

Judges Bios

Steve Kuni Chief Judge

Steven T. Kuni, a National Board Certified Teacher, joined Wake County Public Schools in July of 2001. He was born in Harrisburg, PA where he attended primary and secondary school. He began his musical endeavors by taking up the piano at age eight and the trumpet at the age of nine, studying trumpet with Lloyd Batdorf. The summer of 1990, Mr. Kuni began his collegiate career at The Pennsylvania State University. While at Penn State, Mr. Kuni studied trumpet with Rob Howard and John Daniels as well as performing in the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, Jazz Bands, Orchestra, Brass Choir, University Choir, Phi Mu Alpha Brass Quintet, and the Nittany Valley Symphony. Since graduating from Penn State in 1994, Mr. Kuni has taught middle school and high school bands in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. Ensembles under the direction of Mr. Kuni have received Superior and Excellent ratings at Marching and Concert Band festivals sponsored by the North Carolina Bandmasters Association State Contest Festival. In 2002, Mr. Kuni completed a Master of Music in Music Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Mr. Kuni maintains membership in the Music Educators National Conference, North Carolina Music Educators Association, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. Mr. Kuni is active as a freelance trumpet player, clinician and adjudicator throughout North Carolina. He currently resides in Apex with his wife, Donna, and twins, Samantha and Jack.

Stan Schoonover Music Performance Ensemble Judge

Stan Schoonover has been Music Director of the Fairfax Wind Symphony since its founding in 1999. His thirty-two year career in public school education included Bangor, Mt. Vernon, West Springfield, and Robinson high schools, and eleven years as Music Supervisor for the Fairfax County (VA) Public Schools. Ensembles under his direction have appeared three times at the Mid-West Clinic, the National Concert Band Festival, the Mid-East Clinic, Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, Soldiers and Sailors Hall, the GMU Center of the Arts, the Forbes Center, and at fifteen VMEA In-Service Conferences. For more than twenty years, his bands received championship honors and superior ratings in more than 10 states. The John Philip Sousa Foundation awarded the Sudler Silver Scroll to the Fairfax Wind Symphony in December of 2019. Mr. Schoonover has been an adjunct instructor at James Madison University, and is a member of the MFA Educational Team, and the Midwest Clinic Advisory Committee. Mr. Schoonover received degrees from Gettysburg College, and West Chester University. He is an active Past-President of the Virginia Band and Orchestras Directors Association [VBODA], and an elected member of the prestigious American Bandmasters Association. He was named to the 2018 VBODA Hall of Fame, the 2017 Phi Beta Mu Hall of Fame, received the 2012 VBODA Phillip J. Fuller Award, and the 2006 VMEA Outstanding Administrator Award. In October of 2004, Mr. Schoonover was inducted into the East Stroudsburg (PA) Hall of Fame Marquis.

Daniel Boothe Music Performance Individual Judge

Daniel W. Boothe is an internationally award-winning music professional currently serving as Music Director & Conductor for Symphoncity of Virginia Beach, Virginia and Commander for the Air National Guard Band of the Southwest in Texas. As producer, conductor, or performer, his live events span 31 states, Southwest Asia, and Russia with multimedia broadcasts that have reached over 50 million people in 175 countries. In 2007 he was the sole international recipient of the prestigious David Efron Conducting Fellowship for the Chautauqua Institution in New York, where he led symphonic, ballet, and opera performances to critical acclaim. His compositions have been recognized by the National Band Association and are available through Cane River Music. Ensembles under his direction earned the highest international award for military concert bands, a "Colonel Howard Citation for Musical Excellence" from The John Philip Sousa Foundation. For over 25 years, Boothe has been a drummer for jazz ensembles from Pittsburgh to Washington D.C., as well as performances and recordings as a percussionist with the Roanoke Symphony and Chorus, Wintergreen Festival Orchestra, and Alfred Music Publications. Endorsed by Vic Firth as a Marching & Scholastic Percussion Specialist, he is in high demand as a music adjudicator, having been invited to serve as a juror for numerous national and international events. Boothe has also conducted performances with GRAMMY-winning artists in broadcasts by the Hallmark Channel and has produced numerous albums for wind band, chorus and orchestra. More information at: danielwboothe.com.

Mike Gillespie Music Effect Judge

Staff Sergeant Mike Gillespie joined The United States Army Field Band, a Washington D.C. premier military band, in 2020. He earned a Master of Music degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Oklahoma. His primary teachers include Jim Ketch, Karl Sievers and Mark Clodfelter with additional studies with Carl Saunders, Charley Davis, and Tom Hooten. Prior to joining the Field Band, he was the trumpet professor at Campbell University. Mike toured the globe with the Glenn Miller Orchestra, Shrek the Musical global tour and two runs of Elf the Musical as well as being a musician on cruise ships. As a freelancer he has performed with the Platters, the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus and numerous other ensembles including brass bands, chamber music, jazz big bands, top 40 bands and recording studio sessions as an arranger, producer and performer. An advocate for music education, Mike taught superior rated ensembles as a high school band director and is Orff Schulwerk certified. He taught Kindergarten through Grade 8 in Hong Kong for two years additionally fronting a jazz trio around the city singing and playing. He has written marching band show formations for dozens of schools around the USA and taught Drum and Bugle corps for several seasons after performing in them as a youth. Mike marched Carolina Crown in 2002 and The Cavaliers 2005-2007 as a trumpet soloist. He taught Cavaliers in 2010 and Santa Clara Vanguard 2011-2014 as well as Carolina Gold 2011-2012. His drill design company, DrillforBand.com has been active since 2006. Most recently Mike wrote the drill and choreography for The Army Field Band's show in Scotland at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo. Mike is an Appalachian trail thru hiker (2019) and a hot yoga certified instructor. He enjoys studying Tai Chi and thinking about running another marathon one day.

