

WMTA NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2024

Dear Colleagues,

As I write to you, I am reflecting on the opportunity to serve WMTA for the next three years as State President. While it is daunting in some respects, the conversations and presentations of the 2024 State Conference in Appleton remind me of how grateful I am for the colleagues I will be serving in this association. It was a great conference, and I came home with many ideas from every session! Two of my takeaways were feeling liberated about score interpretation from Michael Rector and Lori Rhoden's pragmatic improvisation skills to enhance students' abilities to creative accompanying! And I was very inspired by the sound "palates" introduced to me by Commissioned Composer Nic Bizub and notable Icelandic composers presented by Cayla Roché and Kristin Roach.

Although I have lived in Wisconsin for 30 years, I thought it might be nice to introduce myself to members whom I look forward to meeting. My journey brought me to Wisconsin in 1994 when I was hired at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. I had recently finished my doctorate at the University of Texas at Austin, studying pedagogy with Amanda Vick Lethco and Martha Hilley. During my first years of teaching in La Crosse, my mentor was Joyce Grill, composer, teacher, author and member who served WMTA and MTNA for many years. From 2018 to 2024, I served as the Department Chair at UWL, and this fall I returned to full-time teaching, where I teach piano, group piano, piano pedagogy and music appreciation. I volunteer to teach piano at a local Boys and Girls Club now. My volunteering is rewarding, but I am learning many lessons from these students who do not have access to the piano outside of the time that I am there! Although I teach in Wisconsin, I live in La Crescent, Minnesota (I cross the Mississippi every day to come to work). My husband also teaches at UWL, and our two daughters live in the Minneapolis area.

One of my passions is give presentations on effective and efficient learning in a variety of scenarios. For those who have heard me speak, you know that, while there's nothing magical about the number, I often think in threes. For example, what are the three most important values that you want to teach every student? How do you accomplish that in a lesson? In a year? In the student's duration of lessons with you? I encourage you to attend your local association meeting and share your values with other teachers to be encouraged and inspired.

As 2024 ends, here are three wishes I have for you, as my colleagues in WMTA:

Accept Gratitude. Thank you for being in the trenches, providing opportunities for creativity and self-expression through the power of music. However, I hope you are grateful for the opportunities that are provided through WMTA: you have colleagues to stand in the trenches with you through local association meetings and the state conference; different levels of auditions that offer your students a chance to grow outside of the studio; and a WMTA newsletter that provides a "snapshot" of the many activities offered through this association.

Be and become an inspiration. I hope that your "wins" with your students are celebrated! I hope you will share those wins with your colleagues so that they may become inspired too! Attend the National Conference in March 2025-listen to the Finals of the MTNA Competitions and enjoy the "hallway" conversations that members admit are the most fruitful experiences. Finally, inspire the entire WMTA membership by submitting a proposal for the 2025 State Conference!

Explore creative teaching. Another of my mentors at UT was Bob Duke, Professor of Music and Human Learning. One of his adages was the following: "When all else fails, *try something else.*" With your challenging students, I hope that you will seek out new repertoire and new teaching tips and tricks. Again, I am inspired by the conversations with my local association when we share tips about our teaching. I hope you are too!

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve, and to the WMTA Executive Board and Administrative Council for their support and dedication to the WMTA organization.

Happy Holidays!

Mary Tollefson, NCTM, 2024-2027 President, Wisconsin Music Teachers Association, marytolleffsonwmta@gmail.com

Wisconsin Music Teachers Association
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2025 CONFERENCE

It was wonderful to see everyone that attended the Appleton conference! It's always refreshing and rewarding to reconnect with colleagues from across the state and get new ideas to incorporate in my studio. I hope you enjoyed your time in our little corner of the world.

I am honored to be serving as the VP of conference for the next three years. Thank you for trusting me with this endeavor! I love planning and organizing events-my girls had some pretty amazing birthday parties when they were little. Now they're teenagers and are happy to have my attention somewhere else.

The committee and I are excited to announce next year's conference will be:

October 24-25, 2025 At The Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake



If you were at the conference in 2018, you probably understand why we are so eager to go back. If you weren't able to attend, you won't want to miss this beautiful oasis. The Osthoff is a AAA Four Diamond resort with tranquil views on the shore of Elkhart Lake with relaxing spa options.

Special conference rates for accommodations will be:
Run of the house bedroom suites--\$169.00 per night (sleep up to 4 in a room)
Two-bedroom woodland suites \$209.00 per night (sleep up to six)

I hope you all have a wonderful holiday season and are able to relax and enjoy it with family and friends.

Stacey Kraus, NCTM
VP of Conference



SESSION PROPOSALS

Get Wild About Teaching!

You spoke and we listened. Thank you for filling out the after conference survey, as this information is so valuable in planning the next conference. Our theme will be Get Wild About Teaching!

One thing we love is how social music teachers are. Our goal is for next year's conference to provide more interaction, engagement, and idea sharing throughout every aspect. Past Conference attendees might even be excited to hear we might even bring back the BINGO game!

