



# NOTES & NEWS

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COLORADO STATE MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2024

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR THE APRIL ISSUE OF  
NOTES & NEWS IS MARCH 1, 2024.  
EMAIL CONTENTS TO [JSAFFIR@GMAIL.COM](mailto:JSAFFIR@GMAIL.COM)  
AND PUT "CSMTA" IN THE SUBJECT LINE.

## CSMTA AWARDED MTNA 2024 STATE AFFILIATE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Congratulations to CSMTA, MTNA 2024 *State Affiliate of the Year!* As such, Colorado will be honored at the upcoming national conference in Atlanta for its commitment to education, advocacy, and community, as outlined in its admirable recently revised mission statement, as well as its nationally recognized leadership in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Bravo!

## On Being Asked to Judge

by David House, Editor of *Lyrics*, DAMTA's Newsletter



The email said that my name had been given by a colleague in hopes that I "might consider judging piano students for the Aurora Music Teacher's Association's Achievement Day." I had two reactions: 1. Wow! I've finally arrived as a teacher of standing in this community if I could be considered a qualified judge. 2. I couldn't possibly be a judge.

I have feelings about judging aspiring musicians. I'm not against because it can be a useful, even important part of a musician's growth. When learning an instrument, certain standards apply. Clarity of attack, evenness of sound, steadiness of rhythm—these are real things that students angling for excellence, or even basic competence, must strive for, and it is not, in itself, a bad thing for them to be appraised by outside ears. Then there is the matter of performing a piece. Does the student know it solidly? Have they arrived at a persuasive interpretation? Have they achieved the necessary combination of grit and poise to play in front of an audience? Playing for a judge can

yield useful information. It can be a good muscle builder.

Serious musicians generally associate judges and judging with the competition circuit. Competitions are predicated on the idea that judging one contestant's abilities over and against another's can be a way to spur healthy ambition and the pursuit of excellence. Béla Bartók's famous assertion that "Competition is for horses, not artists" notwithstanding, competitions do have their place, problematic though it may be, and I'll not judge anyone's choice to take that route. Judging, when it comes down to it, is something that we as teachers do in every lesson. It's how we discern what a student needs to 'level up,' as gamers say.

Of course, adjudicating competitions is a very different swimming pool from judging Achievement Day participants. Ann Markey, who is on the AMTA board and who had authored the email, explained in our follow-up conversation that judging would have nothing to do with ranking when done in the context of Achievement Day. My job would be to listen, give gentle critiques, and most of all, offer encouragement. "It's all about love and kindness," she said. We could all do with a bit of that, so I agreed. But here is the rub: The infinitive "to judge," whether it is used as is, or as a present participle

# 2024 CSMTA Conference

Friday, October 18 - Saturday, October 19, 2024

Capps Capozzolo Center for the Arts

Colorado State University - Pueblo

2200 Bonforte Blvd., Pueblo, CO

Early Bird Registration: September 15

## CALL FOR CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Topics to consider include (but are not limited to): composition, technique, repertoire, collaborative performance, business policies, or other studio and performance-related topics that address the needs and interests of music instructors.

To apply, please submit via e-mail:

1. A Microsoft Word document (only acceptable format) containing:
  - Presenter's information (name, phone number, e-mail)
  - 70-80 word biographical sketch (please do not exceed 80 words)
  - Session title (as you want it to appear in print) and Session abstract (not to exceed 35 words)
  - Session proposal (not to exceed 250 words)
2. Your photo (not to exceed 1.5 MB in size, minimum 300 dpi)

**Applications that do not adhere to the formatting and content rules will not be considered.**

**FORMAL PRESENTATION DEADLINES: May 15, 2024:** Formal Session application submissions.

To apply for a presentation, or to make a recommendation send: Name, Presentation Title, and Subject Content to: Dr. Zahari Metchkov, [zahari.metchkov@csupueblo.edu](mailto:zahari.metchkov@csupueblo.edu). Include "CSMTA Session" as subject.

---

## CALL FOR CONFERENCE POSTER PRESENTATIONS

A visual presentation of information for display. Authors present and describe the work, provide handouts, and answer questions at the designated Poster Session times. Typical categories include (but are not limited to): research, studio/pedagogy projects, and practical teaching information.

To apply, please submit via e-mail:

1. A Microsoft Word document (only acceptable format) containing:
  - Presenter's information (name, phone number, e-mail)
  - 70-80 word biographical sketch (please do not exceed 80 words)
  - Session title (as you want it to appear in print) and Session abstract (not to exceed 35 words)
  - Session proposal (not to exceed 250 words)
2. Your photo (not to exceed 1.5 MB in size, minimum 300 dpi)
3. A PDF version of the proposed poster presentation

**Applications that do not adhere to the formatting and content rules will not be considered.**

**POSTER PRESENTATION DEADLINES: September 15, 2024:** Poster Session and Mealtime Performance submissions.

To apply for a presentation, or to make a recommendation send: Name, Presentation Title, and Subject Content to: Dr. Zahari Metchkov, [zahari.metchkov@csupueblo.edu](mailto:zahari.metchkov@csupueblo.edu). Include "CSMTA Poster Presentation" as subject.

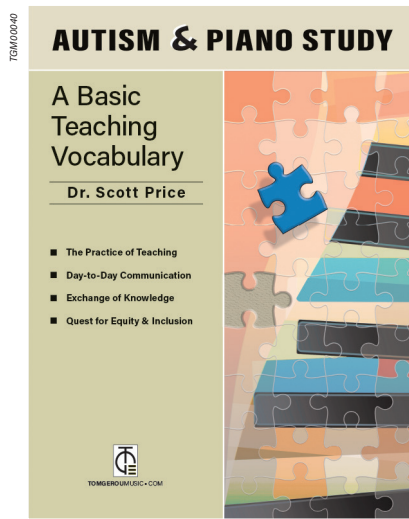
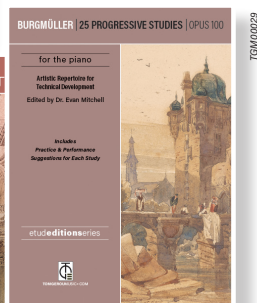
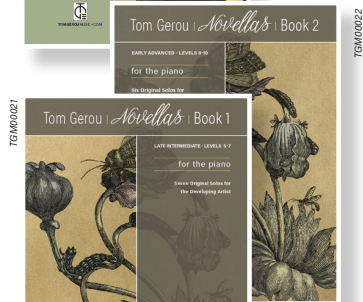
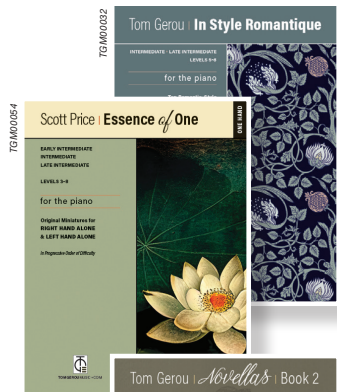
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## 2024 CSMTA CONFERENCE ARTISTS: THE REVERÓN TRIO

“The Reverón Trio shines at the Casals. Pianist Yefim Brofman and the Reverón Trio exuded virtuosity in their respective presentations.” *El Diario de Puerto Rico, May 2022*

The Reverón Trio is made up of three of the most outstanding musicians from Venezuela. The trio incorporates beautiful, wonderful works by Latin American composers into the standard repertoire. Audiences and presenters love their presentations, and talk about the unknown works with such charm and humor. They are in residence at University of Michigan this autumn.

El Reverón has performed in festivals and prestigious halls including Festival Casals en Puerto Rico, the Granada Festival in Spain, the Aruba Symphony Festival, Beethoven Festival Park City, the Music Institute of Chicago, Chamber Music Wilmington, and the American Music Festival in North Carolina and various other universities in the U.S. and abroad.

