



NDMTA NEWSLETTER

February 2026

Letter from the President, Lisa Schuler

Hello and Happy New Year to all NDMTA Members!

Since our last newsletter, your NDMTA board has been working to approve the necessary documents for the 2026 Mini Conference. The schedule is set, the registration form has been approved, and the rest of the details will be crossed off the list so our members will experience a memorable party! Yes, a party! This year marks not only the 150th year of MTNA, but the 70th year of NDMTA! Mark August 5th-6th on your calendars NOW so you don't miss out on the presentations, competitions, recitals, food, and fellowship. Everything is being held at Popplers Music Store in Grand Forks, and we have a great rate at the conference hotel. See details on the registration form.



The MTNA national conference is coming up in March. If you are a member that is attending the event in Chicago, please contact me if you haven't already. I would like to keep in communication with fellow attendees and hopefully we can get a group picture taken there!

Finally, I can't state enough how proud I am of NDMTA and its many successful programs. Because of this pride, I submitted a nomination for the annual MTNA State Affiliate Award. NDMTA received an enthusiastic letter from our West Central Director, Cyndie Caruth, stating that we came in 2nd place and that our state was a cause of great discussions with the committee. Our successful programs benefit our members, their students, and communities. Congratulations and keep up the good work!

Lisa Schuler, NDCTM
NDMTA President

MTNA National Conference, March 21-25

Join us for the next MTNA National Conference in Chicago, March 21-25, 2026—a landmark occasion as we celebrate 150 years of excellence in music teaching!

The MTNA National Conference is a place where inspiration, innovation, and tradition converge. Immerse yourself in transformative sessions, a vibrant exhibit hall, and world-class performances. Experience the thrill of MTNA National Competitions finals and the joy of connecting with a community that shares your passion.

A Homecoming for Our Profession

The annual MTNA National Conference has long been the premier gathering for music teaching professionals. In 2026, we invite you to Chicago to honor an extraordinary milestone in music education history: 150 years of MTNA. Be part of this once-in-a-lifetime celebration as we reflect on our rich legacy and look toward the future of music teaching.

Inside this issue:

2026 CONFERENCE PRESENTER: HELEN MARLAIS	2,5
2026 COMMISSIONED COMPOSER EMILY DRISCOLL	3
UPCOMING EVENTS	3
2026 FOUNDATION FELLOW: DIANNA ANDERSON	4
BADLANDS MTA	4
MINOT STATE KEYBOARD ARTS FESTIVAL	5
POPPLERS COMPETITION	5
POPPLERS APPLICATION FORM	6
CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM	7
CONFERENCE SCHEDULE	8



August 2026 Conference Presenter: Helen Marlais

Dr. Marlais' dedication to pedagogy for the young is sincere and unwavering. She has given well over 800 pedagogical presentations and master classes for pre-college students. One of the joys of her life has been creating materials to support piano teachers as they guide young musicians. The piano series that she has developed and published for The FJH Music Company have become an integral part of piano students' repertoire across the country and abroad.



Excellent external reviews have come from the European Piano Teachers Association (EPTA), Canada, and the USA. Her series, *Succeeding at the Piano®*, and *The All-in-One Approach to Succeeding at the Piano®*, *Succeeding with the Masters®*, *The Festival Collection®*, *In Recital®*, *Write, Play, and Hear Your Theory Every Day®* all have companion recordings. Other series that round out her catalog are: *Sight Reading and Rhythm Every Day®*, *Energize Your Fingers Every Day®*, *Play Your Scales and Chords Every Day®*, *The FJH Intervallic Reading Series®*, the *FJH Adult Piano Curriculum*, and *In Recital® for the Advancing Pianist*. The *Contemporary Keyboard Editions®* focuses on piano music by contemporary art-music composers. Several of these series above have been released in South Korea, China, and Taiwan. One can peruse this library and teaching resources, including over 1,500 free teaching and performance videos, on Marlais' website: www.HelenMarlais.com as well as on her YouTube channel: *Piano Lessons Helen Marlais*

