

RES25-021
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 80

INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY & ENTERTAINMENT (ITE)

**INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY & ENTERTAINMENT
(ITE) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Feb 13, 2025 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Thomas Bingham	Email: bingham@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Feb 11, 2025 @ 11:16 AM

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February 11, 2025

The Honorable Augie Tulba, Chair
And Members
Committee on Innovation, Technology & Entertainment
Honolulu City Council

Dear Committee Members,

I understand that Clarke Bright is being considered for reappointment as Bandmaster of the Royal Hawaiian Band. I fully support this reappointment.

I am Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where I served as Associate Director of Bands, Music Department Chair, Dean of the College of Arts & Humanities, Dean of the School of Architecture, and Dean of the School of Travel Industry Management.

I have followed and interacted with the RHB since I came to Hawaii in 1975. I have worked with every RHB bandmaster since Ken Kawashima, appearing as guest conductor, serving on the musician audition panel and the interview panel for administrative positions. I have conducted research on the RHB and a number of the musicians are my former students. In short, I am familiar with the band and its operations and I care very much about the future of the RHB.

Over the fourteen years since Clarke's appointment, he has proven be exceptional in the multiple skills needed in this unique position. Not necessarily in order of importance:

- Musician/Conductor: The mark of a good conductor is how good the ensemble sounds, and Clarke is among Hawaii's best. The 175th Anniversary concert, presented soon after Clarke started, was already the best I had heard the band sound in years, and the E Kani Mau concert in Hawaii Theater in 2022 was a tremendous success.
- Personnel: Managing professional musicians is quite different than managing most other employees. Artists, particularly those accomplished enough to be professional, have vastly different needs and present challenges not found in most departments. Clarke's solid moral center and firm instance on treating everyone with integrity and fairness earn him respect from all. Having spent many hours with him during personnel interviews, I can tell you that he cares as much for the person behind the instrument as he does about their playing ability.
- Administration: Clarke has also proven to be a skilled administrator, not necessarily a common trait among talented musicians. By tweaking staff responsibilities and making

thoughtful hires, he has considerably improved both performance and efficiency. Significantly, Clarke was able to arrange for a new “home” for the band, the holy grail of every RHB director for decades.

The Royal Hawaiian Band has a rich history of accomplished bandmasters and Clarke has already earned a place among the best. The City and County of Honolulu would be fortunate indeed to have him continue in this role.

Sincerely,

Thomas R Bingham, retired
Professor of Music Emeritus
University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa