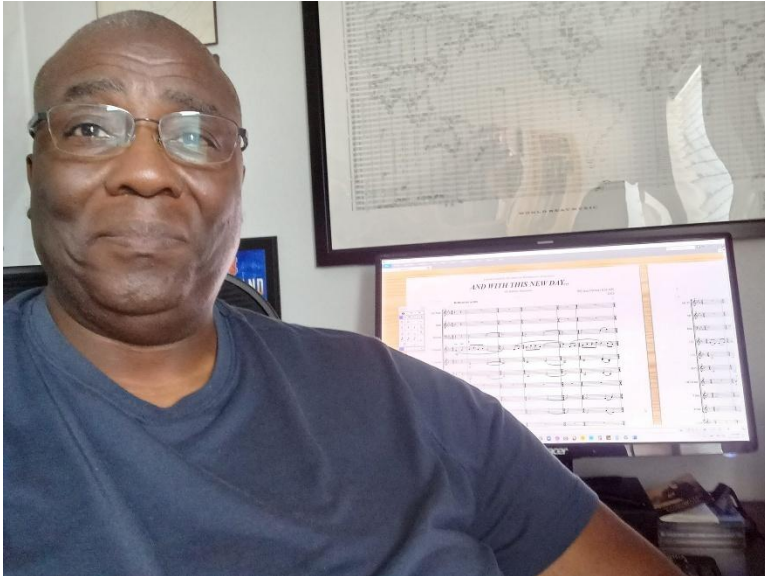


# 2026 MSBOA All-State Guest Conductors



**2026 MSBOA All-State Middle School Band, directed by William Owens**

A native of Gary, Indiana, William Owens, DMus (b. 1963), is a highly sought-after composer, clinician, and conductor throughout North America. Renowned for his practical and expressive compositional style, Dr. Owens has firmly established himself as a leading voice in the concert band world. His catalog includes more than 500 works for concert band, string orchestra, and jazz ensemble, many of which appear on required music lists nationally and abroad. Many of his works have been analyzed in educational text and have become staples of the wind band repertoire.

Active as a composer since 1993, Owens' works have received widespread acclaim. Principal commissions include those from the South Plains College (TX) Department of Fine Arts, Phi Beta Mu International, and the American Bandmasters Association. A 1985 graduate of Chicago's VanderCook College of Music, he is honored in the VCM Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. His accolades include the Meritorious Achievement Award from the Texas Bandmasters Association and the Doctor of Music Education Honoris Causa from his alma mater. Dr. Owens holds professional memberships with the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA), the Association of Texas Small School Bands (ATSSB), and the Mansfield (TX) Wind Symphony.

In 2014, William formally retired from his 30-year career as a band director in Texas. In his spare time, he enjoys sight-seeing and is a proud Chevrolet Corvette owner/enthusiast. William resides in Fort Worth, TX with his wife and best friend, Georgia.



**2026 MSBOA All-State High School Band, directed by Courtney Snyder**

Dr. Courtney Snyder is Associate Director of Bands and Associate Professor of Conducting at the University of Michigan where she conducts the Concert Band, teaches undergraduate and graduate instrumental conducting, assists in administering the Michigan Bands program, and directs the Michigan Youth Symphonic Band. Under her artistic leadership, the University Concert Band was invited to perform at the College Band Directors Association North-Central Division Conference. Previously, Snyder served as the Assistant Director of Bands and Director of Athletic Bands at the University of Nebraska-Omaha where she conducted the “Maverick” Marching Band, conducted the Concert Band, served as Associate Conductor of the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, and taught courses in conducting, music education, and brass methods. While in Omaha, Snyder also served as Music Director for the Nebraska Wind Symphony, which, under her direction, was invited to perform at the Nebraska State Bandmasters Association annual conference. Prior to teaching at the collegiate level, Snyder taught high school and middle school band and orchestra in the Michigan public schools, the last four years of which she served as Director of Bands at Ypsilanti High School.

Dr. Snyder is an active guest conductor and clinician, conducting and teaching both nationally and internationally and has presented at national and international conferences including the Midwest Clinic, World Association of Symphonic Band Ensembles, College Band Directors National Association, College Music Society, and Women Band Directors International. Her current projects include improvisation in the large concert ensemble, conducting pedagogy, band music of South and Central America, and promoting equity of women and BIPOC composers and conductors. She is a past president of Women Band Directors International and a Conn-Selmer clinician.

