

NORTH DAKOTA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
Newsletter, May 2010

Arlene Gray, President



A Message from your President:

Greetings NDMTA Members and Musical Friends,

The national conference was tremendous. I enjoyed attending the recitals, a few competitions, many workshops and even the meetings. I will condense the conference experience in an article inside this newsletter. Imagine yourself attending the national conference in Milwaukee next year. It could happen.

This is my final newsletter as your NDMTA President. It will be two years next month since I took on the presidency. Four years ago in Grand Forks I agreed to step into the vice president's position. What a curve of learning this has been. I have learned about competitions, learned about website connections, learned about the state and national organization. This is a vibrant, healthy organization, for the most part. We can be very proud of where we are, what we have been, and especially proud of what we can become. According to our constitution, two years is the term of office. I am stepping out of the president's office, but will remain on the board for two more years as Foundation Chair. I will happily mentor my successor(s).

Perhaps a team of two will take up the vice presidency and a team of two take up the president's tasks. It is not so heavy a load when shared. If YOU are leaning toward accepting either the presidency, the vice presidency, please come forward before the June 5th board meeting. We need these positions filled immediately. Jeff Dasovick needs to be replaced in the secretary position. I have enjoyed working/volunteering in this organization. Attending the Leadership Summit in Cincinnati was amazing. Attending four consecutive national conferences is inspiring. YOU could step into this position and enjoy meeting the national officers and MTNA staff. They are a terrific group of people.

I regret not visiting every local organization. This was one goal I did not meet. The Fargo local put together an awesome conference in June 2009. The Dickinson members are assembling a terrific conference and competitions October 2010. Please put the conference on your calendars now and make plans to be in Dickinson the last weekend of that month. You will be inspired and uplifted by attending the conference.

While attending the national conference in Albuquerque, I shared a room with Diane Smith, formerly of Bismarck. She sends greetings to those of you who remember her.

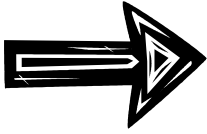
May your students come to lessons well prepared and eager to learn. May you make time for rejuvenation. May spring be a month of joys restored in your hearts, homes, and studios.

Arlene Gray

REMINDER: State Board Meeting June 5, 2010 at 9am at Chieftain in Carrington.

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Imagine, Discover, Create

is the theme for the 54th Annual North Dakota State Music Teachers Association Conference to be held in Dickinson on October 28, 29, and 30, 2010. Mark your calendars and plan to attend. The Conference will begin Thursday evening with the State Executive Board dinner meeting, followed by the first session presented by our Conference clinicians, Forrest and Akiko Kinney. Friday will feature two more workshops with the Kinneys. Two of our highly qualified NDMTA members, Mary Schneider and Beth Klingenstein, will also be presenting workshops, and there will be the usual breaks for visiting with old friends and making new ones, as well as perusing the exhibits and silent auction items. Dinner will be held at one of Dickinson's newest restaurants, followed by an evening of music by the Kinneys (and others, we hear). A reception will follow, courtesy of Dickinson State University and President McCallum. All events except for the Friday evening dinner will be held on the campus of Dickinson State.

One of the reasons for moving the State Conference from June to October is to provide us all with the opportunity to attend the NODAK and MTNA Competitions, and those will take place on Saturday, beginning at 9:00 a.m. They will conclude with a competition winner's/commissioned composer concert Saturday afternoon. The students work so very hard to prepare for these highly competitive events and our presence there will be an opportunity to reward them for their labors. We hope those who attend the Conference will stay the extra day for the competitions. It will be too late to go home after the Friday concert anyway, so plan to stay and enjoy the wonderful music.

The Badlands MTA members have already been working hard to provide an enjoyable and worthwhile event. If you haven't been to Dickinson for while, you may be surprised at the changes, so come and see. Look for the registration information and schedule of events in the August Newsletter.

Submitted by Priscilla Keogh

From Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)
Einstein said that "the most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious." Then why do so many of us try to explain the beauty of music, thus apparently depriving it of its mystery?

From Martin Luther (1483-1546)
Music is the art of the prophets, the only art that can calm the agitation of the soul; it is one of the most magnificent and delightful presents God has given us.



MTNA

MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

April is here and it's time to begin recruiting for the 2010–2011 membership year. MTNA members are a vital link to recruiting new music-teaching professionals, and we want to offer the resources you need to develop your local, state and national associations.

In an effort to go green, MTNA will not be printing and mailing large quantities of membership brochures this year. However, all applications can be downloaded and printed off the web site, www.mtna.org. If you have any problems printing the applications, please contact MTNA and we will take care of it. Prospective members can join MTNA and current members can renew their membership from there. The collegiate membership application can also be found on this page.

Talking to prospective members? You may want to mention some of these benefits MTNA offers its members.

