



# NEBRASKA musicteacher

NMTA Newsletter

Winter 2018

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## from the President

Last September I attended the MTNA Leadership Summit in Cincinnati, Ohio. During the three-day conference, I enjoyed visiting with the other state MTNA presidents, sharing ideas and concerns, and comparing ways that we run our state associations, conferences and competitions. I had the opportunity to renew acquaintances with MTNA administrators, and meet new members of the national staff, as well as tour the offices of the MTNA national headquarters. I attended ten sessions during the Summit which included a tutorial on the newly-designed MTNA website, an auditor presentation on MTNA finances, an antitrust compliance meeting, and a Presidents Advisory Council meeting. I learned about the latest online programs launched by MTNA. These include E-Festival Evaluations, where performances can be uploaded for feedback from MTNA approved evaluators, and E-Competition for Two-Piano Duos, where the preliminary rounds are conducted entirely online, with the Final Competition taking place during the MTNA National Conference. More and more MTNA programs are being offered online, making many MTNA-sponsored opportunities more accessible, especially for students in remote areas.

During the Summit, I learned that MTNA will use the Ediger Global Initiatives Fund (established with a bequest from Nebraska's own Thomas Ediger) to begin exploring international associations, starting with China. I was amazed to hear that there are over 40 million piano students in China! MTNA hopes to establish a professional relationship with the teachers of these students.

The most valuable meetings for me during the Summit were the West Central Division meeting and the State-by-Size meeting. It was interesting to hear about activities in



state associations within our West Central Division. The State-By-Size meeting, based on membership population, covered many of the same issues that we face in NMTA, including costs associated with state conferences and district festivals, fund raising strategies, how to increase membership numbers, how to get members to serve on committees and state boards, and how to attract members to the state conference.

Over the next few weeks, NMTA teachers and students will be preparing for District Festivals. Festival season is an exciting time of year, and I wish everyone great success and positive experiences. Remember to take time to reflect on how much your students have grown in their abilities since last fall, and tell them how proud you are of their accomplishments. Best of luck to everyone!

Larry Jones, DMA, NCTM  
NMTA President



## 2018 Conference – Call for Proposals

The 2018 NMTA State Conference will take place at University of Nebraska-Kearney, Kearney, Nebraska on October 11-12, 2018.

The State Conference Committee welcomes proposals on all aspects of music teaching, performance, literature, advocacy and other areas of interest to independent and college music teachers.

### General Guidelines:

- Conference sessions are generally 50-minutes in length
- Participants must be willing to present on either day of the conference
- Conference presenters are not compensated or reimbursed for expenses, and must pay the published Conference fees
- Electronic submissions are required with attached bio and jpeg photo of presenter

### Complete proposals include the following:

1. Name, institutional affiliation if applicable, e-mail, mailing address and telephone
2. Session title
3. One-page abstract describing your session
4. A brief biography of all involved persons
5. A list of Equipment/Technology needs.

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE:** Proposals must be submitted by May 1, 2018.

**SUBMIT TO:** Gail Dunning, NMTA President Elect, via e-mail as a Word or pdf attachment at [gail@dunningpianostudio.com](mailto:gail@dunningpianostudio.com)

Gail Dunning  
NMTA President-elect

## LMTA News

2017 year was a very special year for LMTA, because we were named Outstanding Local Association of the Year by MTNA. Our “Celebrate 75” committee consisting of Charlotte Heermann, Wanda Mandigo and Lois Burger spent a lot of time in preparation of two events: past and present members lunch with a history “show and tell” part in May, and display of photos and documents at the 2017 State Conference in October.

Fall 2017 was filled with enriching activities for LMTA students and teachers.

On September 27, Dr. Debra Hope, UNL faculty psychologist, led a workshop entitled “Anxiety and Memory Lapses in Children During Performance.”

On October 8, several LMTA members toured the Omaha Conservatory of Music.

LMTA students attended the first of three Piano Series Lied Center performances on October 24, a performance by Van Cliburn Winner Yekwoon Sunwoo. Fourteen LMTA students took advantage of the Nebraska Arts Council School Bus grant providing a financial scholarship for all who attended.

On November 15 Mr. Morgan Cowell, piano technician at First United Methodist Church, presented a “hands on” demonstration of keyboard instruments: harpsichord, organ and grand piano. Teachers were able to see the inner details of playing mechanisms and compare different materials that are used in their manufacture.

