



NEBRASKA musicteacher

NMTA Newsletter

Winter 2024

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from the President

The end of the fall semester is a somewhat frantic time for academics as we try to finish grading, hear juries, prepare for our next term, deal with our application and audition cycles, and sort out myriad other details. With the additional demands of the approaching holiday season with its performances, parties, and events it can be easy to get wrapped up (see what I did there?) in the business and stressors that attend this time of year. However, whether we are teachers affiliated with an institution or independent music teachers, the end of a teaching term represents a prime opportunity to set aside some time to reflect on our teaching. The truly transformative teachers I have known through the years, many of them here in Nebraska, all share a commitment to continued focus on and development of their teaching effectiveness. Honest and unflinching reflection is a hallmark of teaching excellence and is most effective when it is regular and continual. Here is the process I use personally and through which I guide my piano pedagogy students:

- First and foremost, compose your teaching philosophy in writing. A teaching philosophy is not the same thing as a studio policy. It is rather a statement of what you believe to be most important for you to teach and for students to learn as well as what you value in the learning process, and it is the lodestar of your teaching praxis. To write a philosophy statement, consider questions such as: What elements of music do you value and emphasize in your teaching? What do you value most about the learning process? Who are your students? How you want to teach and interact with your students? Some details of your teaching philosophy will change over time, in response to your continued growth and reflection as a teacher.
- Once or twice a year, set aside some time to reread your philosophy statement and ask yourself whether what and how you are teaching aligns with your philosophy. Perhaps you need to adjust your teaching practices—or maybe you need to rethink your philosophy!
- As you revisit your teaching philosophy, observe a recent video of your teaching. Are you teaching what you set out to teach? Are your teaching strategies effective? Do you notice any barriers to student communication and learning? MTNA offers a wonderful self-assessment tool on their website for this purpose (follow path Join+Renew—Members Only—Publications—Assessment Tools). Be sure to note one to three successful aspects of your teaching as well as identifying elements you want to improve. Avoid vague and uninformative terms like “good” (what was good?) and condemnatory language. Be as specific and objective as possible.
- Before each lesson, target one (maximum two) specific goal(s) to

improve your teaching. After the lesson, briefly assess whether you met your goal. Be sure your goals are specific, realistic, and achievable yet challenge you to stretch and grow as a teacher.

- Consider inviting periodic opportunities for students and families to share their perceptions and experiences. Providing carefully considered and worded questions is more likely to yield thoughtful feedback that can help inform your teaching evaluation process.

While the description above is perhaps overly involved, a regular evaluation process itself does not take as much time as one might imagine and the returns are rich. I'm reminded of the well-known account of Pablo Casals being asked why he was still bothering to practice the cello at age 80. His response—"because I think I am making progress"—represents exactly how I feel about my teaching!

Speaking of ways to cultivate teaching excellence, I hope many of you will also consider joining me at the annual conference of Music Teachers National Association March 16-20 in Atlanta, Georgia. This conference always provides a wealth of new ideas and inspiration for teaching and performing. It is also not too early to begin planning to attend our NMTA conference October 17-18, 2024, which will be hosted by my home institution, the Glenn Korff School of Music on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus.



Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda Wristen".

Brenda Wristen

NMTA President

Petra Wahlqvist joins LMTA as bookkeeper

LMTA is happy to announce the hiring of Petra Wahlqvist as their new bookkeeper. As an arts and nonprofit professional with over 20 years of experience, Petra is thrilled to join the LMTA team as a contractor. She has a passion for LMTA's mission and work in the community, especially through the Music Outreach Program (LMTA-MOP) which offers low-cost lessons, instruments and their upkeep, educational materials and performance opportunities for children in need. Petra is excited to work alongside LMTA volunteers, teachers, students, parents, and supporters on bookkeeping, organization, and administrative tasks.

Petra is the co-founder and Executive Director of BLIXT ARTS LAB, a Lincoln nonprofit specializing in arts innovation beyond expectation. She is the former Executive Director of Nebraskans for the Arts and also served as the Director of Education and Community Engagement at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. She has an extensive background in education, including serving as an adjunct faculty at UNL and Nebraska Wesleyan University. Prior to moving to Lincoln, Petra lived in London, UK, and served as a Teaching Artist for elementary students. She studied theatre at the University of Kansas and in London and Paris. She is originally

from Sweden, and travels there at least twice a year to see family and friends.

In her spare time, Petra enjoys knitting, running, reading, cross country skiing (when there is snow!) and spending time with her family and dog Annie. LMTA warmly welcomes Petra to the organization. If you want to connect with Petra, you can drop her a line at bookkeeping@lmta.info.

