

FBCH SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS 2017-18 FACULTY BIOGRAPHIES

Kristen Bearfield studied Praise & Worship Ministries at Liberty University and graduated from East Tennessee State University with a major in Marketing and a minor in Bluegrass & Country Music Studies. Early proponents of her music included her great Uncle Clarence "Tater" Tate, who played bass and fiddle for the great Bill Monroe for many years. Kristen has played with Country and Gospel Music Hall of Fame Member Jimmy Fortune, The Hurleys for eight years, and is currently touring with the award-winning country gospel group, HighRoad for the last two years. Kristen's teaching experience has taken her all the way to the top, where she has taught mandolin and songwriting workshops in the Taylor Swift Education Center at The Country Music Hall of Fame. She joins the SoFA Faculty in 2017.

Kirsten O'Rourke Benfield comes to Tennessee via Bethel, Alaska, and has been a collegiate art instructor for the past 18 years as well as a lifelong visual artist. She has a Master's of Fine Arts in Printmaking from East Carolina University, in addition to a B.F.A. in Graphic Design from the University of Connecticut. Kirsten comes to the FBCH School of Fine Arts after 10 years as a faculty member at the Art Institute of Tennessee - Nashville, where she also served as the Director of Faculty Development. Currently, Kirsten teaches classes at the Art Institute as well as Volunteer State Community College, in addition to running a successful portrait drawing business. Kirsten is married to Jesse Benfield, the Director of Media for FBCH, and together they have two children, ages 7 and 8.

Melanie Crane has a long history in music and piano. Her love for the Lord and ministry makes her a great addition to our faculty of experienced instructors. She has used her experience to teach piano privately and at FBC Columbia, FBC Collierville, Calvary Baptist, and FBC of St. Petersburg, Florida. Melanie began piano at the young age of 5 and has studied at the Birmingham Southern Prep School of Music, Samford University Prep School of Music, and Samford University. Melanie is also the wife of Greg Crane, Worship Minister here at FBCH. She joined the FBCH SoFA faculty in 2014.

Jan Davenport has had a passion for piano and teaching young students since she was 16 years old. Jan has a B.A. in Elementary Education and Music from Cedarville University and has taught at several Christian schools. She also has experience in music program direction, as a church pianist, organist, and accompanist, and has home schooled her children. Jan has taught with FBCH SoFA for 4 years.

David Austin Hobbs...TBA

Maria King graduated from the University of Houston with a Bachelor's degree in Music, principal in voice, and a minor in Music Theory and Music History. She also graduated from North Harris College with an Associate of Arts degree, principal in Music. She was employed with Sherman Clay for 10 years and taught for Yamaha Music Education System. She taught in Houston with the largest Yamaha school in the country and co-managed another. She is a two-time recipient of the Sherman Clay Music Teacher of the Year award. Maria began her love for music at the age of 7 when she started learning piano. She later began her vocal training at the age of 16. Maria and her husband Trent, have two children who both currently attend SoFA classes. Maria has taught with FBCH SoFA for 8 years and has a passion to help students develop strong technical skills and extensive theoretical knowledge during their musical training.

Katie Lawrence graduated from the Frederick M. Supper Honors Program at Palm Beach Atlantic University with a Bachelor's degree in Music, voice principal. She has a passion for vocal study in a variety of styles, ranging from classical to contemporary worship, pop, and jazz. With extensive formal training and course work in vocal pedagogy methods, Katie has a passion for developing the individual voice in a healthy manner with a strong technical foundation. She also enjoys helping students grow in their knowledge of theory and musicianship while instilling in them a love for the arts. Katie has previously worked as a music teacher, choir director, and private voice and piano instructor at Winter Haven Christian School. She has previous experience leading worship across the country with Student Life Youth and Kids' camps, performing regularly at Walt Disney World, doing studio session work, and singing at various conventions, chamber ensemble and concert venues throughout Florida. Currently, she is a soprano with the Nashville Symphony Chorus, NSC Chamber Chorus, and Charles Heimermann Chorale. Katie joined the SoFA faculty in 2015 and is currently the Children's Choir Director at FBCH.

Thomas Milner... TBA

Becky Panknin has a B.S. in Music Education from the University of Illinois and has a long history of teaching private lessons in both piano and voice. Her positive attitude and high energy has helped her promote a love of the arts as a school music teacher and choral director. Becky also has experience as a professional actress and has performed at Chaffin's Barn and Mystery Comedy Dinner Theaters. Becky has been part of the FBCH SoFA faculty for 3 years.

Denise Patton is an Adjunct Professor at Belmont University, teaching in the Commercial Music Department. She has performed in many stage shows at Opryland U.S.A., in Celebrity Cruise Line ship shows, and she has performed and worked with Lee Greenwood, Jim Ed Brown, Little Jimmy Dickens, Pam Tillis, Jim Nabors, Jeannie Sealy, Celine Dion, Roy Acuff, and Porter Wagoner. Denise is currently the lead vocalist with the Craig Duncan Orchestra and is also a session singer. She has worked on many projects for LifeWay and has served as a music curriculum writer, music editor, children's musical choreographer, and songwriter. She currently serves as the choreographer of "Worship Kidstyle." Denise graduated Cum Laude from Middle Tennessee State with a Bachelor of Business Administration with a minor in Music. She holds a 1st Degree Black Belt in Karate. She enjoys life with her husband, David, and her two children, Dean and Nicole. She has been with the FBCH SoFA faculty since 2010.

