



# Newsletter

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Fort Worth Music Teachers Association

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## Editorial Musings



As members of the Fort Worth Music Teachers Association our collective creed is our desire to teach the art of playing the piano; retrospectively, it is our innate love of music coupled with a life-long love of playing the piano that has us share the same goals as members of our association.

Your editor has been a member of FWMTA for a considerable length of time. Recollections of meetings during the early years of my membership bring to mind a general meeting occasionally culminating with music provided by a talented student. Prior to settling in Fort Worth, the few Music Teacher Association meetings I attended in West Palm Beach, Florida, as a potential member, were always enhanced by music-making. As meetings were mainly held in the homes of members, I learned that solos, duets for keyboard, works for stringed instruments and piano and voice and piano, formed an intrinsic part of that music association's agenda when attended by the general membership.

We are all pianists; we have studied music and devoted interminable hours to honing our skills as pianists. The years spent at music schools and conservatories prepare us for what each of us has deigned to do – recreating works for piano from its vast repertoire or training aspiring young pianists to do likewise.

Our membership can boast of a sizeable number of gifted pianists. While their performances in an

intimate setting –such as a teachers meeting- will be a source of inspiration to us all, equally pleasurable will be a performance given by members who do not play professionally. We play the piano for a variety of reasons, chief among them: to maintain the skills required of pianists and for the sheer joy of playing the instrument. It would be so enjoyable to hear duets, solo works for piano, and collaborations between violin and piano and other such duos played by members and musician friends at a general meeting.

The rigours of the life of concert artists are only too well known. Relatively few pianists choose to grace a stage, face the foot-lights and discerning audiences and be critiqued. Playing at an association meeting stands at the other end of the spectrum. The few minutes of music provided by those performing in an informal setting will add a special glow to the otherwise predictable agenda of meetings. Imagine the anticipation and joy it would provide both members attending and those breathing life into the music being played.

On a personal note, making music in an informal atmosphere was encouraged in my family by my parents. I had the special privilege of accompanying my father, a fine amateur violinist. He unintentionally provided my first lessons in accompanying. The joy of making music purely for music's sake created a special bond between us, just as it did with the rest of my siblings as we made music together. Piano, voice, violin, double bass, and alto saxophone, brought relief to the Latin, Math and other demanding homework

assignments we had to face through the week.

Perhaps just one FWMTA meeting every two years, should encourage members who **wish to perform**, to do so. The idea of members providing a short program of music was rekindled in me when I was invited very recently to the Forum's monthly meeting at the Women's Club. I deeply regret not having been in a position to attend that meeting. On the agenda, I later learned, was a program of solos and four-hands at one keyboard given by members of the Forum. How engaging, how delightful! It was not the perfect wrong note that those in attendance listened for, but rather, music recreated by the members of their association who, as pianists, wished to share the joy music unceasingly imparts. There were five Forum members who performed - among them were Reva Jean Beck, Ethelyn Beck and Dr. David Yeomans, all of whom hold dual memberships in the Forum and FWMTA.

The incoming FWMTA VPs for Programming can organize an informal recital of music by members with ease. Let's hope it will see fruition in the very near future.

Rosemary Solomons  
Editor, FWMTA Newsletter

**In this edition of the Newsletter co-presidents Jennifer DeSantis and Sarah Alexander review their tenure; musician and journalist, Edward Brown writes on Improvisation and a special feature recognizes our youthful Senior-year pianists graduating High School**

## Honors Recital Rescheduled

Due to the delay of the Steinway Hall opening, the FWMTA Honors Recital originally planned for June 18, 2019, has been advanced to **May 18, 2019, at 4:30pm** at Martin Hall, **Texas Wesleyan University**. At this recital, we will honor our senior scholarship recipients as well as our state winners (theory, composition, performance, chamber, video, publication & world of music). Please make a note on your calendar and plan to attend the **Open Recital and Honors Recital**.

## Event Calendar 2019

### MAY

18 FWMTA Ensemble Rehearsals  
**18 Combined Honors and Open Recital**  
at Texas Wesleyan University, Martin Hall  
(Honors recital rescheduled from June 18)

### JUNE

8 FWMTA Ensemble Rehearsals  
15 FWMTA Ensemble Rehearsals  
20-23 TMTA State Convention, Houston Hyatt Regency,

## In Retrospect

**Jennifer DeSantis**  
and **Sarah Alexander** Review  
Their Tenure as Co-Presidents



The past two years as Co-President of FWMTA has been a very meaningful experience for me. I have truly enjoyed working with you, the membership, and my colleague Sarah Alexander. We immediately began to work as a team and learned how to use our strengths to conquer the workload. But we couldn't have done it without you, the Executive Board, Committee Members and Membership. Thank you all for your hard work and support!