Jo Riecker-Karl, Chair
LMTA Music Outreach Program



SUMMIT 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 and/or scholarly in nature.
- 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 submission as an email attachment to Angela Miller-Niles at

angela.miller.niles@gmail.com.

Greetings colleagues! OMTA has had an eventful fall! Our September meeting kicked off our fall programs with a master class presented by Emanuel Ax at the Holland Center. The Omaha Symphony also arranged for a rare “open rehearsal” so our members could watch the symphony work with this amazing concert pianist.

In October we were so pleased to host the state conference at UNO which had wonderful workshops and presentations that were interesting, educational and fun too! Many thanks to all on the NMTA Board who devoted so much time and expertise to make this happen for all of us!

Our November program brought the ever-entertaining Paul Barnes to the big “O” for his presentation entitled “Weight Just a Minute! And Other Thoughts on Technic.” His talk was both enlightening and engaging—we are so fortunate to have him in our musical community!

Also in November, we hosted an “honors” recital for students who have received top ratings in events over the past several months. The students all delivered beautiful performances!

In December we met for our annual Christmas luncheon at Biaggi’s restaurant. What can I say but FUN and DELICIOUS! What a great way to start the holiday traditions!

We are now busy planning our annual Music Fundamentals Fair to be held at UNO on January 20th. We are delighted to have 297 students entered from 24 studios!

Here’s wishing all of you a glorious, festive and MUSICAL holiday season!

Very best regards,

Mark Dickmeyer for OMTA.

OMTA
Omaha Music Teacher Association



Call For Conference Session Proposals

2024

The 2024 NMTA State Conference will take place at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska on October 17-18, 2024.

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 55 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 March 15, 2024.

SUBMIT TO: Jane Sonneland, NMTA President-Elect, via e-mail as a Word or pdf attachment at jwson88@yahoo.com.

Jane Sonneland
NMTA President-elect

Ediger Scholarships

Please encourage your students to apply for the NMTA Thomas Ediger Scholarships! Each of these \$1000 awards recognizes the musical study, musical achievement, musical contributions, and good citizenship of the recipient.

Those who are seniors in high school who are planning to graduate in 2024 are eligible to apply for the NMTA Thomas Ediger High School Scholarship, and those who are currently enrolled as music majors at a college or university in Nebraska who are planning to continue higher education toward a music degree in the summer or fall semester of 2024 may apply for the NMTA Thomas Ediger Collegiate Scholarship. Applicants must be studying with a current member of NMTA whose dues were paid by September 1, 2023.

The entry deadline is 11:59 pm on Sunday, March 3, 2024. Detailed information is available on our website at <https://nebmata.org/thomas-edigar-scholarships/>. I hope many students will take advantage of this opportunity!

Anne Madison, Scholarship Coordinator



Senior



Junior - Piano



Junior - Violin



Collegiate

2023 NMTA Performance Competition

Senior Piano Division

Winner: Natalie Cheng, *Teacher: Fei Fei Jiang*

Second Prize: Eunha Ok, *Teacher: Kyu Yoon Butler*

Third Prize: Amelia Burba *Teacher: Mai Butler*

Honorable mention #1:

Andy Vu *Teacher: Tammy Miller*

Honorable mention #2:

Chuyee Huang *Teacher: Boban Martic*

Judge: Vanessa Cornett

(Graduate) Collegiate Piano Division:

Winner: Frances Reyes, *Teacher: Kristin Taylor*

Judge: Vanessa Cornett

(Undergraduate) Collegiate Piano Division:

Winner: Natalie McNamara, *Teacher: Kristin Taylor*

Judge: Vanessa Cornett

Junior Piano Division:

Winner: Andrea Hu, *Teacher: Fei Fei Jiang*

Second Prize: Jonathan Zeng, *Teacher: Marina Fabrikant*

Third Prize: Catherine Friesen, *Teacher: Marcia L. Wiebers*

Honorable Mention #1:

Anton Alexandrov, *Teacher: Marina Fabrikant*

Honorable Mention #2:

Sam Kitchen, *Teacher: Jennifer Novak Haar*

Judge: Xuan Kuang

Junior Violin Division:

Winner: Wenqing Jia, *Teacher: Lisa Nielsen*

Judge: Xun Xu

2023 MTNA Performance Competition

The MTNA Performance Competition took place Friday and Saturday, October 20 & 21, 2023 on the campus of University of Nebraska Omaha in the Strauss Performing Arts Building. There were 28 competitors - 6 Junior, 15 Senior and 7 Young Artist.