Recent engagements include concerts at the Festival Casals in Puerto Rico, Latin American Music Initiative's first conference, Aruba Symphony Festival, the Beethoven Festival Park City, the Collaborative Piano Institute, Festival A la Vela de la Alhambra in Granada, and the

Universidad de los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia. Additionally, the trio has been in residence at Michigan State University, University of Wisconsin, Dickinson College, Lawrence

University, Louisiana State University, the Westfield Center for Historical Keyboard Studies, the Collaborative Piano Institute, and various other universities in the U.S. and abroad. Upcoming projects include recitals at the National Gallery of Art, West Virginia Chamber Music Society, Chamber Music Wilmington and American Music Festival in North Carolina, Sociedad Filarmónica de Lima, the Cervantino Festival in México, the release of their next audio recording produced and distributed globally by IBS Classical, the Latin American Chamber Music Series at the Music Institute of Chicago, a concert



tour in Peru, and residencies at various other universities in the U.S. and abroad.

Visit [www.reverontrio.org](http://www.reverontrio.org) for updated information.

**S**ave the date! The 2024 MTNA National Conference will take place March 16-20 in Atlanta, Georgia.

As always, you will be treated to an outstanding array of informative sessions, inspiring master classes, thrilling concerts, and wide-ranging exhibits. Details later. Don't miss it!

For more information on registration, poster sessions, and call for proposals, visit the MTNA website at:

[https://www.mtna.org/Conference/Conference\\_Home/Conference/Home.aspx?hkey=cecd079e-f62b-4ed5-8575-57e2283ba248](https://www.mtna.org/Conference/Conference_Home/Conference/Home.aspx?hkey=cecd079e-f62b-4ed5-8575-57e2283ba248)





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DR. ANDREW COOPERSTOCK, NCTM, CSMTA PRESIDENT

# Happy 2024!

I hope you enjoyed a restful winter break and meaningful time together with family and friends.

For me, the new year is a time for personal assessment. Where am I on my life's timeline? What have I been able to achieve? What do I enjoy today? What legacy will I leave for the future? Invariably my thoughts turn to connections—whether through appreciating personal relationships, communicating with audiences, working with students, or sharing experiences with others in our organization. I remain truly grateful for opportunities to dream together, to grow, and to continue to learn.

CSMTA is a living, flourishing body, and I am grateful to be part of its evolution. With this in mind, I'll remind you of a significant upcoming change: Our state conference has moved to the Fall. So if you haven't already, please mark your calendars for October 18-19, when we will be treated to an energizing two days of programming, now alongside our inspiring state MTNA competitions. Looking forward to that weekend, I know I will especially take pleasure in attending performances and the chance to step back for a few minutes from academic deadlines to occasions for simply enjoying sounds in the moment and

appreciating what brought us all to music in the first place.

What a blessing it is to be able not only to perceive sound, but to interpret as we wish, and to connect with the art. Indeed, esteemed mindfulness pioneer Jon Kabat-Zinn venerates the sense of hearing as “a purity of awareness without center or periphery, without subject or object, that can be visited and touched over and over.” (*Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World through Mindfulness*, 2005)

I wish for each of us a healthy, happy year ahead, full of beautiful sounds, loving friendships, and meaningful connections.

*Dr. Andrew Cooperstock, NCTM  
CSMTA President*



## TEACHER ENRICHMENT CORNER

BEN RAZNICK, VP FOR TEACHER ENRICHMENT, EDITOR  
THE TEACHER ENRICHMENT CORNER LISTS NON-PROFIT EVENTS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN COLORADO.  
IF YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR EVENT ADDED, PLEASE EMAIL [BENRAZNICKMUSIC@GMAIL.COM](mailto:benraznickmusic@gmail.com)

## Teacher's Toolkit: Resources for Music Teachers

As an organization, MTNA prides itself on the wealth of resources available to members and non-members alike. As a leader in empowering the music-teaching professional since 1876, MTNA works hard to ensure that a full spectrum of questions and answers, concerns, assets, partnerships and services are readily available and easily accessible for busy professionals.

Take a look at the “Learn” dropdown menu of [MTNA.org](https://www.mtna.org) to find these resource sections:

**Webinars:** MTNA has launched a series of webinars to provide an opportunity for continuing education without having to leave the comfort of your home, studio or office. Topics range from technology to technique and cybersecurity to cadence. MTNA members will be notified in advance via e-mail to register for these monthly events.

**DEI Resources:** As part of our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, MTNA has developed this section of the website to organize and curate DEI resources from American Music Teacher, the MTNA e-Journal, MTNA webinars and the MTNA website. Content will continue to be added and

updated to ensure MTNA members have access to the latest information and research.

**MTNA Collaborative Music Commissioning Project:** The MTNA Collaborative Music Commissioning Project (CMCP) was created in 2011 to promote chamber music study at the intermediate and amateur adult levels. The goal of the project was (1) to support living composers and their work with teachers and students in MTNA, and (2) to provide accessible repertoire for unusual instrument combinations.

**Parent and Student Resources:** Whether you are a seasoned music parent or a parent looking for information about selecting a music teacher, MTNA provides resources for you.

**Wellness Resources:** Like other focused educational activities or pastimes, learning, performing and listening to music can produce possible negative health consequences when undertaken incorrectly or excessively. Music teachers need to be health conscious and to engage in prevention education with the students in their charge.

**And more:** Studio Resources, Teaching Tips, Copyright Information, Essential Skills, and COVID Toolkit.

## PARLIAMENTARY MOMENT

KATHY HAMMER, NCTM, RP (REGISTERED PARLIAMENTARIAN)

## Is this DEBATE/DISCUSSION going anywhere?

How often have you been in a meeting where the debate/discussion seems to be going in circles? Or the discussion seems to be between only a couple of members? Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) offers direction for the handling of these situations.

Whether a discussion precedes the making of a motion or is the result of a motion having been made, according to RONR, a speaker "must address their remarks to the chair, maintain a courteous tone, refer to officers only by title and should avoid the mention of other members' names as much as possible." (RONR, 4:30)

If a subject arises in a meeting without a motion first being made and the discussion is going in circles, a member or the chair may ask if someone wants to make a motion. Only by making a motion can the membership be assured that the subject of discussion will be carried out.

When a motion has been made and is being discussed, the chair should alternate speakers between those in favor and those opposed to it. After a couple of speakers, if it is apparent that no one desires to speak against the motion or that the discussion is going in circles, a member may "Call for the question" or the chair should ask, "Are you ready for the question? (pause...

chair restates the motion) Those in favor say Aye. (pause) Those opposed say no. The ayes have it and the motion to (chair repeats the motion) is adopted."

If the agenda contains business that may be contentious, rules for speakers should be set before the discussion begins. A motion could be made to set a time limit for each speaker. RONR states that no person can speak a second time until everyone who wants to speak has spoken.

Additionally, the "presiding officer does not enter into discussion unless he leaves the chair until the pending business has been disposed of." (RONR 4:31) Also, the chair cannot close debate so long as any member who has not exhausted his right to debate desires the floor, except by order of the assembly, which requires a two-thirds vote. (RONR 4:32)

**Chairs/presidents** – know how to handle discussions in a positive way. **Members** – be informed so discussion adheres to the subject. Let's not go in circles. **Secretaries** – remember only the motion goes into the minutes and whether it is adopted or not – never any of the discussion.



## 2024 CSMTA COMMISSIONED COMPOSER CALL FOR APPLICATIONS AND SCORES

CSMTA is accepting applications for the 2024 Commissioned Composer Award. The 2024 Commissioned Composer Award includes:

- Premiere performance of a new work during the fall CSMTA State Conference 2024, October 18-19, 2024.
- Award of \$2000, to be presented upon the completion of the premiere performance
- Subsequent submission of the commissioned work to the Music Teachers National Association competition for the Distinguished Composer of the Year award. The winner of this award receives \$5000 and has his/her work performed at the 2025 MTNA National Conference.

### ELIGIBILITY:

1. Applicants for the 2024 award must be current or former residents of the state of Colorado; out-of-state students and those on temporary or long-term visas may apply.
2. Applicants must be current legal residents of the United States.

### APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

- 1) Composers will submit a curriculum vita (CV) along with scores and recordings of up to three compositions from their body of work.

- 2) Submissions will be digital only: scores and CVs must be in PDF format, and recordings in MP3 format.

- 3) All of the above should be uploaded to a folder in Dropbox or Google Drive, and a link to the folder be emailed to the 2024 CSMTA Commissioned Composer Chair, [jenniferlinn@yahoo.com](mailto:jenniferlinn@yahoo.com), with "2024 CSMTA Commissioned Composer Application" in the subject line.

