



Lee Commander (Director of Bands) instructs Symphonic, Concert, Jazz and Marching Bands. Prior to his appointment to Leon High School, he served as the Director of Bands at Pinellas Park High School (Largo, FL) for three years. Bands under Mr. Commander's direction have continuously received outstanding ratings throughout district and state assessments. Prior to earning his B.M.E from The Florida State University Mr. Commander was highly involved with the College of Music where he worked on the Board of Advisors for the College of Music, Marching Coordinator and later Staff Manager for the illustrious Marching Chiefs. He was awarded the Manley Whitcomb Scholarship in 2010 for his continued support and effort to music education and a Medal of Honor from The Marching Chiefs.

Mr. Commander is highly active in Tau Beta Sigma as a Southeast District Counselor where he works with collegiate students to develop leadership and post collegiate skills. He was granted

honorary membership in this organization in spring of 2013. His other professional affiliations are NAFME, FMEA, and FBA.

An active saxophonist, he currently sits as the principal saxophonist for the Tallahassee Wind Community Band and sought after as a pit musician for local musicals.

Shawn Fassig (Keyboard, Guitar, and Steel Drum Adjunct Faculty) – Pic and bio coming soon!



Elise Gonzalez (Percussion) began playing percussion at the age of twelve and has never looked back. She received her Bachelors of Science in Music Education from the University of South Florida, where she studied under professional percussionist, Robert McCormick. In her last two years of study at USF, she expanded her repertoire by also studying with John Shaw, the Principal Percussionist of The Florida Orchestra, where the focus was emphasized on orchestral percussion. During her stay in Tampa, she performed regularly with the St. Petersburg Opera and was featured on two professional CD recordings with Naxos and Ravello recording labels.

Elise attended the Florida State University where she studied under the esteemed percussionist Dr. John W. Parks IV, to receive her Masters of Music in Percussion Performance. While at FSU, she was the winner of the Percussive Arts Society Florida Mock Audition. She has performed with multiple ensembles within the Florida pan-handle area

including: Sinfonia Gulf Coast Symphony, Pensacola Symphony Orchestra, Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, and the Tallahassee Community Chorus.

Currently, Elise is the Director of Orchestra and Percussion at Cobb Middle School and Director of Percussion at Leon High School. She is also a utility timpanist with the Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra. In her spare time, she performs locally in the Tallahassee area.



Lea Marshall (Director of Dramatic Arts) The dramatic life began for Lea Noblin Marshall when she was a very shy 8-year-old. Her parents, Millard and Bobbee Noblin, proud members of Leon High School's Class of 1953, enrolled her in an after-school drama class taught by Tina Williams. Lea was in the first ever class of what would eventually become Tallahassee's "Young Actors Theatre" and has never been the same. Mostly because she was never called "shy" after that year. Lea graduated from Maclay High School (but can be seen in the Leon High yearbook as she frequented the Leon extracurricular activities.) She went on to study at Furman University and graduated with a B.A. in Education. She also was fortunate enough to intern with the Royal Shakespearean Company in Stratford, UK merging her love of Theatre with her passion for teaching. Since then she has taught drama/theatre in almost every age group. She has taught in Elementary School Programs in South Carolina and Georgia, The Afternoon Acting Academy in Gwinnett County, Georgia, led Story Telling Workshops at the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, taught at Temple Israel Preschool in Tallahassee, and is the former Theatre Teacher/Director at Raa Middle School. She is a contributor to the QWILL Writing Curriculum based on Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* which is used in schools throughout Canada and in California. She is married to Adam Marshall, and one of her biggest accomplishments has been in making him attend dozens of theatrical productions with her, and now he even enjoys them! Her "pride" of three lions (Millie, Maxx, and Rosie) have all attended Leon High School and participated in various Performing Arts during their time at Leon. Theatre History continues to fascinate her endlessly, and she is always amazed at the way a well-written play can interpret, interrupt, inform, and instruct us as human beings. She is excited to be a Leon Lion and possibly have her name in the *Lion's Tale Yearbook* alongside her photo...



