



Wisconsin Music Teachers Association

State Affiliate of Music Teachers National Association

May 2024

Letter from the President

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

May. --- The very word makes the heart leap. Bird, Buds, Blossoms, Beauty! Break away from every bondage of circumstance or low spirits and go out into the sunshine. Answer back the bird-note in your heart, kiss your finger tips to every new blossom, and be a part of the spring.

~Eva D. Kellogg, "May," 1902

I know many music teachers who are also expert gardeners. Maybe it's because we've been conditioned to understand that expert care in tending to the soil and seeds will eventually lead to beautiful rich blossoms. It takes time and patience, it takes digging deep, and it takes the right balance of moisture and sunlight for a successful garden. Some of us have greener thumbs than others, but we all bring our own preferences and personalities to our gardens, and we learn to understand which plants will do well under our care and which ones won't.

Our teaching studios are much like our gardens. Whether you're a literal "plant person" or not, I wish you a beautiful spring and summer in self-reflection of your teaching strengths and weaknesses, digging deep to find your musical passions you'd like to share with others, and flourishing with enthusiasm for your craft. Happy gardening!

Yours sincerely,

Michelle "Mickey" Lytle, NCTM
President, Wisconsin Music Teachers Association





2024 WMTA State Conference

By Hector Landa, VP-Conference

We are working hard to make of this conference a memorable experience. Make sure you [book your hotel](#) now (Use code "WMTA" to get our special rate) because the Packers schedule will be out soon and room availability may change quickly. Watch the [conference website](#) for further information.

We look forward to seeing you in Appleton!

WMTA Young Composer Festival

By Amber Bruns, NCTM, WMTA Young Composer Festival Chair

Young Composer Festival is back this summer! Registration is due July 1 and all compositions must be submitted by August 15. Any instrument in any style is welcome. More information is available: <https://www.wisconsinmusicteachers.com/competition-for-young-composers>. Please contact Amber Bruns amber@bluemaplemusic.com.



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District Auditions 2024!

By: Roberta Grube, WMTA State District Chair

The 2024 District Audition season is complete. Congratulations to all the students, teachers, and parents who were involved in this year's auditions. A special thank you to all the District Chairs who spent hours coordinating schedules, hiring judges, printing certificates, judge's sheets, theory tests, and nametags, and arranging background checks to name just a few of the tasks they take care of.

I am looking forward to meeting all of you at the WMTA conference in October. It is a great time for the District Chairs to talk and pick up certificates and awards for the 2025 audition season. Just a reminder to start coordinating sites for next year.

Remember to renew your MTNA/WMTA/local memberships this summer. All renewals must be recorded by October 15, 2024, in order to enter students in the 2025 District Auditions.

Thank you for your patience and support this past year as I took on the position of WMTA State District Chair. I want to thank Sandra Statz, Mary Anne Olvera, and Opala Bilhorn for their guidance this past year. A special thank you to ALL the District Chairs, you are the rock stars of WMTA!

WMTA State Vocal/ Instrumental/ Ensemble Competition

By Opala Bilhorn, NCTM, State Vocal/Instrumental/Ensemble Chair

Greetings WMTA Members!

The WMTA State Vocal|Instrumental|Ensemble Competition will be held on Saturday, May 11, 2024 at UW-Stevens Point.

Participants are registered to compete in Vocal Solos, Vocal Ensembles, Keyboard Duets, Guitar Solo and String Solos.

A Winners Recital will occur on May 11 around 3:00pm at the Noel Fine Arts Center – all are welcome to enjoy hearing the winning students from the State Vocal|Instrumental|Ensemble Competition as well as the Regional Keyboard Competition.

The Vocal, Instrumental and Ensemble WMTA Auditions participation numbers have increased this year. This is the second year of offering the Ensemble Track and it is exciting to see more students participating in this opportunity at both the District and State level competitions.


