



NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2011

FROM THE PRESIDENT
Alison Barr

Dear Colleagues:

Happy 2011 to all of you! This time of new beginnings can fill us with excitement and expectation of change for our studios, our students and ourselves. It can also fill us with dread and questions. Where do I start? What exactly should I do? And how will I find the time and energy to accomplish positive, lasting change? On New Year's Day about ten years ago, I sat down at my computer and drafted an outline for a series of music appreciation lectures aimed at avocational adult students. One thing led to another, and, because of this lecture series, I was invited to join Peter Mose, a piano teacher from Toronto whom I originally met at an MTNA national conference, as a faculty member in the Symphonic Workshop's *Adult Piano Retreat* in the Czech Republic. From there, I partnered with Peter and a dear friend and colleague (also an MMTA member and past-officer), Debi Adams, to co-create the *Midsummer Adult Piano Retreat* at Williams College, now in its sixth year.

Occasionally we are struck, as I was that New Year's Day, with a bolt of inspiration that propels us forward. Though I wish I could take credit for great insight, brilliance and prophetic vision in writing that first outline, I am certain I didn't single-handedly formulate my idea. Rather, inside me was a collective of voices, with its wisdom built into my psyche through years of collegial exchange. Membership in MMTA/MTNA has granted me the opportunity to interact with amazing teachers -- at local and national conferences, over dinners out, on airplanes, on the phone, and now via email. Sometimes the wisdom comes in the form of a reassuring hand on mine or a "Yes, you have to do that!" Sometimes it's a time-consuming and thorough edit on an article I'm about to submit. Sometimes, it's that certain smiling face in the crowd when you play a recital or that little note in the mail saying that you are appreciated and doing a good job.

Of course, it's not only what your professional organization can do for you that matters, but also what support you can bring to it. Support takes many forms -- attending our two special events coming up May 7 and October 1 (please see articles elsewhere in this

newsletter), enrolling students in and helping out at our varied student activities like the Judged Festival and Music Achievement Evaluations, or perhaps even attending the MTNA Conference to be held in Milwaukee March 26-30!

I hope that MMTA/MTNA membership carries for you, as it does for me, the spark and energy of inspiration. As we enter 2011, please know that your board will do everything in its power to insure that your professional organization is the best it can be for you and for your students!

Respectfully submitted,
Alison Barr, President

National Music Certificate Program

The National Music Certificate Program's winter session finished on December 11 with 40 students taking the practical piano exams and 24 taking the theory. This was the first time we held the exams in Norwood with the Emmanuel Lutheran Church graciously hosting us.

We're working on opening a second center northwest of Boston for the spring session and Indian Hill Music School in Littleton has expressed interest. We will keep you posted as things develop as we will need more volunteers to staff two locations.

Registration for the next session runs from January 18 to February 22.

Many parents were asking for instructors who teach the certificate program, especially theory. If you are one of those teachers, make sure you go on to MMTA website and modify your teacher profile to reflect that as I do refer parents constantly to our "Find A Teacher" feature. Go into your MMTA account, and under "My information", click on "Modify my information" and you will get a box where you can check if you teach the NMCP syllabi. Remember, this program is not just for piano. It includes an extensive number of instruments from Accordion to Voice! Visit

<http://www.nationalmusiccertificate.org/> for more information and to find the syllabi if you are interested in extending the offerings in your studio.

Shelley Reeves, NCTM

Judged Festival

The registration for the Judged Festival is now open on the MMTA website. Please go to the homepage and choose "Member Log In" on the top right corner to register. The Judged Festival will be held on Sunday, February 27th at the Indian Hill Music School in Littleton, MA. The theme for this year is Romantic Music. For more information about the Judged Festival, to see the official rules, and for the required repertoire list, please visit http://www.mmta.net/event_details.aspx?event_id=1038.

Registration is available online only and will be open until January 31. Please note that because of the generosity of the Indian Hill Music School, we have a much bigger space to hold the festival this year, which means that teachers are no longer bound by the five entrants per teacher limit, and no student will be turned away due to space limitations. We hope to see you there!

MTNA State and Division Performance Competition Results

The MTNA State Performance Competition was held on November 20th at Brandeis University. The winners and State Representatives of the piano and string competitions competed at the Division level, which was held at Rowan University in Glassboro, N.J. on January 7-8, 2011.