- A nationwide network of 22,000 music-teaching professionals, performers and pedagogues representing all applied areas
- Low-cost insurance, merchant services and support for zoning, tax and legal issues
- Practical resources such as *American Music Teacher* magazine and the *MTNA e-Journal*
- Programs and activities to inspire and motivate your everyday students, in addition to recognizing excellence
- Opportunities for continuing education and career advancement through conferences, seminars, workshops and the MTNA Professional Certification Program
- National Student Performance and Composition Competitions

If you have any ideas or suggestions on membership recruitment and retention, please e-mail MTNA headquarters at mtnanet@mtna.org. We'd love to hear from you!

On Facebook?

If so, come visit the MTNA Facebook page and become a fan! It's another great way to keep up with MTNA and MTNA to keep up with you—[MTNA Facebook Page](#).



The 2011 MTNA National Conference will take place March 26–30, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and now is the time you should begin planning to attend!

The MTNA National Conference provides a great opportunity to learn, communicate with your colleagues, sharpen your teaching methods, gather the latest information and revitalize your career. Attendees have the opportunity to see some of the best pedagogues in the world, the most seasoned performers, the latest teaching products and colleagues from across the country. Professional workshops, sessions, industry showcases, master classes, free evening recitals—are all an excellent way to bring in spring and recharge your teaching batteries.

Prepare for the conference now, as you set your schedule for 2010–2011 teaching year. Determine how many weeks you are going to teach and when. Ensure you have the time off to go to the conference, and plan your calendar so you start teaching one week earlier or teach one week later. Another way to set the calendar is to go ahead and schedule the dates that you will be gone and then plan "make-up" lessons. Also, make sure to budget for the conference—registration, travel, meals, hotel and the like.

Make it a group trip! Find out now if others from your local association or state are interested in attending and make plans now to be roommates. Depending on where you live, you might even consider car-pooling or even renting a small van together and really make it a "group thing"!

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact MTNA national headquarters. at mtnanet@mtna.org or (888) 512-5278.



Since 2000, I have been involved in the MTNA Composition Competitions, first as state coordinator for Illinois, and recently as East Central Division Composition Coordinator. I am thrilled that I have been asked to be the MTNA National Composition Coordinator. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the competition or if you need guidance with teaching composition.

At the 2004 MTNA National Conference in Kansas City, I gave a session on getting students to compose. I continue to present sessions on student composition for local and state MTA groups. Since the deadline for the MTNA competition is in September, start thinking about composition now, and get your students to compose over the summer! Here are some tips on helping your students compose:

To get a student started, consider giving them a starting measure of accompaniment that they can use or alter to start their own piece. This is especially fun to do with groups of students, as all of the pieces will be different, even if the starting idea is the same. You can also do this to reinforce accompaniment styles (waltz bass, alberti bass, etc.) that your students are learning in their performance pieces. Theme and Variation (or chaconne, passacaglia, or ground bass) is also an easy form to work with for first compositions.

Some teachers ask me how they can guide students in composition when they themselves don't even compose. All of us are trained musicians, and we know what we like about a piece. Think about how you choose pieces to learn yourself. I tell my students who compose that they need to learn the rules before they can break them.

Problem: Does the composition have good form and good phrase length?

Fix: Try ABA form for first compositions and stick to four-bar phrases in the early stages.

Problem: Are there too many ideas in the composition?

Fix: Help your student decide which motives work best together and develop them. Then you can save the other themes to start a new piece. Short, memorable melodies help make a composition successful.

Problem: Is there enough variety in the composition?

Fix: Try changing the harmonies, changing the accompaniment pattern, embellishing the melody or changing the register.

Lastly, I think it is great for teachers to model for their students. We do it to demonstrate producing tone or teaching rubato. Why not improvise a little with the student's ideas to spark new ideas for them? A little improvisation goes a long way to get the creative juices flowing. And don't worry, your students will not be able to reproduce a short teacher improvisation, but it will help them develop their pieces.

Remember, the MTNA competitions deadline is always the second Tuesday after Labor Day. This year, the entry deadline is September 14, 2010. Online applications will be available in August. If your state does not have a lot of composition entries, it just increases your chances of having a winning composition! Get started now, use composition as a summer project and good luck!

Chris Goldston

goldston@hotmail.com



MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Chamber Music Performance Competition

The MTNA Chamber Music Performance Competition is the youngest of the Competitions, having begun in 1988 to encourage music making in ensembles. The Chamber Music Competition has shown growth in numbers, particularly from the 32 entrants of 2001–2002 to the 94 entrants of the 2009–2010 competition year.