Results (teacher's name in parenthesis):

BRASS - YOUNG ARTIST: Horn (Representative) – Bradley Greathouse (Alan Mattingly)

PIANO - JUNIOR: Winner – Sarah Fernandes (Washington Garcia)

Alternate – Junya Duan (Chern Voon Fung)

Honorable Mention – Nora Peithmann (Sandra Quiring)

SENIOR: Winner – Matvey Moissejev (Paul Barnes)

Alternate – Winston Schneider (Anne Madison)

Honorable Mention – BingYi Wang (Anne Madison)

YOUNG ARTIST: Winner – Tierra Cassens (Paul Barnes)

Alternate – Megumi Sakamoto (Nathan Buchner)

Honorable Mention – Khang Nguyen (Paul Barnes)

STRING - JUNIOR: Winner Violin – Junyi Yuan (Olga Smola)

Alternate Violin – Christopher Lee (Ruth Meints)

Honorable Mention Violin – Josephine Abuhl (Ruth Meints)

SENIOR: Winner Violin – Taryn Geiger (Ruth Meints)

Alternate Cello – Nicholas Li (Tracy Sands)

Honorable Mention Viola – Anna Suh (Ruth Meints)

YOUNG ARTIST: Violin (Representative) – Steven Pruss (Olga Smola)

VOICE - SENIOR: Winner - Charlotte Fox (Anne-Marie Kenny)

Alternate – Riya Kumar (Anne-Marie Kenny)

Each Winner will submit repertoire requirements via video performance for Division Competition; deadline is December 6th. Division results will be announced during the second week of January.

Piano Performance Judges were Dr. Curtis Pavey - University of Missouri, Dr. David Pickering - Kansas State University, and Dr. Jack Winerock - University of Kansas. String Performance judge was Dr. Ting-Lan Chen - University of Nebraska Kearney. Voice judge was Dr. Jared Hiscock - Hastings College.

Sixteen teacher members of NMTA are represented: Paul Barnes, Nathan Buckner, Marina Fabrikant, Chern Voon Fung, Washington Garcia, Jennifer Novak Haar, Catherine Herbener, Anne-Marie Kenny, Anne Madison, Boban Martic, Alan Mattingly, Ruth Meints, Sandra Quiring, Tracy Sands, Olga Smola and William Wolcott.

Linda Rogers, NCTM

MTNA State Competitions Chair, Nebraska

Central Nebraska Music Teachers

For the 12th year, several Central Nebraska studios provided more than 15 hours of Christmas music for The Stuhr Museum's Christmas Past and Present in Grand Island. This 2 weekend event in early December decks the town in period Christmas decor with actors in character demonstrating what it would have been like to live in the midwest during the 1890's. It was a festive atmosphere and unique performing experience for our students (discussions of period appropriate music—only carols from before 1890, chilly temps, dim lighting at night, and lots of distractions).



Central Nebraska music teachers have enjoyed a few “Music Teacher Meet Ups” in 2023 to network and share ideas. More meet ups are in the works for 2024 and we look forward to building a strong network of connections.

Back row: Alicia Glaser, Jonathan Sokasits
Front row: Tara Blodgett (Ella), Lindsay Dietze,
Linda Dahlstrom



Online State Festival

We held an online state festival option to increase accessibility for students. Fourteen students entered, with nine teachers from across Nebraska (Alliance, Bennington, Lincoln, Omaha, Papillion and Council Bluffs, IA). All entrants were on piano, and Linda Rogers adjudicated. 79% of students received a I-, I or I+ and 71% achieved Theory Excellence with a score of 90% or higher on the theory test.

Angela Miller-Niles
Online Festival Chair

2023 State Festival Report

The 2023 NMTA State Festival was held on October 21-22 at University of Nebraska – Omaha. There were 224 solo entries – 210 piano, 6 string, 1 flute, and 1 voice. There were also 2 ensemble entries – 1 string quartet and 1 piano duo.

Erin Blake
NMTA Vice President

Call for Nominations: Teacher of the Year

In an effort to support outstanding teaching in music, NMTA presents the Teacher of the Year Award every other year at our state conference with the next award given in October 2024. Please consider nominating one of our outstanding teachers! Nominations need only contain a few sentences describing the qualifications of the nominee. (Nominees do not submit portfolios.) Please send nominations via email to Brenda Wristen no later than January 15, 2024. The executive committee will select the recipient.

Requirements:

1. Member in good standing of NMTA/MTNA for the past five consecutive years
2. Demonstrated excellence in teaching as shown 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.

Award:

The honor includes a plaque and cash award. 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. An article about the recipient will be published in the subsequent NMTA newsletter.