Laura Logue Poteet, a professional violinist, studied at Tennessee Tech University, where she obtained a Bachelor of Science in Music Therapy. She has studied violin with Gerald Greer of the Nashville Symphony and Elisabeth Small of Belmont University. As a board-certified music therapist, she works primarily with children with autism but has worked with children and adults with various disabilities throughout her career. Laura began teaching with FBCH SoFA in 2010.

Shea Roland has been a professional singer/dancer for 34 years and loves to use her knowledge and experience to teach others in an uplifting environment. She graduated from Belmont University with a degree in Music Business and has worked as choreographer with Dollywood, Gary Musick Productions, Word Music, Praise Gathering, Integrity Music, Pam Andrews Music, and Lillenas Publishing. She has also been Show Choir Director for Davidson Academy. She joined the FBCH SoFA faculty in 2015.

Neva Self has experience performing both on stage and television and has worked with Nashville vocal coach, Kathy Chiavole. She has an Associate of Science degree in Business Administration from Jefferson State Junior College in Birmingham. Neva has previously taught with melody Music Studios in Franklin as well as on her own with Myself Music. She has been with FBCH SoFA for three years.

Andrea "Andie" Smith has had a long and varied career in music. She studied at Indiana University and received a Bachelor's degree in music education and music therapy with an emphasis on instrumental music and cello from East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. While her children were young, she taught violin, viola, and cello lessons, primarily using the Suzuki Approach. Her family was led to resettle in the middle Tennessee area, and once her children were in high school, she returned to the classroom and teaches orchestra and chorus at Ellis Middle School. As a post-graduate student at Belmont University, she studied vocal/general music. Andie is an active free-lance cellist in the greater Nashville area. She enjoys meeting the diverse needs of her students and developing their talents, using a variety of approaches. When not teaching or performing, Andie enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren. Andie has been a part of the FBCH SoFA faculty for 6 years.

Janet Sneed studied music at Concord University in Athens, West Virginia, where she played trumped for four years in marching band and bass guitar in the school jazz band. A popular group locally, they also toured up and down the east coast. She taught piano and guitar while in college as well as being the pianist at her church. Janet began playing guitar at age 8, piano at 12, and bass guitar at 13. Though self-taught initially, she reads music and tablature and is well versed in music theory. Upon moving to Nashville, Janet immersed herself in music, playing with many groups with varying musical styles. She has played for theatre with Steeple Players of Hendersonville and the Roxy Theatre in Clarksville. She played acoustic guitar in the FBCH orchestra for many years and bass guitar in the contemporary service. Currently, she helps lead worship at Restoration Church in Nashville as well as Celebrate Recovery at Long Hollow Baptist in Gallatin. Janet has enjoyed playing music for over 30 years in many different genres from big band to pop. She enjoys writing and playing coffee houses whenever she can. Janet has been a part of the FBCH SoFA faculty since 2010.

Tralena Walker is a native of Richmond, Virginia, and studied classical voice and piano at Virginia Commonwealth University. She holds a Bachelor of Music Education degree with concentration in voice and minor in piano. She began performing professionally at 16 years of age. She began performing on television in 1986 on The Nashville Network's "You Can Be a Star." She has performed the National Anthem for major NASCAR tracks. Tralena currently teaches voice and piano lessons at Davidson Academy in Nashville. She is a publisher of Tralyrics music and "We Do Too" publishing companies, continuously pitches songs, and pursues her songwriting career. Tralena has certifications in Suzuki Piano books 1-3 and studied with the legendary Mary Craige Powell. She was a winner of several NATS (National Association Teachers of Singing) competitions while at VCU. Tralena has also studied voice with Mary Bates George at Belmont University since living in Nashville. She joined the FBCH SoFA faculty in 2016.

Josh Waugh is the Associate Worship Pastor at FBCH, leading our band-led worship service on the weekends as well as our midweek middle school worship experience. Growing up with hymns and now leading with a band, Josh has a passion in leading music and worship that connects with every generation. Josh graduated with his Bachelors from Samford University with a concentration in congregational studies. From singing in choirs and barbershop groups to playing in the drumline through high school and college, Josh is able to teach not only as a pastor but also as a vocalist and musician. He has led worship all over the southeast for summer camps, retreats, and weekend services. Josh and his wife, Susie, have two little girls and just moved to Gallatin in 2016.

Nikki Wilson has been immersed in her two favorite things for the past 15 years – performing and teaching. She has a passion for children’s education, and has taught group strings lessons, group theory lessons, and group and private violin lessons. She has performed nationally at the Hot Springs Music Festival in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and at the Bayerische Musikademie in Marktoberdorf, Germany. She has also had the opportunity to perform with several orchestras, including the Evansville Philharmonic, the Owensboro Philharmonic, the New Atlanta Philharmonic, and the Murfreesboro Philharmonic, the Jackson Symphony Orchestra and the Paducah Symphony Orchestra. She is a proud graduate of the Rudi E. Schedit School of Music in Memphis, Tennessee, where she obtained her Bachelor of Music Degree in Violin Performance, and of the Georgia State School of Music in Atlanta, Georgia, where she obtained her Master of Music Degree in Violin Performance. Her teachers include Gerald Greer, Assistant Concertmaster of the Nashville Symphony; Susan Waterbury, founding member of the Cavani String Quartet; Susanna Perry Gilmore, Former Concertmaster of the Memphis Symphony and Current Concertmaster of the Omaha Symphony; and Dr. Nancy Schechter, Concertmaster of the Gwinnett Symphony Chamber Orchestra and former member of the Alea String Quartet.