



# Newsletter

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**Fort Worth Music Teachers Association**

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## President's Column



**Dear FWMTA Colleagues,**

Do you remember the movie *28 Days Later*? It was a dystopian sci-fi flick about a destructive virus outbreak. (Fantasy, I know.) Well, we're now more than 728 days later than the first recorded Covid case in this country, nearly two full years into the pandemic.

When it comes to our current situation, we've seen this "movie" before. It feels by turns numbingly repetitious and horrifying. The utter chaos surrounding school closings and other staffing shortages is just the latest bizarre and disruptive twist. And of course, the MTNA National Conference has now sadly been moved online for a third consecutive year.

At this point, many of us understandably feel like either giving up – carrying on with life as it was before; or giving in – conceding defeat, for now, shelving plans to get out of the house or undertake new projects due to the

potential for events to be canceled. Indeed, for many of us, the most frustrating part of this phase in the pandemic is this feeling of being stuck in limbo, unsure of what is to come.

These tendencies – to fear uncertainty, to wither under adversity – have existed for many of us even in non-pandemic years. We refine skills to excel in our professional lives, but often don't anticipate just how hard it will be to deploy those skills in less than ideal conditions.

How do you keep your outlook hopeful and motivation steady? Even little things that keep your brain fresh can help. A popular bit of advice suggests taking a new route to work or on daily errands, just to see things from a different angle and make the familiar feel new. In that vein, something as simple as rearranging books on a studio shelf, or putting the reward stickers in a different drawer, can provide a moment of freshness in an otherwise stale routine.

New ideas abound at FWMTA, too. This semester we have an exciting expanded joint meeting planned with Mid-Cities MTA and Piano Teachers Forum: a half-day pedagogy workshop, featuring several guest clinicians. (And a new date, rescheduled from January to later in the spring.) Please help us

spread the word about a new scholarship as well. This award will recognize excellence in music-based community service and will be open to any graduating high school senior in greater Fort Worth.

We have in-person events planned for our students, some of which have been virtual in recent years – our Solo Competition, Outreach, Ensembles preparing for an in-person convention, and a second semester of Theory testing back at Broadway Baptist – and some of which we were able to hold last year in-person, such as the Local Performance Contest, Meet the Composer, and Duo Piano Competition.

I hope you find something to keep your mind and skills focused and goal-oriented through this strange period – maybe a new project you've always considered exploring but never felt the time was right. What's the worst outcome when an event you've looked forward to gets canceled, anyway? That exciting new student activity, presentation, or performance is now ready to go, even if not quite when you expected.

Take care of yourselves and your students. We will make this an enriching and musical semester!

**Evan Mitchell, President**

## Editor's Column



Of the musically enriching programs offered to students at the state level by TMTA and at the local level by FWMTA is ensemble playing. This event provides piano students the opportunity of playing as members of a piano ensemble at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. The honor of performing at the TMTA State Convention awaits the Piano Ensemble players who have perfected what it takes to perform together as a *piano ensemble*.

The June Leondar Chamber Music Contest goes a step further; it invites students in grades 7 through 12 to perform in ensembles of two to fifteen players. Ensembles can be for *duo or piano duet, mixed instrumental or vocal groups, or popular or jazz ensembles*. The rewards that await students in this chamber event are live performances given at the TMTA convention plus cash prize awards.

MTNA adds to the pleasures and camaraderie derived from ensemble playing by offering students the opportunity of playing as members of *string and wind ensembles* in a two-tier competition. Handsome cash prizes await winners in this contest. Students who devote themselves to the study of piano, voice, and wind and string playing are exposed to the inherent beauty

of chamber music through these events offered at the national level.

This early exposure to chamber music through these events also provides music students with the opportunity of honing their skills as chamber musicians at an early age while promoting the serious consideration of becoming professional chamber musicians or seeking a position as a member of a symphony orchestra.

During the many months of preparation, students learn to accept constructive criticism and support each other as an intimate group of musicians. They also learn the importance of polishing their skills as instrumentalists as well as improving their interactive abilities.

Some of the special skills required in chamber music may not be as crucial in solo performances. Listening is a skill all musicians develop; chamber music requires ensemble players to listen not only to their own part but to the totality of what is being played.

