

Michigan Music Teacher

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**PUBLICATION OF
THE MICHIGAN MUSIC
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

*Affiliated with the Music Teachers
National Association*

Vol. LXII No. 2 December 2015

President's Letter

Dear MMTA Members,

When you receive this newsletter, we will be arranging studio recitals, juries, holiday preparations and family functions. After a wonderful October State Conference in Grand Rapids, we have returned to our students and our studios, more inspired and empowered to share our music educational experiences.

I had the privilege to visit with the lovely **Metropolitan Detroit Musician's League** in October. I enjoyed meeting many members of MDML and hearing **Giuseppe Lupis'** presentation on The Italian Conservatory. I do enjoy reading of each association's monthly events, so if your local association has a newsletter, I would love to receive one.

We are welcoming to the MMTA Board two new chairs. **Beatrice Ellis** has graciously accepted the position of Teacher's Education Chair and **Janice Derian** will be our new State Certification Chair.

The **MTNA Auditions** were held the weekend of November 20-22 at the University of Michigan. Congratulations to all students and teachers who participated. Thanks to **Laurie Marshall**, MTNA Auditions Chair, **Penny Draper**, Young Artist Coordinator, **Christopher Harding**, site organizer, and **Eric Van De Vort** for their time and their organization of this huge competition. It was a full three days of competition with over 100 students competing in piano, strings, and woodwinds (and our first snow fall). The winners will compete at the East Central Division Audition at Goshen College on January 16, 2016.

Earlier in 2015, a friend suggested the book *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron. Some of her thoughts seem very relevant for myself and for MMTA. "Success occurs in clusters." Julia compares artists to a garden. "Each plant has its name and its purpose. There is no one flower that cancels the need for another. Each bloom has a unique and irreplaceable beauty." She continues, "Let our gardening hands be gentle ones. Let us not root up one another before they have time to bloom. Let us bear with the process of growth. Let us never be hasty to judge, or reckless in our urgency to force unnatural growth."

We benefit tremendously from the support of all of our members. Please consider being more active in your local association by volunteering for a new task or a new committee during 2016. Invite and bring a musician friend, who is a non-member, to a local meeting or a musical event.

May we all have a safe, restful, and peaceful holiday season and a healthy, happy and musical 2016!

Sincerely,

Gail Lytle Lira, MMTA President

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Full page \$140
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1/4 page \$60

Submit ads to the MMT editor
with a check payable to MMTA.
Fees are for one issue only.

DEADLINE

FOR THE
MARCH 2016

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

Important Upcoming Dates:

January 15 - 16, 2016 ECD Competition and Meeting, Goshen, IN
February 27-28, 2016 MMTA Concerto Competition, Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, MI
April 2-6, 2016 MTNA National Conference, Hyatt Grand Hotel, San Antonio, TX
April 16, 2016 SAT Semi-Finals, West, Central, and East locations
May 7, 2016 SAT Finals, MSU, East Lansing, MI
October 9-11, 2016 131st MMTA State Conference, Midland, MI

2016 MMTA State Conference in Midland

The 2016 MMTA State Conference will be held October 9-11, 2016, in Midland, MI.

The conference will be held at the H Hotel, a Dolce hotel, with rooms at \$109/night.

Continue to check the conference website as more details become available:

www.michiganmusicteachers.org/2016-conference-information

I look forward to seeing all of you at the 131st state conference!

Charles Aschbrenner, Vice President

A Note from Diana Spitnale Miller -

Thank you very much to the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors for presenting me with the Distinguished Service Award. It is a wonderful honor. While doing some research on another subject, I was reminded of a mistake I mentioned in the biography I submitted for the MMT and the Fall Conference Program Book. In the very first paragraph in the list of offices served it said "as Technology Chairman when she created the first website for MMTA". In reality the first web presence of MMTA came about in November of 1998. Then chair Judy Wade worked with a committee to decide what topics would be online and there were five pages. When she stepped down in 2001, George Widiger briefly tried to maintain the website before I took over as Chair in September 2001. Through the years both myself and the current chair Eric Van De Vort have recreated the website working to keep the website fresh as the age of technology has continued to improve.

