



Newsletter

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Fort Worth Music Teachers Association

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Editorial Musings



If you attended the first FWMTA meeting for the academic year on August 25, 2018, you are aware of the highly interesting idea presented to members - a book of musical interest chosen from a brief suggested list of books is to be read by members and discussed at the meeting to be held in April, 2019.

This first *Book Club* presentation did what it was intended to do – make us aware of the knowledge and expertise musicians of renown share through their writings in the form of a book. While a piano score beckons us enter a world of glorious sound, a book permits us read at a leisurely pace absorbing as much as time and inclination permit.

To the avid reader, there is nothing quite like a book, just as there is nothing quite like a piano score to us pianists. The magic within the score's pages unfold no sooner the keys of the piano are

touched. To progress from sightreading a score to perfecting it, takes a pianist - or other instrumentalist – to a level of personal fulfillment. In contrast, the knowledge imparted by a musician who takes on the role of writer wishing to share the knowledge accumulated over the years, places us musicians in the enviable position of appeasing our quest for learning and knowledge - something that should be cultivated and maintained throughout our lives.

We are fully aware of what little time we have to devote to reading due to the demands of our individual schedules. But to take the initial step of sitting down with the book of your choice, isolated in a world of your own for just ten to fifteen minutes at an appointed time each day or as often as possible, will soon become an absorbing and refreshing habit.

The time left for reading at the remains of the day will at first be a luxury, but soon become an absolute necessity as it is addictive!

One book that I have read and reread over the years, due to the wealth of information therein, is Alfred Brendel's *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts*.

Should you allow yourself to enter the world of music and musicians created by Alfred Brendel in *Thoughts and Afterthoughts* (Princeton University Press), you will find the piano works of *Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt and Busoni* discussed in a fascinating manner. And the sections on *Coping with Pianos* and *Remembering my Teacher* are superbly recounted.

Set aside a few minutes to indulge in reading the first book chosen to be discussed at the April 2019 meeting. You will be glad you did.

I would like to thank contributing members, Christine Pater and Patrick Behringer – recipient of the 2017 NTCM award - for the splendid topics covered in their respective contributions to this edition of the FWMTA Newsletter.

Rosemary Solomons - Editor

Event Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2018

- 13 Fall Festival: Jazz and Classical Registration Deadline (online registration)
- 14 Student Affiliate Enrollment Deadline
- 22 Composition Clinic: Private Lessons with Dr. Martin Blessinger at Steinway Hall

OCTOBER 2018

- 6 Open Recital at Texas Wesleyan University, Martin Hall
- 11 Fall Theory Test Registration Deadline
- 13 Fall Festival: Jazz and Classical at TCU, Ed Landreth Hall
- 15 Original Composition Contest Deadline for Entry

NOVEMBER 2018

- 3 Student Affiliate Late Enrollment Deadline (Fee Assessed)
- 3 Fall Theory Test at Broadway Baptist Church
- 10 Open Recital with Forum at Texas Wesleyan University, Martin Hall

TBD Chamber Music Clinic: piano and instrumental at TCC-NE. Joint event with Mid-cities MTA and TCC-NE. Presenter: TBD

TBD Original Composition Contest Recital at Steinway Hall

DECEMBER 2018

- 1 Youth Duo Piano Competition Registration Deadline
- 1 Open Christmas Recital, with Christmas hymns, carols, duets, and winners of Original Composition Contest
- 2 Local Publication Competition Deadline
- 2 Local Video Contest Deadline
- 30 Student Affiliate Extended Late Enrollment Deadline (Fee Increased)

JANUARY 2019

- TBD** Original Composition Contest State Deadline
- 10 Spring Theory Test Registration Deadline
- 19 Local Performance Contest Registration Postmark
- TBD** Pedagogy Masterclass. Presenter: TBD
- 19 Open Recital (Masterclass) at Texas Wesleyan University, Martin Hall

Note from Co-President Jennifer DeSantis

FWMTA's Open House held on August 25, 2018, was a huge success! Sarah and I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the members who helped with this event: Mandy Luckert, Julia Parker, Spring Seals, Echo Wilson, Ilka Araujo, Jimmy Angeles, Catherine Lloyd, Christine Meng and Lori Christ. Thank you for your service to the organization.