Young Artist Piano Competition

George Fu-State Representative
Student of Meng-Chieh Liu

Division: Honorable Mention

Senior Piano Competition

Matthew Wu-State Winner
Student of Dorothy Shi

Division: Honorable Mention

YooMin Lee-State Alternate
Student of Natalia Harlap

Carl Lian-Honorable Mention
Student of Nilly Shilo

Yong Murray-Honorable Mention
Student of Niva Fried

Raagini Rameshwar-Honorable Mention
Student of Janet Ainsworth

Junior Piano Competition

Yuji Sato- State Winner
Student of Niva Fried

Kevin Sherman-State Alternate
Student of Valerie Henkin

Young Artist String Competition

Mari Black-State Representative

Division: Winner

Student of Bonnie Black

Senior String Competition

Yon Woo Kim-State Winner
Student of Fudeko Takahashi

Division: Winner

Hao-Kai Pai-State Alternate
Student of Fudeko Takahashi

Jeffrey Tan-Honorable Mention
Student of Vera Rubin

Junior String Competition

Sydney Adedamola-State Winner
Student of Bonnie Black

Division: Alternate

Spencer Kim-Alternate
Student of Kevin Christensen

STUDENTS WIN RECORDING SESSIONS WITH BLINK MUSIC STUDIOS

The exceptional performances of **Matthew Wu** and **Yonwoo Kim** in the senior piano and strings categories (respectively) won them each an unexpected prize fit for a champion at Saturday's Massachusetts Music Teachers Association (MMTA) State Competition. Both students were presented with an award certificate valid for a single-track recording session with Blink Music, renowned in Boston and greater New England for sonic excellence in music production thanks to its world-class concert grand piano, state-of-the-art recording equipment, experienced engineers, and comfortable studio atmosphere.

Producer Tim Lukas of Blink Music was proud to have the opportunity to team up with the MMTA: "artist development is critical to the success of any instrumentalist/pianist, and I am happy to be in a position to give a talented young student a chance to record with the best possible quality. I'm looking forward to hearing their final tracks."

Matthew and Yonwoo will be joining the ranks of heavy hitters. Among artists recorded or produced at Blink Music are talents such as Hollywood actress Alicia Silverstone, G-love, Tower of Power, Manhattan Transfer, Justin Brooks, Fay Gauthier, Little Horse, Jamie Rattner, vocal acapella groups as Vox One as well as pianist chairs Michael Lewin (Boston Conservatory), Stephanie Tiernan (Berklee College of Music), Andrew Rangell, jazz great Laszlo Gardony, jazz singer Oliver Rockberger as well as instrumentalists Tony Levin, Tony Grey, Bob Moses, Jamie Haddad, Egguie Castrillo and many more.

About Blink Music

Blink Music Studios is a New England production leader founded in 1996, with a specialization in advanced music production, artist development and high-resolution mix

and mastering. It also offers functional voice and piano lessons, and a reputable training program for aspiring sound engineers (flyinthestudio.com). Composer/producer Tim Lukas directs the songwriting, artist development and production work for solo artists in collaboration with a hand-picked team of engineers. For more information, please visit www.blinkmusic.com

8th Annual Russian Music Festival-Competition 2011

Dear Teachers and Students, NJTYMA invites students age 5 to 18 to celebrate our
8th Annual Russian Music Festival-Competition.

Instruments:

Voice, Flute (duets), Clarinet, Violin, Viola (duets), Cello, Piano (duets)

All selected performers will participate in a **Winners Concert.**
STUDENTS MUST BUY A PACKAGE OF TICKETS.

**1st place winners concert at the Carnegie Hall, NY
(35 students from NJ and MA)
where students will receive a trophy and certificate.**

**2d place winners concert in Massachusetts
where students will receive medal and certificate**

Dates to be announced

Repertoire:

One selection (**original**) of any Russian-Soviet composer performed **by memory.**

- Early level – up to 3 minutes
- Intermediate – up to 4 minutes
- Advanced level – up to 6 minutes

The performer must have sheet music for the judges; a written evaluation will be provided to the students (Only compositions of Russian Composers will be evaluated)

Teachers need to be a member of TYMA for 2011.

All information on the website.

Application: Must be postmarked by September 30, 2011 (available on website)

Application Fee: \$55/per student (**NON-REFUNDABLE**) **ONE CHECK ONLY FROM TEACHERS**

Free gift for everyone at the audition day.