Session Proposals

Because we are seeking engagement or interaction in some manner, the WMTA Conference Committee is requiring an example of how you will facilitate this when submitting your proposal. Examples would be a quick discussion amongst the table, physical movement, volunteers for demonstration, creating a game to see who hears you say a certain word the most times, creating a digital open poll (many ideas on pigeonhole live blog). The possibilities are endless and the theme will definitely get those creative juices flowing!

For members who are looking to submit a proposal, these are topics or presentations that have been requested:

- Meeting needs of neurodivergent or special ed students
- Performance presentations
- Technique in beginners
- Pedagogy for those transitioning out of methods
- Progressing dedicated students to bigger repertoire-potentially preparing for eventual college auditions
- Brain based learning
- Legal resources and taxes
- General music topics- not just for piano such as theory, rhythm, practice motivation, goal setting, creating good practice habits for every age and stage, building a music community, etc
- Adjudicating - how to get started, how to give quality feedback in short time
- Duet/ensemble preparations

Conference Sessions Submissions

We are now seeking session proposals for the 2025 Annual Conference and all proposals must be received before the close date of January 31, 2025. Please note that presenters must be MTNA members and that general sessions are noncommercial in nature. Information and directions on how to submit a proposal are on the WMTA website [HERE](#).

When you are ready, submit your conference proposals here: [WMTA 2025 Conference Proposal Form](#).

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the Conference Planning Committee by emailing wisconsinmta@gmail.com.

Let your thoughts go wild!



2024 CONFERENCE CONCERT

2024 CONFERENCE CONCERT

The Friday night conference concert featured faculty from Lawrence University, UW-Green Bay, UW-Oshkosh and UW-Stevens Point. We had a full audience of WMTA conference attendees, Lawrence faculty and students, and Fox Cities community members. The energy was high and the music was a delight. Of special note was the premiere of Nicolas Bizub's piece *Musica Est Lux*.

You may experience the concert by going to the Lawrence website to catch an archived recording. The recording will be available until January 6, 2025. To find the recording and concert program: Go to lawrence.edu; select "Music and Arts" at the top of the homepage; choose "webcasts" from the drop down menu. Once there you'll be able to access both the recording and the program. The event was on October 25, 2024.

Link to the video:

<https://vimeo.com/lawrenceuni>

Link to the concert program:

<https://www.lawrence.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/241025WMTA.pdf>



NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The 2025 MTNA National Conference is March 15-19 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Register before December 16 to lock in the early bird discount before prices increase after December 16. Your national conference registration this year also includes the Tempo virtual conference in late April. MTNA sends us lots of member information via email, so make sure to check your inbox in addition to the MTNA website for more information.

To learn more you can check out the MTNA website. [Click Here](#)

Conference Roommates

If you are interested in receiving a list of other WMTA members who are looking for a roommate for MTNA National Conference in Minneapolis, please email Mickey Lytle (mickeywmta@gmail.com) by January 6. She will connect those who respond on Friday, January 10, and they can help each other.



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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Membership News

This year we have 396 members - which is exactly in line with where we were last year. This doesn't mean we haven't changed though. Some members have moved on from our organization, others have decided to join. New members joining us is largely due to the energy and engagement of our current members - sharing with prospective members reasons for joining, inviting other music teachers to a meeting, sharing a cup of coffee and talking shop. The truth is, there is no magic formula other than the excitement of each of us as individuals to help our organization grow. One member recently asked me if WMTA had a list of the benefits to share with prospective members. I quickly put together the following from my perspective:

- entry into WMTA auditions
- connections with local teachers of (Insert LA organization name)
- state conference for continuing education
- a network of other professionals in the music field to share ideas and resources

but this list is likely different for each of you. So in the conversations you have out in the field, I ask as we approach a new calendar year for you to think of your 2 minute piano teaching elevator speech - why do you do what you do? And try to find a way to weave WMTA and MTNA into that conversation. If everyone of us were to invite someone new next year, and with a 10 percent success rate, we'd have about 40 new members. So continue to share music and share the benefits of our organization with others you know who are teaching but might not yet have joined. If you think about marketing, sometimes it takes a little while to wear someone down, but keep up the hard work, and may your teaching continue to spread the gift of music.

Submitted by Dr. Justin Krueger DMA, NCTM
2nd VP of Membership



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FOUNDATION FELLOW

Foundation Fund and MTNA Foundation Fellow

WMTA is seeking donations for our 2025 Foundation Fellow fund. Our 2025 Fellow is Rachel Fritz. The deadline to fund our fellow is Monday, January 13, 2025. When you give to WMTA/MTNA in support of the Foundation Fund, you can be confident that your gift will be used to support the professional and musical development of teachers, students and organizations all across the country. Last year alone, MTNA, through the FOUNDATION FUND, distributed more than \$150,000 in grants and awards to deserving individuals and groups. It's quick and easy to make your contribution.

Simply visit <https://www.mtnafoundation.org/contribute/contribute-now/> and indicate that your gift is for WISCONSIN FELLOW RACHEL FRITZ in the "Fellow" field. This ensures your gift is allocated correctly.



