

Michigan Music Teacher

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**PUBLICATION OF
THE MICHIGAN MUSIC
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

*Affiliated with the Music Teachers
National Association*
www.mtna.org
www.michiganmusicteachers.org

Vol. LXIII No. 2 December 2016

President's Letter

Dear MMTA Members,

It is an honor to serve again in the capacity of President for the Michigan Music Teachers Association! Please allow me to update you on some of our organization's activities.

The new SAT Handbook is now undergoing a test-drive by selected teachers across the state. Scheduled to be released in 2018, we owe a huge thanks to the following members for thoughtfully revising the handbook: Diana Munch, chair, Gail Lytle Lira, Barbara Du-Russel, Jackie Vander Slik, and Sarah Carriere. This was a daunting task and was not taken lightly by any means. The Board and membership recognizes their hard work. Thanks!

The Board voted to move the SAT Senior Piano Finals to the Michigan Youth Arts Festival in 2017: the date will be May 18-20 at Western Michigan University. Students will receive an invitation to the festival after the SAT Semifinals and will register independently on-line. The Finals will be held on Friday of the festival, so students can come on Thursday evening to enjoy the gala events. In addition, students can receive master class coaching as part of the festival.

We welcome new board members! Jody Pierce, a recent graduate of Central Michigan University, will replace Michelle Mitchum as Arts Awareness and Advocacy Chair. Michelle Mitchum will replace Margaret Thomson as SAT Auditions Chair. In addition, we

welcome Ruth Goveia as the new MTNA/MMTA Senior Competitions Chair. Our new Vice President is Lia Jensen Abbott—we welcome her and look forward to our next two Conferences coordinated by her! Go Lia!

I had the pleasure to attend the MTNA Summit in September: this is an event geared towards new and returning state presidents: It is sort of an immersion in all the details of being a president. It was great fun to meet other state presidents, and also to meet and bond with the presidents in our East Central Division. To top off the short weekend, we took a tour of the new offices at MTNA! It was awesome! And of course, just getting to meet up with the staff at MTNA was great fun! Through all this, I realize how good our state is: we have a wonderful Board of dedicated individuals who are thinking of and towards the association as a whole, and a fantastic membership of hard working members throughout the state! Michigan is GREAT!

Also, a shout out of great joy and thanks Laurie Marshall for organizing the MTNA/MMTA Competitions! Thank you! And, of course, thanks to the teachers for their hard work in preparing the students for the competitions, the students for their hard work as well. Central Michigan University's School of Music will be the host site for the East Central Division Competitions, January 15, 2017. Looking forward to seeing our states come together with some really great talent!

To close.... You might remember my son is a golfer? (you are probably thinking.... Oh no! here we go again!!!!) Well, Cameron is 20 now and a sophomore at Northwood University where he is majoring in Entertainment, Sports and Business Management. He plays on the golf team and his passion is still golf! We mourn the turn in weather! If, and only if, we could have weather like Florida all the time!?! It has been a journey with his golf game and such a pleasure to see him get out there and golf! Stay tuned.....

Wishing you and your students and families a blessed winter season!

Warmly,

Adrienne Wiley, MMTA President

MICHIGAN MUSIC TEACHER

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1/4 page \$60

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DEADLINE

FOR THE

MARCH 2017

MMT:

February 15

All materials must be
received by this date

CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR E-MAIL

Send to

Lester Castellana, Membership Chair: lestercastellana@gmail.com

~ or mail to: ~

Lester Castellana, 7164 Palmer St., Dexter, MI 48130

In Remembrance of Charles Aschbrenner, MMTA Vice President

November 19, 1936—September 18, 2016

Words from three long-time friends and colleagues



Charles Aschbrenner was both a gracious, caring gentleman and an inspiring teacher. Many of us looked up to him as a mentor and we have all benefitted from his years of service to our local and state associations. He was a founding member of the Holland Piano Teachers' Forum and has been a valued member for many years. Even with his busy teaching and performing schedule, he was always willing to serve as a Forum Board member, as a liaison between the Forum and Hope College, and as a tally room worker for SAT even when he didn't have students entered. He was also very active in MMTA and was finishing a term as vice president when he passed away.

