the field very well without going back and forth, back and forth. The rifle gals knew what they were doing, for sure. The marching cymbal trio was a treat to watch, and I usually don't care for marching cymbals unless they are effective so...way to go!

My Score: 77.10

My Placement: 22nd

Cary Senior H.S., NC

Repertoire: "That's Where Eagles Fly," including: 1. "Call of the Mountain" by Joseph Curiale," 2. "Yosemite Autumn" by Mark Camphouse and 3. "Death Hunt" by Bernard Hermann

Comments: The wind players sway like reeds in the wind as if they are in a trance. A recorder seems to contribute to this. Superb visual builds by all, and then the music takes off somewhat jaggedly. The meat of this band is the woodwind section--what a display of skills! The eagle kite was a nice touch, as are the graceful auxiliary--now with wings!

My Score: 79.90

My Placement: 17th

Archbishop Alter H.S., OH

Repertoire: "The Gift," 1. "A Gift," 2. "Emotional," 3. "Spirited" and 4. "Celebrate"

Comments: This group had the most eye-catching plumes of the afternoon--a neon green. For a small band they took up a lot of space and had a different, new age take on the standard "Simple Gifts."

Excellent interpretation of music by the flags. Ha ha! Great "wind-up toy" acting by the winds. This was a solid show.

My Score: 66.40

My Placement: 27th

Ayala H.S., CA

Repertoire: "ICUCME," including: 1. "Don't Look At Me," 2. "Everybody's Watching Me...Gotta Be Perfect," 3. "Looking Within" and 4. "Seeing the Real Self"

Comments: I like how the face masks on the back of the heads move around as if watching you (before the show starts). How appropriate! Ha! Intentional rifle mishandle...or was it? Clever. Hmmm, the rifle twirling is sloppy, somewhat. Excellent all-encompassing sound. I like the whisper voiceovers--introverted, yet "personal." The percussion really headlines this production.

My Score: 87.30

My Placement: 11th

Marian Catholic H.S., IL

Repertoire: "On Being Hit On The Head," including: "Are You Experienced" by David Lang, "Symphony No. 2 Mvt. 1 & 3" by Christopher Rouse; "Deus Ex Machina" by Michael Daugherty and "Blink" by Joel Puckett

Comments: The circle form in the corner of the large block form is pushing the envelope metaphorically (like a square peg in a round hole, or symbol for Squarepusher). The fascinating show concept of "being hit on the head" works, as strange as that may seem. Woo-hoo! One...handed...high...rifle toss.

Scattershot musical notes just come at you and come at you again. This show was quite a marvel.

My Score: 94.00
My Placement: 5th

Avon H.S., IN

Repertoire: "Iconoclash," including: I. "Magnum Opus," II. "Everybody Hurts" and III. "Schadenfreude"
Comments: The whiplash change of pace from a prim and proper show to a rebellious "now" show was fresh. Hello brass licks, hello! Wow. The sabre work, especially the ambitious toss where the guard has to do a high toss and catch it awkwardly as they fall backwards onto the feet of another guard member is crazy! (It was not perfect, but who cares! It was nuts!)

My Score: 95.80
My Placement: 1st

Bourbon County H.S., KY

Repertoire: "R.E.M."

Comments: How unique to have the person "sleeping" in the bed prop drift away. My goodness, this small band, pound for pound, is amongst the best here...bar none. Trumpet line, there are no words to express how impressed I am with your double-tonguing and your even-Steven dynamic contrast. The voiceover narration was a tad unclear, but relatively I did get the point.

My Score: 84.00
My Placement: 16th

Greendale H.S., WI

Repertoire: "The Ribbon," featuring "Between the Lines" by Sara Bareilles

Comments: The heart-wrenching narrative of a soldier leaving his wife to go to war is great. Drums, tone it down, yeah? (I can't even hear the story! This must be another "outdoor ensemble brigade.") Blend all those notes, trumpets. I like how the male and female "love interests" play an instrument, march, and play key roles as actors/soloists, though I would like to hear more "exchange" between the two instead of all mello (for the male) and little to no sax (for the female).

My Score: 79.10
My Placement: 19th

Kiski Area H.S., PA

Repertoire: "Imaginarium"

Comments: The flamboyant "make a wish" from the "Willy Wonka" movie goes perfect with the random things that occur on the field. The guard work--refreshing. And hey, how about that keyboardist singer in the pit? It is a joy to see that maze form come apart and come to life to unveil vertical lines like a cage. Minus the minor flaws, this was one great show!

My Score: 88.00
My Placement: 9th

Tippecanoe H.S., OH

Repertoire: "Atlantis"

Comments: Super trumpet fanfare. Across the field I see fine spacing. Don't die on me, trumpets, especially since you have established yourselves as the creme de la creme. Guard programming was, eh, bland--motionless for a long while and then toss does not work for me, especially if you are not going to catch it. Great accelerando, gang--way to watch the drum major! Okay! Not bad, this show.

