



# Newsletter

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Fort Worth Music Teachers Association

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February 2020



## Love Scores

By Rosemary Solomons

Messages of love commercialized to a high degree, stand as reminders of the approach of Valentine's Day celebrated each year on the fourteenth of February. Flowers, messages of love hidden within the folds of greeting cards and a variety of other gifts chosen with care, serve to express feelings of love on this day.

With composers, tokens of love don't always have to be tangible; they have the rare privilege of creating the most beautiful expressions of love through music.

The great love of **Robert Schumann's** life was Clara Wieck. A good many of Schumann's art songs were inspired by his love for Clara.

Schumann's song cycle, *Myrthen, Opus 25*, was composed for and meant as a wedding gift for Clara. The widely known and loved song *Wiedmung* or Dedication, is a splendid example of Schumann's long and abiding love for his wife, Clara. A pianist and minor composer herself, she is remembered as the world's first woman concert pianist.

**Johannes Brahms** fell deeply in love with Julie, the daughter of Robert and Clara Schumann. Nothing came of Brahms' love for Julie as she was betrothed to a count. As a salve for his broken heart he composed *Alto Rhapsody* as a wedding gift for the young bride.

**Richard Wagner's** romantic episodes fueled his creative imagination in a bizarre sort of way. While married to Minna, his wife of many years, Wagner's roving eye settled on Mathilde Wesendonck, the wife of a silk merchant who befriended Wagner. The full spate of Wagner's love for the literary-minded Mathilde, found expression in his settings of five of her poems for voice and piano. Titled *Wesendonck Lieder* the songs exist today in a version for voice and orchestra as well.

**Wagner** met **Cosima**, the illegitimate daughter of Franz Liszt toward the end of his affair with Mathilde. Wagner and Cosima had two children while she was as yet married to the famed conductor, Hans von Bulow.

Wagner's orchestral work titled *Siegfried Idyll* was presented to Cosima as a birthday gift following the birth of their son, Siegfried, in 1869. The *Idyll* was given its first performance the morning of Christmas Day 1870 at the Wagner villa in

Switzerland. *Wesendonck Lieder* and *Siegfried Idyll* stand as reminders of the complexity of Richard Wagner's relationships.

**Benjamin Britten** composed his *War Requiem* in 1961 for the consecration of a cathedral in England destroyed by the Germans in 1940. The tenor part in this work was written by Britten for his life-long partner, famed British tenor, **Peter Pears**.

**Antonin Dvorak** was greatly attracted to Josefina Kounicova in his youth. She shunned his advances by singing a song composed by Dvorak titled, *Leave me alone*.

Dvorak learned of Josefina's death when he was in America in 1894. Upon his return home, he incorporated the melody of the song *Leave me alone* into the already composed slow movement of his Concerto for Cello and Orchestra. The melody of the song is stated again in its entirety in the final movement. This was Dvorak's tribute to the memory of Josefina whose bitter-sweet love he appears not to have forgotten.

Love's intrigues have found a permanent place in the repertoire of classical music. We are musically richer for it.

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### MARCH 2020

- 6 World of Music Testing, Location TBA
- 14 Local Chamber Music Ensemble Contest registration postmark
- 18 Solo Competition registration postmark deadline
- 21 Open Recital with *Forum* at Texas Wesleyan University, Martin Hall
- 21 Local Chamber Music Ensemble Contest, location TBD
- 21-25 MTNA National Convention, Chicago, IL

### APRIL 2020

- 1 Senior Scholarship Award application postmark deadline
- 18 Solo Competition at Texas Wesleyan University
- 19 "BookNotes", 2:00 pm, discussion led by Dr. Jill Sprenger
- 25 Solo Competition Honors Recital at Texas Wesleyan University, Martin Hall
- 25 FWMTA Ensemble Rehearsals, 9:00 am-noon, Steinway Hall Fort Worth
- 26 Outreach performances, 1:00-2:00pm, James L West Alzheimer Center, 1111 Summit Ave, FW, 76102
- TBD State Registration for the Chamber Music Ensemble Contest

The University of Texas at Arlington - Music Department    [www.uta.edu/music](http://www.uta.edu/music)    [music@uta.edu](mailto:music@uta.edu)    817-272-3471

**The University of Texas at Arlington Department of Music** is an exciting program offering both graduate and undergraduate degrees in music. Students work with an exceptional, world-renowned faculty, who help them realize their musical potential. The department presents many top-notch performances each semester that are often free and always open to the general public. Located in the heart of the Dallas/Fort Worth Metropolitan Area (the fourth-largest metro area in the United States), UTA is a

major NCAA Division I research university with an enrollment of over 43,500 undergraduate and graduate students. The Music Department offers performance opportunities for both majors and non-majors alike, with a full complement of Band, Choral, Jazz, and Orchestral ensembles, including many small chamber groups. Located in the Fine Arts Building, the department is home to Irons Recital Hall, a brand-new world-class recording studio, and many talented students.