The Oakland Piano Teacher's Forum is pleased to announce the upcoming appearance of Randall Faber who is an internationally known speaker, composer, pedagogue and co-author of the best selling *Piano Adventures*® series.

Mr. Faber's lecture is entitled "Developing Musical Minds, Hearts and Communities."

The event takes place on Friday, January 29, 2016 at the Farmington Community Library, 32737 W. 12 Mile Road, Farmington Hills, MI. The event will start at 10:30 AM and will run for two hours. This is a free event and should be of great interest to all teachers.

Contact Henry Feinberg at pianohenry@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

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

November 20-22, 2015

University of Michigan, School of Music, Theatre, and Dance
1100 Baits Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48109
2015 MTNA MMTA Performance Competitions Chair, Laurie M. Marshall

Junior Division

Piano: First Place, Shuheng Zhang Teacher, Logan Skelton
Alternate, Catherina Lu Teacher, Catherine Rollin
Honorable Mention, Isabelle Lian Teacher, Arthur Greene
Honorable Mention, Chihiro Ochi Teacher, Tomoko Mack
Honorable Mention, Jubilee Wang Teacher, Mary Siciliano
Honorable Mention, Bright Xu Teacher, Faye Mao

Senior Division

Piano: First Place, Heather Gu Teacher, Logan Skelton
Alternate, Minyl Zhang Teacher, Thomas Lymenstull
Honorable Mention, Yung Yi Chen Teacher, Michael Coonrod
Honorable Mention, Isabella Hu Teacher, Catherine Rollin
Honorable Mention, Tsung Sah Lian Teacher, Michael Coonrod
Honorable Mention, Demi Yang Teacher, Faye Mao
Honorable Mention, Maple Xu Teacher, Faye Mao

Piano Duet:

First Place, Joseph & David Mutone Teacher, Catherine Rollin
Alternate, TingTing Chang & Heather Gu Teacher, Logan Skelton

String: Representative, Justin Shim, violin Teacher, Solomia Soroka

Woodwind: First Place, Hunter O'Brien, flute Teacher, Joanna White
Alternate, Grace Gelpi, saxophone Teacher, Joseph Lulloff
Honorable Mention, Lindsey Wong, flute Teacher, Amy Porter

Young Artist Division

Piano: First Place, Hsiujung Hou Teacher, Christopher Harding
Alternate, Aaron Kurz Teacher, Logan Skelton
Honorable Mention, Vivian Anderson Teacher, Logan Skelton
Honorable Mention, Danni Feng Teacher, Logan Skelton

String: Representative, Bingqing Xia Teacher, Fangye Sun

Woodwind:

First Place, Jonathan Hostottle, saxophone Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Alternate, Andrea Voulgaris, saxophone Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Honorable Mention, Jeffrey Leung, saxophone Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Honorable Mention, Dylan Ward, saxophone Teacher, Joseph Lulloff

Chamber Ensemble Strings:

Representative: Koinonia Trio Teacher/Coach, Amy Cheng
Hye-jin Cho, piano; Christine Li, violin; Nathaniel Pierce, cello

Chamber Ensemble Woodwinds:

First Place: Eero Quartet:

Teacher/Coach, Timothy McAllister
David Foley, soprano saxophone
Andrea Voulgaris, alto saxophone
Lisa Keeney, tenor saxophone
Brendan Kelly, baritone saxophone

Alternate: Auteur Quartet:

Teacher/Coach, Joseph Lulloff
Ka Wai Ching, soprano saxophone
Dylan Ward, alto saxophone
Jeff Kinsey, tenor saxophone
Chris Ogden, baritone saxophone

Honorable Mention: Aurora Quartet

Teacher/Coach: John Nichol
Emma Pendergrass, alto saxophone
Jared Waters, soprano saxophone
Lucas Keur, tenor saxophone
Brett Goodman, baritone saxophone

Honorable Mention: The Origin Saxophone Quartet

Teacher/Coach: John Nichol
BethAnne Kunert, soprano saxophone
Alyssa Shepard, alto saxophone
Sean Bradley, tenor saxophone
Kyrstin Jensen, baritone saxophone

Certification News - 2015

Another year has passed during which we have taught many students. As we teach, our teaching skills develop and we see progress in our students. The certification process, whether state or national, is another way to develop teaching skills. I might add, that it takes courage to be willing to present our teaching skills to be evaluated by peers.