Please reach out if you have questions about how to participate in the WMTA Vocal|Instrumental|Ensemble Tracks in your District Competition, I am happy to assist!

Opala Bilhorn, NCTM
opalas.music.studio@gmail.com



PIANO COMPETITION

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If you are studying advanced-level repertoire and desire to push yourself to the next level, apply for our High School Scholarship Piano Competition.

- Accepted applicants receive detailed written feedback.
- Contestants are awarded an overall rating based on their performance.
- In addition to a \$300 cash award, MBU scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,500 will be awarded to top performers.
- Contact janet.tschida@mbu.edu with questions.

mbu.edu/pianocompetition

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Limited Openings





2024 WMTA REGIONALS AND STATE KEYBOARD EVENT – May 2024

By Mary Anne Olvera, NCTM, Regional Keyboard Competition Chair

As I write this, we are still three weeks away from our first Regional weekend. So, this is a good time to happily shine light on topics surrounding scheduling:

REQUESTS and SWITCHING!!

Many teachers, on behalf of parents, request special consideration for their student. Sometimes it takes the form of a very gracious request, most times it takes the form of a statement. My answer to a request is always the same: I don't take requests, unless it involves a family emergency or hardship.


Asking for extra consideration when a student has another event usually seems very reasonable to a parent or teacher. This other event often has undeniably great value. But this simple request puts an unreasonable hold on the already complex process of scheduling.

For this reason, I say no requests, but I will make a note, and make no guarantees. I have to stand by this, and here's why: Regional scheduling is not just scheduling the individual student, as we do at district auditions. Regional scheduling is scheduling an entire grade level block, or multiple grade levels, in one site. Coordinating siblings needs to be done (always complex across grade levels) and each site needs to be balanced so that each site is done around the same time.

And time is an important factor. Regional competitions always include a Winner's Recital at day's end, which is often the gem of the day! We want to ensure a reasonable start time, while ensuring that an audience, including the Winners, will be in attendance and able to perform. And, for those families who have traveled, it's important to send them on their way home at an acceptable time.

I have also had teachers/parents who will ask me, after the schedule has been published, if they can switch with another student, same grade level, same site. While this also seems like a benign request, my answer is always the same: *No. Once the schedules are published, there can be no changes.*

I have to stand by this, and here's why: As soon as the schedule is published, the judges' forms are prepared. They go into production, with sites and times printed on the forms. They are collated in the order of performance to facilitate ease of distribution to judges folders. These must be in order, or ease of distribution to judge's folders cannot happen. Switches would create glitches! Student certificates are also being prepared, collated in an order facilitating distribution to teachers' packets. Again, switching creates additional and unreasonable time spent re-ordering certificates. And of course, there are a mass of coordinations that cannot be changed.



Time requests and switching requests are made by wonderfully well-meaning and supportive parents/teachers, who are advocating for their students. I understand this, and I wanted to share my thoughts, hoping to build understanding around these topics.

And bravo to the 300 students and 90 teachers across WI who participated in another successful and exciting Regional/State Keyboard event! Results will be posted in the next newsletter, and on the WMTA Facebook page.

Administrative Council: MTNA Jr/Sr Competitions Chair

WMTA seeks a new MTNA Jr/Sr Competitions Chair! Bethany Hartlaub has recently resigned as WMTA's Jr/Sr Competitions Chair after serving in that position for the past several years. (Thank you, Bethany!) This position is a member of the Administrative Council which has two meetings a year (October and June). You work with the other two Wisconsin MTNA Competitions Chairs to host the fall event. If you are interested in this position, please email President Mickey Lytle: mickeywmta@gmail.com.

MAKE **MUSIC** YOUR SUPERPOWER



As the warmth of summer sets in, the urge for students to take a break from their instrument may be strong, but maintaining a steady practice routine is crucial for progress and development! With extended daylight hours and increased leisure time, the summer months offer an ideal chance to delve into fresh techniques, dabble in diverse genres, or embark on composing your own music. With programs like Playcation offering chances to keep playing and win prizes, and events like Make Music Day providing opportunities to celebrate music with others, there are plenty of reasons to stay engaged and inspired!