His influence spreads beyond MMTA as well to the hundreds of students he taught in his 50 years at Hope College. While I was never formally a student of Charles, I have enjoyed hearing him speak to our organization and listening to his performances. His legacy as an educator will live on through all the students who have taken his pedagogical ideas and are now using them to teach a new generation. As teachers, we all take a personal interest in our students' lives which continues after they leave our studios. I know that Charles cared about his students in the same way, it's been almost 10 years since my son took just one class with Charles at Hope. Years later, Charles would still ask me about how Jon was doing and where he was in his studies.

Charles Aschbrenner was a highly respected and cherished member of the music community in Holland and throughout the state. We were blessed to have him as our fellow teacher, mentor, and friend. We will miss him.

- Jacki Vander Slik

Since bios of my friend and colleague are easily accessible, I thought it might be of more interest to MMTA members to share some insights into our "joined-at-the-hip" 13 year stint as the CONWAY & ASCHBRENNER 2-piano team.

Our teaching studios were side-by-side in the Hope College music building. We probably fell into our career as a team by default, and played first at Hope and St. Cecilia in Grand Rapids. Our very first piece was Clementi's B-flat Sonata, and the adjustments we had to make were huge. Our sounds, our tempi, our ways of rehearsing – nothing matched. Neither did our concert apparel, so we had our colors "done" at Personal Palette, only to discover, after 2 hours of being draped – he in white, I in cream, he in mauve, I in orange, that a summer and an autumn can only clash. So we bought matching leather music cases and came on-stage with our 70s big hair and clashing plaids.

The logistics of duo-piano playing become tedious: Who will play which piano, which will have the lid taken off (by us at each new venue), who is playing too loud, how to see each other over the music.....We worked through these issues and soon were playing everywhere – Interlochen, MMTA conventions, colleges across the country – Charles cheerfully driving his restored classic blue convertible, doing most of the piano shoving, lid-removing (carrying tools for dealing with bent pins), and I fretting because he was usually late.

In 1982, at the instigation of Jill Christian, we founded a 2-piano camp. Flying under the radar in our own community, it was an amazing and riotous ride. Held at Hope College, only 1 week long, it was packed with 2-piano, piano 4-hand, 6-hand, 8-hand daily coaching, banana-split parties, beach roasts at Jill's cottage, and

Cont. on p. 4

Cont. from p. 3

concerts – Oh the concerts! Friends came from all over to perform for next to no money: Aebersold & Neiwem, Stacey & Rich Ridenour, Alan & Alvin Chow, Angela Cheng, Nagy & Sales. Charles and I kicked off each season with a duo concert and ended with another – often including Christian and Scott Cutting. The campers had a final recital too: duos and ensembles, culminating with a rendition of “Stars and Stripes Forever” by all – after we rolled in every upright in the building!

After 5 exhilarating but incredibly demanding years we agreed to hang it up, and our duo also burned out. But not before we had laughed and argued our way through a very large chunk of the 2-piano repertoire. I loved playing audience favorites like Lutoslawski’s Variations on a Theme of Paganini and Variations on “Yankee Doodle” by Mario Braggiotti. Charles came to hate them. On the other hand, his preference for Mother Goose and En blanc et noir promised no standing ovations!

We continued to teach next door to one another, becoming known as Ethel & Earl, till I retired in 2000. Charles kept right on for 16 more years till his untimely death “retired” him. A final peek into his laid-back, but always gracious personality: I visited him at Hospice one sunny day. He was in a wheelchair seated on the porch, speaking with a woman. He told me later that he was making funeral plans, and found it “rather depressing”.