**Jennifer DeSantis**

What a joy and privilege it has been to serve as Co-President of FWMTA! FWMTA, you have an amazing Board that works hard to support members and students with meaningful, educational, and professional activities. I have learned much from working alongside the Board members and getting to know you, FWMTA members.

**Sarah Alexander, NCTM**

*The past two years have been a whirlwind of activity! Besides the annual events that so many of our members facilitate, we had several additional programs that stand among the highlights of our two-year tenure.*

Highlights:

- **The Celebration Gala**



on April 28, 2018, organized with the VP of Programs, Mandy Luckert. At this event, we honored our teachers, premiered a documentary of the history of our association (directed and produced by FWMTA member, Jimmy Angeles) and enjoyed musical performances by students. The highlight of the evening was a performance by a collegiate member, Ben Pawlak, of Timothy Brown's *Frontier Follies* (dedicated to FWMTA).

- **Mentoring Program**, headed by Echo Wilson. This program was developed to advise and guide new members through initial involvement in FWMTA.

- **Job Descriptions** organized by MaryAnn Fritz. Updated job descriptions of each Board Position will be posted on our website to ease transitions between revolving FWMTA Board positions.

- **Updated Bylaws**. We have proposed changes to FWMTA bylaws to align ourselves with the needs and functions of our present-day association.

- **Outreach Program**, headed by Jennifer DeSantis. A new outreach program is currently being developed to promote community partnerships and service at area hospitals and clinics.

- **Book Club**,



- organized by Mandy Luckert, hosted by Julia Parker, led by Lori Christ. Our spring meeting was our first book club meeting with an in-depth discussion led by Lori Christ. *The Perfect Wrong Note* by William Westney was the book chosen for discussion by FWMTA members.

As we wrap up the school year and look back to evaluate our activities, we appreciate the FWMTA and the members that volunteer their time and efforts to keep our association functioning. As we look forward, we will be helping new Board members transition into their positions and are excited about the new ideas and perspectives they will bring with them. We appreciate the support the FWMTA brings to our profession and students; we will continue to serve on the FWMTA Board as past presidents.

**Jennifer DeSantis & Sarah Alexander**

**FWMTA Announces New Slate of Officers: 2019 - 2021**  
**President - Evan Mitchell; VP for Programs, Co-Chairs - Gloria Lin and Anne Smith;**  
**VP for Membership – Jae Kim; Secretary – Cricket Hackney**

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## **FWMTA Senior Scholarship Winners for 2019**

**Report by MaryAnn Fritz, VP Student Activities**

### **FWMTA SCHOLARSHIPS 2019**

Each year the Fort Worth Music Teachers Association awards scholarships to seniors who have demonstrated a dedication to musical endeavors through participation in Student Affiliate events, TMTA Theory Tests, Piano Guild auditions, National Federation of Music Clubs Junior Festival, Fort Worth Solo Contest, the Royal Conservatory of Music program, NATS and UIL competitions, choirs, orchestras, and various other activities. This year we had six students apply for and receive scholarships.

**The Senior Scholarship** of \$300 was awarded to **Ari Butterfield**, **Julia Hunnell**, and **Katie Nguyen**. Ari Butterfield (student of Jill Sprenger and Maureda Travis) will soon graduate from Southwest High School and plans to attend UT Dallas, where he will study computer science. Julia Hunnell (student of Jennifer DeSantis) is a student at Benbrook Middle High School. She will head to Baylor University, where she will major in physical therapy. Katie Nguyen (student of Reva Jean Beck) is looking forward to graduating from North Crowley High School. Katie will be a student at the University of Texas at Austin this Fall.

**The Memorial Scholarship** of \$500 is awarded to graduating High school students **majoring in music**. Our recipients this year are **Claire Metroka**, **Meredith Mitchell**, and **Damoyee Neroes**. Claire Metroka (student of MaryAnn Fritz) is a student at Southwest High School. Claire plans to major in music education, with an emphasis on oboe, at Texas Tech University. Meredith Mitchell (student of Maureda Travis) is a graduate of Fort Worth Country Day School and will attend TCU as a piano pedagogy major. Damoyee Neroes (student of Jennea Potter) is graduating

from Booker T. Washington High School in Dallas. Damoyee is headed to Berklee College of Music, where she will study film scoring.

