



WASHINGTON MUSIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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For the first time ever—a modern piano music festival

By Nancy Breth

WMTA invites your participation in a brand new piano event on June 11, 2016. Modern Piano Music Celebration (MPM for short), is devoted entirely to piano music by composers born in 1905 or later. To keep the event focused on “modern” music, the composer birth year will be increased by five years. In other words, in 2020 the eligible composers’ year of birth will be 1910 or later; in 2025 it will be 1915 or later, and so on.

All musical styles that fit this requirement are welcome. Because we use other peoples’ pianos, however, we must regretfully exclude repertoire for prepared piano. Performers’ hands inside the piano, though, is totally acceptable.

Students may play one or any number of pieces but time limits will be in effect.

When news of the competition was first posted, it was listed strictly as a competition. Since then however, a new venue

has been secured that will allow a larger enrollment:

Chevy Chase United Methodist Church, 7001 Connecticut Avenue, NW in Chevy Chase MD.

So now MPM will feature both competitive and non-competitive sections. All entrants will receive critiques and certificates; winners in the competitive division will receive modest cash prizes and ribbons.

We chose a late date (June 11) to give people time to prepare.

MPM is open to students in grades 3 through 12. They will be grouped in three levels according to age. All sections will be conducted in recital format.

Since the event is new, the board voted to keep the entry fee low the first year: only \$12, and we are open to students of non-members for double that fee. Apply on line by the deadline, May 1. For more details check the WMTA web site.

For questions, contact Nancy Breth, 202-237-1525.

The president’s message



I don’t know about you, but I’m ready for spring break!

March seems to be the busiest month for me with regard to music activities these days: theory exams, festivals, my studio musicale, meetings and the extra lessons that go along with preparing students for all their activities. And to top it off, I agreed to do a presentation for the Greater Laurel Music Teachers Association on *Music and Technology* this month, which I have given before to other groups but is a topic that is ever-changing and requires updates every time I do it.

During all this, our family had to put our beloved 18-year old cat

Noelle down. She had been with us practically ever since we moved into our home. It’s been a tough month.

But there is a bright spot in all the March madness. Are you familiar with the Teacher Enrichment Grants that MTNA offers? I applied for a grant to continue study in the *Music Mind Games* program by taking the Unit 2 workshop and just got notice yesterday that I received the grant from the MTNA Foundation. If you have never explored this opportunity, I encourage you to look on the website to see what MTNA can do for you. The MTNA Foundation is committed to supporting not only their state and local affiliates but individ-

ual members as well. I am very grateful for this opportunity to continue my musical education and I know my students will benefit from my experience.

Although we are all busy, I hope you will make time to attend the WMTA General Membership Meeting on Thursday, May 12, 10:30 a.m at Jordan Kitt’s Music in Rockville, MD. We will have a short (I promise) business meeting, members’ performances and a potluck lunch. Please take a little breather from all the end-of-year activities and enjoy some music, camaraderie and food. Hope to see you there!

Lori McCarthy
President, WMTA

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“Turn the piano into something else,” Thomas Pandolfi tells students



Concert pianist Thomas Pandolfi, at the piano, with BlackRock Center for the Arts teacher Barbara Kober and students, left to right, Siddarth Voonna, Ronak Tallur, Hailey Sebastian, Rithik Karkhanis, Bethany Fuss, Jonathan Nalikka and Abrar Sheikh.

By Barbara Kober

Thomas Pandolfi is not only a stunning concert pianist he is a master teacher. When BlackRock Center for the Arts, where I teach, engaged him for a concert and a master class in February, our Executive Director, Krista Bradley, asked me to put my most advanced students in the workshop.

Four of them are 12 year old boys who tend toward the rowdy sometimes and though they are diligent practicers and facile performers, I was surprised when they so enthusiastically seized the chance. My two middle school girls didn't surprise me, though, when they agreed wholeheartedly.

But the biggest surprise is hearing his words still echoing through my teaching room.

“More, less. More, less.” I hear it again and again. And they end their phrases that way even as they are saying it.

“Breathe like a horn player,” he told them. And I see them do it.

Chimes by Alexandre Tcherepnin, now magically sounds almost like the National Cathedral's cast bells.

