

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. LXVI No. 1 September 2019

From the Desk of Lia Jensen-Abbott, President

Dear MMTA Colleagues and Friends,

I'm sitting here at my desk and it's now August. The anticipation of school and teaching is upon us, and after a busy summer I thought I would offer some reflections. As most of you know, I train for triathlons and play golf when I'm not otherwise engaged. On a run the other day, I began thinking about form. Every time I train or play golf, I have two options in terms of my kinetic movements: to be efficient (which, sadly, oftentimes feels like "more work"), or to ignore good kinetic form and simply (mindlessly), keep going. Some days, in the pool or on the bike or on a run, I am able to control my mind and truly focus on every step, stroke, breath, or pedal. And honestly, some days, I count myself lucky to have just survived the training. On the golf course, it's often the same. When my mind is focused, my form is efficient and my shots are tolerable. If my mind isn't focused, my body makes embarrassing mistakes.

It occurred to me that music involves two kinds of form really. The first is what I spoke of above—kinetic form—the literal movements that we control in order to produce our music. And as we all know, this form (technique in our world) is completely dependent upon our minds, knowledge, planning, and focus. It is the same for our students. If they are not focused, their "form" will not be efficient, their musical thinking and movements will not create the necessary sounds for a piece, or there might be fluency problems, etc. etc.

The second is the form and structure of our pieces. I know that all of you, like me, teach our students using form every day—finding small patterns of repetition, helping with memorization, learning to shape a phrase based on formal knowledge, understanding sections and how they relate to create the perception of a piece as a whole, etc. etc.

In the end, both of these processes require intense work and efficiency to truly integrate a piece into our minds, hands, and ultimately, hearts. I offer these thoughts to you for two reasons as we all strive to become better teachers, performers, and listeners. The first is that we are all learning to move our bodies (ears and minds as well) in conjunction with the structure of the music, and that is a wonderful and exciting process! It has helped me to return to Charles Rosen's book *Sonata Forms* as I think about associations, connections, and structures of all kinds of music. This book has been a staple during my education and my teaching, but of late, I was referencing it and realized how powerful form (in this case sonata) truly is once again.

The second is that our exciting state conference will be here before we know it. It will be a chance to see form in action—in the guise of performances by world class artists—to see and hear how they "move"; and to hear these very artists teach what they know about form, listening, movements, and efficiency. I hope you can attend the remarkable state conference that Béatrice Ellis has organized. It is sure to be reflective, educational, and exciting. Besides, spending time with our wonderful friends is so healthful and restorative. Come be a part of our beautiful community in Lansing—let's celebrate each other and what we do!

Finally, I wish you a relaxing and peaceful end to your summers and I offer great hope that this beautiful season has restored each of you for the coming year with our fantastic students.

Joyfully,

Lia

MICHIGAN MUSIC TEACHER
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ADVERTISING FEES

Full page \$140

2/3 page \$120

1/2 page \$95

1/4 page \$70

Less than
 1/4 page \$60

Submit ads to the MMT editor with a check payable to MMTA. Fees are for one issue only. For multiple issue pricing, please contact the editor.

DEADLINE

FOR THE

DECEMBER 2019

MMT:

November 22

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

Developing

Musical Talent

From Percussion to Piano, Saxophone to Singing, our exams nurture musical development at every level. With a wide range of exciting repertoire to choose from, and many options within the technical work and supporting tests sections, our graded exams allow musicians to play to their strengths and express their individuality.

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From the Vice-President:

I really hope that many of you are planning to join us at the **State MMTA Conference in October!** I know it will be a fun time meeting colleagues, discovering a new generation of presenters and opening up to a variety of topics. Coming to the conference is both a professional development opportunity and a way to support MMTA's mission. Your participation and input are essential to ensure that next year's conference reflects your needs and interests.

