

In Tune With Tuxedos

Suits were trending on choir stage

“Why would you want to wear a tux? sophomore KC Cumings-Barnes’ parents asked. “So you can wear boys’ clothes?”

After a few questions and an explanation of the preference for a tux, Cumings-Barnes parents understood the reasoning behind the choice.

For past choir concerts, men traditionally wore tuxedos and women wore dresses. Due to some students wanting to break away from gender-specific attire, tuxedos were always an option for everyone. “If you look at our choir handbook, it still says men will wear this, women will wear this,” Hannah Ryan, one of the department’s directors said. “But when we have discussions in our choirs, we have some students who would prefer to not wear a dress, so we just make that accomodation for them so that they feel comfortable performing.”

Although this had always been an option for any student, in recent years the choice had become more of a trend. “This year it has become more popular because our mixed choir students were required to wear concert attire,” Robilliard said. “There were more students in that ensemble that expressed an interest in not wearing the typical dress.” With the rise of more and more students expressing a desire to wear tuxedos, Ryan and the other director, Samantha Robilliard, ran it by counselors in case a problem occurred so that they were aware of what was happening. Both teachers agreed that they did not have any feedback or problems. “It’s the 21st Century, and this is what is happening,” Robilliard said.

As one who wore a tuxedo, Cumings-Barnes enjoyed being comfortable and not wearing a dress. The choice was perfectly fine with Ryan and Robilliard.

On top of her parents’ comments, others also made remarks. “People said I looked nice, but some just gave weird looks,” Cumings-Barnes said.

When senior Finn Eschliman moved from women’s to concert choir, he also chose the accomodation to wear a tuxedo.

Eschliman also received commentary from peers. “I went to go see my friends, which were all in the women’s section,” he said. “Apparently, some girl behind me, I wasn’t listening, but a lot of my friends said she was being awful. It was an underclassmen that said, ‘It shouldn’t be here.’” He thought it was funny. “I cope with humor.”



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