**In addition to the Senior and Memorial Scholarship winners, the following High School Graduates will proceed on to College in the Autumn of 2019. We applaud both students and their teachers.**



**Will Thomas** began piano lesson at the age of four. He earned eight gold and four silver medals in the TMTA Theory

Test he took from grade school through High School. He has received an Honorable Mention in the FWMTA Solo competition and Fall and Jazz Festival, and the Junior Festival and has earned high ratings in the Junior Festival and other such events. Although not pursuing a career in music, he plans to continue his study of piano throughout his college career. As the current Vice President of the F.W. Sister Cities International Youth Board, Will had the opportunity to travel and stay with host families in China, Japan, Indonesia and e'Swatini. Will graduates from Fort Worth Country Day School in May 2019 where he currently serves as Senior Class Representative to the Student Council. He will attend the University of Chicago in the Fall and plans on majoring in Economics.

**Student of Dr. Tanya Karyagina**

**The following High School Graduates are the students of Patrick Behringer.**

**Janani Gopal** (5 years) will attend the University of Texas at Austin. Neuroscience Major, Music Minor.

**Haley Portorreal** (5 years), will attend Tarrant County College/University of North Texas. Major: Biology (Pre-Med).

**Aaron Snow** (4 years), will attend TCC, Major Computer Science.

**Hailey Emmert**, (3 years) will attend Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Major: Nursing

**Yasamin Mohmand**, (2 years) will attend Texas A&M, Major: Geo-Science

**Tyreque Harris**, (2 years) will attend UT-Arlington. Major: Engineering

**Gabriel Vives Cortes**, (1 Year) will attend TCC, Associate of Arts (Music)



**Roscoe Bussell** has received a full scholarship to Rice University in the Fall of 2019 as a double major in piano and composition.

Additionally, he will be playing the semi-finals of the Young Artist Performance Contest at TMTA in June. Former student of **Bonnie Dove**. **Current student of Timothy Brown and Dr. Ilka Araujo.**

**Alaina Eargle** - Alaina will graduate from Covenant Christian School in Denton and will head to Fayetteville, AR to attend the University of Arkansas.

**Yojana Jagadish** - Yojana will soon graduate from Trinity Valley School and will be a pre-med major at St. Louis University.



**Kaleb Johnson** - Kaleb is graduating from the Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts and plans to attend UTA to study music production.

**Jessica Moynihan** - Jessica will graduate from Arlington Heights High School and will head to Norman, Oklahoma to study interior design at OU.

**Madeleine Opalecky** - Maddie will graduate from Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts and is excited to begin her studies as a vocal performance major at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA.

**Students of Dr. MaryAnn Fritz.**

**Devina Devagharan** – Home-Schooled Senior who made it to regionals in the TMTA solo performance contest, will attend UTA as a Biology major in the Fall of 2019.

**Abigail Klophaus** graduates from Arlington High School and will attend Gordon College in Wenham, MA, in the Fall and double-major in Music and Nursing.

**Students of Dr. John Solomons**



**Grace Terrell** will graduate from Nolan Catholic High School (Summa Cum Laude) May, 2019. Grace will attend the University of

Texas at Austin in the Fall where she plans to major in Biology. She took her study of piano and theory seriously, has won twice in her category, playing with her sister Ava, in the duo-piano contest at TWU and has competed and earned superior ratings in the annual Solo Piano Contest. An avid flutist as well, she was Drum Major in this, her senior year. While music will continue to play a part in her life, she confesses that science and research are what interests her most.

**Student of Rosemary Solomons**

**Evan Rush** will graduate from Covenant Christian Academy. He will attend UT Dallas on an Academic Excellence Scholarship to study Electrical Engineering and Physics.

**Student of Sarah Alexander**



**Julia Hunnell** Began Early Childhood Music classes when she was 15 months old, graduating in 2008 after two years of group piano. In second

grade, she began Music Preparatory private piano lessons with Jennifer DeSantis. Julia has earned superior ratings in numerous Fall and Jazz Festivals, and received three gold cups from NFMC for her achievements in Junior Festivals. She has performed as a recitalist in five Honors Festivals (2015 – 2019), and competed in several Piano Solo and Duo Contests. She has placed at the gold and silver levels on annual TMTA Theory Tests, participated two years in the FWMTA ensemble at the TMTA state convention, and received the third place 2018 TCU Royal Purple Award. She will graduate from Benbrook High School as Valedictorian of the Class of 2019. Julia played Varsity Soccer, was Co-Captain of the Whiz Quiz team, served as National Honor Society Co-President, and participated in various Academic UIL teams. In the Fall, Julia will be attending Baylor University with the goal of becoming a physical therapist.