My Score: 69.90
My Placement: 26th

Meade County H.S., KY

Repertoire: "The Night," featuring the music of Modest Mussorgsky

Comments: After the piano sound an unsteady flute entrance. The distorted synth is prominent, now...and remains so. It is no secret that the wind players are not great, but doing what they can with what they have they don't fall apart. Pit seems out of synch, and it looks like none of them are confident enough to look up at the drum major. Great work with the tall flags in the back of the field being straight up and down, and aaah, nice DOUBLE flag feature.

My Score: 62.20

My Placement: 31st

Plymouth-Canton Educational Park, MI

Repertoire: "The Source"

Comments: The black curtain in the back is a fantastic stage tool. A chorus in black soon appears, and then the winds make their way forward. Okay, they have my attention. Yikes, bad form there...and then an equipment drop. Great mammoth sound, and sustained! I see a lot of flat, frantic feet out there. Can the guard save them? Maybe. Ha! So unexpectedly great with the tarp change in color...and the MUSICIANS! (Yeah, back in the Plymouth yellow...great self-homage.)

My Score: 87.00

My Placement: 12th

Broken Arrow H.S., OK

Repertoire: "ZO," inspired by "The Wizard of Oz"

Comments: Broken Arrow rings in "Ding, Dong, the Witch is Dead!" in eerie, cheery style, and then hit a home run with the nostalgic "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." What a fun, offbeat show--one you can easily like. The dagger-like "ZO" scripting on the field is just PERFECT. Magnificent sound, magnificent music, magnificent theatrics.

My Score: 95.00

My Placement: 2nd

Godwin Heights H.S., MI

Repertoire: "Five Stages of Grief," Including: 1. "Denial," 2. "Anger," 3. "Depression," 4. "Bargaining," and 5. "Acceptance," original music by John Meehan and Tom Weidner

Comments: I like the intensity from this group--a sort of no-nonsense approach. I am not sure the four stages of grief is an alluring subject, especially for those who have experienced loss. Backfield, don't let the curved form evaporate. For a show so deep a subject...it sure is mechanical! Nevertheless, these kids get the job finished proficiently.

My Score: 65.00

My Placement: 28th

Carmel H.S., IN

Repertoire: "Stop and Smell the Roses," an original composition by Richard Saucedo and Michael McIntosh

Comments: There was a long pause before the show began...technical difficulties, I'd imagine. Wow, this guard is blazing hot! To say their guard carries this group would not be far off, and yet the winds make the most of their intimately tailored composition...solid! Ooh, shrill flutes, HAHA! So much is going on. This is great.

My Score: 94.90

My Placement: 3rd

Lafayette H.S., LA

Repertoire: "The Awakening," including: "Spring" from "Three Botticelli pictures," "The Pines of Rome" by Ottorino Respighi and "Aurora Awakes" by John Mackey

Comments: My eyes are drawn to the big orange flags, yes. Thank you, winds, for accentuating that. So far, so good. This band is a great, but it takes them too long to really "wow" you like some of the other top caliber groups. For example, where was that great rifle toss EARLIER? I am on the prowl for new things.

My Score: 85.70

My Placement: 14th

(The Exhibition Bands--Riverside Community College and Michigan State University: What can be said about these great groups that has not been said before? I'll start first with their styles--incredibly different with one a corps style or "broadway theatrics" prone group with the RCC Marching Tigers and the other a traditional good ol' boy half-time party with high-steps, drum major madness, and baton tosses from the majorettes that nearly hit the stadium speakers [!?] with Michigan State. These bands were fun to watch and listen to, and provided a "big brother" means to reach the kids in high school who may be graduating soon who might be wondering where music goes BEYOND high school. It might be fun to have a drum and bugle corps perform at nats someday for yet ANOTHER alternative, or perhaps a symphony orchestra. BOA opens all sorts of doors with this kind of stuff and I love it. "Music for All" indeed!)

END OF DAY 2 PRELIMS

At the end of preliminary competition on Day 2, here are my results. Please note the "*" (asterisk) indicates the bands that are my picks to be amongst the top 11 to advance to semi-finals regardless of class. Please note the "!" (exclamation point) indicates the bands are my picks to be amongst "the next 8 highest scores of day 1 and day 2 of preliminary competition" to advance to semi-finals regardless of class. Enjoy!:

- *1. 95.80 Avon H.S., IN
- *2. 95.00 Broken Arrow H.S., OH
- *3. 94.90 Carmel H.S., IN
- *4. 94.20 L.D. Bell H.S., TX
- *5. 94.00 Marian Catholic H.S., IL
- *6. 93.90 Tarpon Springs H.S., FL
- *7. 92.80 Kennesaw Mountain H.S., GA
- *8. 90.00 Stephen F. Austin H.S., TX
- *9. 88.00 Kiski Area H.S., PA
- *10. 87.40 Cedar Park H.S., TX
- *11. 87.30 Ayala H.S., CA
- !12. 87.00 Plymouth-Canton Educational Park, MI
- !13. 86.00 Winston Churchill H.S., TX
- !14. 85.70 Lafayette H.S., LA
- !15. 85.60 Boiling Springs H.S., SC
- !16. 84.00 Bourbon County H.S., KY
17. 79.90 Cary Senior H.S., NC

