



NEBRASKA musicteacher

NMTA Newsletter

Summer 2023

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From the President

Hello NMTA members!

I am writing my last newsletter article as President of NMTA and I can say the time has flown by! I have enjoyed serving with everyone on the board, and getting to know you all better. Thank you to everyone that has helped with District and State Festivals and the State Conference, as well as doing the day-to-day work in your local organizations.

Music teaching can feel like a solitary endeavor, but remember that we are better together! Your local, state and national associations can support you in your teaching and professional life. On the national level there are competitions, the e-festival, and the national conference; as well as benefits like reduced rates on insurance, rental cars, and music purchases. There are also several types of grants, including Teacher Enrichment grants which can be used for almost any type of professional development project.

At the state level, we have Travel Grants for MTNA-sponsored events and Workshop Grants for local associations. We also have both a high school and collegiate scholarship for students. All applications can be found on our website at www.nebmta.org.

We also have a great State Conference, which is a wonderful yearly opportunity for professional development. I'm excited for this year's program, which includes wellness sessions by Vanessa Cornett and a concert by Angela Cheng! Look for more details about the conference later in this newsletter.

I hope you all have a great summer, and I will see you at the October conference!

Angela Miller-Niles,
NMTA President



ANNOUNCING THE 2023 NMTA STATE CONFERENCE



Mark your calendars for the 2023 Nebraska Music Teachers Association State Conference, competitions, and festival events in October. The campus of the University of Nebraska Omaha is co-sponsoring our conference and will host all events.

NMTA State Conference: October 19-20 (Thursday & Friday)

MTNA Performance Competitions: October 20-21 (Friday evening & Saturday)

NMTA Performance Competition: October 21 (Saturday)

NMTA State Festival: October 21-22 (Saturday & Sunday)

The NMTA State Conference will include workshop sessions, performances, as well as an advanced masterclass. The main highlights of the conference include the following guests:

- **Vanessa Cornett, guest clinician:** Vanessa Cornett is the Director of Keyboard Studies and Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis–St. Paul. Author of the book *The Mindful Musician: Mental Skills for Peak Performance* (Oxford University Press, 2019) she is a Fulbright U.S. Scholar for 2022-2023. An international clinician and educator, Dr. Cornett has presented workshops, seminars, and masterclasses in 23 states of the United States and in 18 countries across six continents. She has published widely on the intersection of contemplative practices, sport psychology, peak performance, performance anxiety management, and the mental health and well-being of musicians.
- **Angela Cheng, guest artist:** Hailed as one of Canada's most distinguished pianists, Angela Cheng has appeared with numerous orchestras, including the Israel Philharmonic, Boston Pops, and the symphonies of Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and St. Louis. She has also performed at Wigmore Hall (London) the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), the Musikverein (Vienna), and Mariinsky Concert Hall (St. Petersburg). She studied extensively with Menahem Pressler at Indiana University.
- **Marti Epstein, 2023 NMTA Commissioned Composer:** Marti Epstein is a Boston-based composer whose music has been performed by the San Francisco Symphony, The Radio Symphony Orchestra of Frankfurt, Ensemble Modern, Trinity Wall Street, and the Boston Symphony Chamber Players. Marti was a two-time fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center (1986 and 1988) and a three-time fellow at the MacDowell Colony (1998, 1999, 2022). In 2020, Marti was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. *Nebraska Impromptu*, an album of Marti's chamber music for clarinet, was just released this past April on New Focus Recordings. Marti is Professor of Composition at Berklee College of Music/Boston Conservatory of Music.
- Sessions by NMTA members **Kristín Jónína Taylor, Krista Clark, and Oscar Vázquez Medrano.**

Brenda Wristen,
NMTA President-elect
bwristen@unl.edu

As was the case last year, the summer bulletin containing more details about these events, the conference schedule, and instructions for registration will be sent out via email in July. Please be on the lookout for this important communication from NMTA!