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WMTA Hiring Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant is responsible for supporting the members and events of the organization as directed by the President and Executive Board Members. Regular tasks include checking and answering the organization's email, designing and sending the quarterly membership newsletter and membership emails, updating the website, and assisting the Conference Chair in organizing and managing the Annual State Conference each October.

Qualified candidates must be self-driven and capable of independent work from home and have a computer capable of fulfilling the organization's needs. They should be capable of professional, timely, and effective written communication, while having strong editing and organizational skills. Applicants need sound computer skills including document design and knowledge of Gmail, Google Workspace, WordPress, MailChimp, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel. Typical weeks average 3 to 5 hours of work but tasks are generated by the current needs of the organization and can vary. This independent contractor (1099) position includes an annual evaluation and contract renewal with a competitive hourly rate.

WMTA members are strongly encouraged to apply.

Send cover letter and resume to mickeywmta@gmail.com, to the attention of Mickey Lytle and Mary Tollefson. Immediate hire.


**Please enjoy these articles
submitted by our members!**

MTNA 2024 Conference Session on Nutrition for Performing Artists

-Submitted by Tim Mueller, member Madison Area Music Educators (MAME) (Article reprinted from MAME's April 2024 Nuances newsletter)

A week before the MTNA national conference this month, I decided to arrive a day early so I could attend "Pedagogy Saturday." I am very glad I did. The second session that morning, "Strategies for Breaking Common Nutritional Myths," was part of the Musician Wellness Track at the conference. Going into it, I was expecting the standard well-organized presentation about how proper diet and exercise are important for doing one's best as a performing musician. But the presentation itself, by research scientist Dan Bernardot, PhD, of the Center for the Study of Human Health at Emory University, went far beyond what I expected. Dr. Bernardot looked at eleven common misperceptions about nutrition and health, and enlightened us with their corresponding realities. I was shocked by how many of these misperceptions I had assumed were true, and also by how complex and nuanced the realities are compared to the simplistic myths that surround them.

Among the problems he addressed were:

- 
- Cultural norms assume that eating 3 meals a day is ideal, but it's not.
 - “Calories in -- calories out” in 24-hour units is not how our bodies work. Energy needs are best met in real time.
 - Thinking of lack of hydration as something to recover from (i.e., drinking when thirsty), rather than finding ways to stay hydrated and avoid thirst.
 - Eating protein is most effective if it's distributed equally throughout the day's meals, and not primarily in a large dinner.

There was so much more beyond this brief summary. [Linked here](#) are the 31 slides that Dr. Bernardo used in his presentation. I found the depth of detail fascinating, particularly some of the graphs showing the results of his research. I hope you will find it as interesting and valuable as I did.

Reflections from the MTNA National Conference

-Submitted by Lisa Allred, incoming MAME President (Article reprinted from MAME's April 2024 Nuances newsletter)

Nine MTNA members from Wisconsin attended the MTNA National Conference this month, five of which were attendees from MAME specifically. MAME's very own Dr. Jess Johnson gave an excellent presentation on vulnerability in teaching with her colleague, Midori Koga.

It was an excellent conference; I attended sessions on a variety of topics including the following:

- Teaching and improving students' improvisation
- Masterclasses with beginner, intermediate, and advanced students, as well as a technique-focused masterclass
- Understanding taxes for an independent studio owners
- Teaching complex polyrhythms (5 against 7, 6 against 11, etc.)
- Improving my studio website
- And so many more!