If you have never or rarely attended a conference and still hesitate to register because of the price tag and/or the disruption of your teaching schedule, planning ahead is always beneficial. To save money, don't be shy about asking colleagues to carpool and share a room. I have done so many times and it makes the conference even more worthwhile because discussing sessions and recitals at the end of each day is always enjoyable. To avoid losing income, make sure to include the conference in your studio calendar ahead of time because it will facilitate the rescheduling process. My students' families are always intrigued that I attend this kind of event. I sense that they value the fact that I keep up my motivation to improve and update my teaching, and that I am part of a network of highly qualified professionals.

Please register now!

Dates: *Sunday, October 6 - Tuesday, October 8, 2019*

Start time: *Sunday, 1:00 PM. (State Board Meeting begins earlier.)*

End time: *Tuesday, 12:00 PM. (Still time to make it home for teaching!)*

Location: *Radisson Hotel, Lansing, MI.*

Deadline is September 9 for all:

- **Conference Registration** - *to save \$10.00 on the early bird discount.*
- **Hotel Registration** - *to be guaranteed a room at the discounted convention rate.*
- **Banquet:** *This is a special dinner where members get awards and recognition for their work and dedication. It can sincerely be rather humbling. \$27.00 is a pretty good deal for a full dinner including dessert but it is really about the experience: Check out the menu, as there is something for everyone.*

For your convenience, here is a link to the MMTA website:

<https://michiganmusicteachers.org/state-conference-registration>

If registering on-line is not your favorite thing to do, please print the attached registration form and mail it with a check and call the hotel to make your reservation after you have read the information. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at Octbb47@sbcglobal.net.

I look forward to seeing you in Lansing!

~Béatrice Ellis

MMTA State Conference Schedule Preview



Sunday, October 6, 2019

8:30 AM	Executive Board Meeting	Stateroom I
9:30 AM	Full Board Meeting	Michigan I
12:00 PM	Registration & Vendors Display	Capitol Lobby
1:00 PM	Opening Remarks	Capitol I
1:05 PM	<p>Dr. José Ramón Méndez <i>Perception and its Influence on Movement</i></p> <p>From the very first time a child approaches the piano, he/she makes a series of assumptions that will impact his/her perception of the instrument. Later on, deciphering a musical score will create new assumptions about space, timing, position and speed. Without perception and judgment, learning would be impossible. However, those perceptions have an everlasting impact on the way the young musician relates to the instrument and, in some case, they are at the core of technical and musical problems. Identifying the issues arising from a faulty perception and its influence on the way we move at the keyboard is essential.</p>	Capitol I
2:30 PM	<p>Dr. Kay Zavislak <i>The Art Of Interpreting Keyboard Music from the Classical Period</i></p> <p>In the classical period, composers employed styles and characteristics that were easily recognized by audiences of the time. Understanding these musical gestures, called <i>Topics</i>, will help performers to achieve stylistic interpretation. (This talk was presented at the MTNA Conference in Spokane last March.)</p>	Capitol I
3:45 PM	Business Meeting 1	Capitol I
4:00 PM	Warm up for MMTA/MTNA Winners Recital	Capitol I
4:30 PM	MMTA/MTNA Winners Recital	Capitol I
6:00 PM	Dinner On Your Own SAT Piano Handbook Committee Dinner Local Associations Dinner	Stateroom I Michigan I
7:30 PM	<p>Composer's Commission Winner Two-Piano Recital hosted by CAMTA: Dr. Young Hyun Cho and Dr. Claire Tang</p>	Capitol I
9:00 PM	Reception Hosted by CAMTA	Capitol Lobby

