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## MUSIC TELLS THE STORY

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### TARPON SPRINGS

It comes together like the fine-tuned production that it is. With about four minutes remaining in the first half, the xylophones, the timpani drums, the electronic ensemble and the wooden stage elements are moved into place just beyond the gridiron.

The woodwinds are in one corner and the brass are in another warming up. The color guard is stretching.

When the clock hits zero and the football players trot off the field for halftime, the Tarpon Springs High School marching band goes into the action.

Within minutes, the field's stage is set and The Trilogy, the nationally acclaimed marching band's 2009 show, comes to life.

"It's a story of a person waking up and not knowing their identity or where they are but having extraordinary talents," said Kevin Ford, director of Tarpon Springs band program, who along with Frank Sullivan, conceptualized and wrote the show. They also wrote original music for the show.

"Throughout the show, there is a struggle of one person trying to resist finding their identity and on the other side, a person trying to find their identity. We allow that constant conflict to influence the music and imagery."

The band, also known as the Tarpon Springs High School Outdoor Performance Ensemble, has a sound history of giving stellar halftime performances. And the band is often lauded with awards at national band competitions across the country.

Last spring, the band earned the 2008 Sudler Shield, considered the highest accolade for a high school marching band.

And just last weekend, the band was named grand champion of the Bands of America 2009 Southeastern Super Regional Championship in Atlanta. Forty-five other bands competed.

At the Georgia Dome, the 138-member band also won Most Outstanding General Effect, Most Outstanding Music Performance and Most Outstanding Visual Performance.

Tarpon Springs was selected as the "fan favorite" based on a 60,000 text message vote from spectators viewing the live Internet broadcast.

On Friday nights, band members glide from one yard line to the next. They fall to the ground in rhythm. They run from one designated spot to another, but the quality of the sound coming from their silver and gold instruments never changes.

The color guard tosses swords, flags and red backpacks in the air. The fans cheer.

"I'd feel like I was out of place if I wasn't with the band on a Friday night and at the football game," said Jonathan Casarow, a 17-year-old junior tuba player. "I just love the intensity before we perform."

This is trombone player Zach Chamberlin's third year in the band.

"I like that everyone has the common goal and commitment to excellence," said Chamberlin, 16.

The award-winning show doesn't come without sacrifice.

At the end of last school year, there was an icebreaker practice where portions of the music for the fall show were distributed and the freshmen met the upperclassmen.

The summer months included a three-hour volunteer Tuesday practice and in August there was a one-week band camp that went from 1 to 9 p.m. When school started, practice shifted to 5 to 8:45 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday. The members also take band as an elective during the school day.

"Unless someone has experienced it firsthand, I don't know if they can understand the demand that's placed on the students," Ford said. "When you see it live, you have an appreciation for what those students are doing."

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