

WMTA Newsletter

February 2024



Greetings, WMTA Members!

Happy New Year! I trust 2024 has begun on a positive note for all. We are excited to share the successes of Fall 2023 and the upcoming events in February and March!

Welcome Dr. Christopher Kies, our new Judged Recital Chair! Congratulations on being recognized as NVMTA's Spotlight Teacher of the Month. With vast experience and a strong local connection, Dr. Kies, who moved to Virginia in 2020, is impressed by the active Virginia Music Teachers community. Having volunteered as a judge and chaired General Recitals, Dr. Kies embodies his commitment. Excited about the enriching contributions he'll bring, let's anticipate a harmonious and inspiring year ahead at WMTA.

Don't miss our feature – an essay by Claire Peng, 2023 WMTA Music Essay Award winner! Praised by judges Hedy Bannon and Lori McCarthy, Claire's essay earned her a \$150 prize for its thoughtful expression of her connection to music. Best wishes for her future endeavors!

Warm regards,

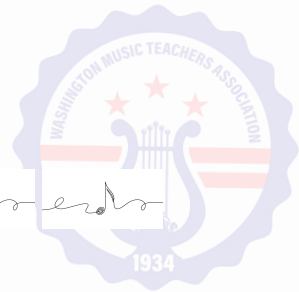
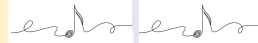
Rachel



Rachel Chen, Newsletter Chair, WMTA



President's Message



Happy Lunar New Year of the Dragon 2024!

As I write this message, many are celebrating the start of this joyous holiday with wishes of good fortune, happiness, bounteous feasts, firework displays and reunions with family and friends. Reflecting on the new year prompts reflection and renewal, gratefulness for our many blessings as well as a time to honor those who have gone before us and who have left lasting legacies and memories.

It was with much sadness that we learned of the death of one of our longtime WMTA members and a former WMTA President (1989-1994), Rosita Kerr Mang, who passed away in her home on October 28, 2023 at the age of 81. A stalwart pillar of our musical community, Rosita's passion for teaching, commitment to her student "Warriors" and tireless, unbridled pursuit of excellence will be remembered by all who knew her.

Renowned pianist and pedagogue, Rosita, née Menendez Chacón, was born in 1942 in Havana, Cuba to accountant Oscar Menendez and Maria Theresa Chacón, the founder of one of the most prominent private schools in Cuba. She studied piano with Jascha Fischerman, and after fleeing to the United States in 1961 on one of the last of the Peter Pan flights, continued her studies at the University of Miami with Rosalina Sackstein and Ivan Davis. Rosita was a proud American citizen.

After a brief career as a concert pianist, she decided to devote her life to her three children and teaching, her greatest passion. She taught hundreds of children and adults over a span of almost fifty years. As one of the most prominent teachers in the DC area, she served as past president of both WMTA & NVMTA and was a frequent speaker at numerous pedagogy conferences. She generously supported arts organizations as well as animal rights groups.

She is preceded by her beloved husband, John Mang, Jr., her former husband William Hassell, Sr., and survived by former husband Hugh H. Kerr III, her three sons, William Hassell, Hugh H. Kerr IV, Alexander Kerr and grandchildren Joshua Hassell, Noah Kerr and Aidan Kerr.

(thanks to Alex Kerr for providing this obituary)

Audrey Peterbark, former WMTA board member and longtime student of Rosita's, has written a tribute in memory of her dear teacher, shared here.

I have many fond memories of Rosita, from my earliest years as a member of WMTA, serving on the board, chairing competitions, and attending pedagogy workshops and conferences together.

There will be a celebration of Rosita's life on Saturday, February 17 at the United Christian Parish of Reston from 1-5pm. May she rest in peace, and may her memory be a blessing.

GRACE

Grace McFarlane Bottelier, WMTA President
wmtadc@gmail.com





1. Rosita Mang Celebration of Life Service

In loving memory of Rosita Mang, whose soul resonated with the love of music, a celebration of her life will take place on February 17.