Janet Zimmerman Receives NMTA Service Award



Janet Zimmerman received a Service Award at the Annual NMTA Awards Luncheon on October 20, 2023, for her volunteer work with the Nebraska Music Teachers Association.

Janet received her Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She studied with Clarke Mullin and completed her studies with Dr. Marsha Johnson. In her sophomore year, she received a full ride academic scholarship which she maintained for the balance of her time at UNO. During this time, she tutored and served as the scribe for a visually impaired music student, and was awarded the UNO Music Department "Music History Award". Janet opened her teaching studio during this time, and has remained active as a teacher since then. She has

adjudicated for the National Guild of Piano Teachers, NFMTC, Junior Festivals and the NMTA District Festivals.

In July of 2001, Jan joined MTNA, NMTA, and OMTA. It only took a few years before her service career began. In 2005 she became President Elect and Fun Fair Chair for OMTA. These two opportunities gave her a chance to grow relationships with many wonderful colleagues whom she now cherishes as her friends. She relied on them as she was still a very inexperienced member and is forever grateful for their support. Since then, Jan has served OMTA as President, Advisor, the FUNdamentals Fair Co-Chair for 7 years, Trophy Festival Co-Chair, Member Communications, Web Coordinator, and she has chaired the Finance Committee since its beginning in 2009. She also wrote and prepared Theory Tests for the FUNdamentals Fair 2007-2018, continues preparing tests for Trophy Festival, and served as Theory Chair for NMTA for 3 years. She has been serving as Treasurer of OMTA since 2020.

TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENTS

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TWO TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENTS,
PAULETTE SMITH AND JERRI NIVER!

Paulette Smith has been a member of MTNA, NMTA and OMTA since 1987. She was NMTA's 2020 Foundation Fellow but was unable to attend the conference as it was canceled due to the COVID pandemic. She has served on the NMTA and OMTA boards, and is currently serving as Parliamentarian of OMTA.

Jerri Niver has been teaching piano for over 50 years and has been a member of NMTA since 1988. She has been Nationally Certified with MTNA for 32 years. She has served on the NMTA and OMTA boards, and is currently Certification Chair for NMTA. She was NMTA's Foundation Fellow in 2019.



Travel grants have been raised to \$1,000 and applications can be found at our website www.nebmta.org.
***We usually award one travel grant each year, plus a travel award to the Foundation Fellow. As we have no fellow this year, two travel grants were awarded.*

Thank you to Nebraska Arts Council!

NMTA was awarded a grant of \$1,460 from the Nebraska Arts Council to support Angela Cheng's concert at our October state conference at the University of Nebraska-Omaha.

The Nebraska Arts Council, a state agency, supported this arts event through its matching grants program funded by the Nebraska legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. Visit: www.artscouncil.nebraska.gov for more information.



In Memoriam: Joan Reist

Nebraska Music Teachers Association is saddened to note the death of Joan M. Reist on November 4, 2023.

Joan began her teaching career in Cortland Public Schools, but it was her decision to open a piano studio in 1960 that set her on a path that would define her professional life. For the next 33 years, countless young people learned to play the piano in the studio in the basement of her home – early on with her baby daughter in a crib nearby. She embraced the philosophy of her mentor Robert Pace, that teaching students to play the piano, improvise and read music was a way to help them enrich their lives by making music a part of it.

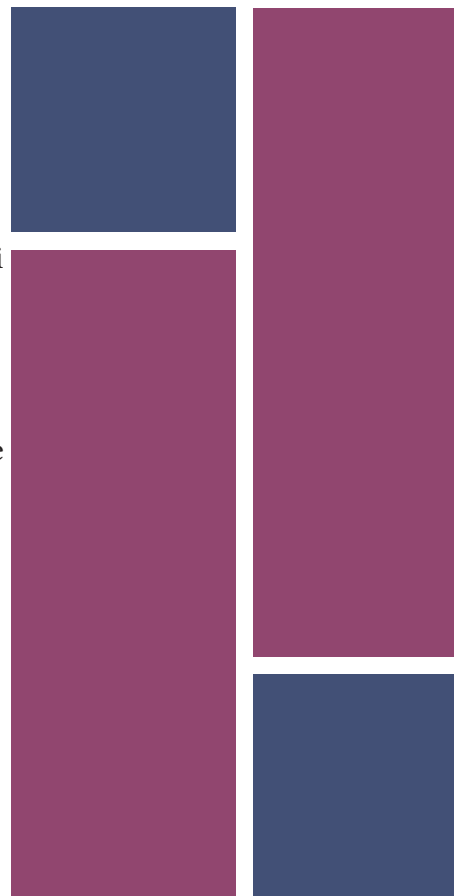
In 1973 she joined the university, where her accomplishments included creating and coordinating an academy for all freshman music majors, designing piano proficiency and musicianship programs and supervising graduate assistants. She retired as an assistant professor in 2000.