And where the duet *Scherzo* by Anton Diabelli changes to minor I hear Hailey Sebastian gradually bringing out her Primo part notes.

And as usual, I am learning more from my students than they learn from me—thanks to Tom Pandolfi.

The Master Class was scheduled for 90 minutes but Tom gave the kids more than two hours of his time—and just before he played a full solo recital that included the Chopin A-flat major *Polonaise*, the *Ritual Fire Dance*




Thomas Pandolfi fine tunes a performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Musette* for Bethany Fuss.



Pandolfi shows Jonathan Nalikka how to end a phrase in his *Minuet* by Mozart.

From Facebook

 **Thomas Pandolfi** This was a terrific group of students, and I congratulate them on all of their hard work, their parents for their support, their teacher for her wonderful guidance, and the Black Rock Center for providing a wonderful learning environment! Best of luck to all of them!



Hailey Sebastian, left, and Bethany Fuss watch Pandolfi play their duet, *Scherzo*, by Anton Diabelli.



“Left hand should swirl” in Johann Burgmüller's *Ballade*, Pandolfi tells Abrar Sheikh.



Rithik Karkhanis learns to “turn the piano into something else” for *The Music Box* by Gurliitt.

Music students lost to heavy academics

Cynthia Cathcart wrote this for her President's Page in the February MCMTA newsletter. Have you had this experience? Or are you losing or gaining pupils for other reasons?

TELL US YOUR STORY — EMAIL PIANOBNK@VERIZON.NET

By Cynthia Cathcart

Over the last year I have lost three students. Sometimes I don't mind losing students: they graduate and move on to college; or they decide to study a different instrument. But that's not what happened with these three. I didn't even lose them to sports, which I'm sure has hap-



pened to us all. No; I lost these three students to academics.

These children each signed up for a heavy academic program; Baccalaureate, AP Classes, Magnet school. These programs overwhelmed them. Not just heavy homework, but things like orders to an 8th grader to rewrite a 20-page paper after it didn't meet some sort of collegiate standard because, of course, we have to get them ready for college by making pretend they are already in college! To the point that going to college is a relief from the rigors of high school.

All three students completely quit

music study of any sort to make way for academic learning. The definition of a well-rounded education has devolved into math, science, intense language study, and with any luck, a sport so the kids do more than sit all day.

Yet, in this same year, I have picked up five students, and again atypically for my studio, these aren't kids coming on the recommendation of a school friend or finding my website. These are adults. I have acquired five adult piano students, each of whom is returning to piano study because "they quit too early." If only I could get them talking to those three youngsters!

It is interesting to see the effects of our culture's extreme emphasis on academics on our children at the same time as seeing the results for these adult students. I suspect that in 15 or 20 years those three young students of mine will be looking for a teacher who can help them pick up where they left off.



The Bartok Competition final results

By Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt

The WMTA 2016 Bartok Competition took place at the National Presbyterian Church January 30, 2016.

Winners performed at the Embassy of Hungary on February 11. WMTA is grateful to the Ambassador, Dr. Reka Szemerkenyi, and David Singer, cultural attaché, who attended the recital. Ambassador Szemerkenyi introduced us and highlighted the uniqueness of this competition.

Teachers whose students performed were Elena Arseniev, Nancy Breth, Margarita Gramaticova, Dr. Marjorie Lee, Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt and Soyoon Yim.

Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt was chair with co- chairs Junko Takahashi and Nancy Breth.

Here are the results of the competition.

Level 1

1st Place: #16: Ella Kim (Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt)

2nd Place: #9: Felix Xu (Margarita Gramaticova)

3rd Place: #15: Sophia Lin (Marjorie Lee)

Honorable Mentions:

#11: Anna Bray (Marjorie Lee)

#3: Kalan Warusa (Marjorie Lee)

Level 2

1st Place: #42: Tongtong Ye (Marjorie Lee)

2nd Place: #34: Brendan Cocchiara (Soyoan Yim)

3rd Place: Three Way Tie:

#25: Anna Gu (Elena Arseniev)

#35: Jessica Wang (Marjorie Lee)

#40: Qi Wei Chen (Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt)

Honorable Mentions:

#44: Helen Fu (Margarita Gramaticova)

#43: Yifan Li (Elena Arseniev)