Rachel Fritz's journey with MTNA began via participation in local auditions in College Station TX. Joining MTNA as a collegiate member in undergraduate study at the University of Central Missouri, she has held roles of Nebraska MTA Junior Competitions Chair, Des Moines MTA Secretary, Wisconsin President and Treasurer. She has presented at state, local, and national conferences. Currently serving as COO and piano faculty at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music, she strives to make music education accessible to all.

In her free time she enjoys outdoor activities of all kinds, cooking, reading and travelling anywhere in the world. To my fellow WMTA members, thank you very much for selecting me for this honor. I am humbled to be named a MTNA Foundation Fellow.



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STATE KEYBOARD

WMTA 2025 STATE KEYBOARD COMPETITION

SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2025

UW-STEVENS POINT
NOEL FINE ARTS CENTER
1800 PORTAGE ST.

Registration Deadline: May 14, 2025. Forms and Fees must be mailed to:

Mary Anne Olvera
664 Louise Lane
Hudson, WI 54016

WMTA offers students the opportunity to advance beyond Regional events and compete against their Regional grade level counterparts, to determine one grade level winner for the state.

Eligible participants are the designated Regional winners - S, NE, and NW - at grades 7-12.

NEW! THE JUDGES CHOICE AWARD

In addition to the grade level Winner, judges will now be given the opportunity to acknowledge one student - inclusive of all grade levels but not chosen as grade level winner - whose performance deserves a unique recognition.

The new Judge's Choice Award will be given at the full discretion of the judging panel.

Judges are not bound to give this award each year, and their basis for award may differ each year. The Judge's Choice Award will be determined by the impact of student performances, and the resultant decision of the judging panel.

Students in grades 7-12 are eligible. Winners will not be considered for this award.

Examples of possible consideration may include, but are not limited to:

- An outstanding performance with overall program/repertoire choices less weighty than the Winner's program/repertoire choices
- An overall program combination that creates a unique, interesting, imaginative and fresh blend
- Any other distinctive performance elements that moved the judging panel to award this unique recognition

Points: Winner = 15

Judges Choice = 13

Questions may be addressed to:

Mary Anne Olvera, NCTM, WMTA Regional and State Keyboard Competition Chair - maryanneolvera@gmail.com



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REGIONAL KEYBOARD

2025 REGIONAL KEYBOARD COMPETITION DATES AND VENUES

By: Mary Anne Olvera, NCTM

2024 WMTA REGIONAL KEYBOARD COMPETITIONS

WMTA 2025 Regional Keyboard Competitions dates and venues are as follows:

S REGIONAL

UW-Whitewater
Greenhill Center of the Arts
950 W. Main S.
SATURDAY, MAY 10, 2025

NE REGIONAL

UW-Oshkosh
Arts and Communication Building
1001 Elmwood Ave
SATURDAY, MAY 10, 205

NW REGIONAL

UW-River Falls
E. H. Kleinpell Fine Arts
420 Cascade Ave.
SATURDAY, MAY 10, 2025

Deadline: postmarked by April 9, 2025. Registration fees are \$30 for each student entered.

Send fee summary sheet and check, made payable to WMTA to:

Mary Anne Olvera
664 Louise Lane
Hudson, WI 54016

REMEMBER:

- *Students advancing to the Regional Keyboard Competition must compete in the region associated with their home district.*
- *A student preparing both solo (for Regional Keyboard) and duet (for V/I/E) may participate in the Regional Keyboard Competition at the venue/location of the State V/I/E for full award consideration in the Regional Keyboard Competition*
- *Teachers submitting students must plan to volunteer at the competition.*

Questions may be addressed to:

Mary Anne Olvera, NCTM, WMTA Regional and State Keyboard Competition Chair - maryanneolvera@gmail.com



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V/I/E COMPETITION

WMTA Vocal|InstrumentalEnsemble Competition News

The 2025 State Vocal|InstrumentalEnsemble Competition will be held at UW-Oshkosh on May 10, 2025. Below are the steps for participating in the WMTA State Vocal|Instrumental|Ensemble Competition:

Students must participate in District Auditions to qualify for the State Vocal|Instrumental|Ensemble Competition.

To qualify for the State competition students must receive a score of at least 14 points on their playing/singing ensemble and at least 4 points on their theory test.

April 9, 2025 is the State Vocal|Instrumental|Ensemble Registration deadline

Payments should be mailed to Opala Bilhorn at 508 Campus St. Suite 3, Milton, WI. 53563 and postmarked by April 9th. (See the fee summary form for costs). Make sure to include your fee summary form printed from the website. [Fee Summary Form](#)

Audition information (performance time and location) will be sent within a couple of weeks. Teachers submitting students must plan to volunteer at the competition.

Please note that State Track Keyboard Duets and Adult Keyboard are included in the State Vocal|Instrumental|Ensemble Contest. Teachers of State-qualified students will need to submit their registration materials to Opala Bilhorn.

Any questions please contact Opala Bilhorn at: opalas.music.studio@gmail.com 262-745-1063

Respectfully submitted,
Opala Bilhorn, NCTM



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DISTRICT AUDITIONS

WMTA District Auditions News

It was great meeting many of the District Chairs in person at the 2024 Conference in Appleton. Thank you for picking up all your certificates and awards which made my job distributing them very easy.