2023 MTNA COMPETITION

2022-23 MTNA Composition Competition had winners from Nebraska at the Division level and move on to compete at the National level. Joe Arndorfer (Junior) student of Regina Carnazzo and Bennett Lambelet (Senior) student of Bryan Stanley both competed at the top level.

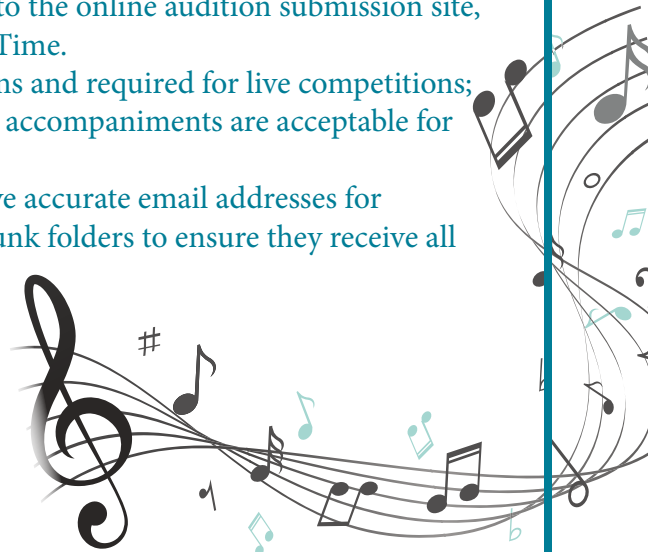
2023-24 MTNA Composition Competition – Details are available on the [MTNA.org](https://www.mtna.org) website. Information for entering will be available in August 2023.

- **NEW THIS YEAR**—YouTube links will be submitted instead of MIDI files. See details below.
- **NEW THIS YEAR**—Attendance and performance at the national conference is optional for national winners and is not a condition for accepting the prize money.
- MTNA active membership dues must be paid before submission of the registration. A \$150 nonmember teacher fee will be assessed if entrant's teacher has not paid active membership dues for the 2023–2024 membership year.
- Primary communication is via email. The registration must have accurate email addresses for entrant, teacher and parents. Be sure to check spam/junk folders regularly for confirmations and other important information.
- **Registration deadline is Wednesday, September 13, 2023, 3:00 P.M. Eastern Time. There will be no exceptions.**

MTNA Performance Competition in Nebraska will take place live and in person at UNO on Friday evening and Saturday, October 20 & 21, 2023. Details are available on the [MTNA.org](https://www.mtna.org) website. Information for entering will be available in August 2023.

- Entrants are responsible for verifying the format (live or video) prior to entering the competition.
- Division competitions will be an **ONLINE-ONLY VIDEO** round. [Click here](#) for the details of the Division competitions process. An additional division video fee of \$25 fee will be required for those advancing to the division level. Deadline for video submission to the online audition submission site, "Acceptd," is Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time.
- Live piano accompaniments are preferred for video competitions and required for live competitions; however, if extenuating circumstances arise, prerecorded piano accompaniments are acceptable for video competitions.
- Primary communication is via email. The registration must have accurate email addresses for entrant, teacher and parents. Participants should check spam/junk folders to ensure they receive all communications regarding the competitions.
- **Registration deadline for Performance Competitions is Wednesday, September 13, 2023, 3:00 P.M. Eastern Time. There will be no exceptions.**

Linda Rogers
MTNA State Competitions Chair



CALL 4 POSTERS

Conference 2023

The 2023 NMTA State Conference will be at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in Omaha, Nebraska on October 19-20, 2023. We are looking for poster presentations featuring research projects, outreach or collegiate chapter activities.

Presenters must furnish their own poster board. Posters should contain all pertinent information in a manner that can be read from 3-4 feet away. Please submit a maximum 250-word abstract/description of the poster presentation. Include the poster title, preliminary graphic of the poster, presenter name and bio, institution (if appropriate), presenter email and phone number.