#32: Jenny Jie Zheng (Vivian Kwok)

#24: Cindy Yang (Jun Yang)

#26: Audrey Zheng (Jun Yang)

#30: Ethan Tran (Amy Work)

#23: Andrew Cocchiara (Marjorie Lee)

Level 3

1st Place: #64: Alison Wan (Marjorie Lee)

2nd Place: #53: Elaine Pan (Marjorie Lee)

3rd Place: TIE

#51: Lauren Joelle Kim (Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt)

#46: Andrew Zhang (Marjorie Lee)

Honorable Mentions:

#63: Elizabeth Vinokurov (Elena Arseniev)

#48: Annabel Lee (Nancy Bret)

#56: Lauren Elizabeth Kim (Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt)

#60: Joshua Kucharski (Carol Wolfe-Ralph)

Level 4

1st Place: #82: Oscar Paz-Suaznabar (Marjorie Lee)

2nd Place: #79: Michael Xie (Elena Arseniev)

3rd Place: #71: Alena Lu (Elena Arseniev)

Honorable Mentions:

#68: Ashley Ondoua (Nancy Breth)

#84: Jialin Tso (Nancy Breth)

#77: Joanna Cheng (Marjorie Lee)

#80: Melissa Wu (Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt)

#78: Sahana Ramesh (Rosita Kerr Mang)

#67: Alexander Suh (Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt)

#73: Victor Pan (Marjorie Lee)

Level 5

1st Place: #96: Muli Yu (Marjorie Lee)

2nd Place: #87: Evan Hu (Marjorie Lee)

3rd Place: #95: Hana Wang (Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt)

Honorable Mentions:

#93: Sasha Wang (Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt)

#94: Austin Huang (Jun Yang)

#97: Pierre Quan (Margarita Gramaticova)

Level 6

1st Place: #104: Kevin Wang (Nancy Breth)

2nd Place: #103: Matthew Schultheis (Lisa Emenheiser

Sarratt)

3rd Place: #100: Nicholas Pace (Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt)

Honorable Mention

#99: Bryan Zhang (Nancy Breth)

Novik Memorial Competition winners announced

By Grace McFarlane



Mrs. Nitti Sekhri hands out prize awards and the Junior Trophy to Michelle Tang, winner of the Junior Division. From left to right are Junior finalists, Jialin Tso, Andrew Zhang, James Bennett, Mrs. Sekhri, Michelle Tang, Grace McFarlane, Chair, and Nathan Mo.

The 2016 Ylda Novik Memorial Piano Concerto Competition was held Saturday-Sunday, March 19-20, in the Wendell E. Eaton Recital Hall at the Steinway Gallery in North Bethesda, MD.

The winner of the 2016 Junior Competition was **Michelle Tang**, student of Katerina Zaitseva, and second place winner was **Nathan Mo**, student of Rosanne Conway. Honorable Mention was awarded to **James Bennett**, student of Marjorie Lee, **Andrew Zhang**, student of Marjorie Lee and **Jialin Tso**, student of Nancy Breth.

Special congratulations to Marjorie Lee, whose students, **Lynne Bai** and **Oscar Paz-Suaznabar**, won first and second place in the Senior Division, as well as to **Philena Sun** and **Evan Hu**, who were awarded Honorable Mention.

This competition was established in recognition of Mrs. Novik, who served as President of WMTA from 1965-1967. A Hungarian-American immigrant, internationally recognized and respected pedagogue,

author and editor, she contributed generously to musical life in the Washington Metropolitan area. Known for her flaming red hair, her kindness and generosity, she was a true advocate for the music of Bartok.

The high quality of her teaching, which resulted in her students consistently excelling in competitions, inspired other teachers and raised the level of pedagogy in the area. Some of her most notable students who have gone on to pursue major music careers include Ana-Maria Vera, Brian Ganz and Jessica Krash.

This biennial concerto competition has been in existence since spring 1981, and was created to recognize and encourage excellence in the performance of piano concerti among students of elementary, middle and high school age in the Washington Metropolitan area. It was designed to support healthy competition, informed assessment of skills, award monetary prizes and an opportunity for the senior winner to perform with an orchestra. The two divisions – Junior and Senior – compete in two stages, Preliminaries and Finals. Each stage is adjudicated by a different panel of judges.

