

BLUE AND GOLD MARCHING MACHINE BECOMES FIRST OFFICIAL WINNER AT HONDA BATTLE OF THE BANDS INVITATIONAL SHOWCASE



The Blue & Gold Marching Machine’s brilliant performance this weekend at the Georgia Dome not only brought the crowd to its feet, it clenched the win for the Aggies at the 2014 Honda Battle of the Bands Invitational Showcase.

“We were so excited when we saw the votes come up on the screen,” said Dr. Kenneth Ruff, director of North Carolina A&T State University’s band. “Our band ran out onto the field to celebrate,” he said.

The thousands of fans in attendance were invited to text their vote for the best performance – a surprise addition to the showcase, which is traditionally not a competition.

“I knew about the competition, but I didn’t share it with the (band members). I wanted them to concentrate on the performance, not the competition,” said Ruff.

His theory proved right. A&T’s 200 musicians, dancers and drum majors delivered a top-notch performance that resonated with the audience and secured their victory.

“We wanted to try something new and unique,” Ruff said. “Our performance was diverse and not the traditional HBCU style of show,” he added.

The theme, “The Night Show,” included songs that told a story of the night, including a finale that featured “Night on Bald Mountain,” a Russian classic.

“I think it was this classical piece that brought the crowd to its feet. This is a different style for HBCU bands” said Ruff.

“We also used core-style maneuvers and drills that were unique.”

This year’s performances included bands from Morehouse College, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Bethune-Cookman University, Winston-Salem State University, Alabama A&M

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University, Alabama State University and South Carolina State University. Each school will receive a \$20,000 grant from Honda for its music education programs.

In its 12th year, the Honda Battle of the Bands Invitational Showcase is open to all historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) bands, with eight bands advancing to the showcase. This was A&T's third appearance.

To see highlights from the showcase go to www.hondabattleofthebands.com.