- 4) The deadline for submissions is **March 1, 2024**. A committee will review all submissions and declare the commission by **April 1, 2024** and notify applicants of the results. The Commissioned Composer will then present an intended composition model and instrumentation (for solo or small ensemble) to the committee.

- 5) For the premiere performance, the composer is responsible for travel costs, and is responsible for securing performers and paying performers' fees.

- 6) Further details of procedure, timetable, and contract information inquiries may be directed to Jennifer Linn, [jenniferlinn@yahoo.com](mailto:jenniferlinn@yahoo.com).

*Submitted by Jennifer Linn 2024-25 CSMTA Commissioned Composer Chair*

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

## Leila Viss, 2024 MTNA Foundation Fellow

As we approach the end of 2023, I hope you will consider donating to the MTNA Foundation Fund for Leila Viss, as our Colorado Foundation Fellow for 2024. We are very close to raising all the funds needed, but you could be the one to put us over the top! Please donate soon as the mid-January deadline approaches! Thank you for your support. All the information on how to donate is at the bottom of the article.

*Leila graduated with a Master of Arts Degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Denver, Lamont School of Music, in 1990. She opened an independent piano studio in Centennial, Colorado the next year. Her goal has been to offer innovative, tech-savvy lesson plans to develop pianists who will play for a lifetime.*

*Leila has worked with blogs such as 88pianokeys.me, which became LeilaViss.com in 2018. She has worked with iPads and apps for iPads, and she authored The iPad Piano Studio: Keys to Unlocking the Power of Apps, published by Alfred Music. She has over 700 videos on YouTube as well. Leila helped plan the MTNA Jazz/Pop Tracks, and served as chair of the Creative Pianist Track for the NCKP in 2015. With Bradley Sowash, she cofounded 88 Creative Keys that provides online clinics and workshops. Many of her articles have been published in the American Music Teacher and Clavier Companion (now The Piano Magazine). She also serves on the editorial committee of the AMT Magazine.*

*Leila currently teaches around 25 students and has worked as pianist, accompanist, and organist at South Suburban Christian Church for several decades. She and her husband have three grown sons.*

Please honor Leila with a donation to the Foundation Fund in either of the following two ways:

1. Visit [www.mtnafoundation.org/contribute/contributenow/](http://www.mtnafoundation.org/contribute/contributenow/) (MTNA Foundation Fund MTNA webpage). Make sure you designate Leila Viss as your Foundation Fellow.

2. Mail a check to: MTNA Foundation Fund, 600 Vine St., Ste. 1710 Cincinnati, OH 45202. Write 'Leila Viss' on the memo line for Foundation Fellow for Colorado.

**We need to raise \$1500 by January to honor Leila as a Foundation Fellow at the Atlanta conference. It is very simple to do: Online, type in MTNA Foundation Fund. Click on the Fellow Program, Contribute, and fill out the information. Make sure you click on the Foundation Fellow box and list Leila Viss as our Fellow. Any donation you can make will help us reach our goal.**

If you send a check, please send it to MTNA Foundation Fund, 600 Vine Street, Suite 1710, Cincinnati, OH 45202, and make sure you put Leila's name on the memo line.

*Submitted by Elinore Quander, MTNA Foundation Chair*

## Call for Nominations for the 2024 CSMTA Teacher of the Year Award

CSMTA is accepting nominations for the 2024 Teacher of the Year Award. This prestigious award will be presented at the 2024 CSMTA State Conference next October. Because there are so many outstanding teachers in CSMTA, the Criteria List was revised in recent years to encourage more local associations to nominate a Teacher of the Year. The major two changes are as follows:

- While it is preferred that the nominees be a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music, it is no longer required.
- Only three letters of recommendation are required from a student, a parent of a student and/or a colleague.

Please read and follow instructions on the Criteria for CSMTA Teacher of the Year Award document at: [comusicteachers.com/sites/default/files/CSMTA\\_Teacher\\_of\\_the\\_Year\\_Criteria.pdf](http://comusicteachers.com/sites/default/files/CSMTA_Teacher_of_the_Year_Criteria.pdf)

To make a nomination:

1. Write a nomination letter addressing specifically each of the nine criteria outlined in the Criteria for CSMTA Teacher of the Year Award document.
2. Submit a single Word or PDF file that includes the nomination letter along with supporting materials to Emily

Book McGree at [emily.mcgree@du.edu](mailto:emily.mcgree@du.edu).

3. Write "CSMTA 2024 Teacher of the Year Award" in the subject area of the email.

**Submission deadline: Saturday, March 20, 2024, 11:59pm.**

Please note our past CSMTA Teacher of the Year recipients:

- 2013 Jill Hanrahan, NCTM
- 2014 Carol Wickham-Revier, NCTM
- 2015 Deborah Turnbull
- 2016 Gabrielle Dugan
- 2017 Carol DuBe, NCTM
- 2018 Dr. Joan Sawyer
- 2019 Mary Beth Shaffer, NCTM
- 2020 Thayne Larsen
- 2021 Devika De Mel
- 2022 Dr. Zahari Metchkov
- 2023 Pamela Simpson, NCTM

Questions? Contact Dr. Emily Book McGree, CSMTA President-Elect, at the email listed above.

*Submitted by Dr. Emily Book McGree, CSMTA President-Elect*



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

## CSMTA Executive Board Meeting Highlights: September 23

President Dr. Andrew Cooperstock, NCTM, called the September 23, 2023 meeting of the CSMTA Executive Board to order at 1:05pm. A quorum of 12 Executive Board members was established, with over 22 members present. President Cooperstock thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Our special guest, Garrett Davidson, spoke about his organization, Musicians United for Change, which includes middle and high school students. He shared information about the benefit concerts they put together. The group wants to create an education program to transcend demographical borders.

The meeting agenda was then approved as emailed. The minutes for the June 2, 2023 Advisory Council meeting were approved with changes.

### Executive Board Reports:

**Treasurer—Liane Rockley** (2022-2023 Budget presentation)

She reported account balances as of September 16, 2023 as: Checking: \$55,060.46 and Aspida Synergy: \$66,174. The Current Financials were summarized (the full report includes the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Activities Budget vs. Actual, and Proposed Budget for 2023-24).

Activities reported between June and September were: Balanced bank statements and posted bills. Started investigating a new CPA for accounting. Started tax preparation.

**President—Dr. Andrew Cooperstock, NCTM** then gave his report with the highlight of attending the MTNA Leadership Summit in Cincinnati. He, along with President-Elect

Dr. Emily Book McGree, were both representatives of CSMTA. **President-Elect—Dr. Emily Book McGree, NCTM**, gave her report with the highlights being the MTNA Leadership Summit, Student Activities, Conference, and Teacher of the Year.

**Immediate Past President—Uri Ayn Rovner** then shared his report next.

### Vice Presidents

**Membership—Carrie Hansen**, gave her report, stating that there are 448 members of CSMTA as of September 14, 2023, which includes 31 new members. Her report included other reports, from the Mentorship Chair, Collegiate Chapters Chair, and Community Outreach, Education and Public Relations.

**DEI – Chee-Hwa Tan**, gave her report, with focus on contacting and visiting as many local associations as possible via Zoom, identifying member needs, listening to ideas, and documenting input or concerns that will assist in structuring a VP of DEI job description that is sustainable and supportive of the needs of the teachers and students of CSMTA.

**Student Activities—Jill Ice**, gave her report including other reports from the Concerto Competition chair, which stated that the winners of the 2024 CSMTA Concerto Competition will perform with the Boulder Chamber Orchestra on May 4th, 2024. Jill Ice's reports also included reports from the Colorado State MTNA Competitions chair. The Rising Stars Festival chair, the Student Theory Activity (STA) chair, the Master Class Activity chair, and Achievement Day chair had nothing new to report.

**Local Associations—Nazila Nekoora**d gave her report.

**Teacher Enrichment—Ben Raznick** then gave his report, including Notes & News chair, Website chair, and Certification chair reports.

**Conferences—Christine Nufer Ortega** gave her report, including the Guest Artist and Presenter information.

**Commissioned Composer Chair**—not present. No reports.

**Representatives-at-Large** Thayne S. Larsen – Not present. No reports. Bryan Wallick – No Reports.

All reports were emailed previously and will be filed.