Sadly, Charles never got to assume the role of MMTA President, but his long career as pianist, teacher, adjudicator, board member, life-long-learner, and smiling colleague will be his far-reaching legacy.

- Joan Conway “Ethel”

Dear Charlie ... long time friend and colleague. It was a lot of fun spending time with you over the decades, in various venues. We are all on our way out of this life, and will follow you as we amble toward our final cadence. The best we can ask is that we are surrounded by loved ones before we cross over into silence. Brava on a life well lived, with many diverse episodes and expositions. A true fugue of Bachian dimensions.

- Eric Van De Vort

Dear MMTA Readers,

This recap should have come from Charles Aschbrenner, Vice President, and sadly, as we know, Charles passed away. Stepping in to fill his shoes was an honor for me, and to serve MMTA again in this capacity. We have to thank Charles for his foresight in arranging for the excellent clinicians for this Conference! As an Association, we have much to be grateful for! It was, as I stated, an honor, to pick up where Charles left off, and make the Conference a “go!” I also want to recognize Gail Lytle Lira: without her help in putting together the Conference booklet, and addressing the needs and issues pertaining to the Conference, it would not have happened so smoothly.

A lot of thanks also to the Midland Music Teachers Association! Their unwavering service to assisting with the Conference on their home turf was awesome! Thanks Midland Music Teachers for all that you did!

Looking forward to the 2017 Conference!

Best wishes to all,

Adrienne Wiley
Interim Vice President
MMTA President, 2016-2018

The following article was written by Adrienne Wiley, East Central Division Commissioner on Certification. Each Commissioner is, or will have written, an article on certification, and each article is, or will be sent to the Division states for publication in their newsletter. This article has been disseminated to Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and of course, Michigan!

Why Certify???

My son, Cameron, is 20 years old and is a sophomore in college. His PASSION is golf, and his dream is to become a professional golfer. Now, you have to understand that NO ONE in my family, nor my husband's family, is a golfer. We are musicians and teachers—we teach piano. But golf?? NO!! Cameron, however, took to golf by the age of three: he was using plastic clubs and hitting plastic balls all over our yard, and of course, into the neighbor's yard as well (my years of fence-climbing are over, thankfully!). By the time Cameron was seven, we realized that this was getting pretty serious and we decided to look for his first teacher, or more appropriately: golf coach.

Finding a highly qualified golf coach is similar to finding a qualified piano teacher: we wanted a coach that had gone through the PGA certification, one who had their credentials certified through the PGA and who was an excellent teacher. We eventually found the right coach for him, one that met all of our expectations. As Cameron has continued with his career in golf, we have changed coaches, but each time, we have always reached out to find a coach that is certified through the PGA.

Since I am not a golfer, I found it quite interesting to study the PGA web page regarding their certification process. Interestingly, being certified by and through the PGA holds major credibility—just as certification through MTNA. The PGA has specific areas of specialization, such as teaching and coaching, player development, golf operations, and general management. In addition, within the PGA, the “Certified Professional Program” boasts a detailed outline of projects that must be completed to garner certification, and each is a step-by-step process that is evaluated and eventually endorsed for the certification. The PGA wants their members to be certified and offers every opportunity for individuals to achieve this status.

MTNA offers the opportunity for any music teacher to become certified through a step-by-step process. Like the PGA, MTNA's program is organized and easy to follow, and MTNA **wants** their members to achieve certification status: being a certified teacher shows the community at large how important it is to be professional, and to be endorsed by a national organization as a quality teacher. Like the PGA, the MTNA certification program features projects that are explained and set forth in a methodical manner and is easy to understand. Certification candidates follow this step-by-step process which leads to the submission of their portfolio for consideration.

Just as we searched for a certified and qualified PGA coach for Cameron, today's parents are also shopping for a certified and qualified music teacher. Why would they expect anything less? In today's society, the demand for quality and qualified teachers is at a premium. I encourage any and all teachers to take the leap of faith and get certified through MTNA! There is nothing to lose, but a whole lot to gain!