The term chamber music initially meant music that was best performed in a small, intimate setting. In time, the term led from its early definition to one that embraced the music of a truly intimate nature that was best performed in a comparatively small space.

This intimate type of music composed for a small group of instrumentalists led to the writing

of original compositions, transcriptions and arrangements created for duo, quartet, quintet, sextet, septet, octet and nonet. Seldom does the number of instrumentalists exceed nine.

Although the term chamber music has been restricted to ensembles of solo parts, in recent years it has embraced numerous works for voice and highly interesting small ensembles of instrumentalists.

Among them is Ralph Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge for Tenor, String Quartet and Piano*. Beethoven's *Twenty-Five Scottish Songs, for Voices and Piano Trio*, Opus 108, Samuel Barber's *Dover Beach*, Opus 3, *for Baritone and String Quartet*, Stravinsky's *Berceuse du chat, for Voice and Three Clarinets* and Maurice Ravel's *Chansons madécasses for Voice, Flute, Cello, and Piano*.

String quartets and quintets become piano quartets and piano quintets when scored for four or five-string instruments and piano. A well-loved example of a piano quintet that dispenses with the second violin and replaces it with the deep resonance of a double bass is Franz Schubert's *Trout Quintet in A Major, D. 667*. The uncommon instrumentation calls for piano, violin, viola, cello and double bass. Schubert composed it at the age of twenty-two (1819).

Being of an intimate character, the love and appreciation of chamber music are rather limited when compared with that of symphonic

music, the opera or choral works to which audiences are drawn. Chamber music may present challenges to the listener, but repeated listenings lead to comprehension and deep appreciation of works of this genre. Transcriptions of symphonic works for chamber ensembles have enriched its already voluminous repertoire with tone colors and timbres that await exploration by both chamber

players and lovers of chamber music.

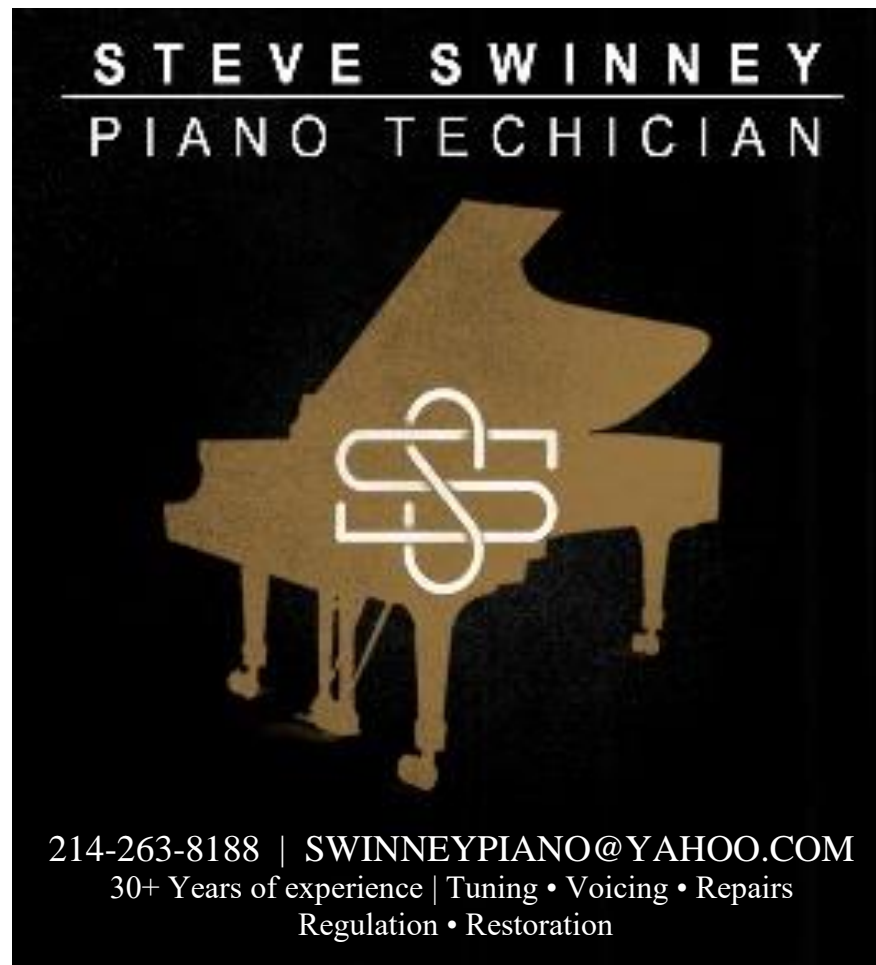
Only recently did the existence of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue as a work for piano and string quartet, become a listening experience for me. I learned of it through a performance given by Evan Mitchell, solo pianist, chamber musician, and FWMTA president, who performed it together with a professional string quintet. Their recent performance brought this

rarely performed chamber version of the Rhapsody (written in 1924 for two pianos by Gershwin) to light.