Proposals must be submitted by **September 1, 2023**.

SUBMIT TO: Brenda Wristen, via e-mail as a Word or pdf attachment at bwristen2@unl.edu

Brenda Wristen,
NMTA President-elect
bwristen@unl.edu

Lincoln District Festival

The Lincoln District Festival was held in-person on April 22, 2023 at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln, Nebraska. It was wonderful to welcome 150 students from 27 teachers of the 153 students that were originally registered.

We had entries in piano, violin, guitar, voice, flute and cello. Students were entered in all 8 level: 1A-36; 1B-33; 2A-30; 2B-16; 3A-18; 4A-8. 88% received a rating of 1+, 1, or 1-and 86% qualified to attend the State Festival! 74% received a Certificate of Theory Excellence.

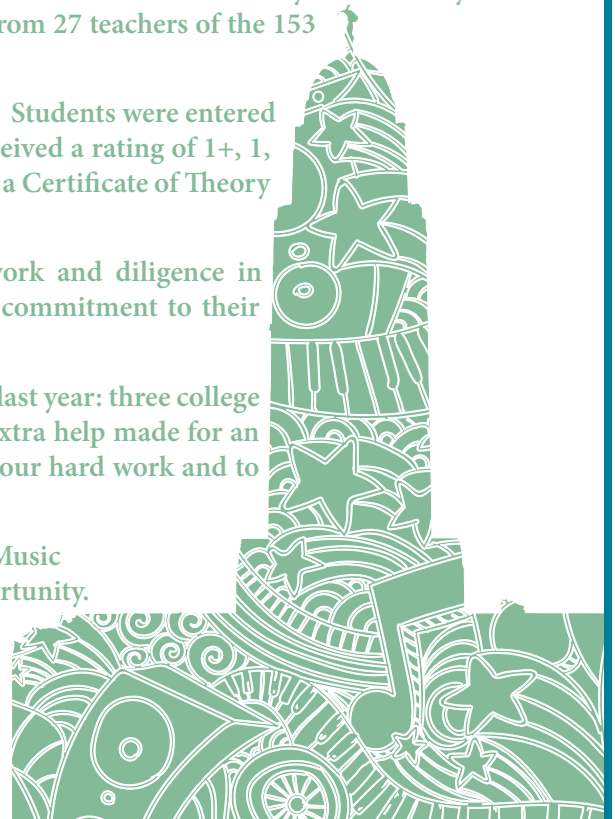
Congratulations to all the participants for their hard work and diligence in preparation and to the teachers of these participants for their commitment to their student's music education.

We had several more volunteers participate in comparison to last year: three college students, a retired teacher and a couple family members! The extra help made for an easier day for all involved. Thank you to all the volunteers for your hard work and to all our adjudicators, as well.

Thank you to Larry Jones and Nebraska Wesleyan University Music Department for hosting us. These festivals are an inspiring opportunity.

Thanks to the fantastic collaboration of all the people involved!

Lisa Myers,
Lincoln District Festival Chair



NMTA WORKSHOP GRANT

An NMTA Workshop Grant in the amount of up to \$1000.00 is available to any NMTA-affiliated organization or member to assist with the expenses of a workshop for the purposes of teacher education/training and/or student activities.

Application details for the available Workshop Grant can be found on the NMTA website: nebmta.org.



Submit all application materials via email to Angela Miller-Niles at angela.miller.niles@gmail.com no later than November 15, 2023

The annual meeting of NMTA membership is scheduled for Friday, October 20, 2023 from 12:15-1:15 P.M. in the Nebraska Room (201) in the Milo Bail Student Center at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.



Travel Grant

A travel grant of \$750.00 is available through NMTA to assist with travel expenses for a teacher attending an MTNA affiliated conference. The applicant must be an NMTA/MTNA member in good standing during the year of application, and the travel must be completed in 2024.

