

WMTA NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2025

Dear Colleagues,

This is my first chance to wish you a happy and healthy 2025!

This year at the 2025 National Conference, WMTA will be recognizing Rachel Fritz as an MTNA Foundation Fellow. Rachel is our current WMTA Treasurer, but she is a past president and a past Treasurer and has been a member of WMTA for almost 20 years! Rachel is a passionate piano teacher and her enthusiasm is infectious! I hope you will take time to read her information that was published in the December newsletter and consider contributing to her honor! WMTA makes a donation in honor of Rachel and we recognize an outstanding member of WMTA and MTNA and help support the MTNA Foundation.

I wanted to share a little bit more about MTNA Foundation. The MTNA Foundation Fund (mtnafoundation.org) supports ongoing programs that address impactful teaching, performance, study and creation of music. Through the Foundation, MTNA offers grants that include Teacher Enrichment grants, Affiliate Enrichment grants (for a local or state association), collegiate grants, and Partnership grants that include community engagement and program development. You can read more about the applications and outcomes at the MTNA Foundation's website. Additionally, the MTNA Foundation recognizes affiliates and members for the work they do to contribute to the missions of MTNA. Along those lines, the MTNA Foundation Fellows combine recognition of outstanding state members with financially supporting all the programs and awards offered through the MTNA Foundation. I encourage you to review the website and take note of those being honored at the 2025 Awards Brunch at the National Conference!

I hope you will read the many contributions to this WMTA newsletter. I am so grateful to the many members who make this a fantastic organization of collaborations and opportunities to work together. While there are updates for the upcoming auditions, I am pleased that the 2025 State Conference is already underway! One way that you could start planning to make this a part of your professional development is to start planning how to have the time in October to attend the conference. Many times, teachers teach every week, but not every student shows up, and so, every week looks differently due to absences and then rescheduled lessons. If you start planning now, could that week of the conference be your "make-up week," where you don't have the typical lesson schedule, but it allows you to make up any missed lessons. Another idea is to take the week of the conference and schedule group lessons—let the students come in a group, play for each other, but with low stakes—this will be the most empathetic audience because every student knows they will need to play something! By scheduling this now, not only will you have scheduled a variety of teaching opportunities, but you won't feel like you "canceled" lessons to attend the conference. I am sure your colleagues will have other creative ideas too!

Thank you for all you do to enrich the lives of your students!

Musically yours,
Mary Tollefson, NCTM
2024-2027 President, Wisconsin Music Teachers Association



2025 CONFERENCE



Conference Details:

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

Theme: Get WILD about teaching!

Registration opens in June 2025 and early bird pricing will be available until August 15.

Greetings Music Teachers,

Plans for the 2025 conference are off to a great start! I cannot say thank you enough to those that have been assisting me and answering my many questions to make this an amazing experience for everyone.

We have some potential new offerings this year, one of which is lightning sessions. We are reaching out to all of you for ideas. These sessions will feature your favorite quick music game you use in lessons (individual or group). These games need to have short explanations, and be done either without a piano or can simulate piano use with a print out. We will have groups of teachers cycle through each table, spending about 5 minutes at each. Do you have a game that fits this criteria? Submit it [HERE](#) by March 1. If multiple people submit the same game, I will reach out to you to coordinate the demonstration.

We would also like to offer a yoga session before Saturday's sessions begin, at an extra cost (\$20-30). The Osthoff has some options for us and I am still getting information. Regardless if this is of interest to you, please fill out this [FORM](#) by March 1 so we know for future planning.