Go fore it!

**Music Teachers National Association
Michigan Music Teachers Association
Performance Competition Results**

November 11-13, 2016; Western Michigan University

Junior Division

Piano:

First Place, Richard Shao	Teacher, Arthur Greene
Alternate, Shuheng Zhang	Teacher, Logan Skelton
Honorable Mention, Jubilee Wang	Teacher, Mary Siciliano
Honorable Mention, Annie Tang	Teacher, Faye Mao
Honorable Mention, Richard Li	Teacher, Nai-Wen Wang
Honorable Mention, Roger Wang	Teacher, Arthur Greene

Senior Division

Piano:

First Place, Heather Gu	Teacher, Logan Skelton
Alternate, Isabelle Lian	Teacher, Arthur Greene
Honorable Mention, Yung-Yi Chen	Teacher, Michael Coonrod
Honorable Mention, James Jiang	Teacher, Faye Mao
Honorable Mention, Katherine Lee	Teacher, Faye Mao
Honorable Mention, Frederick Zhao	Teacher, Faye Mao

String:

Representative, Kathy Zhang	Teacher, Stephen Shipps
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Voice:

Representative, Nathanael Mitchell	Teacher, Laurie M. Marshall
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Woodwind:

Representative, Ian Mahoney	Teacher, Jeffrey Heisler
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Young Artist Division

Brass:

Representative, Joshua Tobias	Teacher, Kenneth Kroesche
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Piano:

First Place, Ji Hyang Gwak	Teacher, Christopher Harding
Alternate, Aaron Kurz	Teacher, Logan Skelton
Honorable Mention, Rachel Chen	Teacher, Logan Skelton
Honorable Mention, Vivian Anderson	Teacher, Logan Skelton

Woodwind:

First Place, Russel Kerns	Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Alternate, Chad Lilley	Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Honorable Mention, Caleb Shannon	Teacher, Joseph Lulloff
Honorable Mention, Christopher Sacco	Teacher, Dan Graser

Chamber Ensemble Winds:

First Place, Adamas Quartet	Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Johathan Hostottle, Russell Kerns, Jeffrey Leung, and Connor James Mikula.	
Alternate, Saarinen Quartet	Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Andrea Voulgaris, Sean Meyers, Chance Stine, and Eric Anundson.	
Honorable Mention, Sapphirus Quartet	Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Chad Lilley, Emmett Rapaport, Connor O'Toole, and Liam Dilenschneider.	

Laurie M. Marshall

MTNA MMTA Performance Competitions Chair

In Remembrance of Karen Ver Hulst

March 8, 1942 - August 10, 2016



It is with great sadness that the Piano Teachers' Forum of Grand Rapids reports the passing of our dear member, Karen Ver Hulst on August 10, 2016 at the age of 74. Karen was a member of our group for 35 years. For many of those years, Karen served as our extraordinary "treat lady" as she provided delicious home baked cakes, cookies and candies for our monthly meeting coffee breaks.

Karen grew up in Holland, Michigan where as a teenage member of Beechwood Reformed Church she was given enough rudimentary instruction on the organ by the church organist to allow her to help with playing the instrument for services. She was interested in medicine and went to Hope college to pursue a degree in science. Life forged her a different path, however. Karen fell in love and became a mom. She dedicated her time to being a stay at home mom and raising her children.

When her daughter Julia was seven years old, she decided it was time to look for a piano teacher! Vivian Kleinhuizen of Grand Rapids took her and Julia under her wings and she has studied with Vivian ever since. As an adult student, Karen went on to pursue music education at Aquinas college where she took lessons with Eugene Hopkins. Karen joined the Piano Teachers' Forum of Grand Rapids in 1980. Her devoted attendance, friendly smile and a cheerful attitude have brightened forum meetings.