If you were not able to make it, here are a few highlights from our general meeting: You can now register your students **online** for the Fall & Jazz Festivals.

To prepare for the local Original Composition Contest, FWMTA students will have an opportunity to take a 30-minute composition lesson with a TCU professor.

Our website, www.fwmta.org has been updated by our new web master, Evan Mitchell. Thank you Evan! On the website, you can find student event forms as well as other helpful resources. Please take a look and like us on Facebook!

FWMTA has numerous opportunities and programs for our membership. If you have any questions about our programs or if you would like to help out on one of our committees, please contact our new Mentor Chairperson, Echo Wilson.

I am still in need of a committee to help with our community service project. If you have interest in helping with this initiative, I would love to hear from you!

Wishing you all a wonderful year of teaching and music making!

By Sarah Alexander



*Co-President Sarah Alexander recently presented a two-part Webinar hosted by MTNA on: **The Struggle is Real: Building a Thriving Local Association**. The article that follows recounts the insightful information presented at that Webinar and recounts the topics covered during that event.*

What makes a thriving Local Association? How does a Local Association sustain growth? How can the Local Association remain relevant to the needs of its members? These are just a couple of questions that were answered and discussed in the webinar presented by me together with FWMTA colleague, Spring Seals, and another colleague, Whitney Hawker. The 2-part webinar, ***The Struggle is Real: Building a Thriving Local Association***, was hosted by MTNA this past summer and is now archived on MTNA.org (with many other wonderful and helpful webinars.) Please consider taking some time this next semester to watch the webinar and then evaluate your part in FWMTA. The seven topics covered in the webinar included:

Professional Development – promoting a culture of Professional Development, viewing it as an investment into your business

- **Programming** – what to offer in programs, reaching fringe members, including Collegiate Chapters
- **Networking** – reasons to network and practical ways to network in and out of the local association
- **Recruitment** – appreciating current members, reaching out to collegiate members and other new members
- **Mentoring** – improving mentor programs to strengthen membership and build future leadership
- **Web Presence** – building and improving websites, staying accessible through social media
- **Community Awareness** – boosting the associations presence in the community, being a vital part of the local area

While it would be too long to cover all of the information presented in the webinar, allow me to highlight one point. The webinar is for all members, not just for those in leadership. The local association is only as strong as the individual members. Thriving members = thriving local association. Valued members = valued local association. Active members = active local association.

As the FWMTA Board met in June and August to review the past year and plan for the upcoming year, we evaluated areas in our association that we hope to improve on to better provide for the needs of the members. Some of them have already been noted by Jennifer in this newsletter. We are so appreciative of the volunteer efforts of our board, chairs, committees, etc. FWMTA has an incredible history and heritage of pedagogues who have given much to our profession and whose work we

reap the benefits of today. Here are some of the highlights of updates and additions from 2017-2018 and into the next year:

- Christine Meng, VP of Membership – Organizes, edits, sends out emails to members with FWMTA news
- Evan Mitchell, Website – Editing and updating the FWMTA webpage, added more info as we move to using the website as our “yearbook”
- Echo Wilson, Mentor chair – reinstating our mentor program to help new members integrate into FWMTA events
- Jimmy Angeles, Ensemble chair/Ilka Araujo, Director – creating a DVD on the history of FWMTA (hopefully made available soon to the membership)
- Spring Seals, Secretary – creating and updating Facebook page with news and upcoming events
- Eddie Brown, Composition Contest chair – creating a new composition coaching event
- Janis Felts, Fall Festival chair – moving to online registration
- MaryAnn Fritz, Co-VP of Student Activities – streamlining the format of event pages, collecting/assimilating job descriptions

And, of course, we cannot keep moving forward without those who faithfully fulfill their volunteer responsibilities and involvement. While they are not mentioned here by name, we recognize their efforts as well and say “Thank You!” Moving into the new year, we hope these highlighted items assist you in the upcoming year and keep FWMTA moving forward.