FWMTA, Forum, and Mid Cities-MTA welcome  
**Dr. Alexander Wasserman,**  
 artist-in-residence  
 at Reinhardt University (GA), as he presents

**Rethinking Relaxation:**

**Is it really what we want at the piano?**

Please join us on Tuesday, February 11, at 10:00 for a Thought-provoking presentation and to connect with music teachers city-wide.

Lunch is available for \$13 in the Tea Room at the Woman's Club following the presentation. Please indicate in your RSVP if you plan to stay for lunch.  
 Looking forward to seeing you there!

## Message from Dr. Evan Mitchell, President FWMTA



Dear FWMTA Colleagues,  
I hope everyone is doing well and making the most of this new decade! Last fall semester was an exciting one for our Association, and there is much in store for this spring. I'd like to share a few highlights.

We had two great programs in the fall: Starting the Year Together, our open-house style program, drew a large crowd to TCU in August; and we enjoyed a brilliant masterclass and lecture by Mike Springer in November at Texas Wesleyan.

Where these programs inspired our members, their students were served equally well by activities like the Fall Festival. This year's Festival saw performances of nearly 400 pieces and marked the end of Janis Felts' tenure as

Festival Chair. I'd like to extend a huge "thank you" to Janis for her three years of leadership chairing the Fall Festival!

FWMTA served the community last fall, too, in a new and direct way. Our first-ever Musical Outreach performances took place in December at the Moncrief Cancer Institute. Thank you so much to the 30 performers who provided 17 hours of live music for patients and their families! Please see Jennifer DeSantis' article in this Newsletter for a more detailed recap of our December outreach and a look ahead to our next event this Spring.

The "icing on the cake" last fall was FWMTA's recognition as Best of State by TMTA for 2020! The award highlights the accomplishments of one local association each year, and this is Fort Worth's first time receiving this distinction. As a result of this award, TMTA will make a \$200 in honor of FWMTA to the Elizabeth Morris Memorial Fund.

Our Spring semester is well underway, with a lot to look forward to. We have two programs remaining this year: our joint meeting with Mid-Cities MTA and Piano Teachers Forum, and our BookNotes discussion in April. The program for the joint meeting, which is on February 11 and will receive coverage in the April Newsletter – is a presentation by

Dr. Alexander Wasserman entitled "**Rethinking Relaxation: Is it Really What We Want at the Piano?**" Our BookNotes discussion will center on Stewart Gordon's *Etudes for Piano Teachers* at 2:00pm on April 19<sup>th</sup>, at the Fort Worth Conservatory of Music and Fine Arts (2816 Hemphill St.). Last year's meeting elicited a lively discussion – we hope you'll join us!

Our Musical Outreach continues with three events at the James L. West Center for Dementia Care in April and May, and our usual spring slate of student activities (Theory, World of Music, the Publication and Video Essay Contests, Performance Contests, Solo Competition, Composition Contest, Ensembles, and more) is in full swing. Our next Open Recital, held in conjunction with Forum, will be March 21.

Lastly, one of the more enriching and inspiring events each year for music teachers throughout the country is the MTNA National Convention. This year's convention is scheduled to take place March 21-25 in Chicago. A number of our members will be attending (I'll be among them!) and I encourage everyone to take advantage of this extraordinary opportunity.

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## NEW MEMBERS

FWMTA extends a warm welcome to the following new members and reinstating members. We look forward to their involvement in our Association and to what they have to offer as teachers and musicians.

Richard Estes  
Donna Hopson (Reinstating)  
Jennifer Clarkson  
Zoe Linnea House (Collegiate)  
JungEun Kim (Reinstating)

Anthony Paradiso (Reinstating Collegiate)  
Halle Baker Puckett (Collegiate)  
Tak Yan Yeung  
Suyoun Yi (Reinstating Collegiate)  
Mariel Zuniga (Collegiate)

## FWMTA SPONSORS

We thank our Sponsors Radda, UTA Music Department and Kawai Piano Gallery, Dallas. See UTA and Kawai Gallery advertisements in this issue.