Date: Saturday, February 17th

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

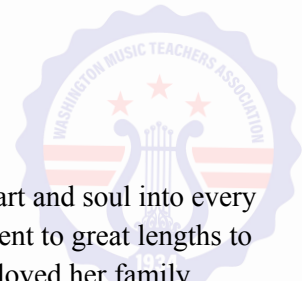
Location: United Christian Parish

Address: 11508 North Shore Drive, Reston, VA 20190

Audrey Peterbark (“1996 Mang Warrior Recipient”) tribute to Rosita Mang:



“Everyone in education has a teacher that has impacted them and moved them to join the profession. The same is true for all Music Educators. Typically, at the beginning of each school year we are asked to “Think of a teacher that greatly impacted your life and your teacher.” Each year, Mrs. Mang immediately came to my mind. The lessons I learned from her were those about piano, relationships, and life. For years, since 1994-1995, I have kept a framed picture of me and Mrs. Mang in every home I have lived in. This picture was in my childhood bedroom. It traveled with me to college, to my first apartment, back home, and eight years ago to Dallas, Texas, where I currently live. This is the picture of us after I received First Place in the NVMTA Concerto Competition. It was the first time I received First Place in any piano competition. I couldn’t believe they had called my name that day as the recipient and not as an Honorable Mention. I was so proud because I finally was first, but I was also proud because I made Mrs. Mang proud that day. Those of us in the Mang “Warriors” piano studio were taught to be “Warriors.” We were taught to be fighters, to be resilient, to persevere, and to take ownership. Those were the principles that Mrs. Mang taught us. They were principles that we implemented on the piano bench as her students, and they continue to be guideposts for us as adults, more personally, they are the guideposts of my teaching. In addition to teaching us how to be “Warriors,” Mrs. Mang taught us how to love. While sometimes viewed as



unconventional, Rosita was nurturing but she was also tough. She poured her heart and soul into every student. When I think of my time with her, she was so invested in me, and she went to great lengths to ensure my success as a pianist and as a musician. I personally also saw how she loved her family. John, Alex, Hugo, and Bill. I don't know if this happened in anyone else's lessons but, I saw Joshua's sonogram pictures when she first got them, I always heard about Hugo and his success as a CPA, and of course Alex and how she was "charged by the eighth note to accompany him for his Julliard auditions." I helped her pick out Mother-of-the-Bride dresses for their weddings and Pop-Pop John always knew when she needed coffee or Diet Rite. Her house was a special house for me, it was a place to work and create my future, and it was like a second home to me. I always made sure to stop by and visit when I was home from college. I even had the chance to go as a parent when she taught my son for a year. Rosita taught me how to have confidence, she taught me the importance of being invested in every student, she showed me what dedication and devotion looks like. It's because of her that I have a metronome app on my phone. She loved the metronome, with her there was no other way to practice. She went through at least 3 metronome's a year in her studio. I know the metronome by heart, especially 126, 132, 138. She loved those speeds, if you could play your scales flawlessly at the beginning of your lesson at those speeds using all sixteenth notes, you were going to have a GREAT lesson.

Her passing shocked me. It actually came the evening of my first musical at my new school. How fitting, as I was watching my own students perform, the teacher that stressed the importance of performance gave her last. I am forever grateful for Rosita Kerr Mang. She was an integral part of shaping my life as a teenager and young adult, and the memory of her continues to shape my abilities as a pianist and organist, as a musician, as a teacher, and as a mother. I still look at that picture from the Concerto Competition, and I still remember that day. I had the privilege of being a student of Rosita Kerr Mang, and a fellow Executive Board Member with her for WMTA. I will miss many things about her, but the memory of her lives on in my heart forever."

Dr. Audrey M. Peterbark
Elementary Music Educator

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2. Dr. Christopher Kies, Judged Recital Chair - [Click Link](#) *eddr*

Meet Dr. Christopher Kies, our new Judged Recital Chair! Originally from Chevy Chase, Maryland, he's a musical dynamo with an impressive background in piano performance and composition. Currently working on a new version of his composition "Amos and Boris", and tackling all 24 Chopin Etudes, Chris is a maestro of both pen and piano. Beyond music, he enjoys grandparenting, cooking Italian cuisine, and savoring classical and ragtime piano harmonies. Warmly welcome Chris and appreciate his whole-hearted contribution to WMTA!