Duets \$40/per student (**NON-REFUNDABLE**), but can share Recital Fee

Audition day - November 2011 (day will be announced)

Audition place - Massachusetts

For any additional questions please contact TYMA representative in Massachusetts

Rita Mikulinsky: rmikpiano@rcn.com

Or direct TYMA: njtyma@njtyma.org

www.njtyma.org

Quad-State Conference at Tufts University on Saturday, October 1, 2011

The combined memberships of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont MTA's will join us for what promises to be a deep, engaging and truly enlightening conference entitled,

"Nurturing the Creative Spirit in the Studio." We are now finalizing arrangements not only with John McDonald of the Tufts Faculty (and a past MTNA Composition Competition Winner), but also with a Guest Presenter, soon to be announced, who promises to be challenging and memorable. Our vision and a projected schedule of the day's events:

We teach our students every day in a caring and dedicated manner. We teach them how to read notes, how to count, how to sit, how to breathe, how to finger, how to articulate, how to move, how to create beautiful tone. And, as the students grow, we teach them how to interpret, how to express, how to appreciate and respect the musical tradition, how to perform with confidence. As if all of this isn't hard enough, at the cote of what each and everyone of us is trying to do is as musician-teachers is to instill a great, deep love and joy for the instrument we play and for its body of work. We are, ultimately, attempting to mine what is within each individual human being -- the need to express in a nonverbal way and in a way that is completely his or her own.

How do we connect/reconnect, in this complicated world, with what impassioned us in the first place? And how do we share that with our students? How does the act of original creation - composition and improvisation - fit into our teaching mandate? What is impeding us as we try to reach the inner core of our students' self-expression? How do we strip away the layers of inattention, apathy, overload and exhaustion that students often present us with and get down to the excitement that inherently lies within each of us? How do we rise above the "competitive" demands of other activities and the cultural blockades that seem to lie in our way? How do we, amidst the confusion of so many things to teach and reach the essence of individual expression for each child?

9:00 Registration and Refreshments

9:30 - 10:30 Opening Panel: Nurturing the Creative Spirit

What nurtures YOU as a creative individual?

What would you identify as inhibiting and/or encouraging forces affecting creativity in today's complicated world?

What impedes teachers/students from being as creative as they possibly can be?

10:30-10:45 Break

10:45 - 12:30 Guest Presenter

12:30 - 1:30 Lunch and Teacher Exchange

1:30 - 1:45 Break and Return to Distler Hall

1:45-2:30 Reverse Master Class -- A different Master Class concept -- how to introduce a new piece -- how to breathe excitement and life into the piece FROM the beginning, how to set a context and how to insure successful understanding and mastery from the very

beginning. This class will probably include beginning, intermediate and advanced students, all drawn from our MMTA student body.

2:30-2:45 Break

2:45 - 3:45 Commissioned Composition Concert (one each potentially from Maine, NH, Vermont and Mass.), Introduction by John McDonald

Adjournment

TEACHER OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

We will be accepting nominations for the MMTA Teacher of the Year for 2011. This form will be due to Alison Barr by January 30, 2011. You can find this form on the MMTA Website, under "Latest News" to submit it electronically or email the information to Alison at president@mmta.net. The MMTA Teacher of the Year is based on fine teaching, leadership service to MMTA, involvement in this and other organizations in the community, speaking honors, and competition success among other things. The MMTA Teacher of the Year will be nominated by the state to the MTNA National Teacher of the Year for 2012.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR SOCIAL

Get out your Blackberries, Smart Phones and just good old paper calendars to reserve Saturday, May 7, 2011 for our *Teacher of the Year Social* at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge -- An evening purely for socializing and to honor our 2010 and 2011 *Teachers of the Year*. We'll have hot appetizers, cool drinks, chamber music provided by a Longy group. It promises to be a lot of fun! You'll receive a separate invitation with more information on the event by mid-February. We are now finalizing our arrangements with Longy. It will be an inexpensive evening and we will have easy parking arrangements, so please SAVE THIS DATE!

MEMBER NEWS

SIMA M. SCHWARTZ

Has been announced as a Finalist of the International Music Prize for Excellence in Performance 2010 in the Expert Level. She will be honored with a Certificate of Achievement in Music Performance, awarded by the National Academy of Music in Greece.

Additionally, two of her Senior students, ages 73 and 78, are performing a series of Ensemble Recitals in Worcester County for Retirement Homes and Senior Centers with a specific entertaining repertoire, known and loved by Seniors. It is very important mission, she is proud they are providing such a needed service.