Juniors are required to perform a movement of a standard concerto and seniors must perform an entire concerto.

This year's preliminary competition attracted a field of eight competitors in each division. Repertoire submitted included the following concerti: Beethoven #1, Mozart K.414 in A, K.449 in E flat, K.451 in D, K.488 in A and K.503 in C, Galynin #1, Grieg, Kabalevsky "Youth," Saint-Saens #2 in G minor, Ravel G major and Rachmaninoff #2.

WMTA gratefully acknowledges the long-standing generosity of Paul Sekhri, former student of Mrs. Novik, who has once again underwritten all prizes and incidental costs related to the 2016 competition. Unable to attend this year's competition, his mother, Mrs. Nitti Sekhri, agreed to come and hand out the prizes to the prize winners.

The first place winner in the Senior Division receives an award of \$1,000 plus an appearance as soloist with the Capital City Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Victoria Gau. The second place senior winner receives \$500.00.

The Junior Division first place winner receives a prize of \$500 plus the Junior Trophy and the second place junior winner receives \$250.00.

Teachers whose students participated in the competition are Nancy O'Neill Breth, Wen-Yin Chan, Rosanne Conway, Natalya Efremova, Lisa Emmenheiser Sarratt, Douglas Harrington, Marjorie Lee, James Litzelman and Katerina Zaitseva.

The Preliminary Competition judges were Aphrodite Mitsopoulou, Rebecca Salt and Gabriel Dobner. Judges in the Finals were Julian Trail, Audrey Andrist, Lura Johnson and Victoria Gau.

Grace McFarlane is chair and Nancy Breth, co-chair.



In picture at right are Oscar Paz-Suaznabar, left, second prize winner, and Lynne Bai, first prize. Judges were Audrey Andrist, Victoria Gau and Lura Johnson.

At left, are Julian Trail, Audrey Andrist, Michelle Tang, first prize winner, Nathan Mo, second prize, and Lura Johnson.





WMTA Officers

President Lori McCarthy
 President Elect Hedy Bannon
 Treasurer Patricia Palombo
 Secretary Nancy Longmyer

General meeting

WMTA will hold its General Membership Meeting at 10:30am on Thursday, May 12 at Jordan Kitt's Music in Rockville, MD. The WMTA Board has voted to have a members' performance after our brief meeting. If you would like to perform, please respond to me, lorinmccarthy@verizon.net with the repertoire and timing by April 30.

Thanks and hope to see many of you at the meeting and hearing some of our talented members share their music with the group!

Judged Recitals Registration Reminder

WMTA accepts registrations for judged recitals only through online registration or by submitting the paper form printed from the website.

Emailed information is not accepted and places cannot be held in advance, before the chair's receipt of a complete registration.

Shop Talk features repertoire-sharing



Participants at the March Shop Talk explored new pieces for students and took turns playing pieces they brought with them.

By Lori McCarthy

The last Shop Talk was held on Thursday, March 3 at Barbara Wing's studio in Bethesda. It was a repertoire-sharing session for intermediate level students featuring many different styles of piano music. We looked at a broad curriculum for intermediate level students who would probably not advance to harder literature, but who would benefit from experience with many different styles. It was fun to share different pieces and we all came away with fresh, new ideas for literature.

such an enjoyable way to explore new music.

I think exploring new pieces for students on a regular basis is a way not only to keep them engaged and excited but to bring interest into our teaching as well!

The next Shop Talk will be on April 21. Be sure to RSVP to Barbara at least two days before to her new email address: barbarawing1@gmail.com. Shop Talk starts promptly at noon and ends at 1:30pm.

Gretchen Hood Competition Rescheduled

The Gretchen Hood Strings Competition (formerly The Potter Strings Competition) has been rescheduled for Saturday, April 30, 2016, at the Chevy Chase United Methodist Church, 7001 Connecticut Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. The deadline is April 15.

WMTA welcomes both members and nonmembers to enter. The prize money has been greatly increased this year as we now have several new sponsors along with our longtime sponsor, The Potter Violin Company. First prize winner in the Senior Division receives \$1,000.

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Judged Recital

*The April 3rd Judged Recital
 is now full
 so registration has been closed.
 Chair, Julian Trail*

**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
 June 14, 2016**