**Student of Jennifer DeSantis.**

## Limitless Creativity

Opening new possibilities for your studio through improvising



Edward Brown writes for several publications, including Madeworthy Magazine, Fort Worth Weekly, Visit Fort Worth, and Visit DFW. He also maintains a large private piano studio and co-chairs the FWMTA Original Composition Contest.

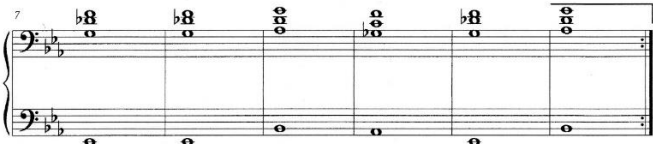
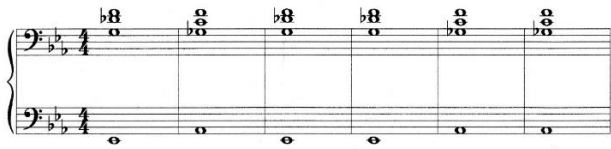
**By Edward Brown**

We all improvise. If you do not believe me then observe your next conversation. Do you plan out the sentences you speak? Do you write them down, publish them and then read them aloud verbatim? Or, do you intuitively speak by following a loose train of thought? We all know the answer. Speech is not a free-for-all though. We slowly develop our vocabulary one word at a time.

There are rules to speech called grammar and syntax. Musical improvisation also has rules called style and harmony. Otherwise, it would be chaotic and incomprehensible. I have found that improvising is a great way to fill extra lesson time and to encourage creativity. Improvising also helps to develop better hand/ear coordination while giving application to theoretical concepts such as scales. What are we waiting for? Let's improvise!

One of my student's favorite improvising exercises covers playing the blues. By limiting the piano to the black key notes, the student instantly feels that he or she can grasp this style. In addition, the pentatonic scale has an instantly "jazzy" sound that students love. I usually give a brief example of what a solo line should sound like, so they understand the dotted eighth note feel of "swing". Many kids will instantly take off and surprise themselves and you at the same time with this exercise.

E flat minor pentatonic scale



If they seem to be picking this up quickly then you may demonstrate the use of the “blue” note (A natural) for an extra jazzy sound. Also, try this boogie oriented left hand pattern to give a more driving pulse to the music.



Continue using the previous example's chord progression.

This next example will take your student off to faraway Egypt. The A harmonic minor scale instantly evokes a Middle Eastern sound. Countless great composers have relied on this colorful scale to evoke feelings of foreign places. Try to demonstrate ways to use this scale without falling into the trap of simply moving up and down the scale as many students do. Devices such as repetition, ornamentation and a varied rhythm all add to an authentic rendition.

A harmonic minor scale



Egyptian Accompaniment



We are all familiar with that Latin American form of music called Salsa. Its driving rhythms beckon us to get off our piano bench and dance. Even though we may not be expert Salsa dancers, we can all enjoy this exercise with our students. Remember, even

though Salsa and Jazz are related, Salsa music has an even eighth note feel without any “swing”. Students should make use of the same A harmonic minor scale as given in the Egyptian example. Accents, octaves and parallel sixths movements will greatly add to the Latin feel.



This last example can loosely be called “Classical Style”. The basis for the harmonic progression is from Pachelbel’s famous canon. We should note that Pachelbel was not the first composer to use this chord progression and, if you pay attention to popular music, he was definitely not the last. You may vary the accompanimental pattern to make this exercise more interesting to the students over the course of various repetitions. The student should use his/her ear to create beautiful melodies. If your student has learned enough theory, you may wish to advise him/her to try and land on the root, third or fifth of each chord on the strong beat to ensure a sonorous and harmonious sound. Trills and sequences are welcome additions to this style.



As in all these examples, beauty and musicality are the desired result. Some students may mistakenly think this is a chance to make crazy sounds. If they do, simply pause, go over the tenants of good melody writing and resume again. When these exercises are done properly, they should sound as beautiful and authentic as their published assignments. It has been my experience that students who enjoy improvising also tend to be good at composing. The two disciplines are actually the same. Improvisation has often been called “spontaneous composition”. All these exercises can be performed by the students alone. It is more technically demanding, but they can take the teacher accompaniments in their left hand and improvise with their right hand. Indeed, this was how pianists such as Keith Jarrett and Bill Evans approached improvisation.