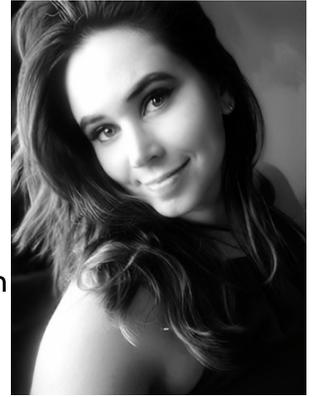
Dr. Helen Marlais' performance schedule includes concerts and pedagogical sessions throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Her travels abroad have included performing and teaching in India, S. Korea, Taiwan, Italy, England, France, Spain, Hungary, Turkey, Germany, Austria, Lithuania, Estonia, China, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, and Russia. Marlais has recorded on Audite, Gasparo, Stargrass and Centaur record labels. She has had performances broadcast regionally, nationally, and internationally, on radio, television, and the Internet. Her recording, *Music for Clarinet and Piano*, with husband Arthur Campbell, was nominated for the 2013 International Classical Music Awards, one of the most prestigious distinctions available to classical musicians today. *FonoForum*, a leading European classical music magazine, writes: "Seldom has one so clearly observed the bubbling substructure of the piano part of Schumann's *Fantasy Pieces Op. 73* and, thereby, seldom have the Schumann pieces been played so elegantly and delicately." They continue with: "...Marlais' playing is always exact, elegant, without excess. The beauty of this genuinely joint playing is so engaging that it seems to lack for nothing."

Recipient of the Distinguished Contribution to a Discipline Award at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Dr. Marlais teaches piano and directs the Piano Pedagogy Certificate program for undergraduate piano majors and for professional piano teachers. Dr. Marlais teaches applied piano lessons to a select number of exceptional piano majors who come to GVSU specifically to study with her, and she also teaches piano literature on a rotating basis. Many of Dr. Marlais' pre-college through university majors are award-winning pianists.

(Marlais, continued on page 5)

NDMTA 2026 Commissioned Composer: Emily Driscoll

Emily E. B. Driscoll is a mother, pianist, composer, professor, vocalist, music director, piano instructor, conductor, singer/songwriter, and arranger. A native of Williston, North Dakota with over 20 years of experience in music, performance, and drama, she holds an undergraduate degree in Music (Piano Performance Emphasis) and a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from North Dakota State University. She has enjoyed a variety of musical ventures, including attending McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she studied Film Composition under the instruction of Sean MacMahon, a composer, ghostwriter, and orchestrator of many successful film scores, and Adi Yeshaya, an arranger for Prince and the TV show *The Voice*.



In addition to her experience in the academic world, Emily is a freelance composer and singer/songwriter with scores featured in sixteen nationally published audiobooks, a piano book featuring twenty-seven of her original compositions, and three albums featuring her skills as a pianist, lyricist, arranger, and vocalist, the most recent of which being the album *The Other Side*, which was adapted into a musical at the University of Sioux Falls, SD. She has performed at venues nationally and internationally, including at the Gospel Music Association of Canada in Calgary, Alberta and at the Breakforth Event in Edmonton, Alberta.

Emily is currently an Adjunct Professor at Williston State College, the Director of Music and Marketing at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, and the Music Director at Faith Methodist Church, as well as serving as the director of the Williston Concert Chorale and co-director of the Williston Youth Choir. When she is not busy with her eclectic assortment of hats (i.e. jobs), she enjoys being a stay-at-home mother to her 2-year-old son, Theodore, listening to classical MPR with her husband, Alec, and taking as many naps as is humanly possible in the midst of a demanding schedule!

Upcoming Events - see www.ndmta.org for more information

March 21-25, 2026	MTNA National Conference	Chicago, IL
August 5-6, 2026	NDMTA Mini-Conference	Popplers Music, Grand Forks
October 17, 2026	MTNA Competitions	Valley City State University
August 11-13, 2027	NDMTA State Conference	Moorhead State University
	Hosted by FMMTA	

Dr. Dianna Anderson Named NDMTA 2026 Foundation Fellow

Dianna Anderson has been a faculty member at Minot State University since 2003, teaching pianists of all levels and performing as a soloist and collaborator. A longtime member of NDMTA, she has presented and performed at state conventions in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Oklahoma, as well as the MTNA National Convention. She has served as president of NDMTA and is the faculty advisor for Minot State's Collegiate Chapter. She frequently adjudicates regional festivals and competitions and is on faculty at Dakota Chamber Music and International Music Camp. Originally from Ekalaka, Montana, her degrees are from the University of Idaho, and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and her teachers were Janeen Larsen, Jay Mauchley and Frank Weinstock.