JOAN GARNISS

Duo Con Anima, Fern Abrams and Joan Garniss, will present their annual piano four-hand recital at the Waltham Public Library on **Sunday, February 13 at 2:30** at the **Waltham Public Library**. The program includes works by Beethoven, Hensel, Brahms, Van Slyke and Reger. Admission is free, but reservations are requested at the library, **781-314-3425**.

They recently released their second CD, *Duo Con Anima LIVE!*, four-hand and two piano performances from the last 3 years. That CD contains music by Clementi, Schumann, Debussy, Ravel, Milhaud and Shostakovich. For more information contact HiRocRecords @ AOL.com.

INFORMATION/DEADLINES

The Application Deadline for the [Boston University Tanglewood Institute](http://www.bu.edu/cfa/tanglewood/) (BUTI) is February 8, 2011. Live Auditions will take place at BU on January 29-30 and February 5-6, 2011. For detailed information and application procedures, please visit BUTI web site: <http://www.bu.edu/cfa/tanglewood/>
You can also email Shirley Leiphon with questions, sleiphon@bu.edu

MASTER CLASS with JOHN PERRY, Distinguished Visiting Artist at BU, will take place at BU Concert Hall: Friday, February 11, at 6pm and Saturday, February 12, at 10am <http://www.bu.edu/cfa/music/faculty/perry/>

The Liszt-Garrison International Piano Competition will take place in October 12-16 2011 in Baltimore, MD, the **Application Deadline is MAY 6, 2011**.

The competition is open for three age categories: Artists (age 25-40), Young Artists I (20-24), Young Artists II (15-19) and also the category of Collaborative Piano.
<http://lisztgarrisoncompetition.org/>

TEACHER FEATURE

By MMTA Member Penny Lazarus

My Student Can Read Music But Why Can't They Find The Notes?

Students often need extra help to read piano music. Understandable; the pianist uses more notes per beat than any other instrument, two different clefs, a musical alphabet in



If you teach young pianists or adult recreational music-makers, *WholeMusicLessons.com* can help. *WholeMusicLessons.com*, founded by **Susan Capestro**, a classically-trained jazz pianist, **NCTM** and past **MMTA** President, provides teachers and students with quality materials for integrating jazz and pop with piano classics.

When jazz/pop is taught in a pedagogically sound way, the required skills actually *complement* and *enhance* pianists' ability to perform traditional repertoire. Students *enjoy* arranging, improvising, and learning music's simple building blocks, all essential for jazz/pop. They also need traditional skills, like music reading, technique and interpretation. When *all* these are included in piano lessons, it's *fun!* Best of all, it gives students a *complete* set of music proficiencies. They become well-rounded musicians. Young beginners begin to acquire these skills from their first year of lessons. And, they're indispensable for adult students who are recreational music makers.

So, enjoy visiting and exploring! Sign up for its free email newsletter. Lots of features at *WholeMusicLessons.com* are free, yet for greater benefits, become a **Registered User**, or for the best deal, a **Full Member**.

Follow Susan's **@WholeMusic** tweets.
 Fan on **Facebook**: "**Whole.Music.Lessons.**"
 Susan will connect with **MMTA** members on **LinkedIn**.

MMTA Members! Use this special link:<http://www.wholemusiclessons.com/wml/mmta>
 Become a **Full Member** of *WholeMusicLessons.com* at a 20% discount.
 This is a limited time offer, so act fast!

Full Member	Registered User	Free to All Visitors
Free Articles	Free Articles	Free Articles
Member Article Intros	Member Article Intros	Member Article Intros
Blog	Blog	Blog
Abridged Tutorial Videos	Abridged Tutorial Videos	Abridged Tutorial Videos
Thrice-Yearly Newsletter	Thrice-Yearly Newsletter	Thrice-Yearly Newsletter
Directory	Directory	Directory
Calendar	Calendar	Calendar
Concert Reviews	Concert Reviews	Concert Reviews
Top Ten Lists	Top Ten Lists	Top Ten Lists
Recommended Books	Recommended Books	Recommended Books
Parent's Tips	Parent's Tips	Parents' Tips
Quizzes and Puzzles	Quizzes and Puzzles	
Member Profile	Member Profile	
Blog Commenting	Blog Commenting	
Newsletter Supplements	Newsletter Supplements	
Directory Listing		
Calendar Item Creation		
PremiumNewsletter Content		
Music Downloads		
Learning Materials Downloads		
Your Own Featured Blog*		

reverse directions, hands that move horizontally, with eyes reading vertically and across. No wonder it takes years for students to read notes proficiently at the piano.

