



# Adjudicator Biographies



## Bands of America Muncie Regional Championship

October 5, 2019 • Ball State University • Muncie, IN

### MUSIC PANEL *(alphabetical by last name)*

#### **Chris Ferrell, Dallas, GA**

Christopher Ferrell is the Supervisor of Instrumental Music for the Cobb County School District in metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. Formerly founding Director of Bands at Hillgrove High School in Powder Springs, Georgia; Associate Director of Bands at L.D. Bell High School in Hurst, Texas; and Director of Bands at Harwood Junior High School in Bedford, Texas; he has also served on the staff of the acclaimed Texas Wind Symphony and performed with the Dallas Wind Symphony. His bands and organizations have presented clinics and concerts for the Ohio Music Educators Association and throughout the North Texas area including the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas. Mr. Ferrell also served as saxophone instructor at the University of Texas at Arlington Summer Music Camp. He received degrees from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio; and did additional study in conducting and saxophone at the Oberlin Conservatory, the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music; and the University of North Texas. Mr. Ferrell holds a Master of Education in Music Education from Auburn University and is a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy of Music Education at Auburn University. His instructors and mentors include Michele Gingras, Gary Speck, Dr. Paul Cohen, Eugene Migliaro Corporon, Dennis Fisher, Joe Gunn, Ray Lichtenwalter, Michael Haithcock, Gary Markham and Alfred Watkins. Chris Ferrell has received the Citation of Excellence from the National Band Association. He holds memberships in Phi Beta Mu International School Bandmaster's Fraternity, NAFME, NBA, CBDNA, GMEA and is active as a clinician and evaluator for Music for All, for public school and university music organizations across the United States. Chris Ferrell resides in Dallas, Georgia, with his wife Shelley, Assistant Director of Bands at Lovinggood Middle School, and daughters Katherine and Madailein.

#### **Mike Howard, Leander, TX**

Mr. Howard is currently in his 11th year at Vandegrift High School and in his 17th year of teaching high school band. He was one of the founding directors of the band when VHS opened in 2009 and became Head Band Director in the Fall of 2014. While at Vandegrift, Mr. Howard's bands have been consistent UIL Concert Competition Sweepstakes Award Winners. He has also been instrumental in several marching band high honors such as BOA Regional Champion, BOA Super Regional Finalist, BOA Super Regional Class Champion, multiple invitational marching contest championships, UIL State Marching Contest Finalist, 6A UIL State Marching Contest Bronze Medalist, 5A UIL State Marching Contest Silver Medalist and 4A UIL State Marching Contest Champion. At Vandegrift, Mr. Howard is the director of the Viper Marching Band, Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band.

Aside from being the Director of Bands at VHS, Mr. Howard is an active Leadership Consultant and Workshop Presenter. He has been a facilitator for SASI for the last 11 years. In this time, Mr. Howard has had the opportunity to work with thousands of students and directors from around the United States. As a lead facilitator for SASI, he is heavily involved with the operations of all Drum Major camps as well as teaching several site-based workshops throughout the summer.

Before coming to Vandegrift, Mr. Howard taught at James E. Taylor High School in Katy, Texas. As Associate Director of the J.E. Taylor H.S. Band, his responsibilities included directing the Jazz Program, assisting with the marching band, conducting the Concert Band, and coordinating and teaching the drumline. A native of Hondo, Texas, Mr. Howard started his teaching career at Morton Ranch High School, where he was a band director and helped open the school in 2004. At Morton Ranch, he taught the Concert Band, Jazz Band, and assisted with the marching band. Before teaching at Morton Ranch, Mr. Howard was an instructor for the Cedar Park High School Band in Cedar Park, Texas, and an instructor for the Madison Scouts Drum and Bugle Corps from Madison, Wisconsin. As a performer, Mr. Howard has performed with the Madison Scouts Drum and Bugle Corps, the Austin Symphony Orchestra, the Austin Lyric Opera and several bands around the Austin/San Antonio area. Mr. Howard graduated from Texas State University in San Marcos, Suma Cum Laude, with a bachelor's degree in Music Education. He lives in Leander with his wife Amber, his daughter Madison, and his son Justin.