In December, LMTA students participated in the “Holiday of Trees” performance at Westminster Presbyterian Church, providing background holiday season music for Heritage Women’s Club of Lincoln fundraising event that serves Lincoln community charities with financial support throughout 2018.

On December 16 LMTA students participated in a Service Recital at Eastmont Towers Retirement Home, providing Christmas music for residents.

The Music Outreach Program currently has 50 students, and 7 students are on the waiting list. Two Holiday concerts were held to benefit LMTA-MOP: The Spiazzo Piano Trio raised \$165.25, and the Malley Keelan Holiday Concert garnered over \$4400.00.

Our upcoming big event for this academic year is the Chamber Music Festival on February 3, 2018.

Winners Recital will take place at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2225 Washington Str. This event is co-chaired by Marcia Wiebers, Marina Fabrikant and Marge Underwood. All LMTA students are encouraged to submit their compositions by February 10, 2017.

Svetlana Yashirin,  
LMTA President



# Six-String Perspective

## Reflection on 2017 Nebraska Music Teachers Conference

I'm a six-stringer, a guitar player with an insatiable thirst for the beauty music brings to our daily lives. This was my first Nebraska Music Teachers Conference. While I was craving the company of fellow music enthusiasts, I was skeptical of my place in the mix. Jo Karl, Lincoln Music Teachers Association member, assured me it would be great. And I had two days off work.

"The Science of Learning..." now that's a topic I can get behind. I have a master's degree in Health Sciences and a career in the health care industry. Most of us have a day job, right? "...and the art of Practicing" presented by Ruth Meints was like candy for a geek, marrying the off-hours bent over the guitar with honest-to-goodness science. I know how inadequate practice feels for me and the few students I've taught. So the 10,000-foot view of tried-and-true techniques are now in my pocket and I don't have to hunt and peck for success.

Marvin Blickenstaff discussed warm-ups for piano. Muscles are muscles, whether in the legs of an athlete or fingers of a musician. Marvin has seen musicians grow from wee little ones to full-grown concert pianists and, if anyone knows about warm-ups, he would. You must make your "O's" and "stretch and grabs". Doesn't it make you mad when you learn these things halfway through your career? I'm on the hunt for warm-ups for guitar players. It hurts to put sensitive fingertips on cold hard wire and to push hard enough for a pleasant sound. There's got to be a better way.

In Blickenstaff's Pedagogy 101: Basics, he covered just what I needed to hear -- how to put a student at ease, how to repeat and reinforce, and how to teach listening and what to emphasize. Exaggerate movements and trace them in the air. Teach a known tune and break down the beats, count them out and repeat them out loud. Let them compose. Explore the instrument, the composers, and the feeling the music gives. Blickenstaff is an ageless teacher and you want to follow him around to pick up nuggets of golden wisdom like these.

Blickenstaff also presented a loving tribute to nature's fingerprint in the music we pretend to compose—or is it given to us? He spoke of breath in Chopin that doesn't even have words, but still creates regular pauses as if to prepare for another inspiration. Gravity, usually our negative friend, contributes to the ebb and flow of Debussy's Arabesque as it goes up and gets pulled down. Music surely deserves my eyes, ears, fingers, body and brain. But interpretation requires my breath, pulse, and imagination which makes it possible to serve my students pizza instead of dry bread crumbs at each lesson.

Paul Barnes from UNL applied a microscope to the Etudes of Philip Glass. Getting to drink tea, sit at the keyboard and compose with Philip Glass probably added to the depth of his findings. However, you just can't argue with a guy who can, with laser-precision, pull apart Debussy, Beethoven and Mozart by phrase, pattern, melody, chord and note and do the same with Glass compositions.

It affirmed my deep conviction that there is musical greatness after the 19th century. So, what does it take to go from good musical sense to great musical sensibility? Take a look at the passion of Barnes or Glass and you'll get the idea.

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. While familiar with the name and the fame, I was coming in cold. There's not much left after career, family and faith to be a concert junkie. But I was in an orchestra once and the first thing I noticed was the obvious absence of a conductor and spent the rest of the concert trying to see how they kept time. Violin bowing was freer and musicians changed chairs between performances. What! No first-chair, top-down dominance? Did you know Orpheus does more than music? They go to colleges and business and introduce their process of collaboration, communication, problem solving and leadership—like having a clarinet player for an artistic director.