Christine Pater is a Professional Accompanist Collaborative Artist and Piano Teacher. She holds a B.M. in Piano Performance and M.M. in Church Music with an emphasis in Accompanying. Christine currently accompanies vocalists at Texas Christian University and is the pianist at Birdville Baptist Church. In addition, she teaches piano at Pater's Piano Studio in Fort Worth.

The Collaborative Pianist

As a little girl the highlight of my week was my piano lesson with Mrs. Antonoff. She was from Bulgaria and had a thick accent. Walking into her home was like walking into Europe. I was enthralled by the large rooms, the beautifully patterned Persian rugs, the European wallpaper and the

huge grandfather clock. I was even more enchanted with learning how to play the piano.

Mrs. Antonoff opened up the world of music to me and took me on an exciting journey. I was one of those rare children who LOVED to practice, so much so that my parents would ask me to STOP practicing. My little girl fingers were adept at finding the right keys and I quickly developed good coordination and rapid reading skills.

My reading skills and sensitivity led Mrs. Antonoff to explore accompanying with me. The first song I ever played for a young soprano was "Voi che sapete" from Mozart's opera Don Giovanni.

My piano teacher promptly took me to her old record player and played a recording of the orchestral version of the aria. She commented on how the instruments complimented the vocal line, the way the orchestra followed the singer's every breath, and the beauty of the Italian language. Holding the pages of the score in my hands while I listened, I trembled with excitement at the sounds I heard.

Mrs. Antonoff explained that as an accompanist I should imitate the sounds of the instruments, be attentive to the breath of the vocalist and know and understand the meaning of the Italian. My teacher's mentoring was invaluable. I was instantly captivated and knew that I had discovered my passion! And so began my lifelong journey as a collaborative pianist.

Over the years I have had the joy of making music with a myriad of soloists, chamber ensembles and

choral and instrumental groups. For me there is nothing more satisfying than a musical collaboration with old friends or new acquaintances.

As a collaborative pianist I get a thrill from the challenge of learning a new piece of music. Delving into the score to uncover the particular nuances of my music and that of the soloist or ensemble is a delight. I enjoy researching the background of the piece and that of the composer, finding a translation of the text (if there are lyrics), and watching live performances on YouTube. These all enhance my preparation and ability to collaborate with musical sensitivity.

The culmination of it all is my first rehearsal with the performer. I derive pleasure from being able to breathe with, follow and support the soloist. It is comparable to an enchanting musical dance between pianist and soloist. Collaborating with other musicians is one of the great joys of my life.

Perhaps you or some of your advanced piano students would like to try their hand at accompanying. If so, here are some practical suggestions for those interested in pursuing accompanying on a professional level:

1. Sight-read on a regular basis
2. Practice score reading (choral, orchestral)
3. Learn to transpose
4. Become skilled at transforming orchestral piano parts into 'playable' piano parts that accentuate the important musical themes and support the soloist (eliminate unnecessary notes or notes that don't sound 'pianistic')
5. Take private voice lessons

6. Study a foreign language (Italian, French, German)
7. Play a wind or string instrument
8. Listen to and watch videos of the piece in order to hear the various interpretations
9. Pursue a degree in Collaborative Piano
10. Be a lifelong learner

Since approximately 90% of our private piano students probably will not pursue music as a professional career, it may be beneficial to incorporate collaborative piano skills into our curriculum. This can help prepare our students for a lifetime of music and ensemble.

A basic list of abilities that we can cultivate in our piano students in order to introduce them to

collaborative piano playing follows.