Travel Grant Application information is listed on the NMTA website. In the letter of application, specify the conference location and dates, and include a brief resume of the applicant. The NMTA Executive Committee will select the Travel Grant recipient. The Executive Committee requires criteria by which to measure and evaluate the strength of each application. These criteria are listed on the NMTA website: nebmta.org

Before receiving the grant money, the recipient must write an article describing her/his conference experiences for the NMTA Newsletter issue that immediately follows the event.

Please submit all materials by November 15, 2023 to Angela Miller-Niles at angela.miller.niles@gmail.com.

OMTA

Omaha Music Teacher Association

Omaha Music Teachers Association begins its new “fiscal” year with the election of a new slate of officers. President-Mark Dickmeyer, President-Elect-Gail Dunning, Vice President-Lisa Batten, Secretary-Jerri Niver, and Treasurer-Jan Zimmerman.

The annual Music Fundamentals Fair was held at UNO in February with 281 students entered. The Young Artist competition followed Fun Fair in February where 20 teachers present the “crème de la crème” of our Omaha area music students with 33 students entered. All three of the recitals exhibited the highest caliber of instruction and playing. Angela Miller-Niles, Paul Barnes and Greg Gronstal provided their expertise as judges. Also in February, Dr. Katrina Cox, assistant professor of music education at UNO, presented a workshop on how students learn and respond to feedback. February was a busy month! The Trophy Festival was held in March, also at UNO, with 21 teachers and 204 students entered. In April, an all-adult recital was held at Schmitt Music and was a great event for all who attended! Also in April, Donna Gunn presented an educational and entertaining program on 18th century ornamentation.

In May, members enjoyed our spring luncheon and were pleased to have our first-place senior scholarship winner, Elisabeth Meade, join us and read her musical essay. Elisabeth received a \$1,000 scholarship and second place winner, Nathan Liu, received a \$500 prize. District Auditions were also held in May with 227 entries. The members of OMTA pride ourselves in continuing to offer a multitude of opportunities for both students and teachers! Very best to all of our NMTA friends and colleagues!

Mark Dickmeyer,
OMTA President

Omaha District Festival

Omaha District Festival welcomed 215 solo participants and 3 ensembles from the 227 entries on May 6th, 2023. Congratulations to all who qualified for the State Festival in October!

We are proud of our students and their teachers for their excellent preparation in the following areas: accordion, cello, euphonium, piano solo & duet, string quartet, trumpet, viola & violin. Across all 8 levels, sixty percent of participants received Certificates of Theory Excellence and seventy-five percent of participants earned a 1- or higher.

Thank you to the thirty teachers who participated and especially our volunteers. Without your help, our day would not have been a success!

Ellen Scholl,
Omaha District Festival Chair



Ediger Scholarships

This year's NMTA Thomas Ediger High School and Collegiate Scholarship winners exemplify the many wonderful students that NMTA teachers have the privilege of mentoring across Nebraska.

Because this year's judge, Dr. Réne Lecuona, Professor of Piano at the University of Iowa, found two applicants to be highly deserving, the NMTA Board made the exceptional decision to award two NMTA Thomas Ediger High School Scholarships this year to Elisabeth (Libby) Meade and Nathan Liu.

Violist Libby Meade is a student of Ruth Meints at Omaha Conservatory of Music. Among her many honors and activities, Libby was the Nebraska winner of the MTNA Senior Strings Competition for the past three years and was awarded alternate at the divisional competition. She has volunteered over 220 hours in various activities including playing for her church's worship team and teaching Spanish at local elementary schools. One of her recommenders wrote of her, "Libby's character is truly spectacular, in the most humble and unassuming fashion. She has big dreams, and all the talent in the world to pursue them." Libby plans to attend Vanderbilt University, where she will double major in viola performance and political science.



