

ALL-SOUTH *Virtual* FESTIVAL OF BANDS @SOUTHERN MISS

THE EVENT

All-South Virtual-Festival of Bands at Southern Miss will be a **free event** for all high school and middle school bands directors and their students. The event will provide feedback and assessment similar to what you are used to with your state's activities association but from the comfort of your band hall or performance facility. In addition, a participation certificate will also be provided to accompany the assessment.

HOW DOES MY BAND PARTICIPATE?

Once a director is registered for the event, a link to upload a video or audio file will be provided. Your recording may be made with a simple smartphone or advanced-level equipment of your choice/that is available. For your convenience, several suggestions regarding audio recording equipment options are given.

All performances will be adjudicated by a panel of adjudicators. This panel will provide feedback, much like the live event at state contests. All assessments/comments will be forwarded to the director at the conclusion of the event.

COST

We have all been through enough turmoil this year and know that many of your school districts continue to face unprecedented budget cuts because of the pandemic. **Your cost to participate is \$0. USM Bands will bear**

the entire cost of this event. As many external opportunities are taken away, it is our honor to provide you with this alternative experience.

HOW DO WE REGISTER?

Directors must register for the event by [CLICKING HERE](#)



Because of the workload expected to make this a high-quality event for you and your students, there are a limited number of spots available with a **March 1 deadline** for entry.

Directors who are accepted to participate in the event will be sent a private link to the ***Director's Portal***, where all submissions will be collected.

WHAT ARE THE LITERATURE REQUIREMENTS?

We will follow your state's guidelines for large ensemble contests (MBA in Mississippi, FBA Florida, ABA Alabama, etc.). For those directors participating outside of Mississippi, please refer to your state association's guidelines in regards to required grade level and or time requirements and restrictions.

DO I NEED TO SEND A COPY OF MY SCORE TO YOU FOR ADJUDICATION PURPOSES?

No, however, to provide the best adjudication possible for you and your students, we strongly encourage each director to scan a copy of their scores and place in a personal Google Drive (or Dropbox) so a link may be shared with the adjudicators. Having a copy of the score will allow us the opportunity to give greater details in our assessment but eliminating the copyright concerns that may occur via an upload to USM Bands.

[Share the link to your scores here.](#)

CAN I SEND A VIDEO OF MY CONDUCTING FOR A FREE LESSON?



Absolutely! Because we anticipate many of our spring semester professional development seminars like conducting workshops will be canceled (or modified beyond normal expectations), we want to offer you an opportunity to send in a recording of you working your ensemble on literature that you are currently studying.

[Share the link to your video submissions here.](#)

I AM UNSURE HOW TO BEST RECORD MY BAND. DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR RECORDING EQUIPMENT THAT FITS MY BUDGET?

Here are a few recommendations below or in general how to record your band with the equipment you may already have on hand.

"I only have my phone or tablet and maybe \$30 out of my own pocket to spend, nothing else. What do you suggest?"

#1, Abandon stereo and get something like this. Position of the mic will be critical and it would be best to experiment liberally to find the best results in any given room. If the conductor likes the way the group sounds from the point where they conduct, that's at least a distant place to start experimenting with position. Note that if they have a newer phone (e.g. iPhone XS or XR), they may have stereo mics built-in and so could perhaps just use those.

#2, Get/borrow a second phone/tablet and record on both, just using the built-in mics. Space them 12 - 24" apart from each other, centered on the ensemble, and again experiment with position. This will require someone to then export the file from at least one of the phones and

load it onto the other one (or load both onto a computer for editing), then line them up in time for sync. However, this is super-low-cost and will give pretty decent stereo results.

I have \$100-\$200 to spend on a quality microphone and have my personal smartphone or laptop, but no special equipment/program, only a free piece of software I downloaded from the internet that is easy to understand. What equipment and free download would you suggest?

There's a lot of activity out there around this price point, but I come back again and again to recommending the Zoom H4n Pro. The main thing about it is the extra functionality it provides, compared to a set of mics and interface, which are simply going to be bottom of the barrel at this price point. With the H4n, you get a pretty good set of mics, with a decent signal path (preamps, etc.). It can be used as a standalone recorder OR connected to a computer, where it will serve as an audio interface. One alternative around the same price point is to consider the Zoom Q2n-4K, which will let you record 4K video as well as audio, but with fewer options on the audio front.

I have about \$1,000 to spend and do not mind a moderate learning curve to recording my ensemble, but the software should not be complicated but fairly intuitive. What equipment/software would you recommend?

At this price point, assuming they already have a computer and software available (and Reaper is cross-platform and effectively free), they should be able to pick up a decent audio interface and pair of microphones, which will be able to do a good job of recording any sort of large ensemble. Not up to Decca standards, but not bad at all. If they're positive they only ever want to do stereo recording and never

add more input channels (e.g. for additional mics or instruments), I'd recommend the SSL2+ interface at \$279. Around the same price, one could get the Audient EVO 8, which offers additional inputs/outputs at slightly lower quality.

Finally, they're getting a bit long in the tooth but a lot of students use the Focusrite Scarlett series with good results (e.g. the Scarlett 4i4). So, assuming one has spent something like \$300 on an interface after tax and shipping, you've got about \$700 left for microphones and cables. In that price range, I think it's impossible to beat a pair of the sE Electronics sE8 for \$499. That leaves \$200 for cables, stands, and whatnot. For those, I strongly recommend looking at monoprice.com, which has super-high-quality microphone cables for prices comparable to cheap cables elsewhere, and decent-quality stands as well.

In addition to the suggestions made above, click here for a [website dedicated to low-cost recording alternatives](#).

We hope you and your students will join us for this special event. The Southern Miss Band Staff looks forward to serving you, your students, and our profession during this pandemic and beyond. Best of luck to you and please be safe.

All our best,

Catherine Rand, Director of Bands

Colin McKenzie, Associate Director of Bands

Travis Higa, Assistant Director of Bands

Have questions? [Send email to us here.](#)