As musicians, we all spend much time in a practice room honing our skills as performers. And most of that time is spent *alone*, in most cases necessarily so. More and more, however, students/teachers/coaches are encouraging the joy of ensemble music making and have found/are finding that students improve their listening, phrasing, imitating, anticipating, technical skills and general musicianship when making music with others in an ensemble. In addition to learning to share time, musical ideas, motivating each other and the joy of companionship in music making together, lasting friendships can, and do, develop. There is no doubt that the great composers of the western world have contributed much fine music to this genre.

Playing chamber music requires careful attention to music-making techniques that might be taken for granted when performing music alone. Is the phrase shaped the same way among the players? Are the lengths of notes played the same (both legato and staccato)? Is the singing line sounding the same when played by the piano, violin and cello, and other instruments (either together or separately)? Does the crescendo or diminuendo show consistency among the players in the ensemble? All of these questions and more come into being when learning from each other and sharing music making together, resulting in the enhancement of the music-making skills of each participant. Thus, ensemble members can be exposed to wonderful repertoire and characteristics of composers that they might never have experienced in performing only solo music.

I hope that you as teachers/coaches will seriously consider bringing your students together into ensembles and offering them the music-making opportunities available playing the trios, quartets, quintets and sextets of the great composers (with and without piano). The MTNA Chamber Music Performance Competition is one vehicle your Association offers for you to provide this added joy and music-making experience for your students.

The MTNA Competition application deadline for the 2010–2011 year is September 14, 2010.

The *average age* of the members in an ensemble must be 18–26 years of age. This allows for a range of varying ages among the performers in any group. Please see the MTNA website at www.mtna.org for all the Competition rules and requirements.

James C. Norden, National Coordinator

MTNA Chamber Music Performance Competition

In Memory Of

Thelma E. Willett

(February 6, 1923 - December 21, 2009)



Thelma E. Willett, 86, Grand Forks, ND passed away on Monday, December 21, 2009 in 4000 Valley Square, Grand Forks, ND.

Thelma Elizabeth Willett was born the daughter of Philip S. and Betty (Jones) Willett on February 6, 1923, in Mansfield, Ohio. She attended high school in Granville, Ohio. Following her graduation she attended the Denison University College in Granville where she received her Bachelor of Arts Degree. She received her Masters Degree in Music from the University of Illinois and later attended the University of Michigan and the University of Indiana. Thelma taught music and piano at the University of Illinois and in 1949 moved to Grand Forks. In Grand Forks, she taught at the Wesley College until transferring to the University of North Dakota in 1953 becoming the Associate Professor of Music. She retired from the University in 1989.

Thelma's life touched many musicians in our community, both colleagues at the University and countless students. She also inspired her church family at the Federated Church with her musical leadership and dedication.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her sister, Mary Alice Willett.

Memorial Service: 11:00 a.m. Tuesday, January 5, 2010 in the Federated Church, 2122 - 17th Avenue South, Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Interment: Welsh Hills Cemetery, Granville, Ohio.

Memorials: Memorials in Thelma's name may be sent to the Federated Church, 2122 - 17th Avenue South, Grand Forks, ND 58201, or the UND Foundation, designation Music Department at 3233 University Avenue, Stop 8157, Grand Forks, ND 58202.

The Albuquerque 2010 Diaries...Sunday, March 21st

by Arlene Gray

9:15 Local Associations Meeting, Karen Thickstun

You must have FUN! Karen covered the table at the front of the room with a table cloth, Easter grass, plastic eggs, chocolate eggs and used this as a centerpiece. Everyone had to choose a large plastic egg and a candy egg.

The large eggs on the centerpiece had papers which listed good ideas from local associations. Karen had this all prepared in advance. Here are a few of the ideas:

1. Ensemble Olympics, non-competitive with gold, silver, bronze levels. \$15 participation fee.
2. Early morning meeting with breakfast.
3. Offer one free year membership.
4. Mentor new members, have babysitters care for small children during meetings.
5. Masquerade Musicale, 45 minute recitals at a music store, Bookstore, Coffee house, Zoo. \$12 participation fee.
6. AIM - Achievement in Music - noncompetitive program with 12 levels of musicianship & performance.
7. Fund Raising ideas (incentives) require advance planning.
8. Attendance requirement for teachers in order to have students on a program.

Grant programs are available for both state and local association in a newly merged Grant program. Plan ahead. This organization supports educational and professional development of MTNA Teachers. All information and forms are on MTNA website. Budget must balance. Good programs to make request: workshop, certification, clinics and community outreach.

10:30 Commissioned composer of the Year recital

Commissioning a composition encourages creativity. Many composers experience an inspired turning point in their life as a composer. Composing develops a musician as one makes a piece "work". New music, trends in music, change. Spectrum of music is wide. Allow students to use their own ideas. Have young ensembles play in public venues such as clubs, pubs, live music is good for musicians and business alike. Orchestral works often have limited rehearsal time and space compared to smaller chamber groups with unlimited time. Music may have immediate appeal as new music needs study to reveal and enjoy the rich depths. Gauge comments toward positive remarks. Help students learn how to embrace new music. Beware of personal attitude toward living composers. Encourage new program music by students. Invite students to meet composers now writing.