Let's congratulate the Melissa Dawn Brown on achieving Michigan State Certification. May this accomplishment encourage her to continue to develop as an effective and dedicated teacher. Let us also congratulate Rachel Lowrance who achieved National Certification.

Standard Renewal was granted to Heidi Cowan- Ann Arbor, Bernadine W. Johnson – Fremont , Janis Rohn-Stanton, Margaret Thorstein- Coopersville. Laura Manchester- Pigeon chose not to renew state certification. Emeritus renewal was granted to Stephanie Burr- Grand Rapids, Sara Carriere- Ann Arbor, Judy Liberson-Pleasant Ridge, Michelle Mitchum – Petoskey. Permanent Certification was granted to Mitchell Genova-Troy, Alix Jenkins-Mason, Grace Meihwei Chuang- Troy, and Diana Munch – Southfield.

Consider the possibility of developing teaching skills through state or national certification. As I am completing my service on the State Certification Committee, I wish to thank the committee members, Maria Lonchyna-Lisowsky, Marilyn Slenk, Patricia Brummel, Kristen Avila, and Adrienne E. Wiley for all their work. Also, I wish the new certification chairperson and members of the committee success in the coming years.

Maria Holian SCTM, NCTM

Pictures from MMTA State Conference 2015



State Teachers of the Year: Heidi Cowan, Margarete Thomsen, President Gail Lytle Lira, Sara Aylesworth, and Local Assoc. Coordinator Jeanne Hanley Thelen.

President Gail Lytle Lira with Distinguished Service Award Winner Diana Spitnale Miller.



President Gail Lytle Lira with outgoing board members Jennifer Drake, Barbara Collins, Maria Holian, and Sara Carriere.



Conference Artist Antonio Pompa-Baldi with MMTA Vice President Charles Aschbrenner.





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Nagel, cont. from p. 8

Audiences tend to keep track of mistakes. It is sort of like counting Matthew Stafford's unsuccessful passes for the Detroit Lions. I more than once have had this experience, but one time truly stands out in my memory ----after the concert a very nicely attired gentleman who I did not know came back stage with his wife (I assume) and uttered the ever-popular audience line "I don't know much about music but I can always tell a wrong note. And you were perfect tonight!" I was playing the Liszt B Minor Sonata that evening and while I don't have great difficulty with that music, I can assure you without any hesitation I missed notes. And I have made enough "mistakes" on stage before audiences to qualify me for prominent membership in the human race.

Missed notes are facts of a performer's life. So are memory slips. And so too are those concerts where everything mechanical goes okay but the communication seems flat. Excitement is less than it might be. I have never known anyone to come back stage and say "you got all the notes but it wasn't expressive." And that, to me, is as much an imperfection as an errant B-flat or a forgotten sequence in a Bach fugue.

There are pianists (and other instrumentalists as well) whose techniques allow them note perfect performances. And there are those whose memories are infallible most of the time. But perfection is NOT the goal we need to chase. We are human beings and by nature we are imperfect. What we need to strive for always is the simple and wonderful fact that in our profession, no matter how well we do at any given time and with any given performance, IT CAN ALWAYS BE BETTER, MORE BEAUTIFUL, MORE EXCITING, MORE CREATIVE. The music, as Schnabel said so eloquently about his preferred Germanic repertoire, is greater than we are. I feel that way about every piece I play, no matter its size, length, or difficulty. The genius behind a short prelude and fugue of Bach or the Schumann Fantasy or Copland Variations (yes, I love that masterpiece) demands that we always RE-CREATE it with fresh ears and minds and try to discover something else we have not noticed before. No performance is so wonderful that in the performer's heart of hearts it couldn't be better.

What does this mean for us as teachers? For one thing we need to share the beauty of music and its power to move people along with the notion that all the notes have to be played correctly for the (a) competition (b) the jury (c) the audition (d) the reputation of the (a) teacher (b) the institution (c) fill in your own category--- (I think I have made my point). Of course we strive for accuracy and attention to information put before us in the score by the composer and maybe the editor (Bach and other Baroque composers e.g.) But if we are only delivering facts, a grocery list of notes, or obedience to the score/teacher's instructions, we are missing something of the HUMANITY of the composer and ourselves as interpreters. Mr. Li need not apologize for being human. He let no one down in my opinion by having a memory slip in a piece he has studied, performed, and knows well. Rather than apologize, he might celebrate the fact that the rest of the performance was successful, and that he brings a strong and important presence to today's concert stages.