### New Business

**DEI Introduction (Chee-Hwa Tan)** – Talked about her ideas for the new position of VP of DEI and what that means.

**2024 Conference (Christine Ortega)** – Talked about plans for the future conference in October 2024. Also asked for suggestions from all members present. One-day registration and also hybrid (online) attendance was also discussed.

### Announcements:

Next Meeting: Saturday, January 13, 2024, 1:00 P.M.

**Adjournment at 2:58pm.**

*Submitted by Secretary, Dr. Jessica Pacheco Hjelmstad, NCTM*

## NEXT BOARD MEETINGS

Saturday, January 13, 2024

&

Saturday, April 13, 2024

1:00PM via ZOOM

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

## Collegiate Chapter News

Collegiate chapters are an integral part of the national MTNA organization, as we look to younger generations as an important area of growth in our profession. Colorado boasts three active collegiate chapters, each providing enrichment opportunities for members and the community through teaching and performing.

With nearly 20 members, the largest chapter is the CU Boulder Collegiate Chapter of MTNA, advised by Dr. Jennifer Hayghe and led by current president Lizzie French. Founded five years ago in 2018, the CSU-Pueblo collegiate chapter (with president Joshua Janitell and faculty advisor Dr. Zahari Metchkov) maintains an active schedule and robust membership. The newest chapter at DU is successfully recruiting new members; president Jen Bowlds works with co-advisors Dr. Stephanie Cheng and Dr. Emily Book McGree.

All three of the chapters have shown their commitment to **enrichment** by hosting guest artist presentations on a variety of topics. The CSU-Pueblo chapter had their first chapter president Abigail Silverberg return to discuss injury prevention, and also invited Dr. Joeun Pak to talk about the benefits of master classes and competitions and how to prepare students for these events. This semester, the CU Boulder chapter was excited to have Dr. Vanessa Cornett give a presentation called “Mental Skills for Peak Performance.” DU is looking forward to having Leah Claiborne in residency for several events during her visit to Colorado.

**Networking and connection** are some of the most valuable opportunities for collegiate chapter members, whether with their institutional community, their local community, the regional or state-level professional community or with internationally known leaders in the industry. Besides attending his presentation and master class, DU collegiate members helped host a reception for Marvin Blickenstaff during his visit coordinated by the Frances Clark Center. They were also able to meet Michelle Cann and attend her recital through the Friends of Chamber Music in Denver while CU Boulder members had a lunchtime meeting with Dr. Pamela Pike during her mini-residency on campus.

Colorado collegiate chapter members also organize and participate in various types of **performance opportunities**, many of them as part of a commitment to community outreach. CSU Pueblo members ended their fall semester with an outreach performance at the Primrose Retirement Community in Pueblo, while the CU Boulder members hosted an outreach performance at Stam Chocolaterie in Lafayette with plans to organize an event at Foothills Hospital in Boulder later in the spring. New members of the DU chapter are hosting an Inclusive Composer Concert on February 22 at 7:30 PM in Hamilton Hall.

The chapters have all been active in **volunteering to assist with various CSMTA events** throughout the year. CU Boulder members volunteered and ran a fundraising bake sale at the MTNA state competitions in October, while CSU-Pueblo

chapter members were a key part of the June state conference. DU hosts the CSMTA Rising Stars Competition every April, and this year chapter members will be volunteering at the event.



Colorado chapter members have successfully presented **research** on various topics for state and national conferences. Conference attendees will remember DU and CU Boulder collegiate chapter presentations at the 2022 conference, as well as CSU Pueblo chapter poster presentations in 2022 and a main presentation in 2023. The CU Boulder chapter has been successful in submitting proposals to present at both the MTNA Collegiate Symposium and National Conferences for several years, and they will be presenting again at the 2024 MTNA National Conference in Atlanta.

One of the most crucial connections for collegiate chapters is with **local associations**, and there has been tremendous growth in that area in the past few years. DU members have been working with Denver Area Music Teachers Association in all aspects of organizing a jointly sponsored series of events with Leah Claiborne this spring, including grant writing, planning and programming. CU Boulder members recently presented to Boulder Area Members Teachers Association members at their October meeting, and the chapter and the association have been actively seeking out more opportunities to connect. CSU Pueblo members have attended and presented at Pikes Peak Music Teachers Association meetings in previous years. Each of these chapters boasts a wealth of energy, innovative ideas, creative thinking and impressive research and technology skills that will help further the work of the state and local associations; they are an often overlooked resource, but are eager to connect with local teachers and learn how the profession and the association work.

On a personal note, I have had the privilege of serving as faculty advisor to multiple collegiate chapters over the past 22 years, and I am always inspired by the talent, energy and commitment to the profession that these young professionals exhibit. The three Colorado collegiate chapters are doing impactful work, and I know that the membership of CSMTA joins me in congratulating them and supporting their growth.

*Submitted by Dr. Jennifer Hayghe, Collegiate Chapters Chair*



## ITEMS OF INTEREST

## Achievement Day Events

Congratulations to the following Local Associations that held successful Achievement Day events this past fall.

Foothills Music Teachers Association held their annual Achievement Day on November 4 at the CCU Music Building. The event was a success, with 104 students, 15 teachers and 14 volunteers in attendance. Chairs were April Larsen and Davina Perret.



Aurora Music Teachers Association held their Achievement Day on Saturday Nov. 11th, with around 85 students participating. Lauren Bales was chair of the event and her committee included Ann Markey and Mary Vanderslice.





## On Being Asked to Judge CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

or gerund (“judging”), or turned into a noun (“judge,” “judgement”), or an adjective (“judicial,” “judgy”), carries an inescapable moral underpinning. Making it fancy by turning it into “adjudicator” or “adjudicating” changes nothing. If you’re talking about judging something, you have, perforce, entered a moral universe. It need not involve anything so dire as parsing Good and Evil. It may be simply a matter of tallying better or worse. Soften it further. If you use phrases like “This needs work,” “You’re really coming along,” or “You’ve nailed it,” you are still invoking a system of right action as opposed to wrong. No matter that there are sometimes diverse opinions as to what right and wrong might be. No matter that you would never say a good performance is a “moral” performance, or a faulty one “immoral” (although critics have often come close; do a quick perusal of what has been written about Claudio Arrau vs. Vladimir Horowitz, for example). No matter that you do not conflate a student’s fundamental worth as a person with how they play a scale, a Beethoven sonata, or a piece about pirates. If you are judging what they do, you are operating on moral ground. And, as every last one of us knows from having been both judge and judged, the boundary between how we do something and who we are can become all too easily blurred.

I arrived at the community church where the event was to be held about forty minutes before the first students were set to arrive. I was shown to a small, bare room with a chair, a small table, and a somewhat worse-for-wear blond-wood upright piano, and instructed as to how to fill out the comment sheet. The kids would be either “Big Achievers” or “Super Achievers” depending on which options they chose. Keep critiques gentle, comments positive, heavy on encouragement. Regarding the “pass/fail” in the upper right corner, always circle “pass”. Verbal interaction with the students should focus on putting them at ease. But it turns out that judging other teachers’ students, even in the spirit of loving kindness, can be dicey. I’m not talking about avoiding stepping on pedagogical toes. That pertains to us grown-ups, the ones presumably with good sense, whose job entails being able to take care of ourselves. I’m talking about having a young person (whom you’ve never met, and may never see again) walk into a tiny, stuffy room, sit before a no-more-than-adequate piano, and put their life on the line to play for you. They have fifteen minutes to do what they’ll do, and in that timeframe, you’ve got to figure out what to say about it.

**“If you’re talking about judging something, you have, perforce, entered a moral universe.”**

Perhaps you ask them to play an E-flat major scale and they do so with wonky fingering. Do you mention the fingering? Do you say anything about the uneven tempo with which they play their

memorized piece, or the questionable hand position? You know from your own experience as a teacher that you can’t assume they have not been told about these things a hundred times. And anyway, you’re not there to teach. What do you say to the tenth kid. The eighteenth? Early in the day, two brothers played for me, first separately, then together. They were around the ages of thirteen and fifteen. The younger one had a noticeably atypical neural style. The older one’s atypicality was somewhat less pronounced. Playing their relatively simple pieces was clearly arduous for them. When they played together, the younger boy counted out loud in groaning surges: “WuuunTooThreeeFohhhr.” Nothing was so apparent to me as that these boys were magnificent.