**Radda's** mission is to connect music students with experts around the world to gain valuable critique on their performances and compositions that will help them to become the musicians they're destined to be. Students have the opportunity to connect with teachers from prestigious schools such as Juilliard, Berklee, UCLA, and UNT and get personalized feedback on their music. Additionally, it's a unique way to discover teachers they would potentially want to study with in college. Radda provides a valuable service to teachers as well who have the opportunity to apply as a Radda Reviewer and critique students from all over the globe. More information can be found at [www.raddaconnect.com](http://www.raddaconnect.com).

## BookNotes

By Lori Christ

In this continuing series, Lori Christ offers her recommendations on books that we may find fulfilling as pianists.



To continue with my theme of finding meaning in music, in this newsletter I would like to introduce you to *Piano Lessons*, by Anna Goldsworthy (St.

Martin's Press, 2010). Upon publication the book received positive critical praise, was chosen as Newcomer of the Year in 2010 by the Australian Book Industry Awards and was shortlisted for other non-fiction awards. This gem is a memoir which primarily details Goldsworthy's experiences as a young girl in Australia while studying with her wise teacher,

Eleonora Sivan, a transplanted Russian. Goldsworthy later spent time in Fort Worth when she continued her education at TCU; you will undoubtedly bump into a couple familiar names!

When Goldsworthy began her life-changing lessons with Mrs. Sivan at age nine, the stage was set with Sivan's comments on day one: "We are not teaching piano playing. We are teaching philosophy and life and music digested." Despite Sivan's fractured English, her outlook is an inspiration to any piano student or teacher. Her brilliance as a teacher is illustrated by her enthusiasm to help students understand not only playing the instrument, but to gain a deeper understanding of music. Goldsworthy pays homage to Sivan's encouragement to perceive music not just as notes on a page, but to *listen*, and internalize it as well.

To bring this idea to the reader fully, each chapter is devoted to a specific composer—beginning with Bach, ending with

Chopin, and a collection of others in between. Goldsworthy admits that her grasp as a nine-year-old was limited, but her intellectual and musical growth flourished under Sivan's devoted tutelage. Her joy in music is obvious, as well as her love and respect for Sivan. In sharing her memories, she pays tribute to the arts of learning, teaching, and playing music.

Also, of interest... *Piano Lessons* was commissioned as a play by the Queensland Music Festival in 2011. Goldsworthy was a co-writer of the script and plays piano throughout. (Check out video clips online.) Currently she teaches piano at the University of Melbourne and the University of Adelaide. She is a member of the Seraphim Trio and has established a successful worldwide performing career.

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## NEWS BRIEFS:

By Tanya Karyagina

Dear FWMTA colleagues,



I would like to inform you about the TMTA SA Performance Contest. The TMTA SA Performance Contest is the premier event for students who wish to

perform and compete at the highest level. Competitors must prepare a program of varied pieces to be performed from memory first in front of one, and then in front of multiple judges. After winning in local and regional rounds, students will perform in the State

Contest at the annual TMTA Convention, with top prizes obtaining monetary awards. Local winners in the Young Artists category move straight to the State round, bypassing the Regional round. Categories include Piano Solo, Piano Concerto, Vocal Solo, and Orchestral Instruments Solo. This event strives for performances of the highest possible ability and artistry. This is a Student Affiliate event and is open to all Student Affiliate students, grades 7-12 and Young Artists who currently study with Student Affiliate teachers. Students in grades 7-12 must pass the TMTA Theory Test at their grade level before entering this Contest.

This year's TMTA Local Contest will be held on Saturday, February 15, 2020 starting at 10am at Texas Christian

University in Walsh Performing Arts Building's Piano Wing. TCU's Division Chair of Piano, Herndon Professor of Music John Owings will be our judge and every student will greatly benefit from playing for him and from acquiring his written comments. Please, read Professor John Owings' bio here: [https://finearts.tcu.edu/faculty\\_staff/johnowings/](https://finearts.tcu.edu/faculty_staff/johnowings/)

Please, consider entering your advanced students in next year's TMTA Performance Contest, as the deadline for this year has passed. Wishing all the best to students who will be competing on February 15!