The chamber events offered by FWMTA, TMTA and MTNA could not be realized but for the assiduous efforts of music teachers who coach students for the rewards that await ensemble playing.

**Rosemary Solomons, Editor**

FWMTA thanks Steve Swinney  
for his interest in our association  
and his generous donation toward our Scholarship Fund.



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# FWMTA Calendar January - March 2022

Please check the FWMTA website concerning possible changes to these events due to COVID-19 and current o-variant

## JANUARY

- 11 Spring Theory Test Registration Deadline
- 15 Local Performance Contest Registration Postmark
- POSTPONED** to March Joint meeting with MCMTA and Forum: Pedagogy Workshop, 9:30am-1:00pm at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
- TBD** Original Composition Contest State Deadline
- 29 Open Recital, 4:30 pm, Martin Hall at Texas Wesleyan University

## FEBRUARY

- 1 State Publication Contest Deadline
- 1 State Video Contest Deadline
- 5 Spring Theory Test (makeup date Feb. 10) at Broadway Baptist, 305 W. Broadway Ave, FW.  
Alternative testing window January 31-February 13
- 4 World of Music Test registration postmark deadline
- 12 State and Local Piano Ensemble Team Intent Form and Fees Postmark Date
- 12 Local Performance Contest
- 19 Youth Duo Piano Competition at Texas Wesleyan University

## MARCH

- 5 Open Recital with Forum, 4:30 pm, Martin Hall at Texas Wesleyan University
- 11 World of Music Testing, Location TBA  
Local Chamber Music Ensemble Contest registration postmark
- 9 Solo Competition registration deadline

\*\*TBD Joint meeting with MCMTA and Forum: Pedagogy Workshop, 9:30 am-1:00 pm at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Local Chamber Music Ensemble Contest, location TBD  
MTNA National Convention

## APRIL

- 1 Senior Scholarship Award application postmark deadline
- 2 State and Local Piano Ensemble auditions, location TBA
- 9 Solo Competition at Texas Wesleyan University
- 16, 30 State and Local Piano Ensemble rehearsals, 9:00-11:00 am at Steinway Hall, 510 Commerce St., FW
- 23 Solo Competition Honors Recitals, Martin Hall at Texas Wesleyan University

## MAY

- 7 "Meet the Composer", 2:00pm-4:00pm with special guest David Karp at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
- 7, 21 State and Local Piano Ensemble rehearsals, 9:00-11:00 am at Steinway Hall, 510 Commerce St., FW
- 14 Open Recital, 4:30 pm, Martin Hall at Texas Wesleyan University

## JUNE

- 4 State and Local Piano Ensemble rehearsals, 9:00-11:00 am at Steinway Hall, 510 Commerce St., FW  
Honors Recital, 6:30 pm at Steinway Hall Fort Worth
- 16-19 TMTA Convention at the Dallas Hyatt Regency



### Nurture a love of music through piano learning

Tak Yan Yeung is a piano teacher, concert pianist, church organist, and faculty member at Tarrant County College. In his teaching, he shares the joy of music-making with his students and develops their musicianship and pianism. Curricula are developed and tailored for the unique learning needs of individual students. Tak Yan brings more than a decade of performing experience and 8 years of teaching experience to his piano lessons. He is a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music of the Music Teachers National Association. Lessons can be in-person or online. Studio location: Meadow Crest Dr. North Richland Hills, Texas 76180

**For more information on lessons provided and studio location please contact Tak Yan at [yeungspianotime@gmail.com](mailto:yeungspianotime@gmail.com) or 817-380-9659 (text or call) for your first piano lessons!**