3. Modern Piano Music Celebration



Nancy Breth and Laura Marchisotto Bogart, co-chairs of WMTA's Modern Piano Music Celebration, welcomed 57 pianists from 7 studios at Calvary Lutheran Church on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023. Judges Eric Ruple and Paulo Steinberg bestowed the following honors:



Results



Best Performance of a Living Composer: Olivia Baek (Student of Silva Blazquez)



Level 1



- 1st Prize:** Seren Shen (Student of Laura Marchisotto Bogart)
- 2nd Prize:** Hanke Kang (Student of Laura Marchisotto Bogart)
- 3rd Prize:** Daniel Liu (Student of Silva Blazquez)
- Honorable Mention:** Penelope Liu (Student of Jaeweon Lee)



Level 2A



- 1st Prize:** Elsa Tseng (Student of Silva Blazquez)
- 2nd Prize:** Louis Xie (Student of Laura Marchisotto Bogart)
- 3rd Prize:** Grace Zhuang (Student of Patricia M. Huff-Palumbo)
- Honorable Mention:** Amelia Barry (Student of Patricia M. Huff-Palumbo)



Level 2B



- 1st Prize:** Sophia Lee (Student of Laura Marchisotto Bogart)
- 2nd Prize:** Bowen Wu (Student of Marjorie Lee)/ Megan Lai (Student of Nancy Breth)
- 3rd Prize:** Sarah Shen (Student of Blazquez)/ Sophie Zhang (Student of Nancy Breth)
- Honorable Mention:** Rose Li (Student of Patricia M. Huff-Palumbo)



Level 3



- 1st Prize:** Olivia Baek (Student of Silva Blazquez)
- 2nd Prize:** Ellie Nguyen (Student of Marjorie Lee)/ Jonathan Shan-Zheng (Student of Nancy Breth)
- 3rd Prize:** Jasmine Mai (Student of Silva Blazquez)
- Honorable Mention:** Brandon Zhang (Student of Nancy Breth)



Level 4



- 1st Prize:** Dylan Schenker (Student of Mary L. Kading)
- 2nd Prize:** Zak Lam (Student of Marjorie Lee)
- 3rd Prize:** Audrey Wandow (Student of Laura Marchisotto Bogart)



4. MTNA State Winner



Presenting our state representatives for the WMTA composition and performance competitions!
Congratulations to these talented students and their teachers!



Results



Junior Composition

Aria Song (Student of Yiming Wu)

Junior Performance - Piano

Evelina Kleczek (Student of Martin Labazevitch)

Junior Performance - String

Amelia Baiseden (Student of Daniel Levitov)

Senior Composition

Jesse Zhong (Student of Yiming Wu)

Senior Performance - Piano

Kidus Yohanness (Student of Raymond T Jackson)

Senior Performance - String

Noah Stier (Student of June Huang)

Young Artist Composition

Aiden Feeney (Student of Stephen Gorbos)





5. 2023 Winner of the WMTA Music Essay Award for High School Seniors



Written by Claire Peng (student of Marjorie Lee)



The beauty of science is reason. Follow one method, and we arrive at the same conclusion. A computer program follows the same logic each time to output a predictable answer. An experiment promises to reveal a simple explanation of an unknown process. While coding or studying biology textbooks, I loved watching the facts and logic build up websites and organisms.

However, is there only one answer in music? Having played piano for twelve years, I've learned there is not. Unlike biology, where the system is the sum of its parts, music is not just notes and dynamics. Instead, it requires spirit, a seemingly magical component that I chased through music theory and technical exercises, but could never catch. For years, I disliked piano because this "spirit" taunted my adherence to reason, like missing a puzzle piece required to make the image whole.

I evaded this challenge by choosing technically difficult pieces, such as Liszt's *Waldesrauschen* or Ravel's *Jeux d'eau*. By imitating professionals, I could pretend to possess musical feeling. Nevertheless, Frederic Chopin, whose compositions are the epitome of musicality, rendered my imitation skills useless. In tenth grade, I tackled his *Ballade No. 1*. My piano teacher, Dr. Marjorie Lee, was constantly frustrated with my lack of this mysterious "musical feeling." "You need to let go!" she finally stated, "Express emotion!"