1. Sight-reading
2. Multiple score reading (for choral accompanying)
3. Duet or ensemble playing
4. Good rhythm; accented downbeats
5. Ability to lead with a strong beat but at the same time follow the nuances of the soloist or director
6. Musical sensitivity and the ability to listen carefully
7. Excellent musicianship (analysis of chords, key signatures)
8. Foreign language skills (for vocal accompanying)
9. Knowledge of keys and ranges of instruments (for instrumental accompanying)

10. Ability to work well with others

Whether one is a professional accompanist or one who simply enjoys playing for soloists or groups, accompanying is an activity that fosters camaraderie and musical collaboration. It is rewarding to be able to partner with other musicians in producing beautiful music whether at home or in a concert hall.

Being a collaborative pianist is a joyful and fulfilling profession. As piano teachers we would do well to encourage our students to explore the realm of accompanying.

The Nationally Certified Teacher of Music

By Patrick Behringer



Patrick Behringer teaches class at Fossil Ridge High School, where he also leads the Keller ISD Summer Piano Camp and after-school program at various elementary campuses. He previously was Education Director of the Fort Worth Music Fund, and taught class piano at Syracuse University, the renowned Interlochen Arts Camp, and Wisconsin Conservatory as a Teaching Assistant.

Mr. Behringer holds a Certificate in Piano Performance from the University of Texas at Arlington where he preformed Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue with orchestra as winner of the concerto competition; a Master of Music degree and Certificate in University Teaching from Syracuse University, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree on scholarship from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Piano lessons have a rich tradition; spawned at the time of the early composers, developed by the great masters, revolutionized by Francis Clark and other pedagogues, and it continues to evolve and grow into the age of the internet. For musicians and teachers, this profession has much to offer: we get to sculpt music full-time; we have schedule freedoms many jobs don't offer; and we have the independence to work with students personally, using educational strategies as we see fit.

One growing trend that challenges the well-established traditions of piano lessons today is the proliferation of information - and misinformation - available on the internet. It seems a growing number of children, teenagers, and

adults think that learning how to play piano is easy and can be accomplished without a teacher. That play-along apps and YouTube videos can teach them; or that simply memorizing the note names and learning the first page of an electronically-downloaded *Für Elise* version constitutes what it means to play the piano - or teach it! Sure, these resources can help individuals get started and can feed their desire to learn, but we know that music lessons provide so much more than that.

Perhaps this mentality has always persisted. Regardless, it seems more necessary today than ever to educate the public about what authentic piano pedagogy looks like. The National Certification as a Teacher of Music is one novel way to do that. Perhaps you don't have a piano pedagogy degree; this helps you study and apply many of the concepts of that curriculum. Maybe your degree is in performance; this widens your pedagogical perspective. To a public which, as a whole, does not have much experience with the traditions, a certification can provide clarity and build trust within your studio.

Besides creating a platform for promoting your business and pedagogy, the NCTM certification is justified, professionally. There is always room for personal improvement as a teacher and musician, as the legendary cellist Pablo Casals pointed out. When asked in his 80's why he kept on

practicing four-to-five hours a day, he famously answered, as the story goes, that it was because he was still "making progress." It is this devotion to our craft we can learn from one of the true greats. All of these reasons played a factor in why I decided to pursue the NCTM.

FWMTA is made up of teachers continually seeking to "make progress", and it represents a standard of excellence in the community. As an extension, the National Certification represents an individual professional standard of excellence and knowledge. The process helps you answer professional questions, such as, "What are the roots and implications of my professional philosophy? How can I better organize my business structure? What would be a creative and effective strategy for teaching this piece? What could have I done better?" Through the process, I analyzed my own musicality and pedagogy, re-evaluated the teaching environment I create, and developed solid business policies. Moreover, it motivated many of my students, who became eager to be recorded and showcased in my portfolio!