Day Two of the Conference was finished like chocolate pudding, rich and satisfying servings of Landler, German dances and polkas that were drawn from folk traditions. Chef Jonathan Sokasits first revealed the recipe handed down through his father's accordion career, one that Sokasits learned to appreciate later as a professor of music. On his encounter with Bach, Beethoven, Smetana and Rachmaninoff, he sensed hints of traditional German dance and polka ingredients. Gathering ocarinas and accordions out of curiosity, he began whipping the flavors together and found himself playing the Cuckoo waltz and even the brisk Circling Pigeons Landler for which is father, Frank Sokasits, is remembered. What wonderful reminder of the long musical history to which we are heirs.

I guess the Private Studio Q&A session was something new, if you don't count conversations in the stairwells, during break and on the way to our cars. The panel of uber-experienced studio warriors (Paul Barnes, Regina Carnazzo, Charlotte Heermann, and Paul Parker) were free with their battle-hardened experience. "Carefully choose repertoire that is not too hard or too easy, music students know and don't know, music they like and don't like." "Let students pick their recital piece from among several you select." Like soldiers with well-prepared gear, you could tell these four were successful teachers because of diligent attention to details and compassionate sensitivity for their students. The light was starting to go on for me. This was all transferable to guitar players.

So I'm compiling notes and plastering basic knowledge posters on the walls. Soon, I'll be thumbing through pages of sheet music, categorizing it by difficulty, skill, familiarity, popularity, etc. I'll be hunting for warm-ups and a plan of attack for lesson times. I'll pay attention to how the student feels music. In short, I'll do what thousands have done before me: become a better teacher.

Karen Jardine

# 2017 State Conference



*Private Studio Q & A Panel Discussion  
(L to R) Paul Parker, Regina Carnazzo,  
Charlotte Heermann, Paul Barnes*



*(L to R) Guest Clinician Marvin Blickenstaff  
and the NMTA Executive Committee:  
Regina Carnazzo, Erin Blake, Jonathan Sokasits,  
Gail Dunning, Larry Jones, Valerie Cisler*



*Larry Jones presents a plaque of appreciation  
to NMTA President, Valerie Cisler*



*Conference Guest Clinician Marvin Blickenstaff*



*Presenter Jonathan Sokasits plays a button accordion*



*Presenter Ruth Meints*

## 2017 State Conference Continued



*Presenter Paul Barnes*



*(L to R) Composer Commissioning Chair Brenda Wristen,  
pianist James Margetts,  
NMTA Commissioned Composer Michael Stephens*

## NMTA 2017 Teacher Of The Year: Nancy Jo Galusha

Nancy Jo Galusha was recognized as the 2017 Teacher of the Year during the Nebraska Music Teachers Association State Conference at Nebraska Wesleyan University in October, 2017. This is the second time that Nancy Jo has been honored as NMTA Teacher of the Year, having received the award in 1989.

For over 54 years, Nancy Jo has taught piano, theory, and directed the church choir. She continues to maintain a piano studio in her Fairmont, Nebraska home. In addition, she has been playing organ for church, for weddings, and for funerals for the past 64 years. Nancy Jo accompanies the Fillmore Central High School and Middle School Choirs, Geneva High School Choir, and the Fairmont Middle School choirs.

Nancy Jo says it is her goal to make sure her students love music forever, and she enjoys creating exciting piano recitals that leave a lasting impression on her students. Her students have performed in piano master classes, Disney dinner shows, costume recitals, comedy numbers, and Rock-and-Roll shows. Nancy Jo's students continue to participate in annual District and State NMTA Festivals, and four of her students were winners in the UNL Young Artist auditions.

NMTA salutes Nancy Jo Galusha for her long and impressive career as an outstanding teacher. For over half a century, Nancy Jo has touched the lives of countless music students, and she is still going strong. Congratulations, Nancy Jo!



*NMTA Past President Larry Jones presents Teacher of the Year plaque to Nancy Jo Galusha.*

## MTNA Foundation Fellow: Maria Rotella Jacobsen

During the October 2017 NMTA State Conference Awards Luncheon, President Valerie Cisler surprised Maria Rotella Jacobsen, NCTM, by announcing that she is the Nebraska 2018 MTNA Foundation Fellow. To receive this award, the NMTA Executive Committee first votes on a nominee, then friends and family of the nominee, and NMTA members must collectively contribute a total of at least \$1,000 to the MTNA Foundation Fund in the honoree's name. Funds raised through the MTNA Foundation Fellow Program support many grants for individual MTNA member studios as well as local and state associations.