Monday, October 8, 2019

8:00 AM	Registration & Vendors Display Collegiate Chapters Poster Display	Capitol Lobby Capitol Lobby
9:00 AM	Students' Lightning Presentations Round table discussion	Capitol I
10:00 AM	Teacher Education Session: Dr. Juliet Hess <i>Privilege and Music Lessons: What can a Music Teacher Do?</i> This session will give music educators an opportunity to think about privilege across multiple identity sites including gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and disability. We will consider how privilege and lack of privilege affects students in our lessons and we will collectively discuss how privilege can intersect with private music instruction. The final component of this workshop invites participants to create ways to address issues of privilege in music studios.	Capitol I
11:05 AM	Dr. José Ramón Méndez <i>Practice Strategies and Methodology</i> Perhaps the most important task any teacher faces when instructing a student is to provide a clear method of practicing. As most lessons deal with the specific problems and details of a particular piece, it falls on the student's capacity to synthesize and apply knowledge to other pieces. Most times, only the most talented students will accomplish this, but a better understanding of the practicing process would benefit all students regardless of their natural facility. Learning the different strategies and methods of practicing can make a huge impact on the student and assure a prosperous pianistic development even after the student no longer has the guidance of a teacher.	Capitol I
12:15 PM	Lunch On Your Own SAT Local Chairs Lunch Meeting	Regency
1:30 PM	Collegiate Students Master Class: Dr. José Ramón Méndez	Capitol I
3:15 PM	IMTF SESSION: Dr. Amy Gustafson <i>Teaching Artistry from the Ground Up: Part I</i> This first of two sessions will explore how to make advanced technical and musical concepts accessible to students even from the very first lesson and regardless of age and level. Artistic concepts will be broken down and discussed on a practical level so that they can be applied in a variety of teaching situations. Short teaching demonstrations and musical examples will be incorporated for illustration purposes.	Capitol I
4:30 PM	Break	
5:30 PM	Cash Bar	Capitol II Lobby
6:15 PM	GALA DINNER	Capitol II

8:00 PM **CONFERENCE ARTIST RECITAL** Capitol I
Dr. José Ramón Méndez

Sonata in D Major No. 84 A. Soler
Sonata in D-flat Major No. 88

Evocacion I. Albeniz
El Puerto
Triana

Sonata Fantasia J. Turina

Sonata No. 2 Op. 19 in G sharp minor A. Scriabin
Mazurka Op. 3 No. 9
Prelude Op. 11 No. 3
Prelude Op.11 No. 6
Mazurka Op. 3 No. 7
Prelude Op. 11 No. 10
Mazurka Op. 3 No. 1
Prelude Op. 11 No. 8
Prelude Op.11 No. 11
Sonata Op. 30 No. 4 in F sharp Major

9:15 PM Reception Hosted By MMTA Capitol Lobby

Tuesday, October 8, 2019

7:30 AM Advisory Council Breakfast Meeting Stateroom I

9:00 AM **Dr. Amy Gustafson** Capitol I
Teaching Artistry from the Ground Up: Part II

This is a follow up to Monday's session. Dr. Gustafson will continue to explore how to develop technical and musical concepts simultaneously and how to ensure these concepts will serve students well through a variety of repertoire regardless of difficulty. Short teaching demonstrations and musical examples will be incorporated for illustration purposes.

10:30 AM **Upper Intermediate and Advanced Master Class:** Capitol I
Dr. Amy Gustafson

11:45 AM Business Meeting 2 Capitol I

12:00 PM Conference Ends

MICHIGAN MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

134th Annual State Conference

October 6-8, 2019 at the Radisson Hotel, Downtown Lansing, MI

CONFERENCE AND MEAL REGISTRATION:

Online registration: <https://michiganmusicteachers.org/mmta-state-conference>

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Local Association: _____ State Certification: _____ National Certification: _____

REGISTRATION FEES:

- MMTA Member: \$85.00 _____ (after September 9: \$100)
- Non-MMTA Member: \$95.00 _____ (after September 9: \$110)
- One Day Registration: \$60.00 _____
- MMTA Member's Spouse: \$45.00 _____ (after September 9: \$50.00)
- College Student: \$15.00 _____
- Gala Concert (Non-Registrant): \$20.00 _____
- Oct. 7 GALA Dinner RESERVATION** \$27.00 _____ (Reserve by Sept. 9/2019)

Please select one Entrée, which comes with salad, rolls, coffee or tea and dessert:

- _____ Roulade of chicken breast, stuffed with baby spinach, sun-dried tomatoes and artichokes
- _____ Roasted Atlantic salmon
- _____ Dijon pesto ravioli
- _____ Gluten free option by special request

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

If you opt to pay by check instead of Credit Card or PayPal online, please make your check payable to MMTA and send it to **Mr. Thomas J. Nobel**, MMTA Treasurer. His address is: **3196 Kraft Ave. SE, Suite 203, Grand Rapids, MI 49512.**

If you encounter difficulties with the online registration, please contact Yelena Wells, MMTA Webmaster: Yelenawells@gmail.com.