She was a longtime consultant for the National Piano Foundation and the International Piano Teaching Foundation. For many years, she judged music competitions, was a guest instructor at universities and music teacher organizations across the country, as well as presenting at workshops and national conferences. She's written for numerous music publications and, among other roles, was president of the Lincoln Music Teachers Association, the Nebraska Music Teachers Association and the Music Teachers National Association, where she was instrumental in helping shape the organization's foundation. She was a member of Mu Phi Epsilon for more than 60 years.

She received distinguished service awards from the national and state music associations and the Nebraska Music Educators Association and received a Mayor's Arts Award in 2012. Joan was an avid supporter of the arts, including the Lincoln Symphony, the Nebraska Chamber Players, the Lied Center, and Friends of Opera. She spent many years after retirement as a docent at Sheldon Art Gallery.

Joan is survived by her daughter, Margaret (Andrew), grandsons Marshall (Peggy), Grant (Jenny) and Will (Bethany), sisters Margaret Prah (Tom Patterson) and Jenny Radulovich (Mark), nephews Jay (Jen), Paula (Brad) and David (Lisa), great-grandchildren Henry, Eliana and Hattie, honorary grandkids Steven, Cait, Dan and Megan Ozaki and a host of great-nieces and great-nephews.

Joan's family suggests memorials to the University of Nebraska Glenn Korff School of Music (care of the NU Foundation in Joan's name), St. Matthew's Church, or the Music Teachers National Association.



MTNA West Central Division Composition Competition Results

Music Teachers National Association is pleased to announce the results of the composition competition for West Central Division.

ELEMENTARY:

WINNER: Anthony Arteaga, Student of Nancy Schoen, NE

Honorable mention: Rowan Hansen, Student of Megan Wallace, MN

JUNIOR:

WINNER: Kevin Chen, Student of Sarah Miller, MN

Honorable mention: Foster Hoover, Student of Connie Brown, CO

SENIOR:

WINNER: Winston Schneider, Student of Kenneth Meints, NE

Honorable mention: Christian Won, Student of Tatiana Ioudenitch, KS

Honorable mention: Blake Zimmerli, Student of Lynee Larson, MN

YOUNG ARTIST:

WINNER: James Morris, Student of Jennifer Hayghe, CO

Honorable mention: Ian Kocher, Student of Paul Lombardi, SD

This year, the West Central Division judges were:

Ian Dicke

Kevin Olson

Andrew Sauerwein

The winning compositions automatically advance to the national competition as national finalists. The results of that competition will be announced by the end of January.

Congratulations to all of the participants in the competition! We hope that the comments you receive from the judges will be helpful to you and your teacher. Your efforts are to be commended, and we hope that you will continue to learn and grow as a composer. Good luck with your musical studies!

Regina Carnazzo,
West Central Division Composition Coordinator
(402) 894-2243
Carnazzo@cox.net

Christopher Goldston,
National Composition Coordinator
(773) 580-7301
goldston@hotmail.com

From MTNA West Central Division Director Mary Beth Shaffer:

On behalf of the West Central Division, I would like to extend my congratulations to all of the winners, alternate and honorable mention recipients and their teachers in the Nebraska MTNA competition last weekend. I know that they are a dedicated and talented group of young musicians!

With all best wishes to each of them in the division competition,
Mary Beth Shaffer
Director, West Central Division, Music Teachers National Association

Ruth Meints recognized by Aksarben Foundation

NMTA member Ruth Meints was recognized by the Aksarben Foundation at their ball on October 28, 2023 for her achievements in the arts. She was one of the leaders included in their Court of Honor, which celebrates individuals who have impacted our state through their volunteerism, philanthropy and community service.

Ruth was applauded for her work in music education, specifically her development of the Spring Sprouts program at the Omaha Conservatory of Music and her tenure there as Executive Director. More details on Ruth's career and service can be found in the Spirit of Aksarben publication's 2023 issue, at www.aksarben.org. Congratulations Ruth!

New Officers Elected

NMTA officers were elected at the NMTA Annual Meeting on October 20, 2023 during the NMTA State Conference at the University of Omaha in Omaha, Nebraska.

President: Brenda Wristen
Immediate Past President: Angela Miller-Niles
President-elect: Jane Sonneland
Vice-President: Erin Blake (not pictured)
Secretary: Jonathan Sokasits (not pictured)
Treasurer: Regina Carnazzo

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