Snyder is published in *Music Educators Journal*, *The Instrumentalist*, several volumes of *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*, *School Band & Orchestra Magazine*, *The Woman Conductor*, and *Association of Concert Bands Journal*. Her chapter “Trailblazers: Five Pioneering Female Band Directors Recount Their Journeys Over the Last 50 Years” in the book *The Horizon Leans Forward...Stories of Courage, Strength, and Triumph of Underrepresented Communities in the Wind Band Field* was published in December 2020. She received the University of Michigan

School of Music, Theatre & Dance DEI Breaking Ground Award, Tau Beta Sigma's Paula Crider Award, Women Band Directors International's Silver Baton Award, National Band Association's Citation of Merit, and earned 2<sup>nd</sup> Place in the 2018 American Prize in Conducting, Band/Wind Ensemble Division Competition. Dr. Snyder is a graduate of the University of Michigan, Baylor University, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania.



**2026 MSBOA All-State Middle School String Orchestra, directed by Sarah Ball**

Sarah Ball has been teaching orchestra for twenty-nine years, currently at North Gwinnett Middle School in Sugar Hill, Ga, where she is one of three orchestra directors. The NGMS orchestra program has almost 600 students enrolled in grades 6-8. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade orchestra was selected to perform at GMEA in January (2012 and 2024) and received the GMEA Exemplary Performance Award in 2009 and 2015. In December 2013, the NGMS Honor Orchestra was one of three middle school orchestras selected internationally to perform in Chicago, Illinois at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic and has also performed at Carnegie Hall. The NGMS music department was awarded the inaugural Exemplary Program Award from GMEA (2017-18). Mrs. Ball holds a Bachelor of Music Education from Appalachian State University and a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction from Lesley University. She was named the NGMS Teacher of the Year for 2011-12 and was selected as the middle school Teacher of the Year for Gwinnett County. In 2018, Mrs. Ball was chosen as the GA-ASTA String Educator of the year and in 2023, was

named the Elizabeth A.H. Green award recipient at ASTA in Orlando. She has served as state treasurer and president for GA-ASTA, K-12 orchestra curriculum committee chair (twice) for national ASTA, as well as member-at-large. Mrs. Ball was the GMEA Orchestra Division Chair and has held school leadership roles as curriculum and department chair at both Lanier MS and NGMS and was Vice President for GMEA All-State events. Mrs. Ball has presented professional development sessions at the school, county, state and national level including the national ASTA conference, the Ohio State University String Teacher's Workshop, and the Habits Institute in Charleston, SC. She is active as a clinician, adjudicator, and conductor throughout the country. Mrs. Ball is on the author's team for the new GIA Publication, *Habits of a Successful Young String Musician*. She is passionate about making learning fun, impactful, and inspiring all while holding students to high standards. Ball started violin at the age of 10 in the Henderson County (NC) strings program. She currently resides in Johns Creek, Georgia with her husband Jerrod, and their cats, Topsy and Turvy.



**2026 MSBOA All-State High School Full Orchestra, directed by Douglas Droste**

Douglas Droste is Director of Orchestral Studies at Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Performing Arts, where he conducts the Baldwin Wallace Symphony Orchestra and teaches conducting.

Droste's guest conducting appearances include the INSO-Lviv Symphony Orchestra (Ukraine), and the orchestras of Kansas City, Indianapolis, Columbus, Canton, Oklahoma City, and Tulsa, among others. Equally at home in the pit, he has conducted over 30 productions of opera, ballet, and musical theatre, as well as many pops shows. He previously served as Artistic Director of the Muncie Symphony Orchestra.

As an advocate of music education, Droste has conducted numerous all-state orchestras, as well as the Honors Performance Series at Carnegie Hall and Sydney Opera House, Let Music Live Festival at the Vienna Musikverein and Rudolfinum in Prague, Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute, and French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts. He is also active as a clinician and festival adjudicator.

A talented violinist, Droste has performed with the orchestras of Canton, Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Nashville, and the Lancaster Festival, among others. He is also skilled on viola, trumpet, and as a tenor. Droste holds degrees from The Ohio State University and Texas Tech University.