Besides piano, Karen loved to garden. She loved to entertain. During the years she served as the morning hostess for the Forum she treated members royally to themed beverages and desserts described as "Works of Art". Most of all, she loved teaching and she was adored by students and fellow teachers alike. Karen was awarded Piano Teacher of the Year in 2013.

Students of Karen's piano studio were active in many musical activities. Her students were recipients of numerous scholarships to Interlochen, Blue Lake music camps as well as winning college scholarships. Karen supported all of the events sponsored by our Piano Forum and we will sorely miss her faithful participation. So ends a 60 year career of loving music and teaching her beloved students up to the week before her death.

Vivian Kleinhuizen, PTFGR

MICHIGAN MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION CONCERTO COMPETITION

SATURDAY, May 13, 2017

Michigan State University

Hart and Cook Recital Halls, East Lansing, Michigan

Adrienne Wiley, Chair (wiley1ae@cmich.edu); Gail Lytle Lira, Co-Chair (gail@gaillytlelira.com)

Giuseppe Lupis, Registration and Scheduling (lupodelu@hotmail.com)

Auditions are open to any student through Grade 12 studying any instrument, including voice, with a teacher who is a member of MMTA. Students of non-members are accepted (see special fees below). Students who have won a first place in any category may not compete again until they have reached the next Division of the competition. There are four divisions in the competition:

Division I (grades 1–3) (\$40 entry fee)

Division III (grades 7–9) (\$45 entry fee)

Division II (grades 4–6) (\$45 entry fee)

Division IV (grades 10–12) (\$50 entry fee)

\$70.00 for Non-MMTA Member Students

For more information, go to <http://www.michiganmusicteachers.org/mmta-concerto-competition-information>

MMTA Concerto Competition Application

Name _____ Age _____

School _____ Grade _____

Parent's email _____ Parent's phone _____

Parent's address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Concerto _____ Composer _____

Mvt. _____ Time: _____ min.

Accompanist's Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Teacher's Name _____

Print

signature

Teacher's email _____ Phone(____) _____

Teacher's Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Teachers, please send **applications and one check** for all students by April 14, 2017 to:

Giuseppe Lupis, PO Box 7355, Grand Rapids, MI 49510

New Honorary Members

At the October MMTA conference, it was my pleasure to recognize 12 members for their more-than fifty years of membership in MMTA:

Mair Alsgaard
Delaine Counsellor
LaVonne M. Harris
Billie Fay Netterwald

Helen Schmitz
Margery Stomne Selden
Betty Kowalsky Stasson
Carolyn B. Tower

Mary Vander Linde
Ruth Vanderwerf
Joyce N. Verhaar
Janet Walworth

More than their membership and *great* service to our organization, this achievement demonstrates an incredible dedication to the art of music teaching: persistence, patience, frustration, endurance... and all that ignites the labor: wonder, beauty, joy, friendship, artistry, and love. Congratulations on an accomplished, musical life - *bravissime!*

Lester Castellana, Membership Chair

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December 2016

In Remembrance

Many of you may have noticed the printed remembrances of MMTA members that have passed away. In addition to the 2 in this newsletter, there have been others printed in past editions. Each year, we would like to honor and remember MMTA members who have passed away. Chapter presidents will be contacted each year for information about local members who have passed away. If you would like to submit an article and picture in addition to the once-a-year remembrance, please contact Alisha Snyder, MMT Editor. This year, we honor the following MMTA members:

- Charles Aschbrenner (1936-2016)
- Gaylene Banagis (1938-2016)
- Kelley Benson (1958-2016)
- Mary Chartier (1935-2016)
- Hazel Teot (1920-2015)
- Karen Ver Hulst (1942-2016)

MMTA SAT Senior Division Piano Finals Move to Michigan Youth Arts Festival

MAY 19-20 2017

Please add these dates to your calendar and remind your students that if they qualify for Senior Division Piano Finals they will be invited to participate in the 2017 Michigan Youth Arts Festival at Western Michigan University. Tentative plans are for students to arrive on Friday afternoon or evening and have a full day of competition and master classes on Saturday. The cost for Senior Piano participants will be approximately \$160, including lodging, meals, and all festival events.