Tabitha Peck (Director of Choral Activities) is the Director of Choral Activities at Leon, and currently in her fifteenth year, having received the B.M.E. and M.M.E. in Music Education from the Florida State University College of Music, where she studied voice with Janice Harsanyi (Undergraduate) and Roy Delp (Graduate).

Mrs. Peck is a Tallahassee native, having attended James S. Rickards High School as a member of the Marching Redskins. She was a french horn player, and Drum Major of the band from 1995-1997.

At Leon, Mrs. Peck teaches Freshman Girls Chorus, Concert Chorale, Capital Singers, Melodears, as well as AP Music Theory and Technical Theatre. Leon's AP Music Theory has boasted an overall 95% passing rate over the last 14 years!

In 2003, she founded the all a-cappella group "The Mane Event" which has competed nationally, twice winning runner-up at the international finals. In 2005, Mrs. Peck's (then Miss Hall) musical arrangements won honors at the district, regional, and state levels. She frequently judges ICCA events at the state and regional levels.

She is an active member of FMEA, FVA, and ACDA, serving as FVA District 3 Treasurer and Florida ACDA State Webmaster and Treasurer, and has been a member of the professional choir: The Festival Singers of Florida. She has presented sessions at the FMEA State Conference on AP Music Theory and on Pop Acappella ensembles, and is an active adjudicator and soloist. She and her husband Tim have two beautiful daughters.



Edward Prasse (Director of Guitar) holds the M.M.E. and the B.M.E. from the Florida State University College of Music. He heads the four-year guitar program at Leon High School in Tallahassee, Fla., which annually serves more than 165 students. He is chairman of the General Music Committee of the FMEA Executive Board, which has developed a series of guitar-focused events within Florida. Additionally, he is a partner, co-author and editor for the publishing company Class Guitar Resources Inc. and an active presenter and clinician. He and his wife Lisa are the proud parents of three children. In his spare time he enjoys playing golf, grilling great food, a bit of sleep, and playing guitar!



Peter Pursino (Associate Choral Director) is also the Director of Music at Faith Presbyterian Church, where he is responsible for a comprehensive music program that includes numerous choirs, instrumental ensembles and summer camps. Prior to his current position, he was a member of the voice faculty at Rollins College in Winter Park, FL and has held High School teaching positions in Orange County, FL and Cobb County, GA. At Leon, Mr. Pursino teaches Keyboard, Leon Men's Choir, Opus, Madrigals, and is the Assistant Director of Capital Singers. Peter is often called on as a tenor soloist, having sung for churches, orchestras, and community choirs. He is also an active guest conductor, clinician and adjudicator.

A native of New York, Peter received a B.M. and a Certificate in Arts Leadership from the Eastman School of Music and a M.M. from Florida State University. Peter lives in Tallahassee with his wife Holly and their four children, Ella, Maddie, Landon, and Hailey.



Mike Wendeln (Director of the "Lion Steel" Steelbands) is a percussionist, and has been a steel "pan" player for almost 15 years, and landed his dream job teaching his own pan program. This program strives to be a leader in steelband education in the state of Florida and throughout the country. Currently, he directs 6 student steelbands each day and helps facilitate 3 community groups as well!

Teaching experiences include 10+ years of High School drumline at various schools including state championship groups, 15+ years of private lessons with students as young as 6 and as old as 60, and as a graduate student, taught collegiate Percussion Ensemble, Steelband, and Drumline. In 2004, Mr. Wendeln earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio where he studied with Dr. William Albin and Dr. Chris Tanner.

He performed in various ensembles including the nationally recognized Miami University Steel Band under Dr. Chris Tanner. In 2007, Wendeln graduated from Eastern Kentucky University, with a Masters degree in Percussion Performance while studying with Percussion Director, Jason Koontz.