



From the President

It's a new teaching year -- new repertoire, a fresh notebook, a new outfit, and, especially, the renewed commitment to make every single lesson the best it can be! I'm **truly** proud to be an MMTA/MTNA member because it allows me to share a positive, dedicated vision of music teaching with some of the most gifted and experienced colleagues anyone could ask for. Of course, our MMTA membership is diverse, representing rural, suburban and urban geographies; independent studios, conservatories and community music schools. Our common goal is to give our students everything they need to grow musically and personally.

To support all of us in that effort, MMTA offers myriad student programs. Teachers can select the perfect experience for each student. There are competitive experiences like the MTNA Competitions, Bay State Contest or Judged Festival; Composer Competitions from elementary level up; non-competitive evaluations in the Music Achievement Evaluations (MAE); and graded performance and theory exams in the TAP program (formerly NMCP), facilitated by MMTA and offered through the Royal Conservatory of Music.

As each program requires time, care and attention to run, we are fortunate to have wonderful, responsive chairs for each of these programs. This fall, I particularly want to welcome our new chairs -- Bay State Contest Chair John Stapp, TAP Chair Heather Riley, and MAE Chair Debby Burzynski. We are so lucky to have these dedicated teachers who have so generously and eagerly accepted their new posts!

As in any organization, there are some needs we are not currently meeting, but we're working hard to develop new programs in these areas:

Chamber Music Festival for All Instruments and Voice

Concerto Competition

Festival or Evaluation for Very Young Pianists

Professional Showcase for Teachers and Students

I hope, with the help of my visionary and hardworking Executive Board, to have these programs up and running by the end of my term in 2012!

Our Quad-State Conference on October 1, 2011, at Tufts University, was a resounding success. With over 100 people registered, the day flowed from the informal reception Friday evening to the very last master class performance Saturday afternoon. John McDonald, Karl Paulnack and A. Ramon Rivera were featured Massachusetts presenters and all met with rave reviews! Our Commissioned Composer Andrew List's piece, *Fantasy for Alto Saxophone and Piano*, was brilliantly premiered by Philipp A. Staudlin and Yoko Hagno. Students of Nilly Shilo participated in the master class. It was a day that left everyone inspired, rejuvenated and excited, and I want to sincerely thank Janet Ainsworth, Alice Dusenberry, Leslie Hitelman, Kathy Maskell, Donna Murphy, Nilly Shilo, Jan Spillane, Vera Rubin, Dorothy Travis and Vivian Tsang for making it a huge success. I am so ready to put on another big event!!!

Please mark the MTNA National Conference in New York City, March 24-28, 2012, on your calendars. There is NOTHING like attendance at a national conference. And, being so close, it is easy to plan to attend. We hope to do something very special for all the Massachusetts members going! For registration and hotel information, please visit <http://www.mtna.org/conference>

Years ago, my son, Ben, took piano lessons from a wonderful colleague who is also a dear friend. Ben learned so much in those couple of years, but piano wasn't his "thing." (He'll regret not staying with it and it will be all MY fault!) He did move on to the drums, which he studied and played throughout high school and beyond. Now he's 25 and out in the working world, and he plays in two bands. I have to

wear earplugs to listen to him in live performance, but I'm so happy that music is in his life! My friend recently sent me a copy of the thank you note Ben wrote her for her years of teaching him. She gave him a love and appreciation of music, an enhanced ability to listen to and evaluate sound, a sense of joy while making music and an appreciation for the great power and range of the piano. Ben wrote in his note, "I like how you put up with me all these years. You are possibly one of the best teachers on the face of the earth."

As I face my new year, I remind myself that the job of a great teacher is not to turn every student into a great performer, but rather to be "the best teacher on the face of the earth" to each and every child.