Check out all the audition information on our WMTA website. There are easy-to-follow flowcharts to help teachers understand the various tracks and their requirements. If you have any questions concerning audition specifics, please reach out to your District Chair. They are a great group of volunteers that work hard to make our auditions a great experience for the students.

Registrations will be completed using spreadsheets again this year. Stay tuned for further instructions from your District Chair as I am putting the finishing touches on the registration spreadsheet.

All applications must be completed by the application due date for your district. **There will be NO applications accepted late!** Please also have your application fees turned in by your district's due date. If you do have a student entering out of district you **MUST** get permission from the out of District Chair prior to the registration due date. Remember if any of your students qualify for Regional or State, they must register in the Region that your District is associated with. The exception would be for V/I/E entries and dual instrument qualifiers. Check out the WMTA website for more details.

There are both comprehensive study sheets and individual study sheets for the theory tests on the WMTA website for your use. As a reminder, all students will receive only two hearings of the aural theory questions during the audition's theory testing. The intervals will be played melodically going up, then down, then together; that is one hearing.

Also, the District Chairs have an opportunity to meet via zoom weekly where we address concerns and questions. I am looking forward to the 2025 auditions with enthusiasm.

Respectfully submitted,
Roberta Grube



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Spotlight on Connection: Learning and Sharing through Local Mentorship Gatherings

By Margaret Burton, Independent Music Teachers Forum Chair

In local WMTA associations, with so many experienced teachers in well-established studios, newer members who are just getting started in the business may feel overwhelmed or embarrassed to ask questions at meetings. What's a way to get everyone connected and engaged? In one local association (FVMTA), a very popular program consists of informal "Mentorship Gatherings" outside of regularly scheduled business meetings. Usually held 4-5 times per year in coffee shops all over the area, Catherine Walby started these gatherings in 10-15 years ago and has kept them going strong.

When asked about the group, Walby commented, "Our mentoring gatherings started as a way for newer members to become better acquainted with FVMTA, WMTA and teaching. What we have found, however, is that all members benefit from this informal time together. We love having a mix of more and less experienced teachers. Conversation flows easily; it has been a great way to explore the joys and challenges of teaching while also getting to know each other better."

Specific pedagogical or business topics are sometimes slated in advance, but most often the gatherings feature an open dialog about what's working well in individual studios, and discussing any specific problems members are seeking ideas to resolve. Repertoire, theory, technique, WMTA auditions, using tech, helping students establish practice habits, handling recitals, setting studio policies and staying organized are some of the topics which may arise spontaneously throughout the year. Picking up new teaching gems, while enjoying a lot of laughter and camaraderie each month keep folks coming back! The group welcomes younger members with children, and meets in places where kids are welcomed, too.

Scheduling on different weekdays each month helps bring new members in. The moderator picks several dates which work well, then asks for a show of hands at monthly association meetings to pick a date. A follow up email with details goes out to invite all local members, asking folks who plan to attend to contact the moderator. Some months, only two or three people might join in, but other times tables are dragged together to accommodate a crowd! Coffee shops make convenient, cozy and flexible venues. For members, these informal gatherings have been an awesome way to check out new places all over town, and to make valuable friends in the organization.

In the music business, connections are everything— Nothing like this in your area, yet? Give it a try!



2024 Local Association Members of the Year

Congratulations to the following members for being chosen as member of the year for their local association! Local associations are the backbone of WMTA and MTNA. We are so pleased to honor some of the individuals who make our local associations the successes they are.

Fox Valley MTA: Margaret Burton

Fox Valley Music Teachers Association is pleased to announce **Margaret Burton** as our 2024 Member of the Year. Margaret has been active in the organization since 2016, having served as Publicist, Vice President of Programming, EmCee for FVMTA's 2023 Monster Concert, and a co-chair of "Roomful of Pianos" ensemble in June 2024. In WMTA, she currently serves as Independent Music Teacher Forum chair. Respected by her professional peers as a volunteer and event coordinator, she was elected President of FVMTA in Spring 2024.

A talented conservatory-trained performer, Margaret teaches piano, theory and improvisation to students of all ages. She performs regularly as a soloist and collaborator throughout the Fox Valley with Wednesday Musicale, Lawrence Community Music School, and at various FVMTA events. On the local jazz scene, she can often be found tickling the ivories with the Neenah Ambassadors Big Band and BBR (Big Band Reunion). When not teaching or performing, Margaret is very active in the aviation community, and currently pilots a Cessna 172.

Kenosha Racine MTA: Stanley Bochat

A KRMTA member for many years, Stanley Bochat has been the chair of our local event, Scale Olympics, for several of those years. His leadership skills and appreciation for his fellow teachers is continually evident. Despite the trials of the changes demanded by Covid restrictions, he ably kept the event going: first by educating the membership on the use of a virtual platform and then skillfully moving it back to its original in-person event. His enthusiasm for the concept that teaching keyboard theory skills such as playing scales, chords, cadences and arpeggios should be and can be applauded with comments and awards has been instrumental in the success of the event. KRMTA is proud to honor Stan as Member of the Year for 2024.