***The Fort Worth Civic Orchestra** operates only through the generous support of members, patrons, and businesses in the Fort Worth Area. This aids the FWCO in continuing its mission of providing the community with an accessible experience of symphonic music. Violinist, Byrwec Ellison, as well as all members of the FWCO give of their time and talent gratis to further the mission of this organization. Ellison, trained as an aerospace engineer, never lost sight of his first love: classical music. He travels the globe to hear performances of symphonic and chamber works and opera. His knowledge of music and musical matters is enviable. In the article that follows Ellison makes us aware of the exciting opportunity the FWCO offers high school students – the Young Musicians Concerto Competition. -The Editor*

## **By Byrwec Ellison**

Fort Worth violinist Kurt Sprenger remembers the first time he performed a concerto accompanied by a full symphony orchestra. A teenager in Hawaii without aspiration for a career in music, he'd won a student competition whose first prize was the opportunity to solo with an orchestra. It was a life-shaping milestone for the high schooler, who never forgot the feeling of accomplishment and the burst of confidence it gave to him.

Decades later, as music director of the Fort Worth Civic Orchestra, Dr. Sprenger wanted to offer the same prospect to gifted students in his adopted community. With grants from the Arts Council of Fort Worth and local business Weir SPM, he and his all-volunteer orchestra inaugurated their signature outreach program for high school players in 2011, the Young Musicians Concerto Competition.

For the Civic Orchestra musicians, most of whom are amateurs who studied music in their youth but went on to other careers, the Competition offers a whiff of nostalgia as well as a service to young people who love making music. Whether those students go on to make music their vocation or their avocation, it's a

moment that will stay with them all their lives. And the Civic Orchestra, part of whose mission is to advance music education, is uniquely positioned to offer such a musical collaboration.

The Competition is open to residents of Tarrant and surrounding counties, through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, who play any orchestral instrument or piano. Auditions are held in the late winter, and the winning players are invited to perform a movement of their chosen concerto with Dr. Sprenger and the Civic Orchestra in the spring on the final concert of the season.

Almost since its inception, the Young Musicians Concerto Competition has been underwritten by local physician and violinmaker Dr. Bill Chambers. And for the life of the Competition, it's been a breathtaking showcase for the talents of dedicated young players on a variety of instruments. The first winner was pianist Katelan Tran Terrell, who performed a movement from Brahms' Concerto No. 1.

A student of Dr. John Solomons, she went on to study at the Eastman School of Music and the Juilliard School and is currently a staff pianist and vocal coach at the Metropolitan

Opera. Other past winners include recent Harvard graduate in the sciences Tim Im (Bruch G minor Violin Concerto), Madison Hardick (Ibert Flute Concerto) and Stephen Chang (Haydn Cello Concerto No. 1).

This year's Young Musicians Concerto Competition will take place on Saturday, March 20 at the Fort Worth Conservatory of Music, and the winner will perform with Dr. Sprenger and the Civic Orchestra on May 7. On the same program, soloist Barbara Blegen will premiere the newly completed Piano Concerto by Donald O. Johnston. Ms. Blegen is the sister of retired Metropolitan Opera star Judith Blegen, who will perform a brief set of songs with her sister. The Fort Worth Civic Orchestra has been invited to accompany the finalists in the concerto round of the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual PianoTexas Festival at Texas Christian University on Sunday, June 26.

For complete details about the Young Musicians Concerto Competition and online application form, visit:

<http://fwco.org/2022-young-musicians-concerto-competition-rules-entry-form/>

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

**Deadline for entries: March 5th, 2022    Competition date: March 20, 2022**

For more details go to [fwco.org](http://fwco.org) and click "Community"

**1st Place prize:** \$500 plus an opportunity to perform the movement of the Concerto with the Fort Worth Civic Orchestra during their Spring Concert on Saturday, May 9th, 2022\*\*\*

**2nd Place prize** (if awarded): \$250 \*Any work for solo instrument that has a commercially available and traditionally accepted orchestral accompaniment may be submitted.

## Revisiting the Cliburn Community Concert in December 2021 at Clearfork, Fort Worth

There were numerous Cliburn Community Concerts generously made available free to the community throughout the closing months of 2021 by the Cliburn Foundation. Included in the concerts was a series of shows in December that showcased the intriguing tale of *The Polar Express* with narration and live music. Among the people gathered on the lawn of The Trailhead at Clearfork on what was a freezing Saturday morning this past December, were those who were absorbed in purchasing what local merchants had to offer, while others were there with their young children ready to board the Polar Express at the invitation of the narrator and enjoy the music.