Respectfully submitted --

Alison Barr, MMTA President

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TEACHER FEATURE

IRENE REED

By Elizabeth Ann Reed

My mother, Irene Reed, started teaching piano when I was about five years old. My sisters, Christine and Lydia, were her first students! Over the next decades, she guided innumerable students to pursue music professionally and avocationally. I write this description of her teaching philosophy from the privileged perspective of having Irene Reed as my piano teacher, supervisor of my student teaching, mentor, colleague, sounding board, friend and Mom.

Irene Reed never stops learning. Although retired now, she still enjoys her daughters' full reports of new methods, ideas, and use of technology. She has always believed in continuing education, attending teachers' workshops and going to state and national conventions.

It was through her first encounters at MMTA workshops and conventions that she became aware of opportunities such as the Bay State Contest. Although it was a competition, teachers were collegial, congratulating each other even if their own students had not placed, exchanging information about repertoire and teaching styles. If you didn't find Irene at the registration table, or monitoring one of the many competition rooms, you would find her in the audience, listening intently to each contestant, taking note of interesting repertoire, and making her own assessments of each performance. This experience sharpened her ability to detect the strengths and weaknesses of each performer, a skill she continued to hone as her students became more involved in performance. She brought unfamiliar repertoire to her own teacher, Vera Gorovitz, who helped her with learning the pieces from a performance and a pedagogical perspective, backed by exercises and etudes that would build up the technical and interpretative skills that were needed. She loved having lessons and practiced what she preached. Some of my earliest childhood memories were of hearing her practice Schumann's *Fantasiestucke*, or Chopin's *Etudes* in Gb Major, while my sisters and I played with our Barbie dolls in the playroom.

She firmly believed that classical music was the foundation of piano playing, but encouraged students to learn popular, jazz, religious or any other kind of music as a supplement. Her greatest challenge and most fulfilling reward was finding just the right piece for each person. Her philosophy was and still is, “Don’t teach the same pieces all the time. Be curious. Involve your students in choosing their repertoire. If they don’t like the piece, they won’t practice it, or they may practice the piece but have no emotional connection to it. For students to develop a love of music, they have to love their own piano pieces first.”

Irene nurtured her relationships with students by attending their non-piano events such as high school musicals and plays, orchestra and jazz band concerts, looking at prom pictures and wearing the array of musical jewelry she received as Christmas and end-of-the-year gifts.

Her lessons were always carefully planned around the structure of fundamental musicianship skills such as theory, sight-reading, and ear-training. She encouraged performing in all venues – studio recitals, National Guild Auditions, NEPTA recitals, MTNA competitions, and local music festivals. She reached out to public school teachers to provide students with opportunities to accompany other instrumentalists, or to play in the band.

Consistency was key to building a solid musical foundation. Her philosophy centered around flexibility (if a particular method, or explanation didn’t work, she’d try something else), but when she knew what worked with each student, she was firm about practicing and playing, using the method that worked.

Irene’s most important goal was always to instill a love of music in her students. If she saw that a student was close to being turned off to music, she suggested taking a break or trying a different instrument. She invited students to go with her (and my father) to Symphony Hall, Jordan Hall to hear Alicia DeLarrocha, Murray Perahia, and Rudolph Serkin. Her enthusiasm and excitement at hearing beautiful music still is contagious.

Irene’s best piece of advice has always stuck with me – Enjoy each student for what he or she can do. Develop your own musical depth by continuing to study. And lastly, have fun! If you’re having a good time teaching, chances are your students will, too.

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Congratulations!

To our State Treasurer, Jan Spillane of Reading, who has recently earned the status of MTNA Nationally-Certified Teacher of Music in Piano! For more information on the MTNA Certification Program, please go to <http://www.mtna.org/certification> Great accomplishment, Jan!

Winter Newsletter Deadline

Our Winter Newsletter Deadline is December 10, 2011. Submit articles to: newsletter@mmta.net

Judged Festival

The 2012 Judged Festival Repertoire list is now online! The theme for this year is Impressionistic/Contemporary Music. The date of the Judged Festival is Sunday, February 26, 2012, at the Indian Hill School in Littleton, MA. Please visit http://www.mmta.net/event_details.aspx?event_id=1104 for more information and to see our Required Repertoire List. We hope that you like our selection and we hope to see you this year at the Judged Festival!