Pianist Nathan Liu is a student of Anne Madison at Omaha Conservatory of Music. For the past five years, Nathan has won one of the top three prizes at the state level of the MTNA Competitions. In addition to piano, Nathan excels at soccer and was highly ranked nationally in debate. Among his volunteer activities, he created a debate video curriculum to increase access to coaching in Nebraska with over 5000 views and multiple schools around the state involved, and he volunteered as a pianist at his church. One of his recommenders wrote, "Nathan is reliable, careful, thoughtful, and filled with integrity. Nathan's resume, scores, and transcript reveal his intelligence and keen understanding of the world around him. Perhaps more importantly, though, Nathan is a pleasure to all who work with him." Nathan will major in political science at the University of Pennsylvania this fall.

The winner of this year's NMTA Thomas Ediger Collegiate Scholarship is Joshua Miller. Joshua is pursuing a piano performance degree with Dr. Kristin Taylor at UNO and was a prize winner in the Charleston International Competition in 2022. Joshua serves as president of UNO's collegiate MTNA chapter, which was honored to be selected to present at the MTNA National Conference in Reno. He volunteers as part of the worship band at his church as well as playing hymns for a group of senior attendees. One of his instructors wrote, "His resilience, creativity, passion, and pursuit of musical excellence make him the perfect candidate." In the future, Joshua aspires to be a freelance composer and film composer, to perform, and to have his own private teaching studio.



Congratulations and best wishes to this year's winners!

Anne Madison,
Scholarship Coordinator

Lincoln Music Teachers Association

A NEW YEAR OF TEACHING, A NEW YEAR OF GROWTH

If you are anything like me, the last few years feel like a blur—a blip in time that feels as though it were a decade ago. As we continue to move forward, I want to take this opportunity to reflect at how our association has withstood the struggles and continued to serve the teachers and students of our wonderful Lincoln community.

The volunteers on our Board and throughout our organization cannot be thanked enough for their persistence, adaptiveness, creativity, and work-ethic these past few years. From online events to Facebook fundraisers, we have continued to provide access to new ideas while simultaneously encouraging fellowship within our community. Our state and national counterparts have done the same, providing teachers with workshops, tutorials, and articles to help us adapt to a unique way of teaching. Our programs have gradually been increasing in attendance, and we have piloted several student performance opportunities this year, such as students performing prior to Lincoln Symphony Orchestra concerts. Our Program Committee has worked incredibly hard to provide unique and relevant events for our membership. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the LMTA Board, to Lindsay Bartlett (Program Chair) and Marcia Wiebers (Program Committee), and especially to our four newest Board Members – Joanna Moody (Secretary), Nancy Binder (Treasurer), Lynette Boyce (Corresponding Secretary), and Paul Zeller (Recital Chair), for stepping in to serve. What a privilege it is to work alongside such outstanding people!

Some highlights from our 2022-2023 program year include: a performance by Ed Polochick and Anton Miller; a presentation on “Fostering the Creative Student” by composer and University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor, David von Kampen; a round-table discussion on preparing students for festival; a masterclass with Dr. Larry Jones, Professor of Piano at Nebraska Wesleyan University; our 10th biannual Composition Contest (to date, we have had 496 compositions entered); a presentation about a life shaped by chamber music given by University of Nebraska-Lincoln professors, Dr. John Bailey and Dr. Christopher Marks; a presentation by Doane University professor, Dr. Bill Whipple, discussing the pedagogical uses of prepared piano; a presentation from the Polley Music Library librarian, Scott Scholz; several recitals and service recitals; and a scattering of fundraisers benefitting our Music Outreach Program which served 50 local students this year.

Our association continues to grow and hopes to offer even more to our members in the coming years. Please visit our website, www.lmta.info, to stay up-to-date on our upcoming events for the 2023-2024 season.

I look forward to seeing you at our first membership meeting this fall! Have a wonderful, musical summer!
Krista Hafez Clark,
LMTA President

Online NMTA District Festival

This was our first year to host a full-scale online District Festival. During the pandemic we provided a smaller-scale version, but this year we tried covering everything included in the in-person districts: performance, sight-reading, theory, and ear training. Although there were a few technical glitches along the way, I felt the festival was successful for students.