At first glance, the NCTM Projects looked like a somewhat arduous process that I was interested in doing "some day". The MTNA Certification website provides many resources to help you get started and stay on track, including tips about what the evaluators want to know and how

they will evaluate your work. As an even greater benefit, I discovered at an FWMTA meeting that members could receive mentorship from Dr. Ann Gipson, director of Piano Pedagogy at TCU. That fall, we began meeting every couple of weeks by appointment and she offered insightful feedback and practical strategies to break up the work into manageable chunks.

At Dr. Gipson's recommendation, I began preliminary work on the projects before officially applying to the program, to ensure that I would have many more months to revise my work, record lessons, survey student progress and collect records of their Theory Test, Contest, and Festival successes, as needed. In all, the process lasted only about one school year, with a weekly review of my materials and processes. However, it took me longer to receive the actual certification because I waited to apply after I had completed the bulk of the work; and then, at the 1-year deadline, I renewed the application for another year, which allowed me to include recent changes to my professional career and teaching experiences. In the end, my projects were reviewed by a panel of lifetime piano pedagogy professionals of MTNA. The result of the process: today I am a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music! And perhaps even more important: I am a better teacher because of it.

Items of Interest

A note from Lori Christ...

And the winner of our election is... The Perfect Wrong Note: *Learning to Trust Your Musical Self* by William Westney (Amadeus Press, 2003). Visit Amazon to purchase. Since the plan is to discuss the book at the April FWMTA meeting, we all have plenty of time to read it by then. Enjoy!

Fort Worth Civic Orchestra Announces Carol Writing Competition

The annual Fort Worth Civic Orchestra Carol Writing Competition is open to all 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students. This contest gives young aspiring composers and songwriters an opportunity to write a seasonal carol, have it professionally orchestrated for full orchestra and voice, and then hear it performed in concert as our guest at our annual Teddy Bear concert. This year's concert is scheduled to be performed in Truett Auditorium on the Campus of the Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary, on Saturday, December 8, 2018.

The carol should be seasonal in nature, having a theme based in Fall/Winter, Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year, or general holiday, but should be pertinent to the Holidays associated with Winter break. It can

www.fwco.org.

FWMTA welcomes new members Jae Kim, Melissa Korzekwa, Won Yong Lee, Felicity Mazur-Park, Harriet Motter, Madysen Powell, Emily Tran, Anita Hurst, Jake Fridkis and Michael Schneider.

Executive Board Members:

Co-PRESIDENTS:

Sarah Alexander and Jennifer DeSantis

VP for PROGRAMS: Mandy Luckert

VP for MEMBERSHIP: Christine Meng

VP for STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

MaryAnn Fritz and Jennea Potter

CORRESPONDING & RECORDING

SECRETARY: Spring Seals

TREASURER: Linda Banfy

UT Arlington Fall Piano Contest and Honors Recital

The University of Texas at Arlington announces its 40th annual Fall Piano Contest and Honors Recital to be held Saturday, November 03, 2018. The contest is open to piano soloists (grades 1-12) and piano concerto soloists (grades 7-12), with an application deadline of Monday, October 15th.

be composed by an individual student, a group, or a class of students. Teacher help is acceptable in the refinement and charting of the song, but the melodies and lyrics are to be originated by the students. If the teacher writes out the song by hand or using software, please include a copy of the student's original work in the package. Judging will be based on the melody and the lyrics.

Entries will need to be received no later than Saturday, October 13, 2018. Minimum requirements for submission are a charted melody line with words written under the music in song form indicating the fit of the lyrics with the melody. The entry package must also include a submission form for each carol submitted and identifying information on each sheet of paper included.

For further information, copies of required forms and examples of past entries go to: www.fwco.org.

DIRECTORS: Ilka Araujo,

Reva Jean Beck, Jill Sprenger,

PARLIAMENTARIAN: Reva Jean Beck

HISTORIAN: Catherine Lloyd

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