Maria Rotella Jacobsen is a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music in Piano and holds a Permanent Professional Certificate from MTNA. She received the NMTA Outstanding Service Award in 2014. She has been active in professional music organizations for over 35 years. Maria was President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer of Private Music Instructors (PMI). When PMI merged with Omaha Music Teachers Association (OMTA), she continued to serve as Treasurer, and has served as co-chair of the OMTA Young Artists Competition. She currently serves as President of OMTA. Maria's students have won the OMTA Senior Scholarship Award, OMTA Young Artists Competition, OMTA Fundamental Fair Trophy, and the Nebraska Federation of Music Clubs National Gold Cup Honors.

Maria Rotella Jacobsen is the 26th Foundation Fellow since 2001 to be selected by the Nebraska Music Teachers Association. Maria will receive her MTNA Foundation Fellow Award at the MTNA National Conference Gala at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort, Lake Buena Vista, Florida on March 19, 2018. Congratulations, Maria, on this well-deserved honor!



*President Valerie Cisler (Right) presents MTNA Fellow Certificate to Maria Rotella Jacobsen.*

## From the Foundation Chair

Congratulations to our newest MTNA Foundation fellow Maria Rotella Jacobsen! Maria was honored and surprised by the award. Thank you to everyone who donated to her fellow!

The conference fundraiser featured a raffle for great Nebraska area prizes and made \$160. Thank you to all who participated!

Nebraska continues to be the top state for individual donations to the MTNA Foundation Fund. Thank you to everyone who supports the fund for your generosity! The Foundation Fund supports student competitions as well as teacher awards and grants. Donations to the Foundation Fund can be made at <https://www.mtnacertification.org/contribute/contribute-now/>.

Angela Miller-Niles,  
Foundation Chair

## 2017 NMTA Competition Winners

Sixteen pianists competed for awards at the 2017 NMTA Performance Competitions held Saturday, October 14 at Nebraska Wesleyan University. Marvin Blickenstaff, a nationally recognized piano teacher who was also the guest clinician at the NMTA Conference, adjudicated students for the Junior, Senior and Collegiate Piano Divisions of the competition.

Winning First Place in the Collegiate Division was Thomas Prentice (teachers: Nathan Buckner and Valerie Cisler, University of Nebraska Kearney). Elly Ban (teacher: Jayoung Hong, University of Nebraska Kearney) won Second Place.

Senior Piano Division winners included Angela Li, First Place (teacher: Gail Dunning, Omaha); Erik Strickland, Second Place (teacher, Marcia Wiebers, Lincoln); and tied for Third Place were Alex Wang (teacher, Chern Voon Fung, Omaha) and Wesley Chong (teacher, Yulia Kalashnikova, Omaha).

In the Junior Piano Division, Ealynn Hsu (teacher, Marcia Wiebers, Lincoln) won First Place. Jordan Zhang (teacher, Mai Butler, Omaha) won Second Place and Justin Lewis (teacher Yulia Kalashnikova, Omaha) won Third Place.

Jennifer Meyer, NMTA  
Competition Chair



## MTNA State Competitions

There were 8 total entries in this the 2017 Composition Competition. Teachers entering students were Regina Carnazzo and Nancy Schoen. This year's judges are Carol Matz, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; W. T. Sky Garcia, Ada, Oklahoma; and Linda Dusman, Baltimore, Maryland. The online process continues to run smoothly for judging.

Results are as follows:

**Elementary Winner:** Maria Fix, student of Nancy Schoen  
**Elementary Honorable Mention:** Joe Arndorfer, student of Regina Carnazzo  
**Junior Winner:** Leah Faber, student of Regina Carnazzo  
**Junior Honorable Mention:** Anna Renard, student of Nancy Schoen  
**Senior Winner:** Payton Plugge, student of Regina Carnazzo  
**Senior Honorable Mention:** Sofia Vander Zwaag, student of Regina Carnazzo

Regina Carnazzo,  
Nebraska State Composition Chairman

## OMTA News

In September, Omaha Music Teachers welcomed new members, Dr. Washington Garcia, Debra Heald, Molly Scott, Tammy Miller, Dr. Kristin Jonina Taylor, Bryan Stanley, Sun Mi Chung, Melissa Holtmeier, Hannah Moser, Tim Strang, Elizabeth Kelly, Angelika Jerden, and former member Pamela Fusselman. The September program had a panel of our peers discussing the motivators in the studio, and efficient, effective business practices.

In November, a masterclass consisting of two intermediates and two advanced students performed for Dr. Paul Barnes. In December, students from different studios performed Christmas pieces at the Gingerbread Festival at the Mormon Trail Center.