This Year's Executive Board Meetings

Monday, February 13, 2012 (Home of Alison Barr)

Wednesday, June 6, 2012

Our meetings start at 9:30 a.m. with refreshments and officially run from 10:00 a.m. – noon

The MMTA Calendar of Events

All events for our state or for local associations can be found in your Directory/Handbook or online at <http://www.mmta.net> Please check out all the exciting events we have going on throughout the year.

New and Renewed Members

All new members and those who have renewed since the printing of the Directory/Handbook will be listed in the Winter Newsletter.

Diane Andersen Concert

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As a Steinway Artist, the great Belgian pianist, DIANE ANDERSEN has been invited to present a free concert at M. Steinert & Sons/Boston at 7:00pm, Friday evening, October 14, 162 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116 (617-426-1900 x223)

"Die Grande Dame des belgischen Klavier" (Lübecker Nachrichten)

Ms Andersen's musical education was influenced by great pianists and musicians issued mainly from Austrian-Hungarian piano school. She graduated from the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles with Polish pianist Stefan Askenase, a wonderful Chopin and Mozart player, had master classes with Edith Farnadi and Annie Fischer, the legendary Hungarian pianist. She had close contacts to composers like Kodaly, Tansman, Milhaud and was during years the duo partner of André Gertler, famous Hungarian violinist, friend and partner of Béla Bartok.

Concerts

During her career Andersen has been playing in famous venues such as Victoria Hall (Geneva), Palais des Beaux-Arts (Brussels), Liszt Ferenc Zeneakademia (Budapest), Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Teatro della Fenice (Venice), Carnegie Hall (New York), Rudolfinum (Prague), St.-Martin in the Fields (London) etc.

She performed under the baton of Bruno Maderna, Pierre Boulez, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Georges Prêtre, Jean Fournet, Okko Kamu, a.o. with orchestras like Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, R.A.I. Roma, O.P.L. Liège, Orchestre National Belgium, Halle Symphony Orchestra (Germany), philharmonic orchestras of the Hilversum radios (Holland).

Recordings

Always in search for new or forgotten music Andersen enriched the repertoire with many interesting CD's (EMI, Pavane, Cypres, Fuga Libera, Talent, EMS, Supraphon, Azur classical), many in world premiere. A. o. the complete piano work by Gabriel Pierné and Joseph Jongen. Andersen is a very active chamber music player as well and her many CD's with works by Czerny, Alexandre Tansman (two pianos four hands), Adolphe Biarent, Joseph Jongen, Ernst Toch piano quintets with the Quatuor Danel, also Toch Second Piano concerto with Halle Philharmonic Orchestra and Hans Rotman conducting, were receiving enthusiastic reviews and awards. Recently Andersen has premiered works by American composers Michael Slayton and Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee (the piano concerto and other pieces written specially for her). With the "Ensemble Joseph Jongen", of which she is the founder, she has created works by Andrzej Kwiecinski, Alain Weber, as well as rediscovered pieces by René de Castéra, Emile Goué, Claude Delvincourt, Albert Roussel a.o.

<http://diane-andersen.org/discographie.html>

I look forward to seeing you at the concert.

Sincerely, Dianne

NEWS

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**THE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM HOSTS FREE INFORMATIONAL
WORKSHOPS
FOR MASSACHUSETTS TEACHERS FROM SEPTEMBER 18-20**

**New National Program Created By Carnegie Hall and The Royal
Conservatory
Encourages Musical Excellence Across The United States**

(For Immediate Release – August 31, 2011)—**Carnegie Hall** and **The Royal Conservatory** invite Massachusetts teachers to learn about **The Carnegie Hall Royal Conservatory Achievement Program (The Achievement Program)**, a national system of music study and assessment for educators and people of all ages independently studying music throughout the United States. **Free information sessions** take place on: **Sunday, September 18**, at **Indian Hill Music School Recital Hall** in Littleton; **Monday, September 19** at **Mattapoissett Congregational Church**; and **Tuesday, September 20** at the Barnstable campus of the **Cape Cod Conservatory**. Each session features an interactive information seminar highlighting benefits for local private music teachers and students. Dozens of Achievement Program sessions have been held across the United States since early June, with many more planned in the coming months.