Could I? Emotion was the enemy of reason—it clouded the ability to arrive at the correct conclusion. I decided to at least try. During the piece's two climaxes and their dramatic, minor chords, I shared my



worries. During the melody, I thought about winter nights driving home, warmed by the car heater and my father’s CD playing Mozart.

Suddenly, Chopin’s Ballade was more than notes on a page. It was music, and it was uniquely mine. By adding my own stories and feelings to the music, I had found a path towards musicality.

Since then, my frustration with subjectivity has faded. I used to think that having multiple answers was chaos; now, I realize that not everything requires consensus. Instead, life is enhanced by listening to a variety of perspectives and opinions. Those disagreements, like the contradiction between liberty and equality that America is built on, create a better result than just one side or the other. Chopin exposed me to the wonderful world of nuances through emotion.

Nowadays, I enjoy listening to different interpretations of the same piano piece. How do their stories influence their playing? Bach is my favorite composer because the sparseness of musical notation produces a variety of contrasting playing styles that all are music. My experience with music has taught me to seek and cherish other people’s stories and perspectives. I’m excited to meet different people and learn what makes them unique, even if their opinions disagree with mine. In essence, I’ve realized that there is beauty in disharmony.

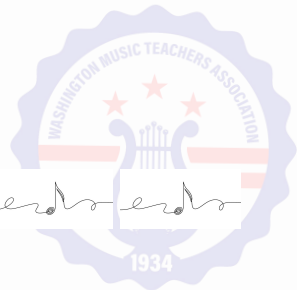


Who is Claire Peng?

Claire Peng is currently a senior at TJHSST. She has studied piano under Dr. Marjorie Lee for six years. Before that, she studied under Miss Anne Madison in the Omaha Conservatory of Music. Claire has won first place at the NVMTA Concerto Competition, has performed at the Honors recital for the NVMTA Sonata Festival, and won Honors in VMTA and NVMTA judged recitals. Recently, she performed in the George Mason University Concert Hall for the Young Artist Musicale.

Her favorite composers to play are Ravel, Bach, and Chopin. Ravel’s impressionist pieces evoke the leaves rustling outside her window while she practices. Bach offers the freedom of interpretation and therefore a plethora of contrasting recordings (her favorites are by Glenn Gould). As for Chopin, well, Claire has spent countless hours toiling over Chopin’s pieces that she has grown to love the satisfaction of playing his pieces. Outside of the studio, she volunteers with the Tacy Foundation and performs in local senior homes. She’s currently the chief intern at Sunrise Hunter Mill and recommends everyone to try volunteering at least once.





Upcoming Events



Student Musicale #4 - [Link](#)

Date: February 25th (1pm)

Location: Calvary Lutheran Church, 9545 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Application Deadline: February 11th

Student Musicale #5 - [Link](#)

Date: March 17th (1pm)

Location: Calvary Lutheran Church, 9545 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Application Deadline: March 3rd

Student Musicale #6 - [Link](#)

Date: April 21st (1pm)

Location: Calvary Lutheran Church, 9545 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Application Deadline: April 7th

Young Composers Competition

Date Submission: April 1st

Online Submission- [Link Here](#)

Application Deadline: April 1st

Judged Recital #4 - [Link](#)

Date: March 17th (3:30pm)

Location: Calvary Lutheran Church, 9545 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Application Deadline: March 3rd

Novik Concerto Competition - [Link](#)

Date: April 13th

Location: Steinway Gallery, Tysons Corner, 1961 Chain Bridge Rd, McLean, VA 22102

Application Deadline: March 13th

Judged Recital #5 - [Link](#)

Date: April 21st (3:30pm)

Location: Calvary Lutheran Church, 9545 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Application Deadline: April 7th



If you'd like to contribute to our next newsletter, we welcome your submissions! Please reach out to me at rchen@levinmusic.org to share your updates, studio achievements, or any content you'd like featured.