



Don Knight | The Herald Bulletin

Students from six county schools learn choreography from Kenny Shepard for the Madison County Choral Festival on Tuesday. The students first learned their songs at their respective schools and were brought together Tuesday afternoon to rehearse for the evening performance. "This is all my choirs have sung for the past nine weeks," Lapel High School director Jeannine Terhune said.

'A fuller sound'

Mass choir celebrates 75th annual performance

BY REBECCA R. BIBBS
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ALEXANDRIA — As others decorated the platform from which guest conductor Kelly A. Ford practiced his craft, the 250-student choir started to rock slowly from side to side in preparation for singing a spiritual.

"It's kind of cool to be with a lot of different choirs because it's a different sound. With a larger choir, it's a fuller sound," said Macie Schmitt, 17.

A senior at Lapel High School, Schmitt has performed in the Madison County Choral Festival since she was a freshman.

The festival, which takes place at a different high school each year, celebrated its 75th anniversary with a performance Tuesday at Alexandria-Monroe Jr.-Sr. High School.

The hourlong program included renditions of "Let There Be Peace on Earth," "Better Together" and an African song, "Bonse Aba."

Schmitt said participating in

the mass choir, which included students from Elwood, Frankton, Lapel, Madison-Grant and Pendleton Heights, taught her different strategies to help her voice blend with those of other singers.

"You learn how to turn music into art," she said. "They just provide a different point of view, a different look into the music you don't get from the classroom setting."

Elwood Jr.-Sr. High School senior C.J. Morgan, 17, also has participated in the mass choir since he

was a freshman. He said getting to know the students from the other schools was easy.

"The easy thing about that is we have the passion because we're all here for the same reason," he said.

But everyone has to pull their weight to make it work, Morgan said.

"We have to count on everyone to have their music memorized. In the past, I've been next to people who have not," he said.

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