Launched in March 2011 by New York's Carnegie Hall and Canada's Royal Conservatory, The Achievement Program provides a national standard for musical achievement, offering a sequential course of study from beginner through advanced level for people of all ages studying

music. Modeled on the acclaimed examination system of The Conservatory, which assesses 100,000 students annually in communities across Canada, the program was created in response to feedback from parents and teachers throughout the US, requesting a top-quality nationally-recognized system to track students' musical progress, celebrating their accomplishments. **The Program has been adopted by the state of Massachusetts as the official music teacher association state curriculum.**

"The Achievement Program complements existing local and state music assessment programs, connecting students across the country through its national standard," said **Dr. Jennifer Snow, Chief Academic Officer, The Achievement Program.** "This leading program provides a clear and meaningful path for recognizing musical achievement, empowering teachers to measure progress beyond regional borders and inspiring students to strive for excellence at a national level."

The interactive information session features an in-depth program overview and a demonstration assessment presented by leading pedagogues, including Dr. Snow. Hosting the Littleton event is Boston-based music teacher **Heather Rogers-Riley**, Assistant Director of the Piano Preparatory Division at Walla Walla College, Chair of the Piano Department at Indian Hill Music, and an adjudicator of The Achievement Program. The event in Mattapoisett is led by local piano teacher **Michelle Gordon**, Organist and Junior Choir Director at Mattapoisett Congregational Church. The West Barnstable workshop will be run by **Sylvia Furash**, a faculty member at the Cape Cod Conservatory and adjudicator of The Achievement Program. **All attendees will receive a complimentary teacher support resource package that includes a syllabus (vocal or instrumental), theory syllabus, online theory module, online ear training module, and certificate of completion.**

The program centers on periodic assessments for students—one-on-one adjudicator-to-student performance evaluations that also function as valuable teaching and learning opportunities. In each practical assessment, a certified professional adjudicator evaluates a student's performance of repertoire, studies (etudes), and musical proficiency

skills. Assessments are offered for keyboard, string, woodwind, and brass instruments; voice; and the academic subjects of music theory, music history, and pedagogy.

The Achievement Program differs from comparable assessment systems in its absence of membership fees, paperwork, or required volunteer hours for participating music teachers. Students of all ages can currently take assessments in 90 US locations, including several communities in Massachusetts, with the number of locations expected to grow as The Program develops. The Program will hold assessments several times a year with upcoming dates and registration information listed on TheAchievementProgram.com.

The Achievement Program – Free Teacher Information Sessions in Massachusetts

Sunday, September 18, 2011, 2:00pm – 5:00pm

Indian Hill Music School Recital Hall
36 King Street, Littleton, Massachusetts

Monday, September 19, 2011, 9:30am – 12:30pm

Mattapoisett Congregational Church
27 Church Street, Mattapoisett, Massachusetts

Tuesday, September 20, 2011, 10:00am – 1:00pm

Cape Cod Conservatory, Barnstable Campus, LaSalle Room
2235 Lyannough Road, West Barnstable

For registration information, including details of Program fees, materials, and locations, please visit

TheAchievementProgram.org/teachers/tis or call 1.866.716.2223

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MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

August 17, 2011

Dear MTNA Colleagues,

At its July meeting, the MTNA Board of Directors passed a resolution to discontinue the woodwinds, brass, strings, and voice competitions, effective with the 2013-2014 competitions. The decision was one of the most difficult any MTNA Board has ever faced. It deliberated and debated the pros and cons at length. There were strong advocates on both sides of the issue, and the final vote was not unanimous. Please note that the Chamber Music, Composition, Piano, and Piano Duet competitions are not affected by the decision and will continue as normal.