18. 79.50 Desoto Central H.S., MS
19. 79.10 Greendale H.S., WI
20. 78.90 Dobyons-Bennett H.S., TN
21. 77.50 Bridgewater-Raritan H.S., NJ
22. 77.10 Jenison H.S., MI
23. 75.20 Lewisville H.S., SC
24. 71.00 Berryhill H.S., OK
25. 70.30 Governor Thomas Johnson H.S., MD
26. 69.90 Tippecanoe H.S., OH
27. 66.40 Archbishop Alter H.S., OH
28. 65.00 Godwin Heights H.S., MI
29. 64.90 Metamora H.S., IL
30. 62.40 Lebanon H.S., OK
31. 62.20 Meade County H.S., KY
32. 61.50 Lakeland H.S., MI
33. 61.00 New Philadelphia H.S., OH
34. 60.90 Troy Athens H.S., MI
35. 60.00 McNicholas H.S., OH
36. 59.80 Clearview Regional H.S., NJ
37. 59.70 Mount Gilead H.S., OH
38. 57.40 Avon H.S., OH
39. 55.60 Western Brown H.S., OH
40. 51.10 Arsenal Technical H.S., IN
41. 50.60 Shortridge Magnet H.S., IN
42. 47.00 Broad Ripple Magnet H.S., IN

And now here are the ACTUAL semi-finalist bands announced in RANDOM ORDER with MY semi-finalist picks in parenthesis next to the ones I thought should have been in instead of the one that did get in.

Center Grove H.S., IN
Marian Catholic H.S., IL
Lawrence Central H.S., IN
Broken Arrow H.S., OK
Plymouth Canton Educational Park, MI
Kennesaw Mountain H.S., GA
Avon H.S., IN
Cedar Park H.S., TX
L.D. Bell H.S., TX
Centerville H.S., OH
Union H.S., OK
Tarpon Springs H.S., FL
Brentwood H.S., TN
Lake Central H.S., IN
Bourbon County H.S., KY
Adair County H.S., KY
Stephen F. Austin H.S., TX
Ayala H.S., CA
Walled Lake Central H.S., MI

Carmel H.S., IN
William Mason H.S., OH
Kiski Area H.S., PA
Lafayette H.S., LA
Winston Churchill H.S., TX
Lincoln-Way East H.S., IL
Lafayette H.S., KY
Morton H.S., IL
West Bloomfield H.S., MI
Northmont H.S., OH
Ben Davis H.S., IN
Lake Park H.S., IL (Boiling Springs H.S., SC)
Dobyns-Bennett H.S., TN
Godwin Heights H.S., MI
Western H.S., IN

POST DAY 2 PRELIMS THOUGHTS: It's too bad Boiling Springs H.S., SC were not a Day 1 performer, as I think this would have been the way for them to make semi-finals, easy (as a top 11 band, even). They had an outstanding show. Lake Park in semis--I am not surprised...but good for them for making it! I don't know what class Berryhill H.S., OK was in but they shook things up with their QUALITY. (Did anyone else catch them?) I made a mental note of Bellbrook being a bubble band for semis, and I'm sad to say they did not make it though I very much appreciated their performance. Besides the "Boiling factor," no REAL semis shockers. I think the judging was top notch, as good as it could get for days 1 and 2 of prelims. This year's GN was a little lopsided with Day 2 being incredibly viscous, but I don't think you can really foresee "greatness," really, especially early season, or with bands dropping out or adding in last second. If I were in charge of BOA I would not change a thing. Keep things are the way they are, as flawed as it may be, because I think it works as well as it CAN work. The only thing I might change is bring back the division ratings. Yes, I know that clapping 3 times for a band with a Division III rating may SEEM mean-spirited...but it was a fun tradition that REWARDED groups for achievement in such a dense field.

My only gripe of the day was with those in earshot of me (sitting behind me) making downright NASTY comments on bands they did not like (personally or...professionally?), including groups that were semi-finalists and finalists. Please, a comment here or a comment there--I don't mind...but rude, insensitive, close-minded words? I can do without, thanks! We should give CREDIT to these groups, even if it is the "benefit of the doubt." All these kids worked hard this year. I might not like all the shows but that does not stop me from accepting them. I like that a few IPS schools got a shot at the big time, and I don't think one could argue that they were going to get killed out there in the national spotlight--but at least they got to be part of it and how great would it be if one of those schools came back next year and improved by 5 points or 10 points or more? Maybe Dr. Tim should have a heart-to-heart with us during PRELIMS.