BINGO is Back—If you have a desire to help our social group socialize more, why not support Conference by creating this year's Bingo boards? Email me at sakraus2@gmail.com if you're interested in helping out with this project,

Stacey Kraus, NCTM
VP of Conference





TREASURER REPORT

WMTA Treasurer Report – January 2025

Statement of Financial Position: 1/15/2025		Statement of Activities: 1/15/2025		
ASSETS			2025 YTD	FY 2024
Checking	1,535	INCOME		
CD 2597 (4.50%, 10/28/27)	109,180	Donations & Grants	1,060	335
CD 2363 (4.00%, 10/30/25)	40,454	Membership	2,726	13,133
Undeposited Funds	1,126	Conference	8,933	10,300
Prepaid Expenses	4,757	District Auditions	0	37,180
Total Assets	\$ 157,052	Regional Keyboard	0	9,000
LIABILITIES		State Keyboard	0	1,315
Total Liabilities	\$ 0	State VIE	0	1,010
NET ASSETS		Composition Festival	865	1,385
FY 2024	158,133	MTNA Competitions	530	1,120
YTD Net Income	6,315	Advertising	475	1,125
Total Net Assets	\$ 164,448	Interest	3,180	6,135
		Other	0	416
		Total Income	\$17,769	\$ 82,454
		EXPENSES		
		Personnel	5,479	38,403
		Facilities	5,100	17,383
		Printing & Publication	350	892
		Postage & Shipping	104	586
		Supplies & Tools	83	584
		Technology	2,723	7,160
		Grants	2,300	7,315
		Awards	1,993	5,138
		Background Checks	84	1,744
		Insurance	368	3,228
		Legal	0	101
		Meetings and Travel	2,059	3,689
		Other	0	26
		Total Expenses	\$ 22,643	\$ 86,250
		Net Income		
			\$-4,874	\$ - 3,797



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



Wisconsin Music Teachers Association

Part of Music Teachers National Association



REGIONAL KEYBOARD

2025 REGIONAL KEYBOARD COMPETITION DATES AND VENUES

By: Mary Anne Olvera, NCTM

2025 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, 2025

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 State Vocal/ Instrumental/ Ensemble Competition

WMTA offers students the opportunity for grades 4-12 and Adult to advance beyond the District Vocal, Instrumental and Ensemble event to compete against their grade-divisions for the title of State Winner.

ELIGIBILITY:

Enter in the State Track at the District Auditions

Receive qualifying scores at the District Auditions (performance scores: 5-5-4 and theory 80% minimum).

Pieces chosen must comply with repertoire requirements, and not exceed 15 minutes.

ON COMPETITION DAY:

Students are grouped into graded divisions.

The adjudicator listens to all the performers in a division and declares a Winner, Runner-Up and Honorable Mention (s).

The Winner has the opportunity to perform at a recital that afternoon/evening.

In the event the Winner cannot perform, the Honorable Mention is invited to perform.

Points = 15 for Winner plus Winners Trophy, 14 for Runner Up plus trophy, 13 for Honorable Mention and all receive certificates

2025 VOCAL / INSTRUMENTAL / ENSEMBLE STATE INFORMATION	
Date: Saturday, May 10 th	Fees:
Location: UW-Oshkosh	Solos & Duets \$30
Registration deadline: April 9, 2025	Ensembles: Solos & Duets: \$30
	Ensembles (3-5 student performers): \$40
	Ensembles (6-10 student performers): \$50
Checks payable to WMTA send checks & Fee Summary form to Opala Bilhorn 508 Campus St. Suite 3, Milton, WI 53563	

For information about guidelines for Ensembles and non-Keyboards instruments and voices please see the WMTA website: <https://www.wisconsinmusicteachers.com/>

Questions: Contact Opala Bilhorn at opalas.music.studio@gmail.com

State Vocal/Instrumental/Ensemble Chair



Wisconsin Music Teachers Association

Part of Music Teachers National Association

**WMTA District Auditions: Better Music Theory for All****by Margaret Burton, Independent Music Teachers Forum Chair**

How's your Theory teaching? I have a confession to make. If you're like I used to be, you might touch on teaching Music Theory rather informally throughout the year, starting beginning students with the basics (note and rhythm reading, time signatures, tempo markings, dynamics, articulation symbols and the like as they work through method books), but letting theory topics slide as students get older. As they progress, it's tempting to launch into working larger repertoire and technique each week, while covering theory topics only "when we have time". This can unfortunately result in that terrible moment (don't ask me how I know) when an intermediate or advanced student gives a blank stare when asked about a term or theory concept they really *should* be confident about! You're thinking, "We covered this!", but now realize there's a gaping hole where some very important music theory understanding should be. Many private teachers need to do a better, more professional job at incorporating Theory into standard lesson procedures. But how? Here's what did it for me:

Make Music Theory a priority. Participate in WMTA District Auditions!

