NDMTA NEWSLETTER

June 2026

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Letter from the President, Lisa Schuler

Hello!

I encourage you to join us at the state conference on August 5th and 6th in Grand Forks. It is all the same experience but in a short day and a half. This year's mini conference is just $75 and includes the Popplers Competitions, Popplers Recital, Commissioned Composer Premier, sessions by Helen Marlais, the annual meeting and awards, and a special IMTF session celebrating 150 years of MTNA and 70 years of NDMTA. Dr. Beth Klingenstein, MTNA President-Elect, will present on the historical highlights, followed by a presentation from Upper Valley MTA featuring narration, photos, and videos covering 150 years of music in North Dakota. But that's not all! We will also enjoy catered hors d'oeuvres as part of this celebration! You must be a registered attendee to participate in the IMTF party.

The state conference is truly going to be a celebration of this great organization that we all belong to. So, get excited and send in your registration. I'm looking forward to seeing you there!

Finally, my term as your NDMTA president ends during the state conference. I truly enjoyed serving as your leader. Some highlights for me were the national conferences, leadership summits, productive board meetings, seeing our new membership numbers rise, the adding of another collegiate chapter, and working with members who are now my dear friends. NDMTA has always been a blessing to me. Seriously think about a leadership role in NDMTA, you will be rewarded over and over again.

My Best,
Lisa Schuler, NDCTM

CELEBRATING 150 Years 1876–2026 MTNA

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 You Tube 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 awarding-winning pianists.

(*Marlais, continued on page 3*)

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

(Marlais, Continued from page 2)

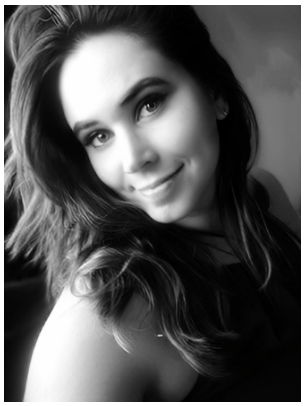
She has demonstrated the ability to develop the highest of standards while teaching with a joy-filled approach. She received her DM in piano performance and pedagogy from Northwestern University and her MFA in piano performance from Carnegie Mellon University. She received her BM in piano performance 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

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

August 5-6, 2026	NDMTA Mini-Conference	Popplers Music, Grand Forks
October 17, 2026	MTNA Competitions	Valley City State University
April 2-4, 2027	MTNA National Conference	St. Louis, Missouri
August 11-13, 2027	NDMTA State Conference	Moorhead State University

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!

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.

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 to Priscilla Keogh (see application for address) or completed 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 _____

Student Fees (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:	Composition	Composer	Duration	Period
	Sonata No 1 in g minor, BMV 1001	JS Bach	I. Adagio (4:17)	Baroque
			IV Presto (2:48)	
			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, Paradiso

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 Marlias, 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 _____ +$3.11 with PayPal
Full Conference – non-member $75 _____ +$3.11 with PayPal
Full Conference - First Time Attendee $55 _____+$2.41 with PayPal
Full Conference - Student $35 _____+$1.71 with PayPal

Late Registration Fee: (Postmarked after July 10) $15 _____ +$1.01 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.