## FWMTA Outreach

by Jennifer DeSantis



We had a successful first Outreach event on December 10-12, 2019, at the Moncrief Cancer Institute on Magnolia Avenue in Fort

Worth. During the three days, our members (teachers and students) and area musicians volunteered their time to provide therapeutic music for the patients, families and staff. The musicians were provided with a wonderful new Steinway Spirio model B-R donated by Steinway Piano Gallery of Fort Worth. Special thanks to Thomas Ragozzino at Steinway for making this possible! Thank you to our members, our President Evan Mitchell, and Charlene Colorado of UT Southwestern for their hard work and commitment to the project.

This event took time to coordinate. In the spring of 2018, I received a call from Charlene Colorado of UT Southwestern Simmons Cancer Clinic, which is housed on the second floor of the Moncrief Cancer Institute. She was interested in finding musicians to perform for the clinic's patients while they were receiving treatments, which often lasted several hours. I immediately responded with a "yes" and got to work. This was an opportunity our organization needed! Not only did it provide another performance outlet away from the stage, but it afforded us the chance to serve our community. Our only drawback was finding a piano for the space. The original plan was to find a digital piano that would be placed in the treatment area year around. Shortly after our Board meeting in June of 2019, Evan spoke with Thomas Ragozzino at Steinway and he offered to donate a piano for the 3-day performance during the holidays. The piano would be played from 8:30am-4:30pm daily. The Steinway was placed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor landing where all could hear the beautiful music! Even though the piano was not directly in the treatment

area, the performances were appreciated by the staff, families, and patients in the waiting area. Many said that they were touched by the music we provided. This event started a relationship with UT Southwestern that will hopefully grow into more performance opportunities for our membership. Thank you to all who performed!

The Spring 2020 FWMTA Outreach event will take place at James L. West Alzheimer Center at 1111 Summit Avenue, Fort. Worth, 76102. This event will happen on three consecutive Sundays (April 26, May 3, and May 10) from 1:00-2:00pm. Students of all ages and levels are welcome to perform! This event will be similar to a recital where students perform one or two pieces for the residents. The pieces must be recital ready and can be performed with or without music. Not only is this a great opportunity for your students to provide a service to our community, but they will also get extra performance practice before their spring recital! For questions about this event, please contact Jennifer DeSantis at [j.desantis@tcu.edu](mailto:j.desantis@tcu.edu).

## Fall Festival

By Janis Felts

The annual Fall & Jazz Festivals took place on October 12, 2019, at Texas Christian University. In addition to the Jazz entries, the students also featured music from the Romantic era. We applaud the 279 students who performed a total of 382 compositions. Congratulations also to the 36 teachers

represented in this event. The students were adjudicated by Laura Barnett, Jim Carmichael, Darrell Crim, John Fisher, Josh Green, Russell Hughes, Mina Kramer, Beth Quillian, Linda Secor, and Eunice Tavaglione.

The performers earned the following ratings: Superior=375; Excellent=7.

FWMTA and the Fall Festival Committee would like to thank TCU for the use of their music studios and pianos. The Fall Festival committee extends a special word of thanks to technician James Williams for ensuring the pianos on which the students performed were tuned.

## BookNotes Coming up in April

Presented by Jill Sprenger, DMA



We all know the importance of giving our students a steady diet of technique exercises and etudes to help them become competent musicians. In his

book "*Etudes for Piano Teachers*" you might think that Stewart Gordon will provide you as teachers with a list of

pedagogy texts to read, or a set of teacher demonstrations to watch in order to further your technique of teaching. What he suggests is something quite different. Get the book (a quick read) and come enjoy a brief time with your colleagues as we ponder and discuss some creative ideas he has, for what will make us all into better teachers. Coffee and chocolate provided to help you recover from the previous day's Solo Contest!

*Jill Sprenger is the founder and Director of the Fort Worth Conservatory of Music and Fine Arts LLC, which opened in Fall 2019, and maintains a large private studio. She is also currently on the Board of Directors of the Fort Worth Music Teachers Association. Jill Sprenger has received her B.M. from Oberlin Conservatory, M.M. from Indiana University and D.M.A. from the University of California, all in piano performance.*



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**THE FUTURE OF THE PIANO**

## FWMTA PHOTO GALLERY



### August 2019 Meeting



### November 2019 Meeting with Mike Springer, composer, teacher and performer.



### December 2019 Outreach Program

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