A girl of about seven came in, acquitted herself of their pieces, then, as one of her “options,” danced for me. This involved procuring her mom’s iPhone, starting a YouTube number, and going through her moves. Not much space in that little room for her multiple back and forward walkovers. Clearly a “super achiever.” Was her dance a meaningful interpretation of the music? Not a relevant question. Another girl, perhaps fourteen, came in, played through her nerves, and finished with tears in her eyes. My efforts to be kind and encouraging did little to ameliorate her unhappiness. Just by my presence and the meaning they attached to it, the boundary between how she performed (or perceived that she had) and *who she was* had blurred.

**...as every last one of us knows, from having been, at one time or another, both judge and judged, the boundary between how we do something and who we are can become all too easily blurred.**

A rather dour blond boy of eleven or twelve made a false start on his memorized piece and asked if he could start over. Of course. “How much will I be marked off for that?” he asked. So young, and already familiar with how the world spins on an axis of merits and demerits. A boy of about sixteen muscled his way through Rachmaninoff’s G minor prelude. What is it about the G minor prelude? This is not the place to start with Rachmaninoff. The place to start with Rachmaninoff is with Scriabin. Of course, no one told me that when I was their age and chose the same piece. And like me, the kid did, indeed, make it happen. Not brilliantly, but not half badly either. Probably better than I had managed it. His love for the piece was self-evident, as was his earnest desire to be the kind of kid who could play it. How well I remember. I would certainly not be the irresponsible one to second guess them. Every single student who walked through the door that day knew exactly what it meant to

## STUDENT PROGRAMS



## CSMTA Achievement Day

Achievement Day is a non-competitive student event run by CSMTA local associations in Colorado, following guidelines created at the state level. Customarily, well over 1000 students are involved with Achievement Day. Each student performs privately for an evaluator who listens and adjudicates the level of certificate to be earned. Guidelines for certificate levels and music-related options, including written and aural tests, are found in the CSMTA Student Achievement Day Comprehensive Guidelines. These guidelines also

explain how students can receive the status of “Super Achiever” by completing additional requirements. Local Associations may offer additional unique programs during these events including: master classes, project displays, games, T-shirt design, recitals, scavenger hunts, music technology labs, and more! See page 10 for AD events.

Info & forms: [www.comusicteachers.net/achievementday](http://www.comusicteachers.net/achievementday)  
 Application deadline: determined by each Local Association  
 Event date: determined by each Local Association  
 Event location: determined by each Local Association  
 Event chair: Amy Watt [amy@amywattpiano.com](mailto:amy@amywattpiano.com)



## 2024 CSMTA Concerto Competition

The 2024 CSMTA Concerto Competition will include categories for flute/oboe/clarinet/bassoon/horn/trumpet/percussion (one category) and 3 age levels for piano. Online entries will be accepted until March 1 2024 at 9:00pm MST. CSMTA is excited to announce the 2024 Winners of each category will be featured in a public performance with the Boulder Chamber Orchestra on May 11, 2024 in Boulder, CO.

For a list of the required concerti, please visit the CSMTA website: <https://comusicteachers.net/concertocompetition>

Info & forms: [www.comusicteachers.net/concertocompetition](http://www.comusicteachers.net/concertocompetition)  
 Online application deadline: March 1, 2024 at 9:00 pm MST.  
 Winners' announcement: March 22, 2024  
 Winners' concert date: May 11, 2024 (Boulder Chamber Orchestra)  
 Ages: Elementary piano: 8-10, Junior piano: 11-14  
 Senior piano: 15-19, Winds & Percussion: 13-19  
 Event chair: Dr. Stephanie Cheng [Stephanie.cheng@du.edu](mailto:Stephanie.cheng@du.edu)



## 2024 Student Theory Activity (STA)

The purpose of the CSMTA Student Theory Activity (STA) is to stimulate theory competency among Colorado music students. The curriculum and testing use the nationwide Keynote Independent Theory Service (KITS). Complete information about this can be found at [www.keynotetheory.com](http://www.keynotetheory.com) where an order form is available for manuals and student study materials. The KITS curriculum is divided into seven levels or “Steps,” Primary-Step 6, and will cover reading, theory, vocabulary, listening, and skills (scales, chords and arpeggios).

Group testing will be offered at the Rising Stars Festival location or through a Local Association testing center approved by the STA Chair. CSMTA offers certificates to all

participating students and bronze medals to those scoring 80-89%, silver for 90-94%, and gold for 95% and higher. All teachers of participating students are required to assist in the administration and grading of the tests. Please order teacher manual and students study guides well in advance! Please order teacher manual and students study guides well in advance!

Info & forms: [www.comusicteachers.net/sta](http://www.comusicteachers.net/sta)  
 Registration/Test order deadline: March 16, 2024  
 Event date: April 20, 2024  
 Event location: University of Denver, Lamont School of Music  
 Event chair: Grace Christus [grace\\_christus@yahoo.com](mailto:grace_christus@yahoo.com)



## 2024 CSMTA Master Class Activity

The 2024 Master Class Activity will take place at the next state conference, October 18-19 at the Colorado State University Pueblo.

Info & forms: [www.comusicteachers.net/masterclass](http://www.comusicteachers.net/masterclass)  
 Application Deadline: September 8, 2024  
 Event date: October 18-19, 2024  
 Event location: Colorado State University Pueblo  
 Event chair: Jill Ice, NCTM [jill@icepianostudio.com](mailto:jill@icepianostudio.com)

## STUDENT PROGRAMS



## 2024 CSMTA Rising Stars Festival

The CSMTA Rising Stars Festival 2024 will be held in person on Saturday, April 20, 2024 at the University of Denver, Lamont School of Music.

This event offers both competitive and non-competitive categories in solo piano, solo voice, solo instrumental, and ensemble divisions. Students are separated by age into five levels within each category. Repertoire selections from the same time period will be accepted, as long as both pieces demonstrate contrasting styles and represent different composers. Continuing from last year, judges may recognize outstanding performances with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Award (DEI medal). All students performing works by DEI composers will receive a gold seal on their certificate. In order to receive the

member registration rate for Rising Stars, teachers must have renewed their membership prior to December 1, 2023. We ask that all participating teachers read through the Student Activity Handbook carefully for all rules and regulations as there have been multiple updates. The ages of students as of the day of the registration deadline determines their level. For the Ensemble category, the average age of all the players determines the level. Please contact the chair with any questions.

Info & forms: [www.comusicteachers.net/risingstars](http://www.comusicteachers.net/risingstars)

Ages: 6-19 (pre-college)

Registration deadline: March 16, 2024

Event date: April 20, 2024

Event locations: University of Denver, Lamont School of Music

Event chair: Amy Lee [amy@pianopassionato.com](mailto:amy@pianopassionato.com)



## Colorado State MTNA Competitions

We are pleased to announce the completion of the CO MTNA competitions.

The composition competition had talented participants and took place on October 15. It was run by our Colorado Composition Coordinator, Jodie Jensen and the judge was Anthony Aronovici.

The performance competition took place at CU Boulder on Saturday, October 21, and we heard many talented participants in Piano, String, Brass and Woodwinds. The event was a huge success thanks to the help of our adjudicators, participants and volunteers.

We were honored to work with amazing judges: Dr. Samuel Welsh, Dr. Eneida Larti, Dr. Jéssica Pacheco, Dr. Joouen Pak, Dr. Fritz Gearhart, Dr. John Adler and Kaori Uno-Jack.

We would like to thank CU Boulder, the CU Boulder Collegiate MTNA Chapter, and all of our volunteers: Alejandro Cremaschi, Jill Ice, Brenda Ishikawa, Elena

Mathys, Sarah Rovner, Uri Ayn Rovner, Jasmine Steadman, Elizabeth Strickland, Thomas Hoops, Ethan Stahl, Bryan Wallick, Greta Dilyte, Mary Alderton and Sharon Hui.

