Enjoying their time to shine

Two talented high school students are ready to take centre stage. By Alana Schetzer

Adam Witbooi and Dean Schultz recently had a “wow” moment. After several auditions, the Eltham High School students were last month picked from thousands of performers across the state to take part as soloists in Shine On 2010: Victorian State School Spectacular.

“I actually auditioned for it two years ago and didn’t make it. So it was pretty exciting to get chosen,” Dean, 17, says.

The arena performance is set to be one of the biggest school productions in Australia. Dean, a year 12 student, and Adam, in year 9, are two of 33 soloists to perform. They’ll be joined by a 100-piece orchestra, 1100-voice choir, 1100 dancers, 130 specialty dancers, 20 back-up singers, 60 cheerleaders, 15 circus performers and 10 puppeteers from 110 government schools across Victoria.

“It’s pretty intense,” Adam says.

The production is being directed by Neil Gladwin, who is best known for the “Lawnmower Man” segment from the Sydney Olympics closing ceremony.

The opportunity to perform in front of thousands of people is not lost on either Adam or Dean, both of whom have long been involved in drama and music. “It’s pretty big,” Dean says. “Not many people have performed in front of that many people in a venue like that.”

Dean, who is studying music group performance for VCE, first joined a choir in grade 3, after spending years watching musicals with his mother. Adam also comes from a choral background, having joined the National Boys Choir when he was in grade 3. He also performs in a band at pubs in South Morang and Eltham.

In the production, Adam will perform Go the Distance, which was featured in the film Hercules. Dean will sing Michael Jackson’s Man in the Mirror.

Despite the long hours spent after school and on the weekends rehearsing, both are enjoying being able to spend time with other students with the same interests.

“Dancing and singing are the kind of hobbies that you can get bagged out about. But when you’re with other people who have the same interest, you can just have fun. It’s really good,” Dean says.

Shine On 2010 will be on September 18 and 19 at Hisense Arena. Tickets: $27.50/$22.50/$14.

For more information, call 132 849 or visit education.vic.gov.au/spectacular