The grand piano placed on a dais, exposed to the frigid temperature and biting wind, sat silent until duo-pianists and FWMTA members **Sara Doan and Evan Mitchell** began the show. Sara Doan played her dual role as narrator with verve and energy, making the hour of entertainment magical for an audience that was exposed to the elements as well. The rendition of well-known favorites and seasonal music for four hands at one keyboard was splendid – an amazing feat with fingers exposed to chilly winds and temperatures in the 20s. Three cheers Sara and Evan! So glad we attended. Pictures taken by Maggie Estes and T. Helmick, show the same event at two locations - Clearfork and Downtown, Fort Worth, December 2021. *The Editor*



Pictures and names of three students were omitted from the September 2021 issue of the Newsletter showing students who participated in the Mona Rejino masterclass/recital, in May 2021 at Texas Wesleyan University. They include: (R) Isabella Jovanovic, student of Jill Sprenger, and Paxton and Payton Bui, students of Ilka Araujo.



## News Briefs:

### Upcoming Events

#### FWMTA Open Recital

Texas Wesleyan University  
Saturday, January 29th, 2022.

#### MTNA Ensemble

Registration deadline: February 12, 2022.

#### Texas State Theory Test

Scheduled date: February 11, 2022.

#### Sonata - Sonatina Festival

February 12, 2022, at Southwayside Church in Fort Worth off of Seminary Drive. All piano teachers and students are welcome. The Festival will be followed by an Honor Recital(s). Everyone is spaced and required to wear a mask. These procedures worked well at the Hymn Festival in December 2021. For more information contact Ethelyn K. Beck at: [angelnotes@att.net](mailto:angelnotes@att.net)

**Co-Chair Donna Hopson** announced a new feature being used for the first time in the FWMTA Student Affiliate Theory Testing. **Ear Training recordings produced by the state for associations will be played during the ear-training portion of the test.** This will ensure consistency in administering the Ear Training for all levels of testing.

Recordings to administer the ear training test will be used on-site and in-home/studios.

**The 14th Duo-Piano Competition** is scheduled for February 19, 2022. It will be held in person at Nicholas Martin Hall at Texas Wesleyan University. For more information, please contact Dr. Ilka Araujo at [iaraujo@txwes.edu](mailto:iaraujo@txwes.edu)

**FWMTA congratulates VP for Membership Jae Kim** on completing her DMA at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary! Jae is one of several members who currently or have recently served on our Board or as activity chairs while also studying full-time. Jae Kim has excelled in her role (now in a second term) serving FWMTA.

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## By VP for Programs Tanya Karyagina



It is a great privilege to serve as the Vice President for Programs this term and plan events throughout the academic year.

We started the year with a meeting that brought us, members, together on August 28, 2021, at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The theme of the meeting was "Making Live Music Together Again!" and the guest speakers were Buddy Bray from the Cliburn Foundation, Thomas Ragozzino from the Steinway Gallery of Fort Worth, and the president of FWMTA, Evan Mitchell.

Our Annual BookNotes meeting was held on October 17, 2021, at the Fort Worth Conservatory of Music and Fine Arts, with the discussion led by Kristin Yost, the author of the book titled "The Mindset of a \$100,000 Piano Teacher."

We look forward to the next event in the Spring of 2022. Pedagogy Workshop will be held on March 19 from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The workshop topics include Wellness, Behavioral Psychology and Technique with Dr. Lesley McAllister and Dr. Sophia Gilmsen from the University of Texas at Austin as speakers. This will be a joint event with the Forum and Mid-

Cities Music Teachers Association members. We also plan to open it up to non-member music teachers of the DFW Metroplex to participate. Upon completion of the Workshop, participants will be awarded a certificate. The participation fee is \$10 for FWMTA, MCMTA and Forum members and students, and \$20 for non-members which covers lunch, materials, and certificate. Application link will be available on or before February 20. Please consider inviting college students and non-member teachers to this very fine event. We look forward with much anticipation to seeing you there!





Pictures show FWMTA members at the August 28, 2021, meeting and the BookNotes meeting on October 17, 2021.




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## Executive Board Members 2021-2022

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