Our February workshop will be presented by Barbara Fast from 9:00 to 2:30 at Schmitt's Music. Barbara Fast's topics include: "Overcoming the Brain's Negativity Bias," "Building Blocks to Effective Sight Reading," and "Smart Practicing." It will be opened to non-members throughout the state and also in the southwest Iowa area. In March, we will again have a panel of teachers discussing teaching points for standard repertoire pieces, and some approaches to the pitfalls in a performance piece from an adjudicator's point of view. In April, Dr. Washington Garcia will present a program, "On the Do's and Don'ts of Piano Technique."

OMTA will be busy planning our annual events which include "The Fundamental Fair" on February 3, Young Artists/ Victor Borge Competition on February 24 and Trophy Festival on April 15. The NMTA District Festival will be held on April 28 at UNO. OMTA will end with a May spring Luncheon at Corkscrew Wine and Cheese Restaurant where we will honor the winner of the Senior Scholarship Award.

Wishing you all a Happy 2018 New Year!



Maria Rotella Jacobsen, NCTM  
OMTA President

## West Central Division Composition Competition Results

### Elementary:

Winner: Sloane Maa, Student of Irina Moreland, CO  
*Honorable mention:* Maria Fix, Student of Nancy Schoen, NE

### Junior:

Winner: Desi Silverman-Joseph, Student of Joyce Li, CO  
*Honorable mention:* Christopher Ramsey, Student of Joseph Myers, KS

### Senior:

Winner: Zachary Freeman, Student of Bonnie Early, CO  
*Honorable mention:* Payton Plugge, Student of Regina Carnazzo, NE

### Young Artist:

Winner: Benjamin O'Bryan, Student of Paul Lombardi, SD  
*Honorable mention:* Justice Myers, Student of Jill Hanrahan, CO

This year, the West Central Division judges were Sam Magrill, Ken Read, and Valerie Roubos. The winning compositions automatically advance to the national competition as national finalists. Congratulations to all of the participants in the competition!

Regina Carnazzo,  
West Central Division Composition Coordinator

Christopher Goldston,  
National Composition Coordinator



# MTNA Nebraska State Winner List 2017

Place	Name	Instrument	Teacher(s)	Accompanist
<b>Junior Performance Piano.</b>				
Winner	Ty Stephany	Piano	Paul Barnes	
Alternate	Alexis Nothelfer	Piano	Anne Madison	
Honorable mention	Crystal Huang	Piano	Paul Barnes	
<b>Junior Performance String.</b>				
Representative	Joseph Zhong	Violin	Anne Nagosky	Xiaolong Chen
<b>Junior Performance Woodwind.</b>				
Representative	Andrew Li	Saxophone	Paul Parker	Christi Zuniga
<b>Senior Performance Piano</b>				
Winner	Alina Hatfield	Piano	Anne Madison	
Alternate	Cynthia France	Piano	Washington Garcia	
Honorable mention	Laura Liu	Piano	Paul Barnes	
<b>Senior Performance String.</b>				
Winner	Alexander Smith	Cello	Tim Strang	to be determined
Alternate	Hannah Stacey	Violin	Ruth Meints	Yulia Kalashnikova
Honorable mention	Anastasia Wilson	Cello	Gregory Beaver	Jennifer Novak Haar
<b>Senior Performance Woodwind.</b>				
Winner	Jacob Cahill	Saxophone	David Nabb	
Alternate	Daniel Fu	Saxophone	Paul Parker	Jennifer Novak Haar
Honorable mention	Logan Beck	Saxophone	Paul Parker	Christi Zuniga
<b>Senior Piano Duet.</b>				
Representative	Angela Li Andrew Li	Piano Piano	Gail Dunning	
<b>Young Artist Performance Brass</b>				
Winner	Jordan Redd	Horn	Alan Mattingly	Unknown
<b>Young Artist Performance Piano.</b>				
Winner	Jonathan Vusich	Piano	Paul Barnes	
Alternate	Cameron Berta	Piano	Paul Barnes	
<b>Young Artist Performance String.</b>				
Winner	Riley Beranek	Cello	Karen Becker	Zhang Yin
Alternate	Stephanie Flores Guerrero	Cello	Karen Becker	
<b>Young Artist Performance Woodwind.</b>				
Winner	Alyssa Pracht	Oboe	William McMullen	Ayaka Kondo
Alternate	Mackenzie Conroy	Clarinet	Diane Barger	Jeremy Duck

