

## For Immediate Release

From – *The Foundation for Music Education*  
10701 Upland Ave Lubbock, TX 79424

September 15, 2015

Contact – Rick Yancey

Managing Director, The Mark of Excellence

[ryancey@choicemusicevents.org](mailto:ryancey@choicemusicevents.org)

The Foundation for Music Education is pleased to announce the results of the 2015 Mark of Excellence Project. Two Hundred and Twenty Nine of the finest high school and middle school musical ensembles in the United States entered the project, a record number!

The Mark of Excellence consists of the *National Wind Band Honors, National Choral Honors, National Orchestra Honors, National Jazz Honors, and National Percussion Ensemble Honors*. It is a competition, entered by recordings, in which the top quarter are selected as National Winners and the second quarter receive Commended Honors. Over the last 8 years, the project has received entries from thirty-six states.

All the groups receive recorded and written comments from the adjudicators, and a compilation recording of the National Winners. This compilation recording is featured on the MarkCustom.com website, and is available for download. This creates a permanent archive of the achievement, as well as a terrific educational reference and resource for ensemble directors.

The nationally renowned adjudicators were:

National Choral Honors – *Allen Hightower* - Weston Noble Endowed Chair in Music and Professor of Music at Luther College.

National Orchestra Honors – *Gary Lewis* - Director of Orchestral Studies and Professor of Music, University of Colorado at Boulder, Conductor of the Midland-Odessa Symphony Orchestra

National Wind Band Honors –

*Steve Peterson* – recently appointed Director of Bands at the University of Illinois, formerly Director of Bands at Ithaca College.

*Don Wilcox* – Director of Bands Emeritus, West Virginia University

*Tom Leslie* – Director of Bands and Professor of Conducting, University of Nevada Las Vegas.

National Jazz Honors – *Jeff Jarvis* - Director of Jazz Studies at the Bob Cole Conservatory at California State University Long Beach, owner of Kendor Music Publishing.

National Percussion Ensemble Honors – *She-e Wu* - Associate Professor of Music and Director of Percussion Studies, Northwestern University

According to Managing Director Rick Yancey “ This years entries set a new standard of musical achievement with many stunning performances. These young students perform incredibly well, and that is testament to their talent, training, and wonderful teachers!”

# 2015 Mark of Excellence / National Jazz Honors

## National Winners

### High School Jazz Ensemble

The Birdville HS Jazz Ensemble	Mike Cheripka	North Richland Hills, TX
Wheeling HS Jazz Band I	Brian Logan	Wheeling, IL

### Middle School Jazz Ensemble

Lamar MS and Fine Arts Academy Jazz Factory	James Hairston	Austin, TX
--	----------------	------------

## Commended Winners

### High School Jazz Ensemble

Spring HS Jazz Ensemble	JD Guzman	Spring, TX
-------------------------	-----------	------------

### Middle School Jazz Ensemble

Glades MS Concert Jazz Band	Erich S. Rivero	Miami, FL
-----------------------------	-----------------	-----------

Special thanks to Jazz adjudicator Jeff Jarvis.

# 2015 Mark of Excellence / National Wind Band Honors

## National Winners

### Class A

Arbor Creek MS Honors Band	Rylon Guidry	Carrollton, TX
Bonham MS Band	Mike Ellis	Amarillo, TX
Colleyville MS Honor Band	Paul Schmidt	Colleyville, TX
Killian MS Honors Band	Rob Chilton	Lewisville, TX
League City Int Band	Rick Brockway	League City, TX
Maus MS Wind Ensemble	Katie Lewis	Frisco, TX
Roma MS Symphonic Winds	Corey L. Graves	Roma, TX

### Class AA

Aledo MS Honor Winds	Joey Qualls	Aledo, TX
Byrd Symphonic I Band	Kevin Graham	Duncanville, TX
Canyon Vista MS Honors Band	Ryan Johnstone	Austin, TX
Cedar Park MS Symphonic Band	Manuel C. San Luis	Cedar Park, TX
Cedar Valley MS Honors Band	Jane Botkin	Austin, TX
Cockrill MS Honors Band	Gary Williams	McKinney, TX
Coppell MS North Honor Winds	Jeremy Lindquist	Coppell, TX
Creek Valley Honor Winds	Kim Cooley	Carrollton, TX
Doerre Symphonic Band	Matt Fehl	Klein, TX
Dueitt MS Symphonic Band	Christopher Gonzales	Spring, TX
Fort Settlement MS Honors Band	Greg Countryman, T. Baragas	Sugar Land, TX
Henry MS Honors Band	Robert T. Herrings, III	Cedar Park, TX
Indian Springs MS Wind Ensemble	David Puckett	Keller, TX
Knox JH Wind Ensemble	Jennifer Dillard	The Woodlands, TX
Robinson MS Wind Ensemble	Kimberly Hernandez	Plano, TX
Shadow Ridge MS Honor Winds	Chris Meredith, A. DeSoto	Flower Mound, TX
Stafford MS Honor Band	Christian Holzer	Frisco, TX
Trinity Springs MS Honors Band	Dean Surface, J. Stokes	Keller, TX
Wester MS Symphonic Band	Brad Smith	Frisco, TX