Stanley Bochat of Twin Lakes, WI, graduated from the University of Wisconsin - Parkside in May of 2005 with a bachelor's degree in Music. He obtained his General and Vocal Music certification also from the University of Wisconsin - Parkside in June of 2008. Currently, he is employed as a Music Educator with the Kenosha Unified School District. From 2017 to current, Mr. Bochat has been the guest conductor for the Fine Arts of Antioch with Orchestra for the Christmas portion of George F. Handel's Messiah. Mr. Bochat is an active adjudicator for WSMA and also an accomplished pianist and performs at weddings, festivals, accompanies students at contests and other community events. Mr. Bochat also has a small piano studio located in Twin Lakes of which he currently teaches local students private music instruction. Mr. Bochat is an active member for NAFME, MTNA-Kenosha/Racine, ACDA-Wisconsin and adjudicator for WSMA. Any time that Mr. Bochat is not spending deeply involved in his musical activities, he is spending with his wonderful wife of 17 years, Summer, and four children, Saechelle (12), Sansabelle (10), Savrielle (7) and Stoltan (5). They love to spend time attending local music events and shows as well as community activities.

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MEMBERS OF THE YEAR

Madison Area Music Educators: Shad Wenzaff

Madison Area Music Educators is proud to nominate Shad Wenzlaff for our Local Association Member of the Year. Shad recently completed a three-year term serving MAME as its association president. In addition to his duties as MAME President, he co-chaired and helped carry out multiple MAME events, including the MAME Honors Festival, and he helped MAME develop a resident partnership with Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras at their new state-of-the-art music center, providing MAME teachers with access to a beautiful, professional environment in which to teach and hold recitals. Thank you, Shad, for all you have done for MAME!

Michibago MTA: Kristin Casper

Michibago MTA's member of the year is Kristin Casper. Kristin is a dedicated member of the organization and has held several leadership roles. She is currently Vice President. Kristin brings a bright spirit and can-do attitude to each project she tackles. Projects placed in her hands are accomplished with skill and finesse. Meeting presenters and locations: check. Our annual MMTA calendar: check. She is the stage manager for our Young Musical Stars concerts and keeps everything running smoothly during the program, even bringing a huggable plushie for a pre-performance boost. Our website stays up to date under her management, even through "technical difficulties".

She has been involved with MMTA since the birth of her 2 children and the members have enjoyed watching her children grow along with her love of the organization. Michibago is proud to recognize Kristin Casper as 2024 member of the year.

Rock River MTA: Bethany Hartlaub Whitesell

Rock River MTA selected Bethany Hartlaub for our Member of the Year for all the work she did with our district auditions and for our local association. We will miss her.

I, Bethany Whitesell (formally Hartlaub) have been a member of the Rock River Music Teachers Association for the past several years. Besides being a member, I have also been serving as chair of District Auditions for Whitewater. I maintained an active studio in Delavan, served as pianist for Geneva Lakes Church and was active in the Lake Geneva Symphony Orchestra. Just this August I got married to Austin Whitesell and moved to Indiana! I'm taking some time off teaching to get settled and enjoy newlywed life but am planning to get involved teaching and playing here in Crawfordsville, Indiana. I will truly miss all the wonderful Wisconsin music teachers and seeing everyone at the state conference! I'd like to say a special thanks to Rachel Fritz and Kayme Henkel who were so welcoming to me when I first joined WMTA! I'd also like to acknowledge Susan Hilker (my former teacher) and Chris Groth, two WMTA members who were an invaluable help and encouragement to me as a young teacher! WMTA is a wonderful organization, and I have truly been blessed to be involved in it!

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MEMBERS OF THE YEAR

St. Croix Valley MTA: Nancy Burman, NCTM

Nancy Burman has been teaching piano and voice for 47 years. She has been a dedicated member of the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), Wisconsin Music Teachers Association (WMTA), and the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) since 1981. Her leadership roles include serving on the WMTA State Board and holding various officer positions in the St. Croix Valley Music Teachers Association (SCVMTA), with the exception of treasurer. Additionally, she contributed to the Minnesota NATS Auditions Committee and has served as the local Audition Chair for SCVMTA, continuing to assist with auditions.

Throughout her career, Nancy has worked as a church organist and directed choirs for both adults and children, as well as community choirs, a 4-H Show Choir, and musical theater programs for homeschoolers. She has been a member of The Phipps Festival Choir for over 30 years and has participated in various community choirs. Currently, she sings with the St. Croix Sacred Ensemble.

An active adjudicator for the Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA) and WMTA, Nancy also accompanies her students during contests and recitals. Over the years, she has accompanied numerous high school choirs and served as the accompanist for the St. Croix Valley Boy Choir for a decade.

Nancy resides in a rural area near Hudson with her husband and three cats. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling to visit her three children, gardening, reading, spending time on the lake, and motorcycling.