Radisson® Hotel Lansing at the Capitol

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111 N. Grand Avenue

Lansing, MI 48933

Michigan Music Teacher Association Conference

October 6-8, 2019

Group Room Rates: \$114.00. Hotel room rates are subject to applicable state and local taxes (currently 13%) in effect at the time of check in.

To Make Reservations: Please call Radisson reservations at 1-800-333-3333 and reference the MI Music Teachers Association, or go to www.radisson.com/lansingmi. Click “more search options” and then enter **Promotional Code MT1019** to receive your discounted group rate.

Terms & Conditions: All reservations must be accompanied by a first night room deposit, or guaranteed with a major credit card.

Cancellations will be accepted without penalty up to 72 hours prior to arrival. Cancellations received within 72 hours of arrival will forfeit one night room and tax.

Cut-Off Date: Reservations must be received on or before **September 9, 2019**.

Parking: The Radisson Hotel is pleased to offer MMTA a discounted parking rate of \$10.00 per night, per vehicle for overnight guests. Temporary valet parking is available at \$20.00 per entry.

Temporary self -parking is available on a space available, first come, first served basis in the city-owned ramp conveniently connected to the Radisson Hotel Lansing at the Capitol via a climate controlled ped-way. The parking rate is \$1.50 for each ½ hour, maximum of \$15.00 per day.

Meeting Topics from Around the State

We have a great variety of topics being discussed around the state this fall. Here is a sampling of meeting topics from around the state:

Livonia Area Piano Teachers Forum:

Their theme for the year is: “One Who Dares to Teach Must Never Cease to Learn.”

All meetings begin promptly at 9:30am.

Wednesday, September 11, 2019

Topic: 2019-2020 Season Meet and Greet

Our season starts with opportunities to meet new members, reconnect with old friends, to learn what been planned for this year.

Location: Evola Music of Canton (7170 N Haggerty Rd, Canton MI 48187)

Wednesday, October 2, 2019

Topic The Dalcroze Method

Speaker: Dr Soonghee Ha

Dr. Ha will present this approach to understanding music – its fundamental concepts, its expressive meanings, and its deep connections to other arts and human activities – through ground breaking techniques incorporating rhythmic movement, aural training, and physical, vocal and instrumental improvisation. She will also demonstrate how to apply them into preparation for SAT (theory, technique, aural, and performance). Bring comfortable shoes.

Location: Steinway Piano Gallery, 2700 E. West Maple Road (M-5 & Maple Road, just west of Haggerty) Commerce Township, MI 48390

Wednesday, November 6, 2019

Topic: SAT Workshop hosted by Chris Smith and Janice Derian. Hands on workshop familiarizing yourself with the new SAT registration process.

Location: Steinway Piano Gallery, 2700 E. West Maple Road (M-5 & Maple Road, just west of Haggerty) Commerce Township, MI 48390

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

Topic: Master Class - SAT 8+ or Late Intermediate/Early Adv.

Speaker: Dr. Sookkyung Cho

Location: Steinway Piano Gallery, 2700 E. West Maple Road (M-5 & Maple Road, just west of Haggerty)
Commerce Township, MI 48390

Metropolitan Detroit Musicians' League:

September 23, 2019: Student Achievement Testing discussion and Q & A, chaired by Maria Lisowsky

October 28, 2019: Tian Tian, Beethoven Sonatas

November 25, 2019: Emily and Kristin Beckman, The Evolution and Art of Duo Playing

Piano Teachers' Forum of Grand Rapids:

All programs except our November Workshop will be held at West Michigan Piano, 3600 29th St. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49512 and will begin at 9:30 am.

