

A.D. Blanco brings down the house with dynamic rock show at MMCC

By Patrick Yost
Staff Writer

It was the cover of Bruce Springsteen's "Born To Run" that got the girl on the front row to close her eyes and start nodding her head.

And it was Rod Stewart's "Maggie May," complete with local attorney Lee Moss shredding the mandolin, that got the crowd to form a small but energetic mosh pit to the right of the stage at the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center's historic auditorium.

"This is different from chamber music," an older concertgoer was overheard as saying.

He was right. This was rock and roll and a reminder of how infectious and important live music is for the soul offered directly from a native son.

The band A.D. Blanco, fronted by Morgan County High School graduate Bennett Evans (lead singer, lead guitar), gave more than 200 people a reason to cheer in a two-hour show that included three standing ovations, a rousing encore and a mixture of both high school band kids and a noted trumpet player Ramon Zamudio (who is also a Morgan County High School graduate). After Zamudio, a classically trained trumpeter, performed, he couldn't stop

smiling backstage. "I know these people," he said.

"This room is filled with the people that helped to raise me," Evans told the crowd while his mother, Jennifer, manned a merchandise table in the back of the room and his father, Brad, leaned against a wall beaming at his son.

The show, a gutsy and loud performance that brought a diverse mix of young and old together (8-year-old Ethan Michael Graves went absolutely mental when the band played their original song "Backburner"), included brass members of the Morgan County High School band on a cover of Chicago's "25 or 6 to 4."

Standing stage left, former Morgan County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Stan DeJarnett — a man who knows the horn — listened to MCHS junior Jason Gregory play the first notes of the biggest saxophone solo of his life on the Chicago hit. DeJarnett breathed to no one and everyone "How great is this?"

Morgan County High School teacher Tara Mahoney, who joined the ladies dancing for a bit, said the performance — a mix of gritty originals and sing-along covers — was ebullient. "I love that some of the music they're playing was from when I was in high school,"



Photos by Josiah Connelly

The Morgan County High School drum line gave the band A.D. Blanco a chance to catch their collective breath during a performance last week at the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center.

she said at intermission.

Evans, along with drummer, Aaron White, told the crowd the band had focused on this show, a return to his hometown and to a venue steeped with both history

and promise, for a month.

At the end, during a cover of Led Zeppelin's "Fool in the Rain," 14 members of the MCHS band drum line marched down the aisles of the venerated auditorium and

shook some 1895-era dust from the rafters. Band director Jeffrey Rowser, standing on the front row, had to cover his ears, and smiled while doing so.

That's rock and roll, too.



Morgan County High School's Jason Gregory plays a saxophone solo at the A.D. Blanco concert last week at the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center.



A.D. Blanco frontman and MCHS 2020 graduate Bennett Evans lets it rip during a concert last Thursday at the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center.



The Morgan County High School horn section took the stage during a song at the A.D. Blanco concert last Thursday at the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center.



A.D. Blanco drummer Aaron White keeps time during a concert last Thursday at the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center.



Kay DeJarnett gives the band A.D. Blanco rousing applause last week at the band's show at the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center.



MCHS band director Jeffrey Rowser proudly cheers on members of the drumline during Thursday's performance.



It didn't take long for the crowd to find room to move at last week's A.D. Blanco concert at the Madison-Morgan Cultural Center.