The decision is not scheduled to go into effect for two years. Since the Board is already committed to reviewing the decision at its December Board meeting, we invite and encourage you to contact me, or Executive Director Gary Ingle at gingle@mtna.org, or any Board member in the meantime to express your views, positive or negative, about the decision.

There are several reasons why the majority of the Board felt the decision was necessary:

Large Financial Impact

For the past three fiscal years, the accumulated national competitions deficit was \$362,205. Each year MTNA must find over \$100,000 in other areas of its budget to compensate for the deficit. We also know that many of our state affiliates also suffer under the financial burden placed on them by the national competitions. Given the current economic realities in which we live today, non-profits like MTNA and our state affiliates are especially susceptible to financial downturns and must be vigilant in ensuring the continued financial stability of our respective organizations.

Small Number of Entrants

The number of entrants in the four competitions was small. Some non-piano categories have no entrants in a state; or, of more concern, only one entrant, who advances to the next round by default, not by competing against anyone. In 2010-2011, there were more piano entrants (833) than the brass, woodwind, strings, and voice areas combined (776). Nationally, there were 80 brass entrants, 303 woodwinds, 300 strings, 93 voice, and 833 in piano. There were 26

states that had no entrants in brass and 21 states that had no voice entrants. Here are some additional figures:

No Entrants

Brass: 26 states

Voice: 21 states

Woodwinds: 8 states

Strings: 5 states

Piano: 1 state (this state had only one entrant, a woodwind)

Two or less entrants

Brass: 41 states

Voice: 37 states

Woodwinds: 15 states

Strings: 16 states

Piano: 1 state

Small Number of Members Participating

Of our 22,183 members, only 1,033 of them entered students into the national competitions this year, or 4.7 percent of our membership. Of that number, there were a total of 471 members who entered students into the brass, woodwind, strings, and voice competitions, or 2.1 percent of our membership: 53 brass teachers (0.2% of our membership), 176 woodwind teachers (0.8%), 183 string teachers (0.8%), and 59 voice teachers (0.3%). The fact is most music teachers do not incorporate the entering of their students into national competitions as a part of their teaching strategy. National competitions serve a very small segment of MTNA teachers who attract and teach the most talented and ambitious students, and who incorporate national competitions into their teaching approach.

Several Boards and Competition Committees over the past years have grappled with these very same statistics and issues. In fact, Competitions Committees over the past few years have recommended the discontinuation of several non-piano competitions, which the Board approved. In 2005-06, three competitions were discontinued: organ, guitar, and percussion at all levels. In 2009-10, junior brass was discontinued. At the July 2011 meeting, the Board was making the same difficult decisions, and for the same reasons, as with the previous decisions: namely, which competitions continue and which do not. It is a very difficult judgment, and one in which reasonable people can and will disagree.

Throughout most of its history, MTNA's membership has been primarily piano teachers, mainly because of the demographics of the music teaching profession. Today, MTNA is more than 80 percent piano teachers, in part because the other disciplines have established their own teachers associations and societies (NATS and ASTA, for example). Regardless, MTNA will continue to be an association devoted to ALL music teachers, in all disciplines, not to compete with the other teacher associations, but to complement them.

MTNA remains committed to serving our non-piano members with programs that will be attractive to a much greater percentage of non-piano teachers and a greater number of non-piano students than just those who are currently interested (or would even be interested) in national competitions. We will not be **less** of a music teachers' association; we will be a **different** music teachers' association, pursuing a broader programmatic vision for incorporating the other teaching disciplines. You have already seen a major movement in that direction with the *MTNA Year of Collaborative Music*, which sought to unite teachers and performers around the world by encouraging collaborative performance within and among all disciplines.

We look forward to hearing from you. We are optimistic about the future of the MTNA and that MTNA will continue to be a vital part of your music teaching.
Sincerely,

Benjamin Caton, NCTM
MTNA National President
caton@mail.etsu.edu

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