Zippy Zebra at the Bands of America Grand National Championships

A. Introduction and Background of Main Event
Music for All’s Bands of America (BOA) Grand National Championships, presented by Yamaha, is the nation’s most exciting marching band event. First and foremost, Grand Nationals is an educational performance opportunity open to all high school bands. Grand Nationals is also a spectacular music and pageantry event, one that band fans from across the nation and around the world travel to for the exciting and creative performances.

The Grand National Championships is a three-day, Preliminary, Semi-Finals, and Finals event. Fifty bands perform in each of the two separate Prelims contests (Thursday and Friday), balanced with like numbers of bands from each class. A minimum of 30 bands then advance to Semifinals, at the conclusion of which national Class Champion awards are presented. The top 12 scoring bands from Semi-Finals, regardless of class, advance to Saturday evening’s National Championship Finals.

B. Name, Description and Purpose/Objective
Students from The Goddard School in Zionsville, IN participate in “Thoughtful Thursday,” a part of the class curriculum of teacher Carrie Miller. Carrie Miller, teacher of the “Zippy Zebra’s” class at the Goddard School, is a long-time friend of Music for All and Bands of America and helped spark the idea to carry “Thoughtful Thursday” over to the Grand National Championships by having her students prepare hand-drawn pictures to “welcome” all participating bands to Grand Nationals. In Fall 2018, Carrie’s class had 15 students, ages 4-5. They drew a picture every week to contribute to the check-in
53.) Best Community Outreach Program

packets. Every band had to check-in at the stadium when they arrived in town, and that is how every director was able to receive their own, unique picture from the students.

While drawing the pictures over a month time-span, some students questioned, “how would they know who received their picture?” That sparked the idea of buying a stuffed zebra that would be with us at the check-in station, so that we could capture either photos or video of directors who wanted to send a message back to the students in the Zippy Zebra class. Our fall intern, Emily Timmons, had experience in making video’s so she was tasked with capturing photos, and video of the pictures, including taking Zippy around Lucas Oil Stadium to get an overall feel of the national event.

C. Target Audience/Attendance/Number of Participants
110 Participating Band Directors in the Grand National Championships received a hand-drawn picture created by 15 young children.

D. Impact
The Zippy Zebra class was able to contribute something thoughtful and welcoming to the band directors and in response, the youngsters received loving and grateful thank you messages. A classroom of students in Zionsville, IN were able to connect to a national event with over 100 directors from across the country at a major pro-stadium in Indianapolis, and created a wonderful synergy for all involved. The students were able to see how music connects all of us to each other, no matter your age, background, gender, or occupation. Their excitement was palpable and created an environment where 15 young students will hopefully keep music in their life because of the connections they built at such a young age. While our director participants work with high school students, to see the joy on their face having received a hand-drawn picture welcoming them to Lucas Oil Stadium to participate at the National Championship provided a “Indy Welcome” to everyone. The picture provided a nice touch to directors and high school students alike.

Watch the video: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b7x-nFNCEdESYvnlS7DpX22NtmzgQ-vS/view?ts=5d2ca68c
E. Tie-in of program to main-event
“Thoughtful Thursday” aligned with 110 bands arriving at Lucas Oil Stadium for the 2018 Bands of America Grand National Championships as preliminary performances begin every Thursday. Every band is required to check-in with the Participant Relations team to pick up their packets and ask any questions so we knew that was the best way to make sure every director was going to receive their photo. To represent the class, we provided a stuffed zebra so each director could also greet Zippy when they arrived at check-in.

F. Duration of program and years program has been part of event
The program is a standard in the curriculum for the students at the Goddard School for the past four years but this is the first time it carried over the Bands of America Grand National Championships. 15 students in the Zippy Zebra class took a month to create the 110 pictures.

G. Overall revenue/expense budget of specific program
No budget was prepared for this collaboration. This was a good-will gesture from both sides, (students making the pictures and Music for All creating the video).

I. Overall effectiveness/success of program
Since the students of this classroom are accustomed to creating pictures on a weekly basis for “Thoughtful Thursday”, that was normal for them. Music for All and Bands of America were also able to participate in “Thoughtful Thursday” back to the students, on the Thursday after the National Championship by providing a video memory of their photos while enjoying the exploits of Zippy throughout Lucas Oil Stadium. They could see the joy their pictures brought to everyone who spoke on camera. They heard the many states that these groups had traveled from. It brought their pictures full circle. The students asked to see the video multiple times!

Supporting Question: What challenges/obstacles did you encounter in creating the program and how did you handle them?
The biggest potential obstacle was the competitive atmosphere of the weekend. For some directors, they are all business until the end of the weekend and are not inclined to dedicate more time than necessary to something that would take them away from their kids and preparation time. However, the directors and some of their students responded even better than we imagined to the messages they received and were willing to reciprocate a message back to the little artists. It made everyone feel connected to the stuffed Zippy and the good will that came from the exchange. While the competitiveness of the weekend is of great consequence to many of the competing bands, it was comforting to layer this “welcome to Indianapolis” into the multi-day championship. Zippy became an Ambassador of good will throughout the stadium and the Grand National Championships.