Revision Committee Update

The Handbook Revision Committee is encouraged by the positive response at the Fall Conference to the changes and additions in Levels 1-6. Interest was even expressed in trial testing the new Performance Rating Sheet during the 2016 testing season. For the following reasons, this is not a sound idea: 1) We do not have time to make the necessary adjustments for its immediate use, and 2) The Executive Board needs time to pore over the completed Handbook before any of it is released to the membership.

Our weekly phone conferences have been resumed and we hope to be able to continue them throughout the SAT season. The timetable is to release all levels to the Executive Board by June 2016.

Gail Davis Barnes, Committee Chair

December 2015

Musical Musings

What Are Our Artistic Goals?

By Louis Nagel

By now it is likely that Yundi Li's memory slip of a couple of weeks ago during a performance of the Chopin E Minor Concerto in Seoul is old news, forgotten, like the passage he forgot. If any readers are not familiar with the story, briefly, this thirty-three year-old Warsaw Chopin Competition winner, in the ascendancy of a brilliant career proved that he, like the rest of us, is human. He forgot a passage and had to go over to the conductor's podium and reorient himself. He then continued without issue to the end of the concerto. He also offered as an encore a glittering performance of Liszt's La Campanella. The audience reaction was negative (to understate it and conform to propriety in writing this column----I have other more graphic words for the aggregate assembly!). However, I am not writing to take off on a public that is nowhere nearly so informed in their piety as is the performer in his humanity. Rather, I want cite HIS response to the situation. I am reprinting his comments here as they appear on internet postings:

The pianist has issued a statement on his Chinese weibo account regretting his memory lapse in a Chopin concerto, played with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in Korea. The failure provoked a social-media storm in Asia.

Yundi writes:

'I apologize for our mistakes in the Seoul concert and would like to issue a sincere apology to our fans and friends and thank the conductor and the orchestra for their support and forgiveness.'

'As a pianist, I know that, no matter what, my performance on stage must be perfect. Any kind of explanation is insufficient.'

'Thank you for your comments.'

I am far more troubled by that than I am by some of the audience members demanding their money back, and the general comments that Mr. Li failed. While it is unfair to cite other artists who have had such situations, I must point out that Cortot was one of the greatest and more fallible artists of the 20th century, and Schnabel had an incident with the Brahms B-flat Concerto not unlike the one Mr. Li experienced. And I cited in a previous column the story reported by an enthusiastic and congratulatory Arthur Rubinstein, who went back stage after a presumably phenomenal recital by Vladimir Horowitz, only to be told by the soloist "Ach, I missed a note"-----a comment I find more insulting than artistically self-critical. The stories must be legion among performers who, attacked by the ever-present virus "memoritis" reveal their humanity.

Mr. Li apologizes for being HUMAN in front of an audience.

I suspect if we want to hear perfection we can listen to cleaned-up CDs or replayed recordings where all the difficult passages that were missed in the live setting have been "sanitized" in a recording studio the next day. This is the story of Mr. Horowitz's performance of the Schumann Fantasy in his historic return to the stage concert in Carnegie Hall in 1965. (Julie and I were in the audience for that unforgettable event.) Long before I ever knew or played that work, I listened enraptured while Horowitz worked his magic. I was totally unaware of any "trouble" in the famous---INFAMOUS----coda of the second movement where pianists long have wished they had the eyes of a chameleon! Apparently he missed a lot of the jumps, which in his earlier days he likely would have played cleanly. And it is reported that the next day he returned to Carnegie and "cleaned it up" for the "live" recording. The point is that for these 22 year old students, hearing Vladimir Horowitz live was such an overwhelming and rewarding experience that keeping track of wrong notes or smeared pedals was as insulting to him as I think his "ach" was to Rubinstein and others hearing him say it.

Nagel, cont. on p. 7