You may give online via the MTNA website (be sure to request your donation to go directly to Dianna Anderson as Foundation Fellow nominee), or you can mail a check to MTNA. Please be sure to write Dianna Anderson in the memo section of your check.

MTNA website <https://www.mtnafoundation.org/contribute/contribute-now/>

or send your check to:

Jennifer Thomason
MTNA Executive Assistant
600 Vine St Ste 1710
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Badlands MTA Biennial Boys Recital & Hosting Drs. Sugiura & Barbu Saturday, March 21

On Sunday, November 23, 2025, Badlands MTA hosted its biennial Boys' Recital. This event featured students of five local music teachers, showcasing solo and collaborative works on piano and voice. This recital has been a great way to build community among male students of music and in turn perpetuate musical interest and participation among the male demographic. Proceeds gained from recital admission will be put towards future scholarships to International Music Camp.

On Saturday, March 21, Badlands MTNA will host a day of learning and music sharing at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Dickinson. The day's events will start at 9 AM with a piano workshop presented by Dr. Nariaki Sugiura. This presentation will focus on how to transition students from method books to intermediate repertoire. Masterclasses in piano with Sugiura and strings with Dr. Simona Barbu will follow this presentation. Lunch will be provided for NDMTA members in attendance. The day will conclude with a joint recital featuring Barbu and Sugiura starting at 1 PM. Please RSVP to Jennifer Goettle at jgoettle7@gmail.com by Friday, March 13 so that we can accommodate meals for those in attendance.



(Marlais, Continued from page 2)

She has demonstrated the ability to develop the highest of standards while teaching with a joy-filled approach. She received her DM in piano performance and pedagogy from Northwestern University and her MFA in piano performance from Carnegie Mellon University. She received her BM in piano performance from the University of Toledo and was their 2008 Outstanding Alumna in the Arts. Dr. Marlais has been inspired by her teachers and their teachers: Frances Renzi, Rosina Lhévinne, and Beveridge Webster; Alan Feinberg and Dorothy Taubman; Ralph Zitterbart, Irene Schreier Scott, Elvina Truman Pearce, and Fran Larimer; and Harry Franklin, who traced his musical genealogy through Alexander Siloti to Franz Liszt.

Visit:

www.HelenMarlais.com

FB: Succeeding at the Piano method

Minot State 2nd Annual Keyboard Arts Festival

by Dianna Anderson



I am excited to announce the 2nd Annual Keyboard Arts Festival to be held at Minot State University on March 27-28 . This year's event will feature competitions for students ages 9-adult, a student honor recital, masterclasses, and a faculty recital.

For more information, please see the festival website:

<https://www.minotstateu.edu/music/pages/keyboard-arts-festival.shtml>

I am looking forward to seeing you and your students on campus in March!

Popplers Music Competition, It's not too early to start!

The 2026 Poppers Music Competitions will be held on Wednesday, August 5, 2026, at the Popplers Music Store in Grand Forks, ND. Now is the time to think about what students in your studio would benefit from a non-advancing competition. The numerous benefits of a competition may help that student grow beyond your expectations! The competition details can be found in your NDMTA directory.

Popplers
Music, Inc.

The competition day usually looks like this; the student and their teacher are given a rehearsal time to get used to the piano and atmosphere of the room. The students are given the competition time for a bit later in the day. Anyone can listen to the students play in the competition. The students will then receive written comments from the judge and learn the outcome of the competition. That evening at 7:00pm, all participating students will play one piece of their choice from their competition in the Popplers Music Recital. The recital is free and open to the public.

NDMTA members may submit students by completing and sending in the application by July 1, 2026. Applications can be mailed or filled out online at ndmta.org.