September 13, 2019: September Coffee

October 11, 2019: Dr Margarita Denenburg - Using YouTube in Your Studio

One of the potentially most useful online tools for music classes and applied lessons is YouTube. It is free, easy to use, and extremely accessible. YouTube offers many different ways to enhance the learning process of the students. This presentation will analyze in-depth YouTube usage, benefits, and useful information that will help to optimize the benefits of this technological device.

November 8, 2019: November Workshop - Dr. Janice Larson Razaq (see ad on page 14)

*Note: This workshop will be held at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary: 2965 Leonard St NE

Session One: 9:00 am - Learning to Play the Piano Without Tension

The topic focuses on important suggestions guaranteed to relieve physical stress and make playing more pleasurable. Learn how to spot tension and then how to deal with it.

Session Two: 10:30 am - The Miniature Piano Pieces of Federico Mompou (Spain, 1893-1987)

These technically moderately difficult pieces present opportunities for voicing, tempo choices, variation of repetitions, continuity of phrase structure, etc. The pieces are highly recommended because of their multitude of interpretive possibilities. The main focus will be on two sets of pieces: Suburbis (1916-1917, 5 pieces) and Scènes d'enfants (1915, 5 pieces)

Session Three: 1:00 pm - Theme and Variations on Adjudication

Learn how to critique effectively and economically for different age groups, for wide ranges in technical preparedness, for various repertoire levels, for the goal of artistic, musically compelling renditions, for tone quali-

ty, for phrasing and articulations, etc. There will be many tips on how to couch commentary positively, by suggesting, without actually “teaching,” improvements. Reference will be made to repertoire in Encore! Books I, II & III, published by Alfred.

December 13, 2019: Dr Lora Kolean - From Beethoven to Bartok: Communication in Music

How do composers communicate to performers, and how do we, as performers communicate to an audience?

Ann Arbor Piano Teachers’ Guild: Meeting held at Kerrytown Concert House

September 19, 2019: Dr. Louis Nagel

“Why and what do we teach?”

Dr. Nagel, Professor Emeritus, explores the pedagogical and artistic reasons we teach piano.

October 24, 2019: Sarah Buckley

“Building a Thriving Studio”

Sarah Buckley, a piano teacher and business mentor from Canada, will discuss music business building, including issues with student retention and setting boundaries. A must for all piano teachers teaching in the 21st century.

November 21, 2019: Sheila Vail

ADJUDICATION WORKSHOP SERIES (in collaboration with the Livonia Area Piano Teachers Forum)

This is the first of 3 workshops presented by an RCM Sr. level Examiner. These sessions will provide practical opportunities to review foundational adjudication practice and principles. Videotaped student performances at varying levels of preparation will provide opportunities to explore reviews of essential performance aspects and appropriate commentary at different playing levels. (Next 2 dates and locations TBA).

Port Huron Music Teachers Association: Program meetings are held at 9:30 am at Griswold Street Baptist Church, 1232 Griswold St., Port Huron.

September 20, 2019: We're doing Lighting Strikes Twice, which will be 5 minute talks on a variety of subjects, presented by the teachers that attended the National Keyboard Pedagogy Conference in July.

November 15, 2019: Teaching Young Students, opening presentation by Barbara Collins and group discussion to follow.

Student Achievement Testing Semi-Finals and Finals Dates

Saturday, April 25th, 2020 is the date for SAT Semi-finals for all three districts. Saturday, May 2nd, 2020 is the date for SAT Finals, held at Michigan State University.

Michelle Mitchum
SAT Auditions Chairperson

Michigan Music Teachers Association Proposed By-Law Changes

By-Law Revision Committee
Barbara DuRussel, Christie Otter, Adrienne Wiley

Article II-Object (p. 77)

Line 2: strike out “the economic and”

Should read:”appreciation, and study of the art of music; to elevate artistic standards.....”

Article IV-Membership (p. 79)

Section 7:

Last sentence, top of p. 79: strike out “or”

Should read:”to apply for national certification **and** to enter....”

Article VII-Members (p. 79)

Section 1: Keep the paragraph.

Add the following statement and call it “Section 2:” Because of this, all the other/following “sections” will need to be re-numbered.