Additional thanks to Dr. Alejandro Cremaschi, Dr. Jennifer Hayghe, Dr. Andrew Cooperstock and Dr. David Korevaar for sharing their studio spaces and assisting in securing our performance spaces. We are lucky to use the CU Boulder Imig Music Building for our competition.

Continue to check the website for information about next year's competition and results from the divisional and national competitions. Thank you for your continued support of our participants.

Info & forms: [www.comusicteachers.net/mtnacompetition](http://www.comusicteachers.net/mtnacompetition)

Application deadline: passed

Composition scores due: passed

Event date: passed

2024 Event location: CSU Pueblo

Event chair: Elizabeth Leger [eleger24@gmail.com](mailto:eleger24@gmail.com)

## On Being Asked to Judge

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

be judged. It mattered not one wit that there were to be no winners or losers, firsts, seconds, thirds, or even honorable mentions. Nor did it matter that I kept my comments, both verbal and written relatively positive. They knew that I was, moment by moment, making assessments (aka: judgments) about them and their performances, which were also, ineluctably, about them. What I most wished that I could have told them in a way that they could have understood was that my judgment of each of them was the same, and it was a snap judgement to

boot; that there was a little more beauty in the world, and a bit less malice, for them being in it, doing what they were doing, however they were doing it.

*David House is a pianist, composer, teacher and writer. He holds a BA in music from St. Olaf College, and an MA in psychology from Lesley University. He is on the board of DAMTA and is the editor of Lyrics, DAMTA's newsletter. He is passionate about teaching and maintains a piano studio in Wheat Ridge, CO.*



# COLORADO MTNA STATE COMPETITION RESULTS

<u>COMPETITION CATEGORY</u>	<u>STUDENT</u>	<u>TEACHER</u>	<u>ACCOMPANIST</u>
Elementary Composition Representative	Cody Wuestefeld	Lori Alcott	
Junior Composition Winner	Foster Hoover	Connie Brown	
Junior Composition (HM)	Raditya Muljadi	Sean Friar	
Junior Piano Performance Winner	Raditya Muljadi	Jasmine Li Meng	
Junior Piano Performance Alternate	Alexander Zhao	Dr. Brenda Ishikawa	
Junior Piano Performance (HM)	Hannah Crawford	Aaron Stampfl	
Junior String Performance Winner	Joseph Sanso (violin)	Heather Gruis	Sarah Eilert
Junior String Performance Alternate	Airan Zheng (violin)	Eugenia Alikhanova	Anna Arzumanyan
Junior String Performance (HM)	Mina Margittai (violin)	Eugenia Alikhanova	Anna Arzumanyan
Junior Woodwind Performance Representative	Alexander Zhao	Yoshi Ishikawa	Dr. Brenda Ishikawa
Senior Brass Performance Winner	Keegan Arnsmeyer (trumpet)	Ryan Gardner	Forrest Howell
Senior Brass Performance Alternate	Gwendolyn Milette (trumpet)	Ryan Gardner	
Senior Piano Performance Winner	Jakob Perlov	Dr. David Korevaar	
Senior Piano Performance Alternate	Madison Suh	Jasmine Li Meng	
Senior Piano Performance (HM)	Eric Kim	Jasmine Li Meng	
	Abigail Kroll	Jasmine Li Meng	
Senior String Performance Winner	Nathaniel Lasaga-lvey (violin)	Emily Ondracek-Peterson	Damien Krzyzek
Senior String Performance Alternate	Alex Sabiers (violin)	Michael Davis	Tobias Tennenbaum
Senior String Performance (HM)	Yiran Zheng (violin)	Eugenia Alikhanova	Anna Arzumanyan
Senior Voice Performance Representative	Noyi Soto-Anglade (baritone)	Joshua Zabatta	
Young Artist Composition Representative	James Morris	Dr. Jennifer Hayghe	
Young Artist Brass Performance Winner	Michael Brotherton (trumpet)	Ryan Gardner	Forrest Howell
Young Artist Brass Performance Alternate	Liam Webb (trumpet)	Ryan Gardner	Zerek Dodson
Young Artist Piano Performance Winner	Jude Dow-Hygelund	Dr. Andrew Cooperstock	
Young Artist Piano Performance Alternate	Christie Macfarlane	Dr. Joeeun Pak	
Young Artist Woodwind Performance Winner	Joel Ferst (saxophone)	Nathan Mertens	Hsiao-Ling Lin
Young Artist Woodwind Performance Alternate	Carter DeSouza (saxophone)	Nathan Mertens	Er-Hsuan Li
Young Artist Woodwind Performance (HM)	Ian Gunnarschja (saxophone)	Nathan Mertens	Robert Hjelmsstad

MTNA COMPETITION RESULTS

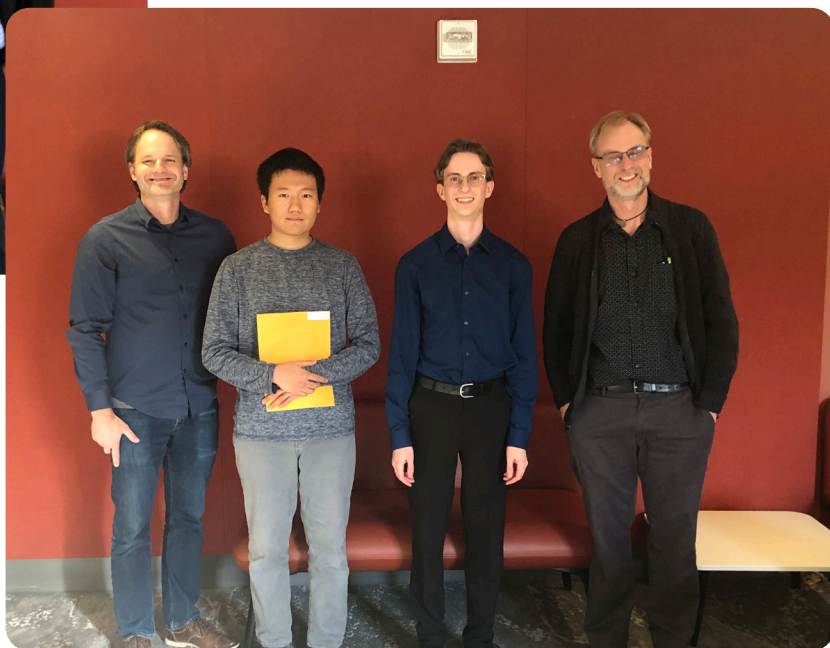


(Left) Senior Brass: Peter Friesen, Keegan Arnsmeier, Gwendolyn Milette, Dr. John Adler (judge)

(Below) Junior Piano: Olivia Huang, Alexander Zhao, Aidan Zhao, Hannah Crawford, Raditya Muljadi, Dr. Joouen Pak (judge).



(Above) YA Brass: Liam Webb, Michael Brotherton, Dr. John Adler (judge)



(Right) Senior String: Peter Friesen, Alex Sabiers, Nathaniel Lasaga-Ivey, Dr. Fritz Gearhart (judge)



## MTNA COMPETITION RESULTS



Senior Piano, Peter Friesen, Jakob Perlov, Eric Kim, Madison Such, Abigail Kroll, Dr. Jéssica Pacheco, Dr. Samuel Welsh, Dr. Eneida Larti (judges).



YA Piano, Christie Macfarlane, Dr. Samuel Welsh (judge), Jude Dow-Hygeland



YA Woodwind, Carter DeSouza, Joel Ferst, Ian Gunnarschja, Kaori Uno-Jack (judge)



# What's Happening in the West Central District of MTNA

by Mary Beth Shaffer, NCTM, MTNA WCD Director

**A**s I draw near the end of my term as the West Central Division director, I have been reflecting on my own MTNA leadership journey. It has been and continues to be a journey that I may not have embarked on without the wonderful encouragement and support of my colleagues!

I have thoroughly enjoyed my tenure as division director, and I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all of the 2234 division members who have contributed to making this leadership opportunity truly fulfilling and rewarding for me.

As you enjoy reading about our division's state presidents, I hope that you will be inspired to say "YES" to leadership opportunities in your state and local associations. MTNA needs YOU!