Recital piece: Sonata for Piano by Pierre Jalbert, Shepherd School of Music, Houston, TX

1 PM Showcase G Schirmer, Inc. Beethoven and Barber

At age nine, Samuel Barber wrote a letter to his mother, explaining that he was not meant to be an athlete, "I am meant to be a composer". He knew what he was meant to become. West Chester, PA has library resources. Barber loved European music as a child. He wrote only pieces he was able to play himself. Free book of Beethoven and Barber music to those present.

Robert Taub, editor of Beethoven Sonatas works from manuscripts, letters. Facsimile, autographs as resources. 1816 sketchbook of Beethoven now released from a private collection is now in libraries for research. Beethoven's Sonatas were revolutionary in his time. They were written to be performed in fashionable, elegant homes. As a performer, Beethoven always demanded more of any instrument he played. Often strings were broken as he played. He was frequently asked to endorse new pianoforte instruments. Each piece he composed created new ideas. Opus 26 ushers in new sounds. Beethoven sensed his music would outlive him. He also knew his music would challenge future pianists. Beethoven found tempo terms frustrating. He was cheered by the invention of the metronome so he could specify tempi. His suggestion to give away metronomes to huge orchestra was not accepted. Opus 109 phrase endings were marked and remarked in his autograph in both ink and pencil. The session ended with a performance of "Waldstein" Sonata.

2:15 Successful Adjudicating

Competitions have changed over the years. Good judges determine success of a program.

Lillian Livingston: How judges think:

- 1) First impressions DO count.
- 2) Walk erect, greet audience, be aware of body language.
- 3) Brief warm up allowed-plan ahead, take the time to rehearse...warm up indicates technique.
- 4) LISTEN to pedaling, scales, arpeggios, technique needs dynamics!, voice chords in several registers.
- 5) Stay focused – body language indicates preparation or lack.
- 6) Start with the ambiance of the music.
- 7) Marked up music with teacher's suggestions okay.
- 8) Choose repertoire carefully-MAKE CERTAIN STUDENT CAPABLE OF TECHNIC IN MUSIC.
- 9) Ending impression-keep gesture at end in the mood of the piece. Remain focused at end. Body language-demonstrate confidence leaving bench and stage.
- 10) BIGGER IS NOT BETTER.

Paul Pollei: Gina Bauchauer Competitions

- 1) Competitions create enthusiasm and excitement for learning.
- 2) Prepare students well.
- 3) Plan well in advance – good director, funding.
- 4) Juries use numbers from 1-25 or simply yes-no. Do not compare notes between judges.
- 5) No talking between judges.
- 6) Specify goal of competition.

Tomas Ungar: Van Cliburn Competitions

- 1) Competitions create opportunity for thoroughly prepared performance.
- 2) First impressions count.
- 3) Judges overlook failings when critiquing.
- 4) Van Cliburn Jury allows no talking.
- 5) Strong organization of participants, jury (judges) and teachers.
- 6) Competitions require teachers teach their best, students reflect their teacher.
- 7) How does one measure impressions?

- 8) Performance needs to move the listener.
Jury needs to want to hear music again.
- 9) Taught musical playing is not the same as instinctive playing.
- 10) Choose music for teaching to move the listener.

Trio of panelists comments:

Survive competitions by learning a lot of repertoire, play, then listen to others.

- 1) Education is not survival – prepare students carefully.
- 2) Incentive to participate – Everyone wins by entering, someone wins, someone loses.
- 3) Teach by doing-practice alone, performance includes the listener...increase the number of listeners.
- 4) Poor judges=inane remarks or too much positive remarks.
- 5) Good judges give information. Helpful, complimentary comments essential.
- 6) Good judges talk with students.
- 7) Keep evaluations of judges after an event and keep records of evaluations.
- 8) Choose repertoire only what student is capable of performing.
- 9) Learn many pieces from all repertoire, then choose from those for program.
- 10) In new competitions, all contestants play three times, expenses paid.
 - a. Round one 41 entrants – top six “yes” from jury.
 - b. Round two smaller pool.
 - c. Feedback judges to student, teachers, parents.
 - d. Set appropriate goals before competition.
- 11) National Federation check list and comments writing. Allow time for comments.
- 12) Quality versus quantity. England has tenth month study of prepared program each year.
- 13) Judges write after music is performed, not during performance.

3:30 PM Winners concert Junior, Chamber, Elementary and Junior Composition

5PM West Central Division Meeting
Handouts given, reports shared.

Evening Concert: The Fellows of the American Pianists Association
Stephen Beus, Spencer Myer and Dan Tepfer.

Artists from American Pianists Association may be invited to state conferences. Check website.



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