There were 43 students entered in the festival, with one violin entry and the rest piano. Entrants came from 17 teachers from Omaha, Lincoln, Alliance, Papillion and Wayne, NE and Council Bluffs, IA.

Dr. Kathryn March from Morningside University was the judge, and provided great feedback about how to improve the judging experience for next year. 91% of students achieved a I+, I or I- and 67% of students received a Theory Excellence certificate. 100% of students entered passed to go onto state.

Angela Miller-Niles,
Online District Festival Chair

Central Nebraska District Festival

Central District Festival was held Saturday, April 29, 2023, at Hastings College of Music in Hastings, Nebraska. Even though the numbers are small, our organization is growing! There were eight teachers entering thirty-two students from Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Phillips, David City, and Lewellen. Three of these teachers are new to Central NMTA and became very enthusiastic about the festival and what it means to participate for their students.

Both judges were impressed with the preparation of Central's students. That became evident when 97% qualified for the October 21-22 Nebraska State Festival. Performance scores recorded 94% with 1+, 1 or 1- ratings.

We administered written theory tests in Levels 1A -2B resulting in 75% receiving Theory Excellence at 90% or above.

In order to accomplish all these great numbers, parents, teachers, and two Hastings College students played an important part that day. This Festival depends on these willing volunteers each year. Hopefully, next April 27 will see double the student participants with equally high performance levels!

Each person there that day warms my heart for what we are providing for music students here in Central Nebraska. It truly "takes a village"!

Linda Dahlstrom,
Central District Festival Chair



Teacher of the Year Nominations

We can be proud that we have many outstanding teachings in NMTA. Please consider nominating one of them for the 2024 NMTA Teacher of the Year Award. A list of past winners can be found on the Teacher Programs/Awards page of the NMTA website (see Requirement No. 3, below).

Nominations need only contain a few sentences describing the qualifications of the nominee. Nominees do not submit portfolios.

Requirements (also listed on the NMTA website):

1. Member in good standing of NMTA/MTNA for the past five consecutive years.
2. Demonstrated excellence in teaching as evidenced through festivals, competitions, student recitals, and other musical activities.
3. The award recipient must not have received the award within any of the previous ten years.
4. Nominee must have held at least one local or state-wide appointed or elected office.
5. No one currently serving on the NMTA Executive Committee (elected officers) is eligible for this award.

The NMTA Executive Committee will select the recipient. The individual receiving the award must attend the state conference in the year in which the award is given and must be present at the awards ceremony. The honor includes a plaque and cash award. An article about the recipient will be published in the subsequent NMTA newsletter. Nominations must be received by January 15, 2024. Please send nominations via email to:

Angela Miller-Niles at angela.miller.niles@gmail.com.

NMTA Officer Nominations

NMTA officers will be elected at the NMTA Annual Meeting,
October 20, 2023, 12:15 P.M.,
during the NMTA State Conference at the University of Omaha at Omaha, Nebraska.

President: Brenda Wristen
Immediate Past President: Angela Miller-Niles
President-elect: Jane Sonneland
Vice-President: Erin Blake
Secretary: Jonathan Sokasits
Treasurer: Regina Carnazzo

Many thanks to the Nominating Committee for their service:
Linda Dahlstrom, Gail Dunning, Larry Jones, and Jan Zimmerman.

SUBMIT YOUR ESSAYS



We invite NMTA teachers and college students to submit original essays for possible publication in future issues of the NMTA Newsletter.

Requirements:

- Essays may be pedagogical or scholarly in nature, or both.
 - Essays must be limited to 1,000 words or less
 - Submit as Word documents, using Times New Roman
- 10-point font Single spaced with double space between paragraphs.

The newsletter editor reserves the right to edit essays chosen for publication. Send an essay submission as an email attachment to Angela Miller-Niles at angela.miller.niles@gmail.com.