Andrew Cooperstock, NCTM, President of Colorado State Music Teachers Association

Sharon Jensen, NCTM, President of Iowa Music Teachers Association

Jason Hausback, President of Missouri Music Teachers Association

Mark Stevens, NCTM, President of South Dakota Music Teachers Association

James Knight, President of Kansas Music Teachers Association

Jacob Fitzpatrick, President of Minnesota Music Teachers Association

Brenda Wristen, NCTM, President of Nebraska Music Teachers Association

Tamara Bertram, President of North Dakota Music Teachers Association

Cyndie Caruth, NCTM, West Central Division Director-elect

## 1. How long have you been an MTNA member?

**Cooperstock:** Since 1986 (37 years!)

**Jensen:** I've been a member of IMTA since 1986 when I started my first job after finishing my doctorate. I had been named Assistant Professor of Music at Augustana College in Rock Island, IL. and there was an extremely active group of teachers in the Quad Cities, QMTA. Thankfully, they are still one of our most vibrant groups. I didn't enter students for many years as I was busy with my faculty position and raising small children, but I served as an adjudicator and formed many life-long friendships with the teachers. Since moving to Dubuque in 1996, I've been part of a much smaller but equally gifted group of teachers, DBQMTA.

**Hausback:** I joined MTNA in 2014. To be honest, as a trombonist I didn't know anything about it, and when I moved to Missouri, I was asked to judge the state Young Artist Brass

competition in 2012. From that point on I was curious about MTNA, and I started finding out more a year later when I was invited to be a MTNA State Chair for the first time. As I'm sure it is in many states, once you get involved, somebody with a keen eye will keep getting you involved more!

**Stevens:** I've been a member of MTNA since the fall of 2018. I was a student member in the past as well.

**Knight:** I've been a member of MTNA for almost 7 years.

**Fitzpatrick:** I joined MTNA when I was in college, so that would have been 2003 or so. That means I've been a member for 20 years!

**Caruth:** 50 years!

## 2. What/who inspired you to join?

**Cooperstock:** I'd been active in the competitions since I was young and even won the divisional level of the Baldwin Junior Keyboard Award a couple years. I've served on a college faculty since 1987 and for both my own continued growth as well as that of my students felt it was important to join MTNA and remain current ever since. I've appreciated opportunities to present many times at the national conference and as guest in various states and to serve as adjudicator at the state, division, and national levels.

**Jensen:** As a child, I studied piano with my mother who has been a member of MMTA for over 50 years. I competed in Michigan MTA auditions each year and as a result I acquired an excellent understanding of music theory before I attended college. Some of my favorite pieces to play and teach were ones I begged my teacher to play after hearing them played at auditions. One of those is *Jardins sous la pluie* from *Estampes* by Debussy.

**Hausback:** I of course joined once I was an officer, but seeing the hard work and dedication of students of all ages and backgrounds was really inspiring. Although MTNA runs on a different timeline than most of the instrumental competitions



Sharon Jensen, NCTM, Iowa

## What's Happening in the West Central District of MTNA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

for winds (due to Marching Band always being in the fall), I decided I wanted to start getting students involved myself.



Andrew Cooperstock, NCTM, Colorado

**Stevens:** I grew up as a student in the Washington State chapter of MTNA. The state offered numerous opportunities for performances, competitions, student evaluations, and community. The opportunities I had as a student through MTNA were essential to my growth as a pianist. When I began teaching at the collegiate level, also

in Washington State, I was thrilled to have the chance to participate as a teacher and serve the organization in various roles.

**Knight:** Various members of our local Association, WMMTA encouraged me to join. Also, having the connection to the national organization was very enticing in terms of member and student activities.

**Fitzpatrick:** When I started teaching, I wanted my students to be able to participate in the same programs in which I had participated. So, in order for my students to participate in those programs, I needed to be a member. And to this day, I use our wonderful programs with all my students.

**Caruth:** Connie Danielson, my private teacher in High School encouraged me and told me it was a must that I join. My longtime friend and teacher William David with whom I studied at Iowa State University is also a lifelong member who encouraged by example for all of his students to become involved in MTNA.

### 3. Have you held other leadership positions in your collegiate, local, or state associations and if so, what positions?

**Cooperstock:** If you mean with MTNA (I've also been active at the national level with NCKP, Mu Phi Epsilon, Federation, etc.), President-elect of CSMTA was my first office.

**Jensen:** I have been president of DBQMTA for 12 years

and auditions co-chair since 2013. I served as IMTA Local Associations Chair since 2015 and President-elect for 2 years before becoming President of IMTA in June, 2023.

**Hausback:** I was the state chair for MTNA Jr/Sr competitions for one year, followed by the VP Auditions Scheduling for 8 years. In Missouri it is a split position (2 VPs for running the auditions,) and one of those years I had to also do VP Auditions Adjudication, so it got pretty intense! Technically, I was President-elect for 5 months (our then President-elect moved away), and then I became President in November of 2022.

**Stevens:** I was on the board of directors for WSMTA for one year, and have served as the treasurer for my current local association, the Brookings Music Teachers Association in Brookings, SD, for three years.

**Knight:** I am also a co-collaborative piano chair in WMMTA. I was also president in our piano teachers' league, WAPTL when it was in existence.

**Fitzpatrick:** I've been on the Minnesota Music Teachers Association board of directors in a few other capacities.

**Caruth:** I've served two terms as Iowa President as well as serving as Local Associations Chair, Mentor, Certification Chair, State and District Auditions Chair, Foundation Chair, Advertising Editor, Website Chair, Theory Chair, Repertoire Committee, Bylaws Committee, Mary Sue Harris Grant Committee, and WCD member at large. I'm currently Magazine Editor for IMTA and honored to serve as WCD Director in 2024-26.



Jason Hausback, Missouri

### 4. What opportunities have you/do you enjoy the most as state president?

**Cooperstock:** I've enjoyed meeting and working alongside so many inspiring members of my state and beyond and learning about all levels of the organization. A two-year term goes by



## What's Happening in the West Central District of MTNA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18



Mark Stevens, NCTM, South Dakota

quickly, but I am grateful to be making, I hope, a difference. I'm proudest of CSMTA's creation of a new Vice President for DEI, for shepherding a move of our state conference to the Fall, which will hopefully help increase attendance, and helping to increase communication among members, especially via social media.

**Jensen:** I have been president for four months so I'm learning more each month about the workings of this wonderful association. I have thoroughly enjoyed the national conferences I've attended and look forward to the 2024 MTNA Conference in Atlanta. The state conferences Iowa hosts each summer are always memorable and truly inspiring. I don't believe I've missed one since 2005! The ideas and insights presented are invaluable but I always enjoy the fellowship and renewal of acquaintances which always takes place at these events. I was able to reconnect with a dear friend from my years at UT Austin at the conference in Spokane, WA.

**Hausback:** Attending the MTNA Summit on Leadership and my first MTNA National Conference this year in Reno was really an eye opener. I really do think the membership of the organization is eclectic and we have a lot of talented, creative people involved. Being a part of the Showcase Recital at Summit and hearing presidents from around the country perform was really quite a treat!

**Stevens:** Well, I'm brand new in the role! But I'm excited to start working with our state and local chapters right away. I attended the MNTA National Leadership Summit this year and came away with a lot of positive energy from the great sessions I attended as well as all of the hardworking, talented people I met. I look forward to meeting with local chapters to discuss the needs and ideas they have for the future of SDMTA, and to developing some new programs and initiatives to enhance our teacher and student experiences throughout the state.

**Knight:** For me, I enjoy meeting other state presidents and people in leadership roles across the country and learning from them, as well as realizing how similar our challenges can be. Also, I look forward to working with our state members in increasing membership in various parts of the state that are under-represented.

**Fitzpatrick:** I am constantly inspired by all of the members and their commitment to our students and to musical excellence. This inspiration is also a reminder that our organization is not one person; rather, we collectively are the organization. We all bring our own strengths to the table and share them with others, and we can then discover ways to teach, enjoy, and better our world through music.

**Caruth:** I thoroughly enjoy the team of board members and committees who are committed to looking at every aspect of our organization and how it can function in a more economical and efficient manner, while maintaining the core values of our organization. We have accomplished so much and continue to grow as an organization! I hope to share these accomplishments with other states and learn from their experiences as I step into the WCD Director position.