**2026 MSBOA All-State High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by Robbie Smith**

Robbie Smith, trumpeter (& saxophonist) is currently a Professor of Music-Jazz Studies at Central Michigan University (2005-present). He graduated from Central Michigan University with a Bachelor of Arts-Trumpet Performance degree in 1986. Rob earned a Master of Music-Jazz Studies degree from The University of North Texas (1989), where he performed in the world-renowned One O'clock Lab Band (1986-89) and can be heard on recordings ('87, '88, '89). Most recently, Smith held a faculty position at The University of North Carolina-Greensboro, the Miles Davis Jazz Studies Program (2004-05). He has also taught at St. Francis Xavier University in

Nova Scotia, Canada (1991-93, 1997-98), Michigan State University (adjunct, 1994-97), Mott Community College (adjunct, 1995-97), Interlochen Arts Academy (sabbatical replacement, 2000) & Interlochen Jazz Camp (2010-2016), and Central Michigan University (instructor-full time, 2000-2004). Smith performs regularly on trumpet and saxophone as a freelance artist and has performed and recorded with several notable groups including: the Woody Herman Jazz Orchestra (worldwide concert tours), the Kirk MacDonald Quintet & the Kirk MacDonald Jazz Orchestra (Toronto), and the Steve Haines Quintet (New York). He currently performs regularly with the Detroit Jazz Festival Orchestra (2012-present), the Toledo Jazz Orchestra (2012-present), and the Master of Music Big Band (Detroit 2011-present). In 2005 he toured with Terri Lyne Carrington, James Genus, Paul Bollenbeck, Munyungo Jackson, Mitch Forman, Nancy Wilson and Dianne Reeves in a tribute to Billie Holiday. This group performed concerts at USC, UCLA, Penn State University, Byham Theater-Pittsburgh, Chicago Symphony Hall, Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center. Smith has performed several times with legendary jazz drummer Jimmy Cobb and can be heard with him on "Stickadiboom-The Steve Haines Quintet featuring Jimmy Cobb" (ZOHO Music-2008). He has also recorded with: the Kirk MacDonald Jazz Orchestra-"Family Suite", "Deep Shadows", and "Common Ground", the Masters of Music Big Band-"Music of Stan Kenton live featuring Peter Erskine", the Woody Herman Jazz Orchestra-"Live at Ronnie Scott's in London" (NYJAM-1999), the Larry Nozero Quintet-"Live at the Montreaux-Detroit Jazz Festival" (2000), the Kirk MacDonald Septet-"New Beginnings" (Radioland Music-1999), the Steve Haines Quintet-"Beginner's Mind" (Artist House Records-2004), the Maritime Jazz Orchestra featuring Kenny Wheeler-"Now and Now Again" (Justin Time-1998), the Terry Lower Quintet-"Step By Step" (2005), the Jim Cooper Quintet-"Itchin' To Groove" (2004), as well as several recordings with his Michigan-based quartet, Mind's Eye. He has also recorded two cd's of his own compositions with the Central Michigan University Faculty Jazz Sextet entitled, "Caught In The Act" (White Pine Music-2007) and "Conspiracy Theory" (White Pine Music-2010). Most recently, Rob recorded on Jordan VanHemert's "I Am Not a Virus" (Big Round Records-2021). Smith has performed in concerts with many notable jazz artists, including: Rufus Reid, Randy Brecker, David Liebman, Bob Berg, Adam Nussbaum, Joe Morello, Frank Tiberi, Cyrus Chestnut, Buddy DeFranco, Marcus Belgrave, George Benson, Phil Markowitz, Phil Woods, Rodney Whitaker, Mulgrew Miller, Kareem Riggins, Jon Faddis, Frank Foster, Jerry Fuller, Ira Sullivan, Neil Swainson, Pat LaBarbara, Lorne Lofsky, Kenny Wheeler, John Taylor, Xavier Davis, Charles Earland, Jimmy Smith, Jack McDuff, Jeff Hamilton, Terri Lyne Carrington, Bob Mintzer, Arturo Sandoval, Larry Carlton, Wallace Roney, Jimmy Cobb, Dianne Reeves, Nancy Wilson, Lew Tabackin,, Jerry Bergonzi, Steve Wilson, Walter White, Peter Erskine, Steve Turre, Wayne Bergeron and many others. He has performed at concert venues and jazz festivals in England, Scotland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Turkey, Italy, France, Spain, Canada and the United States.