Section 2: new statement:

“Officers shall service the organization only as volunteers. In the event a member has another occupation the services of which the organization needs, appropriate remuneration is permissible for that member.

Section 7:

Opening statement should now include: “The Treasurer and authorized committee” and the remainder of the paragraph stays the same.

Last sentence should be **deleted** as this reads: “The Treasurer shall receive an annual stipend to be determined by the Board of Directors for a sum sufficient to protect the Association from loss.” (delete)

Article IX-Board Members (p. 81)

Section 3:

Line 2: “Interest of MMTA....”

Should read: “interests” (lower case I and s at the end)

Article XI-Committees (p. 83-84)

Section 7:

Strike out last sentence of: “The Membership Committee Chairperson shall receive an annual stipend to be determined by the Board of Directors.”

Section 17:

Strike out the last sentence of: “and may receive an annual stipend to be determined by the Board of Directors.

ADD: second line: “...Michigan Music **Teachers**” (add teachers)

Article XIV-Dissolution (p. 85)

Section 2:

ADD to last sentence: **National Association**

Should now read: “...turned over to the Music Teachers National Association.”

Revised June 15, 2019

Join us for our annual November Workshop,
featuring a special session on
ADJUDICATION

Piano Teachers' Forum of Grand Rapids will host **Dr Janice Larson Razaq**, nationally-acclaimed pedagogue and adjudicator, on **Friday, November 8, 2019**.
Registration fee: \$20/adults, \$5/students.
Pick one, or come to all three sessions:

Session One: *Learning to play the piano without tension*
Session Two: *The Miniature Piano Pieces of Federico Mompou (Spain, 1893-1987)*
Session Three: **Theme and Variations on Adjudication: effectively critiquing piano auditions, festivals and competitions at any level**

Visit www.ptfgr.org/november-workshop for more information.

Nagel, cont. from p. 16

chordist and was on tour performing in Louisville. Mr. Graves, my wonderful piano teacher, arranged for me to play the Bach Italian Concerto for this lady. I did so. She liked my playing and asked to see my edition. Obediently I handed her my von Bulow sheet music. I distinctly recall she rolled her eyes heavenward, mumbled something in German which I gathered to be a bit critical, and then patiently explained to me about the importance of URTEXT study. This was new to me; Mr. Graves possibly did not feel this was imperative at my age (needing teaching on the page perhaps). And this was my first lesson in musicology.

As a teen entering Juilliard I was stunned to hear what other teens were able to play with facility and maturity far, far in excess of mine. Thanks to several of my friends in those early days, and the pressures of working in Rosina Lhevinnes studio, I learned quickly about practicing, what it meant and ways to go about it. And after meeting a pretty, shy and highly accomplished piano student in Josef Raieff's studio who played the hell out of the Mendelssohn G Minor Concerto and a few Chopin Etudes, I began to work intensively. In studying with Mr. Raieff after leaving the Lhevinne class (but not the sound world) I began to hear music in ways I had never imagined. I also began to realize that pretty shy piano student was the greatest person in the world, but that came a little later (working now on 54 years with Julie). With Mr. Raieff I learned many large works including both Brahms concerti, and had the honor of playing the D Minor with the Juilliard orchestra. What a deeply meaningful experience that was, and how I love that concerto today!

The final part of this reminiscence has to do with my learning that Mussorgsky originally wrote Pictures as a suite of piano pieces. I actually naively believed I was the only person who was privy to this information, and worked on it despite the fact that there were multitudes of piano repertoire I should have been learning (Etudes, Preludes and Fugues, Beethoven, Prokofiev, Debussy and Ravel, etc.) I did learn that suite and it remains in my active repertoire to this day. However, I no longer believe I am or was its sole performer.

I could go on, citing among other pieces such as the Chopin Barcarolle, and Nocturne in C-sharp Minor Opus 27/1, the Bach D Major Partita, and more. and We all have memories of our formative years and so long as we can learn we are still formative. One of the greatest joys we have as pianists is exploring our bottomless repertoire. Looking back on my first experience with the Brahms Sonata in F Minor, I recall the astonishment at his youthful outpouring of magnificent music—he was 20 when he wrote it (I was 21 when I learned it!) I can remember my first hearing of the Mahler Resurrection Symphony, or Schubert's Winterreise, or seeing Mozart's Don Giovanni. They each have left indelible impressions on me. All of you have your "RÜCKBLICKS" I am sure. And for me at this reflective time when the school year is about to begin, I want to share mine with you.