The Michigan Youth Arts Festival is a comprehensive arts spectacular, culminating a nine-month search for the finest artistic talent in Michigan high schools. More than 250,000 students across the state are involved in the adjudication process that results in nearly 1,000 being invited to participate in the annual event. It is here that these exceptional students in the arts gather together to explore, celebrate and showcase their talent in multiple disciplines. The Festival hopes to foster this lifelong love of the arts through a showcase of individual talent and through celebrating the talents of others.

As a charter member of Michigan Youth Arts, MMTA is delighted to be an active participant in the 55th annual Michigan Youth Arts Festival. In addition to our SAT Senior Division Piano Finals, we will invite last year's Senior Piano winner to perform in a gala concert, and we will continue to nominate a member to receive the Touchstone Educator of the Year Award during the festival.

The goal of the Student Achievement Program is to promote musical growth as well as motivation and recognition for our hardworking, talented students. Since MYA is recognized as Michigan's premiere event for high school artists, this change adds an additional educational component to SAT Senior Piano finals and brings more recognition to our finalists from their peers. It provides something "extra" for our senior piano finalists, many of whom have already participated in SAT finals in previous years. Participants are recognized as "distinguished scholars in the arts," and receive a medal and a sticker added to their high school diploma.

Michelle Mitchum, SAT Auditions Chair

Garik Pedersen, MMTA-MYA Liaison

Nagel, cont. from p. 12

There is usually a single winner, a single alternate, and a couple, maybe three honorable mentions. Are they ready to win first prize and perform? What is it like to be among the others who are not recognized despite their sincere efforts to present themselves at their best? In other words, is the phenomenon of musical competition discussed to the point where no matter what happens it can be turned into a positive (if maybe a painful) LEARNING EXPERIENCE?

I remember sitting on a panel of a particular competition many years ago. A diminutive 11 year-old shuffled to the piano. He looked sad, slumped, as if he did not want to be there. He sat down, adjusted the bench to accommodate his small stature, and proceeded to whip through the Rigoletto Paraphrase with incredible digital command. And after his astonishing performance was concluded, he rose somewhat slowly from his bench and shuffled back to his seat without (as I recall) bowing, or showing any visible emotion. When his name was announced as the inevitable winner, I could not help but feel sad. I do not have the slightest idea who, this youngster was/is nor where he is now nor what he might be doing. But I still feel a certain sadness in contemplating what might have happened to him. Does he play the piano any more now that he is an adult (this was long enough ago that he has reached 21 or more) and does he have a sense of the story behind the music, that wonderful paraphrase that speaks to such a gripping opera story? I don't have an answer. I don't know what that competition did for him. I know what it did for me, and intensified my thoughts about how to make competitions a learning experience.

COMPETITIONS MUST BENEFIT THE STUDENT. They have to be educational. They have to be part of a process that enables a student to grow, to add to his/her repertoire with all sorts of music—Clementi and Dussek Sonatinas and Schumann's "The Happy Farmer" are lovely early pieces that teach musicality and technical confidence. (I can still recall the thrill I felt when I discovered that the Happy Farmer melody is in the LEFT HAND!!!!!!Wow!!!!) For the more advanced student, Bach Fugues, Mozart Sonatas, Schumann and Schubert and Chopin and Mendelssohn character pieces, Prokofiev, Debussy, Schoenberg (Opus 19 in particular) Dello Joio, Hindemith, Bolcom, and so on—study the gamut of our vast repertoire. And understanding as well as dazzling virtuosity should always be the goal of this sort of educational experience. We are training MUSICIANS. In time perhaps a few of our young students will actually enter the Cliburn or the Tchaikovsky or other international competitions and hopefully launch some sort of career. That would be nice. But so few—so very few will have that good fortune. Not achieving that goal does not preclude their becoming successful and contributing musicians. I believe deeply that our state competitions can serve that educational purpose, and if the adjudications and written commentaries of mine and my fellow judges facilitated that growth, then I am really proud to have heard and helped the performers these past few weeks.