Ian Jeffrey

Visual Performance Judge

Ian Jeffrey was born, raised, and currently resides in Richmond, Virginia where he holds the General Music Teacher position at Gayton Elementary School in Henrico County. Ian received his degree in Music Education at Virginia Commonwealth University and graduated in the spring of 2017. Ian is currently a drill writer for a few groups in the Richmond area as well as some other ensembles around the country. Ian is also a visual instructor and wind choreographer for Panther Creek High School. Ian's marching experience began at the Blue Stars Drum and Bugle Corps from 2012-2015. He was the tuba section leader for the 2013 and 2014 seasons and the horn sergeant for his age-out year in 2015. He also marched WGI at George Mason University as a cymbal player during the 2015 and 2016 seasons, where he held a section leader position. Ian's teaching experience in the marching arts began at Deep Run High School in 2012 through 2021. He taught at the Colts Drum and Bugle Corps from 2016-2019 with his last year there as the Assistant Visual Caption Head. Ian taught at Carolina Crown as a visual instructor during the 2021 season. Ian also has some experience in education with WGI where he held the position of Visual Manager at the George Mason University Indoor Drumline from 2016-2020. He has taught and designed for a few local indoor drumlines throughout the Richmond area. Ian brings a wide variety of concepts, pedagogy, and approaches to visual adjudication. He believes his various experiences in the marching arts will allow him to be successful in adjudicating today's performing ensembles.

Jarrold Light

Percussion Judge

Jarrold Light has been teaching percussion in North Carolina for the past six years. Currently he is the Drumline Caption head for East Carolina University. Jarrold also teaches percussion at New Bern High School where they have won multiple first places for percussion. Recently Jarrold has begun teaching music at the Annunciation Catholic School in Havelock NC. Prior to teaching and living in North Carolina, Jarrold taught at multiple high schools and colleges across Texas and Arkansas including the University of Central Arkansas Drumline, Cisco College, and the award-winning Wylie High School band. Jarrold has been teaching for 13 years and continues to do so to have the opportunity to help influence and grow the next generation of musicians. In his free time, he likes studying and learning about nonwestern percussion instruments. Jarrold currently resides in Newport North Carolina with his wife (Brandi) and three kitties (Lola, Arleigh, and Millie). Jarrold is an endorser of Salyers Percussion and Encore Mallets.

Ralph Stewart

Visual Effect Judge

Ralph currently lives in Cumming, GA. He is a graduate of East Carolina University, where he received a Bachelor's degree in Music Education. Ralph marched in the brass section of Carolina Crown from 1991-1993, and served as Drum Major from 1994-1996. Ralph joined the visual staff of Boston Crusaders in 2000 and was their visual designer in 2005. In 2006 he returned to Carolina Crown, working with the visual team until 2008. He has also served as the visual designer for Teal Sound, the visual caption head for the Blue Stars, and most recently as visual designer for the Colts and the Phantom Regiment. He's been an active judge and clinician for many indoor and marching band circuits for over 20 years, and is a designer for bands, guards, and indoor percussion programs throughout the US.

Stephanie Stewart

Color Guard Judge

Stephanie Renell Stewart is from the Atlanta, Georgia area and has been involved with marching arts programs across the country for over 25 years. She is currently working with Carolina Crown Drum Bugle Corps and Paramount Winterguard. She has worked with other groups including Phantom Regiment, Madison Scouts, and Santa Clara Vanguard. She has also been involved with many high school programs. Her experience also includes Carolina Crown Winterguard, Phantom Regiment Winterguard and the Knights. Stephanie is currently a judge with the Gulf Coast Judges Association and judges across the country during fall and Winterguard seasons.

Megan Budway

Timing / Penalties

Megan Budway, from Cary, NC, graduated from UNC-Wilmington with a B.A. in Music Education and UNC-Greensboro with a M.M. in Music Education. Megan has played synthesizer with several world class ensembles throughout her marching career including Palmetto Percussion (PIW), Matrix World Percussion (PIW), Colts Drum & Bugle Corps, and Phantom Regiment. After aging out, Megan stepped into a staff role as a sound engineer for Phantom Regiment & The Cavaliers. Megan has presented to the CWEA circuit directors and instructors on marching arts audio and records vocals for performance ensembles across the country. Outside of the marching world, Megan is a World Champion ninja athlete and has appeared on the TV show American Ninja Warrior.