### **Mike Leitzke, Mount Juliet, TN**

Mike Leitzke began his music career at Prospect High School in Mt. Prospect, Illinois, and went on to become a member of the Carolina Crown Drum & Bugle Corps and Rhythm X. During his tenure at Rhythm X, the group earned their first WGI World Class Championship. Mike has taught, arranged, and consulted for many high schools and indoor programs across the United States, including several BOA and WGI finalists. Additionally, Mike served as the front ensemble caption head/arranger for Palmetto Percussion and during that time the ensemble won the 2010 WGI Open Class World Championship and made PIW Finals for the first time. On the drum corps side, Mike has served on the percussion faculty of the Colts Drum & Bugle Corps and the Troopers Drum & Bugle Corps, as well as a clinician at the GearWORKS series of educational events sponsored by The Cavaliers Drum & Bugle Corps from 2009 to 2014. Presently, Mike is an active adjudicator for Bands of America and Drum Corps International. Mike has had the honor of serving on several DCI championships week panels, including the Open Class and World Class championship Finals competitions. Additionally, Mike is an educator and designer for the WGI World Class finalist Mt. Juliet Band of Gold and Indoor Drumline. Mike earned a degree in Atmospheric Science from the University of South Carolina and works for the State of Tennessee.

### **Monte Mast, Tombell, TX**

Monte Mast is currently the Director of Fine Arts for the Klein Independent School District in Klein, Texas. A graduate of the University of Akron, he taught for one year in the Coventry Local School District before he was lured to teach in Texas. He spent five years at Calallen Middle School before accepting the position of Assistant Band Director at Klein Oak High

School. In the 13 ½ years he spent as the assistant or associate at Klein Oak, his bands were UIL Sweepstakes winners, two time Best-in-Class and three-time runner-up festival winners, and three-time UIL Area Marching Contest participants. He became the first Fine Arts Program Coordinator for Klein ISD in January 2006 and stepped into the role of the Director of Fine Arts after the retirement of his mentor Bob Blanton in July 2007.

As Klein ISD's Director of Fine Arts, Monte oversees the administration and personnel for the band, orchestra, choral, elementary music, theatre arts, dance, and visual art programs for the district's 5 high schools, 9 (soon to be 10) intermediates, and 31 elementary campuses. He has been involved with bond planning, technology, curriculum, facilities design, professional development and GPA committees for the district. During his tenure as the Director of Fine Arts, he has successfully added 68 fine arts instructional positions, built an elementary art program where one did not exist, and increased fine arts stipends by over \$400,000. He finished an instrument replacement plan for the district's 2015 bond plan that was approved that will include just under \$5 million in funding with more than \$1 million additionally for fine arts technology upgrades. During his tenure as Director of Fine Arts, ensembles from Klein ISD have been invited to perform at TMEA 11 times, the Midwest Clinic 6 times, and the Music for All National Festival 8 times. Klein ISD has been named a Best Community for Music by the NAMM Foundation 9 times. He was named 2018's Outstanding Administrator by the Texas Music Administrators Conference (TMAC).

Monte has given presentations on diverse topics including how to get a teaching job, standards based fine arts grading, instrument evaluation, student motivation, effective presentation techniques and marching band adjudication. Monte is a member of and/or has made presentations to the Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Music Administrators Conference, Texas Bandmasters Association, Texas Art Educators Association, the Midwest Clinic, and the Conn-Selmer Music Administration Collaborative as well as multiple individual ISD's. He conducts the annual fine arts stipend survey for the Texas Music Administrators Conference and has done additional research on fine arts teacher certification trends in Texas.

Whether as a performer, staff member, designer or judge, Monte's marching arts experiences have been important parts of shaping his career. His time in the Bluecoats and Phantom Regiment Drum Corps led him into becoming the primary visual designer for more than a dozen bands in Texas, Ohio, Missouri, and Kansas. He spent three years as a member of the Phantom Regiment brass instructional staff and was instructing the corps in 1996 when they won their first DCI title. He judged indoor guards for the Texas Color Guard Circuit for ten years including four championship panels. Between drum corps and marching band, he has judged contests in 40 states counting state championships in 11, including four UIL SMC assignments. Monte has judged for Drum Corps International since 2000, serving on six championship panels, and judges for Music for All/Bands of America.

Monte recently celebrated his 20th anniversary with his wife Karen. They have two children: Garrett (string bass player and theatre techie) and Julianne (artist and beginning oboist). In his limited spare time, Monte is a coffee connoisseur and an avid oenophile (wine geek).

**VISUAL PANEL** (*alphabetical by last name*)

**Robert Elliott, Union, KY**

Mr. Elliott has been a music educator since 1985. Mr. Elliott received the Bachelor of Music Education Degree from Eastern Kentucky University in 1984. Further education included the Master of Education in Educational Leadership degree from Xavier University in 1992 and a Rank I Specialist degree in School Administration/Supervision from Eastern Kentucky University in 2003.