Important Upcoming Dates:

January 15, 2017	ECD Competition and Meeting, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, MI
March 18 -22	MTNA National Conference, Baltimore, MD
April 22	SAT Semi-Finals
May 6	SAT Finals (voice, intermediate and junior piano), Michigan State University
May 13	MMTA Concerto Competition (Entry deadline April 14, 2017), Michigan State University (see page 8 for more details)
May 19-20	SAT Senior Piano Finals, in conjunction with Michigan Youth Arts Festival, Western Michigan University (see article on page 10 for more information)

Musical Musings

COMPETITIONS

By Louis Nagel

Recently I served as an adjudicator for the Mississippi Music Teachers' Association Convention and our own Michigan Music Teachers' Association convention. Both MMTA's by the way, and the emails back and forth occasioned a bit of confusion on my part! Fortunately those confusions were ironed out easily. And both state conventions were marvelously organized, Ellen Elder in Mississippi, (a graduate of our University of Michigan and former student in my studio) and Laurie Marshall here in Michigan did fine jobs to ensure comfort for all participants and fairness in the competitions themselves. A special thanks to Laurie, here in the state for a job wonderfully well done, including the meals we had from Food Dance in Kalamazoo! I admit to being lost on Western Michigan's campus, but never hungry!

I heard some excellent playing in the two divisions I served. The juniors were delightful to hear, and the artist division produced some compelling playing on a high level. And once I managed somehow (despite David Abbot's excellent directions which I clearly did not follow) to escape the maze of Western's campus and land miraculously on 94 going east, I had some thoughts I would like to share with our readers.

Laurie instructed us that these competitions are intended to be educational events. I was so happy to hear that attitude spoken and impressed upon us as a charge to us in our deliberations and comments. Despite the fine playing, this level of competition is not the Cliburn nor Tchaikovsky. Most of these performers are playing works relatively new to their repertoires. And many of the younger students in all likelihood had limited exposure to public performances of their pieces. I am going to go out on a limb and imagine that many pieces were learned specifically to be impressive competitively. So far there is nothing wrong with this approach. But I wonder how many of the students playing super-challenging music also had been preparing some non-competitive pieces that would help them grow as musicians? For example, there are few preludes and fugues that would show off the brilliant techniques a young pianist. A Haydn Sonata other than perhaps the last one, doesn't tickle the ear with silvery pianism. I doubt if a super-sensitive "Voiles" from the first book of Debussy Preludes has ever nailed down a first prize for a young competitor. Since I am surmising here, and cannot back up my words with facts and figures, I can be held accountable for irresponsible journalism. But I do know that we hear some of the same level of super-virtuoso pieces played in a variety of ways at competitions that are not always appropriate to the performer doing them.

I believe a competition should be part of a young person's study after he/she has studied a variety of compositions exploring various styles, lengths, levels of technical difficulty, and above all, understanding. I have always been uneasy, to put it mildly when I hear a teenager venturing forth in the worlds of Beethoven E Major Sonata, Opus 109 or the Schubert G Major Sonata. I am not convinced that the E Minor Partita of Bach is such a great competition piece anyway but even less so for a young person whose repertoire does not include some "work up to" music—like several Preludes and Fugues of varying difficulties and a suite or toccata of lesser dimensions. And I can only hope that students entering competitions have had a chance to talk about their feelings towards competing: are they eager to play? Are they nervous but afraid to admit it? Are they doing this because of pressure from teacher or parents or peers? Are they aware of the intensity of emotion that can build up, particularly if they win a prize less than first? **Nagel, cont. on p. 11**

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