The range and breadth of topics meant that I could learn just about anything, AND connect with colleagues, network, and enjoy professional camaraderie. Not to mention the recitals and performances available to all attendees for free were given by both visiting guest artists and the highest caliber students. As a first-time attendee of the conference, I can't recommend the whole experience highly enough. Next year (2025), the conference will be in Minneapolis, and the year after (2026) in Chicago, so it'll be two locations much closer to home, hopefully making it even more accessible for those of us in MAME.

Cost may be a barrier to attending the national conference (it was for me!), so keep an eye out for scholarship/grant opportunities advertised by MTNA to help you attend if this is something you're interested in. I would not have been able to go without a grant I received from the National Piano Foundation, (advertised in an MTNA email a few months ago) to help defray financial barriers. Many of these types of grant programs don't receive a huge number of applicants, so it may not be as



competitive as you'd think. It's always worth a shot!

If the national conference is out of reach for you, the [WMTA State Conference](#) coming up on October 24-26, 2024, is another great way to receive many of the same enrichment, networking, and professional benefits at a fraction of the cost of a national conference. Conferences are an excellent way to get inspired, rejuvenated, and encouraged in this career where so many of us feel burned out and overworked. If you can, save up and plan now to attend, so you can have this professionally invigorating experience. I hope to see you there!

Aids for You to Use

The Leadership of WMTA

For a list of WMTA Leadership, please click here: [Leadership](#)

For a list of your Local Association Presidents, click here: [Local Associations](#)

Professional Assistance Line

MTNA understands the ever-changing demands that music teachers face. To meet those needs, a vast collection of business resources has been developed by the association. Content will continue to be added and updated to ensure MTNA members have access to resources necessary to grow thriving studios and portfolio careers. If you have any questions regarding the Business Resources section or would like to provide feedback, [click here](#) or contact the MTNA National Headquarters at (888) 512-5278 or mtnanet@mtna.org.

Have You Moved?

All membership changes, including renewals and address changes, should be made on the MTNA website by updating your member profile. www.MTNA.org

Member Submissions

The WMTA newsletter is to be used for WMTA and Local Association information, with the exception of paid advertising. All WMTA members may submit relevant announcements or articles to be published in the newsletter. All submissions should be submitted 2 to 4 weeks in advance and must be received by the 15th day of the month prior to issue date or they will not be included and are subject to space availability.

To propose information, please email the wisconsinmta@gmail.com with potential text and pictures. All text should be concise and edited for content, spelling and grammar. Photos should be clear, high resolution and ready for publication. Please do not send pdf documents. All content is subject to edit and approval before it can be included.



Advertise with Us

WMTA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit as a state affiliate of Music Teachers National Association (MTNA). Advertising with Wisconsin Music Teachers Association will help you reach the 450+ members who are largely private music teachers, college and university instructors, and college student members across Wisconsin. Advertising must be paid for prior to the 15th of the newsletter publication date. If you have questions or if you need an invoice, please email wisconsinmta@gmail.com.

Conference Advertising (Exhibitor)

Many options exist to advertise at our conference. Please see the website for details.

Newsletter Advertising Only Options

WMTA produces a newsletter in February, May, August, and December. If you would like to submit an advertisement, an electronic submission and payment are due by the 15th of the month prior. (January 15, April 15, July 15, and November 15) [More information here](#)

- Multi-newsletter advertising: 4 ads in the consecutive February, May, August, and December Newsletters, paid in full
 - Full Page: \$300
 - Half Page: \$150
- One-time Quarterly Newsletter full page color ad- \$100
- One-time Quarterly Newsletter half page color ad- \$50
- One-time use of our postal mailing list -\$75
- One-time ad, sent via email by WMTA on your behalf to entire membership- \$75
- If you wish to advertise, use [this link](#).

Donate to MTNA

When you make a contribution to the MTNA Foundation Fund, you are helping us work for a more musical tomorrow through programs that nurture the creation, performance, study and teaching of music. Young students are recognized for their pursuit of excellence in performance and composition through the MTNA Student Competitions. The foundation fund also supports local associations by awarding grants from a national level. Click [here](#).