### 5. What advice and/or encouragement would you give to others to inspire them to consider a leadership role in their local and/or state association?

**Cooperstock:** MTNA provides such rich opportunities for working with others with similar interests, sharing talents, and making a difference to students, colleagues, and community.

**Jensen:** I'm so pleased that in Iowa we have such a willing group of members who are willing to serve as leaders. There were approximately 6 board positions to fill when I became president and I was able to fill 5 of those with enthusiastic, capable members who despite



James Knight, Kansas

## What's Happening in the West Central District of MTNA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19



Brenda Wristen, NCTM, Nebraska

busy families and demanding careers were ready to step up to the challenge. I serve because I've gained so much from this organization and I desire to pay it forward to the next generation.

**Hausback:** As stated above, MTNA and the state affiliates are always looking for people to be involved. If you're interested, it's often as simple as contacting an official and letting them know. I know

I can speak for Missouri that we will definitely find something for you to do to be involved! The positions do vary quite a bit, and not all of them are time-consuming. For me, it was a great way to get connected with other teachers when I was new to Missouri. The connections I've made and the opportunities that have opened up due to my leadership involvement have been invaluable to my career, but even more importantly, make it fun to be involved. I enjoy seeing my own students benefit and excel, but it is also great to see all the students benefit.

**Stevens:** I think that an organization can only be as strong as its individual parts. For a state chapter to thrive, the local chapters need to be active and thriving as well! I hope all of our members will feel empowered to serve at the local level in ways

that suit their abilities and interests. We all have the ability to help shape our local organizations to match our interests and goals! I believe that once our members get involved and see the positive change they can help create, they will realize the opportunities available to join in this work at the state level as well.



Tamara Bertram, North Dakota

**Knight:** My advice is don't be afraid to ask questions and reach out to the people on your executive board, as well as other state presidents, and those representing at the national level. Also, try to regularly read board minutes to keep on top of our current issues. I found there is a lot of time devoted to reading bylaws, minutes, updates, etc. to keep on top of all of the responsibilities of not only the presidential position, but everyone else's. Lastly, reach out to as many members as possible at auditions and conferences to keep on top of their concerns.



Jacob Fitzpatrick, Minnesota

**Fitzpatrick:** The entire burden of the organization does not fall on you, nor are you responsible for everything that happens. Rather, let people shine and share their strengths. Encourage participation in the organization in a variety of capacities, because when people are involved, they become empowered and also care about the organization.

**Caruth:** I have always felt it was necessary to bounce ideas off many people. While I love to think outside the box, not everything works for everyone. In a leadership role, much like teaching, try to figure out what will work; what will not work must quickly be tossed aside, even if it means changing your path. The most important thing is not to tackle your position alone. You can end up making poor decisions or appear like you are a "boss." You are surrounded by a team. Involve them to spark your creativity and in turn, you will help them to step into leadership roles effectively.



## INDEPENDENT MUSIC TEACHER FORUM

LEILA VISS, IMTF CHAIR

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE CHAIR IS TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON TIMELY TOPICS FOR INDEPENDENT MUSIC TEACHERS SUCH AS BENEFITS, INSURANCES, LEGALITIES AND BUSINESS. LET ME KNOW YOUR SUGGESTIONS OR QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE TOPICS AND I'LL DO MY BEST TO ADDRESS THEM.

## How to Approach Uncomfortable Conversations



Do you plan to raise your tuition rates next year? Need to contact parents about a student's behavior at lessons? Frustrated with parents who ignore your studio policies? For some, striking up a conversation about these topics is difficult. We could tell families about our raise in lesson rates as Apple

informed me of the Apple TV+ raise in rates, and not care if we lose their loyalty. Check out this email I recently received about my subscription to Apple TV:

Dear Leila,

*Thank you for subscribing to Apple TV+. We wanted to let you know about an upcoming change to this subscription.*

*Apple is raising the price of this subscription from \$6.99 per month to \$9.99 per month. Your subscription will automatically renew for \$9.99 per month starting December 6 unless you cancel at least a day before. To learn more or cancel, review your subscription.*

Regards,

Apple

In contrast to Apple, it is best to use a more caring approach to maintain a relationship of trust with our student families. In his book *The Feedback Fix: Dump the Past, Embrace the Future, and Lead the Way to Change*, Joe Hirsch offers a template for approaching uncomfortable conversations. I learned about his approach while listening to a podcast called *The Cult of Pedagogy* hosted by Jennifer Gonzales. She interviewed Hirsch, and during their chat, he claimed that most of us tend to avoid giving honest opinions and negative feedback and instead deliver a praise sandwich.

For example, we tell the parents how much we enjoy Tommy at lessons, then mention that he could practice more, and then tell them again how brilliant Tommy is. We slip the “meat” of our message (something critical for parents to know) between slices of praise. Research says that we tend to remember the most recent thing we hear, so if parents hear praise last, they'll miss the “meat” you were trying to communicate. To avoid this sandwich delivery, Hirsch advises that we follow his four-step approach, which he labels with an acronym PREP (Gonzalez, 2020, 37:05):

**P is for Point.** Ask the parents' permission to give them honest feedback. This gives them voice and choice in the conversation and puts them at ease. Then, deliver the specifics of the issue and quickly get to the point.

*Is it okay to give you some feedback on Tommy's home practice? It seems to be sporadic and is not helping him make as much progress as he could.*

**R is for Reason.** Give them your reason for your concern so they know what you see at lessons.

*We have not moved forward in his pieces over the past weeks. Perhaps he plays the piano every day, but it doesn't appear he is playing or practicing what is assigned.*

**E is for Explain.** Carefully explain why it's a problem because if parents don't understand what you're saying, they may ignore your feedback.

*Progress at the piano only happens when practice happens. Because Tommy doesn't practice his assignments, he's not making progress. Because he doesn't make progress, he's not motivated. It's a critical loop for Tommy to maintain if you want him to succeed.*

**P is for Prompt.** Provide the parents the opportunity to say what they think. Give them a voice and choice in the process.

*Are you seeing a lack of practice at home?  
How could we partner to help Tommy change his practice habits?*

Asking parents for their opinions puts them at ease, validates their position, and keeps them from getting defensive. This offers the opportunity for a collaborative solution to evolve.

*What if you attended lessons for a couple of weeks to see what's happening and what's expected at home?*

*What could you change to make practice part of Tommy's daily routine?*

People want the truth, yet negative feedback may appear like you are trying to change them. Giving those who receive feedback voice and choice in the process lets them take ownership of the change and see how it will benefit them. Hirsch advises, “It's not that we fear change, we fear being change.” (Gonzalez, 2020, 41:28)

The next time you approach an uncomfortable conversation, avoid Apple's corporate tone and equip yourself with Hirsch's PREP method instead.

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*Gonzales, Jennifer. Moving From Feedback to Feedforward: Listen to My Interview with Joe Hirsch. Cult of Pedagogy. Podcast audio. January 18, 2018. <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/feedforward/>.*

# Local Association Presidents 2023–2024

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# NOTES & NEWS

COLORADO STATE MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

AFFILIATED WITH MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, INC.



## CSMTA Events through October 2024

January 13, 2024	CSMTA Board Meeting, 1:00pm via Zoom
March 1, 2024	Online application deadline for the CSMTA Concerto Competition
March 1, 2024	Commissioned Composer submission deadline
March 1, 2024	Deadline for online entries for CSMTA Concerto Competition
March 16, 2024	Registration deadline for Rising Stars Festival
March 16, 2024	Registration/Test order deadline for Student Theory Activity
March 16-20, 2024	MTNA National Conference, Atlanta, GA
April 20, 2024	Rising Stars Festival, University of Denver, Lamont School of Music
April 20, 2024	Student Theory Activity (STA) University of Denver, Lamont School of Music
May 1, 2024	Formal sessions proposal deadline
May 11, 2024	Performance of CSMTA Concerto Competition with Boulder Chamber Orchestra
September 8, 2024	Application deadline for CSMTA Master Class Activity
September 15, 2024	Poster presentation application deadline
October 18-19, 2024	2024 CSMTA State Conference, CSU-Pueblo

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[www.comusicteachers.net](http://www.comusicteachers.net)

[www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org)