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AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

WMTA Teacher Award of Excellence

It is my goal to help all teachers to earn this award! While students earn bars and plaques throughout their WMTA auditions experience, TEACHERS also can receive recognition for all their hard work! I would LOVE to honor YOU at the WMTA Conference Banquet in October 2025 by presenting you with a Certificate, plaque or bar. The WMTA Teacher Award of Excellence awards are presented to teachers based on participation of their students in WMTA auditions.

- ◆ One point is given to the teacher for each award their students earn through WMTA for each plaque and bar a student receives.
- ◆ An award certificate is earned at the following milestones: 10, 50, and 75 points.
- ◆ A plaque is earned at 100 points
- ◆ Bars are earned in 25-point increments following the plaque.

Submitting Points for Awards

I encourage YOU to reach out to me and claim YOUR AWARD! I understand that you may not have every record of every student award you have ever awarded but if you have received this award in the past, I most likely can tell you what level of award you have previously received. I would recommend starting with what you DO know and go from there. Submit a list of your qualifying students and the bars and plaques they have won to me by October 1, 2025 (sooner is great): Sandra.statz2@gmail.com.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have as well...just send me an email.
Sandra Statz



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MTNA CERTIFICATION



Certification Report

Sandra Statz, NCTM, WMTA Certification Chair

18% of the current WMTA membership holds this National Certification. Wisconsin has 64 certified teachers, five newly certified teachers since February 2024. MTNA reports the following members who applied for certification in 2024:

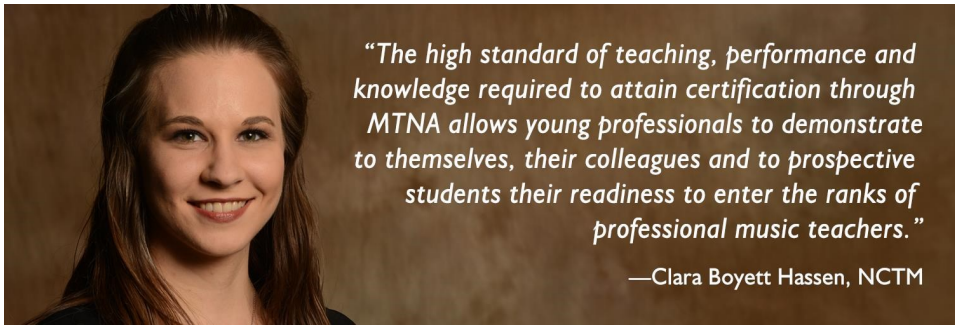
- Andrew Bocher – Piano (Madison)
- Mikaela Pawlowski – Piano (Watertown, collegiate)
- Charis Dwire – Violin (Watertown, collegiate)
- Alissa Foerster – Piano (Watertown, collegiate)

A reminder to all members: WMTA will reimburse application fees for our members who complete MTNA certification (\$200)—please contact me to begin the process.

Congratulations to newly certified members—

- Caelyn Meier, NCTM - Piano
- Yoo Min Lee, NCTM - Piano
- Allison Morken, NCTM – Piano
- Margaret Bugera, NCTM - Piano
- Rachel Turney, NCTM - Piano

I encourage you, if you are not nationally certified, to explore the possibility of becoming certified, either by doing the Teacher Profile Projects or through Administrative Verification.



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Piano – Strings – Ensembles Competitions!

FVMTA Young Artist Festival

(for students in NE Wisconsin)

Saturday, February 15, Lawrence Conservatory of Music

Expert critiques, free clinic, **cash prizes**, winners recital! See <https://fvmta.org/young-artist-festival-2025.html>

For YAF news, fill out interest form on web page.

- Your string players can get extra mileage performing their WSMA pieces!
- Teach the fun of playing on two pianos/keyboards with **one movement** of a concerto for young players – and there are many!
- Combine strings, pianos, voices for ensembles!

Two-Piano Ensembles Performed by FVMTA

Two-piano ensembles filled the air with varying melodies including “Autumn Leaves,” “Malequeña,” “Overture from the Nutcracker Suite,” “Song of The Toreador” and more at the Neenah Public Library on November 16.

Eleven members of Fox Valley Music Teachers Association presented eight-hand pieces and duets in a public recital, pairing the Neenah library grand piano with the Appleton grand piano for a “farewell” program. The Appleton grand will soon be returned to its newly renovated home in the Appleton Library.

Area non-member teachers were invited to meet the FVMTA members and treated to a reception following the performances.

The camaraderie of the participants while preparing the program was an enjoyable and educational collegial benefit for the following members: Margaret Burton, Barbara Froelich, Jody Gawron, Bruce Koestner, Stacey Kraus, Justin Krueger, Nina Mink, Margaret Murray, Lynn Orlando, Catherine Walby, and Shuk-Ki Wong.





WMTA STUDY GRANT

2024 WMTA Study Grant Winners

WMTA awards up to \$2000 annually for Summer Study Grants. These grants are awarded to college students to undergraduate or graduate students currently studying with a WMTA member.