But, what if students name notes on the staff perfectly, even quickly, but still can't read music? Do we assume students haven't practiced enough?

I'm interested in students' different learning styles. Students who easily identify notes on the staff are visual learners. Auditory learners are students who beg us to "play so I can hear it first." Even addressing multiple learning styles when demonstrating a concept, the reality is complicated. We read music well only if our visual acuity is working in tandem with a highly developed visual, tactile and kinesthetic sense of the geography of the keyboard. Some suggestions:

When asking students to name a note on the staff, also ask them to tell you what the key on the piano looks like and which finger they will use. Students are often stumped when they have to imagine what the note feels or looks like on the piano!

Have students draw the keyboard without looking at it. In a group class I was amazed when only 1 student drew the keys of the piano correctly.

Play Blind Man's Bluff by asking students to play every "C" or "F" etc, on the piano with their eyes closed until they do this fluently.

Introduce chording by color pattern. For example Db, Eb and Ab root position chords are built of a Black/White /Black key combination. I call this black, white, black pattern the Oreo Cookie Chord! D, A and E major root position chords use a white/Black/White key combination. I can't help calling these Reverse Oreo Cookie Chords! (I keep Oreos in my pantry to hand out during discussions of chords.)

Some students find Hanon exercises difficult, while others breeze through without a second thought. Those who struggle usually aren't in touch; pardon the pun, with feeling intervals in their hands. I now introduce each Hanon exercise by having students play the significant interval of the exercise, whether a fourth or a sixth, up and down the keyboard until they can do this by feel.

Another stumbling block in reading music is the way measure lengths vary on a page. Students often S L O W down when they see a long measure even if the measure contains mostly sixteenth notes! Measures that are made up of two half notes or a single whole note are laid out using a very short measure space. Students' interpret this squat measure as ~~FAST~~ Misreading notation is one reason a steady pulse is difficult in Intermediate level music.

Even though students may not practice as much as we would like, I am careful assuming that some errors are the result of not "practicing." Errors are different from mistakes and I've become more patient investigating mistakes to find the "error" of students' ways!

Editor's Note: If you are interested in submitting a short article to "Teacher Feature", please note the following rules for submission: 1. Only MMTA members can submit articles to "Teacher Feature", 2. They must be within 300-500 words, 3. They are intended to be short articles which are of interest to teachers, and not advertisements. 4. Submit all proposed articles to MMTA President, Alison Barr. 5. Only 1 article per newsletter will be selected to appear.

Greater Lowell Music Teachers Association presents....

Music Teachers in Concert

Performances by Steve Zocchi, Meghan Taevs, Josh Shapiro and Dr. Tish Kilgore

Saturday February 5th 2011 **3:30 P.M.**

Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt and more...

Parish Center for the Arts, 10 Lincoln Street,
Westford MA 01886 - \$15 admission

This is a fundraising concert. Half of the proceeds to be donated to Feed the Children and half used for

Join us in MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

MTNA National Conference

March 26-30, 2011

Please join me and several other MMTA colleagues in Milwaukee! We know how to have a blast while also learning and growing. We always have a special Massachusetts dinner which is hilarious and fun, letting us renew old friendships and make new ones. There are free concerts and also Pedagogy Saturday, this year centering on Collaborative Music. There is nothing like a National Conference to

help you reinvigorate your teaching! You will return with renewed energy and fresh ideas. Please call me for more information: abarr54@verizon.net I can't wait to see you!

Nestled along a magnificent bluff overlooking one of Lake Michigan's most beautiful bays, Milwaukee is the largest city in Wisconsin and the 22nd-largest nationwide. The city is known for its cleanliness and safety.

Heralded as the "City of Festivals," Milwaukee celebrates its melting-pot heritage throughout the year with a delightful procession of ethnic and cultural events. Polish Fest, RiverSplash!, Lakefront Festival of Arts, Bastille Days, Festa Italiana, German Fest, African World Festival, PrideFest, Arab Fest, Irish Fest, Mexican Fiesta, Indian Summer Festival and the Holiday Folk Fair are all colorful tributes to a cherished past. This kaleidoscope of cultures also influences area restaurants, art galleries, museums and performing arts groups.

What a perfect place for a conference!