### Class AAAA

North Lamar Symphonic Band	Randy Jones	Paris, TX
----------------------------	-------------	-----------

### Class AAAAA

Aledo HS Wind Ensemble	Joey Paul	Aledo, TX
John Hersey HS Symphonic Band	Scott Casagrande	Arlington Heights, IL
Liberty HS Wind Ensemble	Jamie Weaver	Frisco, TX
The Colony HS Wind Symphony	Luis Saldana	The Colony, TX
Waxahachie Wind Ensemble	Rich Armstrong	Waxahachie, TX
Wylie East Wind Symphony	Glenn Lambert, A.Daniel	Wylie, TX
National Winners - continued		

### Class AAAAAA

Brazoswood HS Symphonic Band	Brian Casey	Clute, TX
Friendswood HS Wind Ensemble	Gregory Dick	Friendswood, TX
Hebron HS Wind Symphony	Andy Sealy	Carrollton, TX
Plano East Senior HS Wind Ensemble	Evelio Villarreal	Plano, TX
Southwest HS Wind Symphony	Stacey Dunn	Fort Worth, TX
Spring Wind Ensemble	Gabe Musella	Spring, TX
Vandegrift HS Wind Ensemble	Mike Howard	Austin, TX

### New Music Division

John Hersey HS Symphonic Band	Scott Casagrande	Arlington Heights, IL
Nolan Ryan JH Symphonic Band I	Josh Mooney	Pearland, TX
Summit HS Wind Symphony	Brad Bonebrake	Arlington, TX

## **Commended Winners**

### Class A

Carpenter Wind Ensemble	Katie Zeier	Plano, TX
Downing MS Symphonic Band	Mary Clardy	Flower Mound, TX
Griffin MS Wind Ensemble	Leigh Ann McClain	The Colony, TX
Hunt MS Symphonic Band	Kristen Dillard	Frisco, TX
Lamar MS &	James Hairston	Austin, TX
Fine Arts Academy Symphonic Winds		
Reed MS Symphonic I Band	Michelle Hanegan	Duncanville, TX
The Watauga MS Symphonic Winds	Jason Finnels	Watauga, TX

### Class AA

Apollo JH Symphonic Band I	Andrew Weak	Richardson, TX
Bailey MS Wind Ensemble	Sara McGarry	Austin, TX
Campbell MS Symphonic Band	Scott McAdow	Houston, TX
Cooper JH Honors Band	Adam Powell	Wylie, TX
Creekwood MS Honors Band	Missy DeSpain Allen	Kingwood, TX
T.A. Howard Honor Band	Nathaniel Neugent	Arlington, TX

**Commended Winners – Class AA continued**

Kennemer MS Symphonic I Band	Luzviminda S. Pascasio	Dallas, TX
Kleb Int Symphonic Band	Jennifer Wren, C. King	Spring, TX
Krimmel Int Symphonic Band	Sharon Kalisek	Spring, TX
Lamar JH Honor Band	John Barton	Rosenberg, TX
McKamy Honor Winds	Russell Cote	Flower Mound TX
Nolan Ryan JH Symphonic Band I	Josh Mooney	Pearland, TX
Oliveira Symphonic Band	Gaspar Garcia	Brownsville, TX
Riverwatch MS Symphonic Band	Matt Koperniak	Suwanee, GA
Space Center Int Symphonic Band	Donald McCandless	Houston, TX
Spillane MS Symphonic Band	Tom Harrington	Cypress, TX
Westbrook Int Wind Ensemble	Keith Raney	Friendswood, TX
Wiley MS Wind Ensemble	Garland Chiasson	Leander, TX

Class AAAA

Argyle HS Wind Ensemble	Kathy Johnson	Argyle, TX
-------------------------	---------------	------------

Class AAAAA

Denton HS Wind Ensemble	Brian Wilson	Denton, TX
Milton HS Wind Ensemble	Chris Shumick	Milton, GA
Poteet HS Honors Band	Cody Newman	Mesquite, TX
Timberview HS Wind Symphony	Paul Heuer	Arlington, TX
Vista Ridge HS Band	Brian Christian	Cedar Park, TX

Class AAAAAA

Clear Lake HS Wind Ensemble	John Pearce	Houston, TX
Dulles HS Honor Band	Joe Pruitt	Sugar Land, TX
Flower Mound HS Wind Symphony	Brent Biskup, J.Harvey	Flower Mound, TX
Pearland HS Wind Ensemble	Joe Munoz	Pearland, TX
Oak Ridge HS Wind Ensemble	Dana Pradervand	Conroe, TX
Richardson HS Wind Symphony	Jesus Marquez	Richardson, TX
Richland HS Honors Band	Jason Bird	North Richland Hills, TX

New Music Division

Kelly Lane MS Wind Ensemble	Cynthia Mixon	Pflugerville, TX
Seven Lakes HS Wind Symphony	Damon Archer	Katy, TX

Special thanks to adjudicators Don Wilcox, Tom Leslie and Steve Peterson.  
 The 2015 Mark of Excellence had 229 entries and has now received entries from 36 states.