Popplers Music Competitions Application

Popplers Music Store, Grand Forks, ND

Wednesday, August 5, 2026



Complete this form in pen or online <https://www.ndmta.org/competitions.php>

Entrant Information

Name _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____ Age as of June 1, 2026 _____

Name(s) of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) _____

Hometown Newspaper & Email _____

<u>Student Fees</u> (circle one)	Elementary	\$30.00 (ages 8-11)
	Junior High	\$35.00 (ages 12-14)
	High School	\$45.00 (ages 15-18)
	Collegiate	\$50.00 (ages 19-26)

Teacher Information

Name _____ Member of NDMTA Yes/No _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Email _____

Name of accompanist (if applicable) _____

Area entering (piano, woodwinds, brass, strings, etc.) _____

Repertoire for Competition Performance

This repertoire program must include title and number of each movement, tempo markings, the composer's full name, total performance time and period of music. Please type the complete program on a separate sheet of paper and attach to this application form.

Example:	<u>Composition</u>	<u>Composer</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Period</u>
	Sonata No 1 in g minor, BMV 1001	JS Bach	I. Adagio (4:17)	Baroque
			<u>IV Presto (2:48)</u>	
			Total 7:05	

Competition Agreement: It is the responsibility of the teacher and the entrant to abide by the rules listed in the NDMTA directory that are applicable to the Popplers Music Competitions. This form will be returned if there are any omissions or inaccuracies. The undersigned verify that the information submitted on this application form is complete and accurate and that the teacher paid state and national dues. All piano programs must be memorized.

Signature of Entrant _____ Signature of Teacher _____

Completed forms and check (payable to NDMTA) must be postmarked by July 1, 2026. Mail to:

Priscilla Keogh
1089 Dell Avenue
Dickinson, ND 58601

Mini Conference Schedule, August 5-6

All events held Popplers Music Store, Grand Forks, ND
1726 South Washington Street

Wednesday, August 5th

2:00-4:00 Popplers Music Competition – Exact time determined by number of entrants

4:30-6:30 NDMTA Board Meeting

7:00 Opening of Conference
 Popplers Music Recital
 Commissioned Composer Premier
 Reception Sponsored by the Upper Valley MTA

Thursday, August 6th

9:00-11:30 Popplers Fall Piano Clinic – Helen Marlais, Presenter

11:30-12:30 Popplers Lunch – Free

12:30-1:45 NDMTA Session – Helen Marlais, Presenter
 Topic: “Sounds, Physical Gesture, and Imagination”

1:45-2:00 Break

2:00-3:00 Annual Business Meeting and Awards Presentation

3:00-3:15 Break

3:15-4:30 IMTF Celebration – Dr. Beth Klingenstein & Upper Valley MTA, Presenters
 Topic: Celebrating 150 years of MTNA and 70 years of NDMTA –
 Heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served!

4:30 Conference Closing

NDMTA Annual Conference
Registration Form
August 5-6, 2026
Popplers Music, Grand Forks, ND

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone: Home _____ Cell _____
E-mail _____

NDMTA Member (circle): Yes No Local Association _____

Registration Fees:

Full Conference – member \$75 _____ +\$2.47 with PayPal
Full Conference – non-member \$75 _____ +\$2.47 with PayPal
Full Conference - First Time Attendee \$55 _____ +\$1.90 with PayPal
Full Conference - Student \$35 _____ +\$1.32 with PayPal

Late Registration Fee: (Postmarked after July 10) \$15 _____ +\$.74 with PayPal
Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Payment Options: Complete this registration form online and use PayPal to pay online at www.ndmta.org OR
Mail completed form and send check, payable to NDMTA, before July 10th to:

Michelle Kallod
668 17th Ave E
West Fargo, ND 58078

Refunds: Registration fees are non-refundable except for emergencies and illness. Should such a conflict arise, the registration fee, minus food costs, will be refunded. Please contact Michelle Kallod about cancelling your registration.

Hotel Reservations:

Sleep Inn & Suites Alerus Center
1350 South 42nd Street Grand Forks, ND 58201
(701) 757-2900
NDMTA Group Rate: \$94.00 for a King or 2 Queens Room
Deadline for Group Rate: July 26th

*The \$94 rate may be used for August 4th-7th in case you would like to arrive a day early and stay a day later to enjoy more time in Grand Forks.