Spring is a great time to hone students' theory skills in preparation for the written and aural theory tests included in every district audition. WMTA's website and linked Theory Resources provide an excellent, easily navigated structure to help you help your students learn what they need to know, not just for the test, but for the rest of their musical lives!

What should a student know for WMTA District Theory tests?

For D2, D2-Non Memorized and D3 tracks, Theory levels are chosen by the teacher according to the student's level of musical knowledge. It does not necessarily need to correspond to the difficulty level of the student's repertoire. But, to get a good idea on what a music student *should* know at their grade level, check out the prescribed requirements for the State track.

Here's where to look:

<https://www.wisconsinmusicteachers.com/district-auditions/music-theory-tests>

How can I assess what areas a student has mastered, and what areas need work?

On the webpage above, there are handy Practice Tests linked to every student level from Pre-Elementary through Advanced, and a downloadable Answer Key at the bottom of the list for quick grading. Many WMTA teachers use these Study Guides as a framework in lessons to review concepts with students, then assign Practice Tests one at a time (usually one per week), starting several levels behind where a student is expected to be proficient. Student answers are then checked against the Answer Key, and teachers can then concentrate on the areas that need improvement, moving onto the next level when ready. All of these materials are available to download and/or print. A large 3 ring binder or accordion folder is a great way to file everything by level (PE, EA, EB, EC, etc), making it easy

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to grab what's needed each week at lessons. For the aural portion, there are recordings right on the website so that students can know what to expect on WMTA District Audition Day. I usually start reviewing theory with my students in January and early February, but if you've put it off, it's not too late to get going.

How to make theory review fun: Games, games, and MORE games!

If reviewing examples and churning through worksheets sounds too dry, spice up theory time with short games for targeted practice. Chippewa Valley MTA has a complete set of FREE printable flash cards which correspond to the WMTA levels (<https://mailchi.mp/6ab4a915652e/music-theory-resources>). Printing these out and keeping each set in a baggie labeled by level (PE, EA, EB, etc) are a great "grab and go" activity for lessons.

Teach Piano Today's website has fun free downloadable games for beginning students (music alphabet, note reading, rhythm reading). Many of my student favorites were picked up at WMTA and MTNA Conferences: Rhythm Riot, Legato Lake, soft foam key signature dice, rhythm dice, various whiteboard and card game activities, plus two sturdy boardgames by WTMA members which are terrific: "It's JUST Music Theory" by Tricia Marton of Michibago MTA (especially great with intermediate and advanced students. <https://www.martonmusicstudio.com/it-s-just-music-theory>), and FVMTA member Janine King's "Music Mania Games" (which work well with beginning students for note reading and intervals. <https://www.kingsmusicstudio.com/product-page/music-mania-games>). Many games are great at group setting but can be adapted for a quick 5-minute review in one-on-one lessons, too.

Are there other theory games and activities you love? Write to wmta.margaretb@gmail.com to share your studio's favorites, and we'll feature more ideas in an upcoming article!

Executive Board

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[FVMTA Fox Valley Music Teachers Association](#)

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[SCVMTA St. Croix Valley Music Teachers Association](#)

President: Mary Anne Olvera, NCTM, maryanneolvera@gmail.com

[SPAMTA Stevens Point Music Teachers Association](#)

President: open

[WAMTA Wausau Area Music Teachers Association](#)

President: Open