The WMTA Executive Board approved Summer 2024 Study Grants to the following students:

- ⇒ Jonathan Bass • Lawrence University, senior, piano to participate in the Lawrence Chamber Music Festival in Wisconsin
- ⇒ Sophia Eckdale-Dudley, Lawrence University, senior, cello for attending the Vivace International Music Festival in North Carolina
- ⇒ Isaac Epley • Lawrence University, freshman, piano for attending the Saarbarg Music Festival in Germany
- ⇒ Charlie Grady UW-Eau Claire, junior, flute to attend the Brevard Flute Seminar in North Carolina
- ⇒ Qiaochuhan Li • Lawrence University, junior, piano to attend the Decoda Chamber Music Festival in North Carolina

The application is available on the WMTA website under "Collegiate Chapters," and the application deadline for the WMTA Summer Study Grants is May 1, 2025. Congratulations to all of the 2024 recipients!

Congratulations to Jonathan Bass, one of our 2024 WMTA Grant Winners!

17 October 2024—Summer Chamber Music at Lawrence University

In late July, supported by a WMTA Summer Study Grant, I was able to spend two weeks at the inaugural Lawrence University Chamber Music Festival (LCMF) on Lawrence’s lovely campus in Appleton, WI. Since LCMF is a brand new festival as of 2024, I wasn’t entirely sure what to expect going in — I found it to be an exciting, forward-thinking program that combined many of the best elements of a traditional chamber music festival with some new innovations geared toward shaping versatile musicians for the future. Each of the approximately 40 students were placed into two separate chamber groups, and the fact that the festival welcomed pianists, woodwinds, strings, brass, and percussion students allowed for some very creative instrumentations; in addition to the more typical trombone quartets and piano trios, there was a cello-percussion duo, a violin-trombone duo, a clarinet-violin duo, and several larger eclectic chamber instrumentations. The repertoire was similarly varied; while there were some of the usual warhorse chamber works by Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, and Dvořák, there were also many pieces by living composers such as Missy Mazzoli, Evan Williams, Kevin Puts, and Libby Larson, as well as pieces by composers who are more on the fringes of the Classical canon such as Louis Spohr, Max Bruch, and Aram Khachaturian. It’s my belief that as the musicians of the future, it’s the job of myself and my colleagues to strive for this level of creativity and diversity in our programming as our collective repertoire continues to evolve and become even more rich and varied.

The most exciting and distinctive part of LCMF for me, however, was our collaboration with artists from the Mile of

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weekend at the beginning of each August, and it coincided this summer with the final weekend of LCMF. Students at LCMF had the opportunity to curate a series of shows for MoM, in collaboration with MoM singer-songwriters. Along with a group of about 12 of my LCMF colleagues, I was able to work with the Green-Bay based band Pegasis — we programmed and performed an hour-long show consisting of, in addition to several of the chamber pieces that we had been rehearsing all festival, three original Pegasis songs which Pegasis performed with us.

The curation process involved making many decisions about program order, who would talk and what would they say, and how would we all organize ourselves to make the show flow smoothly. It also involved learning the Pegasis originals by ear, and working together to make our own arrangements of them. I found that this was an excellent opportunity to get outside of my comfort zone in a healthy way, to consider some of the aspects of music-making that go beyond simply reproducing what we see on the written page, to consider how I might more effectively connect with my audience — in short, to get outside of some of the boxes that, in my view, classical musicians can be trapped into thinking in. The band Pegasis, I observed for instance, has a very personable, relaxed, friendly way of engaging with their audience and of telling a story through every aspect of their performance, and I certainly think that there is much that classical musicians such as myself can learn from that.

As an LCMF student, I thought the MoM curation process was a brilliant pedagogical counterbalance to the more traditional chamber music study that we were doing. All in all, I found LCMF an exciting and refreshing program, one that productively challenged me to grow in many aspects of my musicianship, and I was thrilled to learn from the excellent faculty and to work with excellent colleagues in my chamber groups along the way. What a rewarding two weeks!

Congratulations to Qiaochuhan Li, one of our 2024 WMTA Grant Winners!

My name is Qiaochuhan Li, a rising fourth-year student studying piano at Lawrence University. I had the honor this year of receiving the WMTA summer study grant for my summer festival studies at Rocky Ridge Music College Intensive and Decoda Chamber Music Festival, and I would love to share my experience via poster or an article. I will be studying abroad in Vienna in the fall, so unfortunately, I couldn't make it to the conference in person. However, I would love to make a poster and have my friend at Lawrence put it up for me or contribute an article about my experience for the newsletter.

A Summer of Collaboration, By Qiaochuhan Li

As a musician, collaboration has played a big role in my past experiences. This summer, my goal is to learn more about collaboration as a pianist. I've been to the College Intensive program at Rocky Ridge Music (Estes Park, CO) for the past two summers as a solo piano student. I had a great time working on my chamber music repertoire there

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with Dr. Angie Draghicescu and Dr. Andrew Campbell, who primarily teach collaborative piano. I always want to work with them more on my collaborative piano repertoire. At the same time, I want to go to a festival I've never been to. I've been to many concerts at the Decoda Chamber Music Festival (Swannanoa, NC) in the past summers, and the creativity of their faculty performances has always inspired me as a musician. Therefore, I ended up applying and getting into both summer programs. Gratefully with the scholarship from the festivals and additional funding from WMTA, I was able to attend both festivals and learned a lot more about music collaboration.

