

## It's time to step it up

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Pageantry was on parade at the Metrodome on Saturday as high school marching bands flaunted their most imaginative performances in the third annual Youth in Music competition.

Thousands of fans from six Midwest states cheered on their local bands. The competition attracted 19 groups - making it Minnesota's largest event for marching bands, said Brent Turner, president of Youth in Music.

"It's growing," Turner said.

The event has more than doubled since the first year. It includes more than 4,000 students from Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska, he said.

The groups enticed the audience and judges by incorporating elements such as a Chinese dragon and poetry by Edgar Allen Poe into their routines. Ten of the bands advanced to the finals to compete for winning titles, including best overall performance.

The bands competed in three categories based on size and experience. Judges scored the groups on music, visuals, general effect, color guard and percussion.

"It's the highlight of my year," said senior Brooke Middendorf, 17, who plays the synthesizer for the Rosemount High School Marching Band - which got the highest score of all competitors in the preliminaries. Rosemount went on to place first in the finals held later Saturday.

"I thought it went well," she added after the preliminaries.

In their performance "Move or be Moved," the 162-piece band marched back and forth on bridges, while staying in synch and acing their

trumpet solos.

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percentage points shy of a perfect score.

The band's first performance of the day put them 8

Last year, Rosemount won the Youth in Music competition.

"It's a lot of fun, a lot of hard work," said Hannah Campbell, 18, a Rosemount senior who has played the bass guitar for three years.

Campbell remained optimistic her band would win the competition for a second year in a row. "It'll be close, but hopefully we'll be on top."

Others had the same hopes.

The Eastview High School Marching Band of Apple Valley hoped to catch the attention of judges with a show based on the Weather Channel - equipped with enormous thermometers swung by the color guard. The music's volume grew louder and softer as the temperature changed. The show ended with the color guard dancing with and waving flags the colors of a rainbow.

"It was a good show," said junior Joel Leeman, 16, one of two drum majors leading the performance. "We all built up to this."

The band's color guard and drum line began practicing the show in May. The entire group joined in the effort two months later.

Like most groups, the Eastview Marching Band practiced the show sometimes for nine hours a day during a summer band camp.

Last year, Eastview took third place behind Rosemount and the Irondale Marching Knights of New Brighton, which this year got the second-highest preliminary score and took second overall.

"They're all our toughest competition," said senior Laura Mullaney, 17, who also performed as drum major for the 170-piece Eastview Marching Band.

On Saturday, the band came in at fifth behind Eden Prairie.

But for Mullaney, the thrill isn't winning - it's playing in the Metrodome.

"It's so much fun," she said. "They really appreciate what you do on the field."

#### YOUTH IN MUSIC 2007

Nineteen high school marching bands from throughout the Midwest competed Saturday in Minneapolis at the third annual Youth in Music 2007 Marching Band Championships.

#### **Competition results:**

**First:** Rosemount High School

**Second:** Irondale High School

**Third:** Lincoln Way Central, Ill.

**Fourth:** Eden Prairie High School

**Fifth:** Eastview High School

#### **Other area schools that performed in the finals were:**

Waseca High School, Minn.

Champlin Park High School

Menomonie High School, Wis.