Make it a point to try a few of these exercises in your studio this week. You may surprise yourself and your students with the freedom these examples give. A few minutes of spontaneous creativity can open up new worlds to your students that didn't seem possible before.

*“The improviser employs the oldest in music-making...Mankind's first musical performance couldn't have been anything other than a free improvisation.” --Derek Bailey*

## **FWMTA Solo Competition**

### **Report on Spring Contest**

**By Anne Smith**

The 2019 FWMTA Solo Competition, held April 6 at Texas Wesleyan University, was once again a highlight of our year as an organization. Three hundred ten students from sixty-five studios participated, with an increasing number of strings and voice students competing. Ten tireless and qualified judges gave a full day listening to these young performers: Dr. Beth Quillian, Dr. Jill Sprenger, Mr. Gustavo Romero, Dr. Trevor Hale, Mr. Gabriel Sanchez, Dr. Leslie Spatz, Dr. Eva Polgar, Ms. Krassimira Jordan, Mr. Benson Lee and Dr. Heather Hawk. They chose deserving students for the Honors Recitals held the

following Saturday, April 13, in Martin Hall. The most popular pieces performed at the recitals were Khatchaturian's Toccata and Grieg's Wedding Day at Troidhaugen.

The two-weekend event was made possible by Ilka Araújo, Solo Competition committee member and Professor of Piano at TWU. Other TWU music faculty graciously allowed us to use their studios; student workers and campus security helped set up the buildings, and FWMTA teachers volunteered their time as monitors and

served at the recitals. Special thanks to Maureda Travis, John and Cordelia Owings, Siew-Lee Chin, Joanna Koo, and Gloria Lin who gave of their time to make the recitals run smoothly by passing out programs, seating students, setting up the stage, and awarding trophies and medals. Committee members Ethelyn Beck, Janis Felts, and Patricia Tsai served respectively as hostess, monitor support and practice rooms monitor on competition day. Most importantly, the event could not have happened without Sara Doan, Solo Competition committee Chair, who gave untold hours organizing the event so that it ran seamlessly.

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## **News Briefs**

**Lewis Warren** will graduate from the New England Conservatory and attend the Cincinnati Conservatory to study with **Awadagin Pratt**. And **Katelan Tran Terrell** who graduated from Juilliard in 2018 is currently a Lindemann Young Artist at the Metropolitan Opera. **Both are former students of Dr. John Solomons.**

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## **Fort Worth Civic Orchestra Concerto Competition Winners**

Winners of the Annual Young Musicians' Concerto Competition organized by the Fort Worth Civic Orchestra were heard in performance on Saturday, May 11, 2019 at the SWBTS. Conductor and Music Director, Kurt Sprenger, led the FWCO. **William Leicht** (17 years of age) who earned First Place in the competition was the soloist in the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of Edvard Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16. Second place winner, **Eric Rau** (16 years of age), performed the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of Edward Elgar's Concerto in E minor for Cello and Orchestra. William Leicht is the student of Dr. Mary Humm; Eric Rau studies with Elizabeth Morrow.

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A splendid organ performance was given by **Isaac Foreman** at the Bacstravaganza –a concert given by the FWSO celebrating the anniversary of Bach's birth in March 2019. Isaac Foreman was recently named winner in the Young Artist category of the MTNA Young Artist Competition. Foreman received a prolonged round of applause from a very appreciative audience of Bach-lovers, for his organ performance of Bach's Toccata n F Major, BWV 540.

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## **Executive Board Members 2018-2019**

### **Co-PRESIDENTS:**

Sarah Alexander  
Jennifer DeSantis

### **VP for PROGRAMS:**

Mandy Luckert

### **VP for MEMBERSHIP:**

Christine Meng

### **VP for STUDENT ACTIVITIES:**

MaryAnn Fritz  
Jennea Potter

### **CORRESPONDING & RECORDING**

**SECRETARY:**  
Spring Seals

### **TREASURER:**

Linda Banfy

### **DIRECTORS:**

Ilka Araujo,  
Reva Jean Beck,  
Jill Sprenger

### **PARLIAMENTARIAN:**

Reva Jean Beck

### **HISTORIAN:**

Catherine Lloyd

### **EDITOR:**

Rosemary Solomons

### **GRAPHICS:**

T. L. Helmick (non-member)