One of the assignments I received at Rocky Ridge was the first movement of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto in D Major. That was a great opportunity for me to get more experience in playing orchestral reduction. Unlike a duo sonata, an orchestra reduction was not originally written for the piano, sometimes poorly arranged, and therefore a lot of sections are very hard or even impossible to play on the piano note by note. Therefore, as a collaborative pianist, we need to decide what notes to include and what to leave out, so the piece ends up sounding better, and at the same time, we don't overwork ourselves.

In a studio class, Dr. Campbell used the orchestral reduction of the Sibelius Violin Concerto as an example to show us the traps we could fall into when playing orchestra reductions. The opening of the Sibelius Violin Concerto begins with violins playing a measured tremolo. However, neither of the piano arrangements available at this moment captures the sound created by the orchestra. We as pianists can then listen to recordings of the orchestra and try to tweak the available arrangements to better imitate the orchestral sound on the piano. Also, there are misprints in some places of the piano reduction, so we always have to check with the orchestral score. As collaborative pianists, we need to always use our creative brains and think critically about the score in front of us.

One of the challenges I've had at both festivals was to learn and perform a new piece in a very short amount of time. At Rocky Ridge, I had to learn, rehearse, and perform the first movement of the Mendelssohn C Minor Piano Trio (which has so many notes and tricky passages in the piano part) in less than two weeks. At the end of the festival, I performed in three nights of concerts in a row with three different pieces, and that was a big challenge for me to evenly spread out my energy and quickly shift my mindset between each piece.

Since Rocky Ridge and Decoda happened so close to each other, I also have to start learning my chamber music assignments for Decoda during Rocky Ridge. That was a big challenge for me, but I learned how to prepare music quickly in a smart way: I primarily focused on the passages that were most challenging in each piece and started with them, so I ended up spending the most time on it. Although it was still very stressful, learning the music strategically saved me a lot of time and still allowed me to have an efficient first rehearsal.

One of the most memorable moments for me at the Decoda Chamber Music Festival was watching the faculty performance at the Swannanoa Western Correctional Center for Women. This was very different from my past concert experiences because the performance took place at a prison, and we needed to go through ID checks and

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security even before we could go inside. When we arrived outside of the facility, it was burning hot, and the women from the correctional facilities also just got back from working at a laundry facility under 90-degree heat with no AC. We waited for about 30-40 minutes outside before we were allowed to go in. When we walked into the air-conditioned performance venue, even AC felt like a privilege for us.

The chapel was fully packed. We, the festival young artists, were seated among the women from the correctional facility. Before the performance, we briefly chatted. One of the women said, "I played the guitar in high school, and I miss playing it so much." At that moment, I realized that being able to play an instrument is already a privilege. That hour of performance was the first performance I've ever attended without access to cell phones or any form of technology (we were not allowed to bring any electronic device into the facility); I totally lost track of time and learned what it meant to feel the present moment.

The performance also features the premieres of two student compositions. After the performance, the women cheered for the student composers more passionately than I've ever seen at a classical music concert. Music should be a human right. As audiences who were favored by the current society, we've always taken the ability to make music and to listen to music for granted, yet not everyone has access to it. Sometimes, we have so many opportunities to watch music performances that we even feel numb about attending performances and therefore won't react to them as passionately. This reminds me of the times when I complained about the number of recitals I had to go to every term, but now having this experience, I realized how lucky I was to be able to attend high-quality music performances as a conservatory student.

It was such a memorable experience for me to spend three weeks and make music at two of the most beautiful places in the United States. In three weeks, I have (re)learned, rehearsed, and performed the first movements of the Brahms A Major Violin Sonata, the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, the Mendelssohn C Minor Piano Trio, two movements from the Destenay Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, and Piano, and three movements from the Barber Souvenir Ballet Suite for Piano Four-Hands! I learned so much not only about performing but also about how to allow my voice to get heard and to be my own advocate. I am beyond grateful for WMTA to support me and to allow me to have such wonderful experiences this summer!



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FEDERAL REGULATION

As of January 1, 2024, a new federal regulation went into effect that may impact some members of WMTA who have incorporated their teaching studios. Please review the follow information and the MTNA link to determine if you are impacted by the change.

Please note: MTNA members who are sole proprietors (unincorporated) are NOT AFFECTED by the new regulation. State and Local MTNA affiliate organizations are also NOT AFFECTED.

On January 1, 2024, the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) went into effect. This new federal regulation requires most small business entities (“Reporting Company”) that have been formed by a filing with the Secretary of State (corporation, partnership, LLC, etc.) to file a “Beneficial Owner Information Report” (BOIR) with the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), which is part of the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

As a service to our members, MTNA has prepared a “Quick FAQs” to assist those members who are incorporated to comply with the new regulation. Please click on any of the following questions for relevant information regarding the Corporate Transparency Act, Reporting Companies, Beneficial Owners and the Beneficial Owner Information Report.

[MTNA WEBSITE CTA Frequently Asked Questions](#)

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