Bob began his teaching career at Ft. Thomas Highlands as assistant band director in 1985. Beginning in 1991 as band director at Grant County High School Mr. Elliott developed an award-winning concert and marching band program that included 3 appearances in the KMEA State Championship Finals, highlighted by a KMEA Class A State Championship in 1995. Mr. Elliott then moved to Lexington, Kentucky, to assume the Director of Bands position at Tates Creek High School. During his tenure at Tates Creek the concert bands consistently received Distinguished ratings at KMEA District Concert Band Festivals. The Tates Creek Symphonic Band also performed at the 2002 KMEA In-Service Conference. During this time the Tates Creek Marching Band was a KMEA State Marching Band Finalist in 2000, 2001 and 2002. The marching band was also named a Bands of America Regional Finalist at Louisville in 2000 and 2002 and at St. Louis in 2001.

Mr. Elliott was named Director of Bands at Larry A. Ryle High School in 2012. The concert bands consistently received Distinguished ratings at KMEA District Concert Band Festivals. In addition, the Wind Symphony has performed at the University of Kentucky Windfest in 2013 and 2015, and with the Lafayette Wind Symphony and the University of Louisville Wind Symphony in 2014. The Ryle Marching Band has been named a KMEA Class 5A Semifinalist from 2012 - 2016, highlighted by a 5<sup>th</sup> place finish in 2015. The marching band was named as a Bands of America Dayton Regional finalist in 2013 and 2014. The Ryle Marching Band was also named as a Bands of America Grand National Semi-Finalist at the 40<sup>th</sup> Bands of America Grand National Championships in 2015.

Mr. Elliott has been active as an adjudicator and visual drill designer since 1987. Bob remains very closely associated with the high school pageantry arts. He has written well over a hundred shows for high school bands in Kentucky and Ohio. He has also sought-after adjudicator for both concert band festivals and marching band competitions in Kentucky, Ohio, Virginia, and Alabama. Bob is also a member of Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters Fraternity and has been awarded the KMEA District 6 Teacher of the Year Award. Bob is currently the Band and Orchestra Consultant for Fayette County Schools in Lexington, Kentucky.

**Kyle Miller, Las Vegas, NV**

Currently teaching Language Arts in Las Vegas, Nevada, Kyle Miller's pageantry experience begins with high school marching band. While studying music at University of Iowa, he began teaching and designing. This progressed into judging, consulting, and teaching nationwide. He continues to place high value on his experience and opportunities to judge Bands of America / Music for All events. Also evaluating DCI and WGI programs, he works to develop a broad

range of pageantry arts in addition to his everyday position as a classroom educator. He has served as Judge Liaison and Chief Judge in Illinois and Texas, and is fortunate to have additional experience judging internationally, evaluating performances in Europe, Thailand, and Japan.

**Bob Thomas, Apollo, PA**

Bob Thomas currently judges or has judged for Music for All (MFA), Drum Corps International (DCI), Winter Guard International (WGI), Drum Corps Midwest, Drum Corps Atlantic, Indiana State Scholastic Music Association (ISMMA), Drum Corp Europe (DCE), Youth Education in the Arts (YEA), Ohio Judges Association, Florida Federation of Judges, Atlantic Indoor Association (AIA), Pennsylvania Federation of Judges, Marching in Okayama, Japan; and Drum Corp Associates (DCA). In 2008 and 2009 he judged the World Marching Band Championships in Malaysia. He judged the 2009 thru 2011 Thailand Drum Line Competition in Bangkok, Thailand. He has judged for Italian Marching Show Bands Association (IMSB) in 2014 thru 2017. He also judged the Grand Prix Marching Band competition in Jakarta Indonesia in 2017.

**CHIEF JUDGE**

**Dean Westman, Plainfield, IN**

Dean Westman is the Performing Arts Department Chair and Orchestra Director at Avon High School in Avon, Indiana, where he also serves as a Program Coordinator for the Avon High School Marching Black and Gold. He serves as Music for All Educational Consultant for Orchestra Programs. Previously, Westman worked as the Educational Director for Bands of America and Orchestra America, as well as held band director positions in Texas and Illinois. Ensembles under his direction have won numerous honors and recognitions and have performed at Carnegie Hall and the prestigious Midwest Clinic in Chicago. In 2002, Westman was named the Texas Young Bandmaster of the Year. He has taught the Tenrikyo Aimaichi Marching Band from Nagoya, Japan, which has frequently won the All-Japan Marching Band Championship. Westman continues to present clinics throughout the United States and Japan. An active instructor and arranger in the drum corps activity, he has worked with the Cadets, Santa Clara Vanguard, the Cavaliers, Carolina Crown and the Troopers Drum and Bugle Corps, as well as the Yokohama Scouts, who in 2011 became the first Japanese drum and bugle corps to ever perform at a Drum Corps International World Championship. Westman currently serves as the Program Coordinator for the Bluecoats. Westman is a native of Park Ridge, Illinois, and a proud alumnus of the University of Illinois.