Nominating Committee report from Adrienne Wiley, Past President

The Nominating Committee for this year consists of Janice Derian, Christie Otter, and myself. A candidate for the position of Treasurer has been approved and will appear on the Slate of Officers at the Fall, 2019 Conference. Said candidate is Barbara DuRussel.

Respectfully submitted, Adrienne Wiley

Musical Musings

INTERMEZZO: RÜCKBLICK

By Louis Nagel

RÜCKBLICK is the marking Brahms assigned to the fourth movement of his monumental Opus 5--Sonata Number 3 in F Minor. It means “looking back” or “remembrance”. In that there are five movements to this work instead of the usual three (Mozart and Haydn) or two or four (Beethoven and Schubert) the sonata is unique. And its reflections upon the heyday of the form perceived by many to be past its prime, as well as its tributes to past composers, make it a singular work in the piano repertoire. Briefly, citing some of these references, after the opening full orchestra sweep over the entire keyboard there appears the first of many references throughout the sonata to the opening motive of the Beethoven Fifth Symphony. The second movement Andante opens with a theme descending in thirds, a favorite intervallic relationship of both Haydn and Beethoven. Heading the second movement is a highly romantic poem by the German poet Sternau calling to mind the the lieder of either Schubert or perhaps more closely, Schumann. The third movement directly quotes the opening of the last movement of the second piano trio of Mendelssohn. And the final movement swirls all of these motives together, with an added reference to Joachim’s motto F.A.E. (“Frei aber Einsam”) The “extra” fourth movement (which, I might add gratuitously is my favorite movement to play—not easy but not quite the symphonic gestures of the other movements) looks back on material in the first three movements before leading to the tumultuous and super-virtuosic Rondo Finale. He titles this fourth movement “Intermezzo”, a title he would return to seventeen times for his late piano composition). And this movement is unique in number, (a fourth of a five movement sonata) key, (infrequently used B-flat Minor) and drama (such power in those two or three often laconic and brooding pages).

The academic year 2019—2020 begins very soon. As I begin my third year of retirement, I cannot help but look back on some events in my life that have particular music meaning for me. I have not composed a work like Brahms’ Opus 5, although in my youth I did compose and play a couple of ambitious piano sonatas. I am reflecting on music that has influenced me throughout my career and want to start with what I have been told was my first sign of musicality. I stood at the keyboard of our nameless brand of upright piano and picked out the Scottish folksong Loch Lomond. I liked the sound of the pentatonic scale I guess. My mother, an untrained piano player with absolute pitch took note of this—my father, the most musical person I have ever known, was beside himself. (I am told this, I repeat, because I have no memory at all of this.) I followed this up by picking out my own little tunes which my mother copied down on manuscript paper (she could have passed an ear training exam with flying colors!) and the second movement of Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, at which point my parents spirited me off to the University of Louisville School of Music Prep Department where I was admitted (or where I assaulted) into a class for children. Proving to be bored and unruly in this class, (I was 4, what did I know?) I was pretty quickly removed from the class and started private lessons.

In between those earliest of days and the next event I am citing much happened, but a defining experience for me came when I was (I am remembering I think accurately) 13. Rudolf Serkin came to Louisville, my home town, to play a solo recital. On that program was the Sonata in B-flat Major, Opus.Posth., by Schubert. Those of you who read this and know me know what this piece means to me—I brought this monster into a lesson shortly after that,all learned, immaturely but passionately. No piece of music has ever made more of an impact on me that that heaven sent (and soon to witnessed by the dying Schubert) sonata. Not too long after that powerful moment I had the great fortune to play for a visiting artist named Alice Ehlers. She was a noted harpsi-

Nagel, cont. on p. 15