

DECEMBER 2025

WMTA NEWSLETTER

*“Music turns
even the
coldest winter
night into
something
warm enough
to remember.”*

*– Clara
Whitmore*

Wisconsin Music Teachers Association
Part of Music Teachers National Association





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dec 1, 2025

Dear WMTA Colleagues,

A Personal Note: It feels like a minute since the 2025 State Conference, and yet it's been six weeks! It was exciting to hear so many positive comments about the presentations and the chance to recognize and honor our members at the banquet. Congratulations to everyone who helped make the conference a success!

One of the greatest joys beyond learning is sharing what we have learned. My favorite aspect of conferences is to engage with my colleagues and learn from them. This conference had spectacular presentations, but the personal conversations were really special too. One of the strategies we are to utilize in the college classroom is called "Pair and share:" pair with someone and see what they learned at a session and share what you learned. It's a really valuable way to not only affirm your takeaways but continue to learn from your colleagues.

The teaching tips I gained from this conference will impact my philosophy of teaching going forward. However, I think one of my biggest takeaways was: SLOW DOWN. Focusing on learning to read music or recital repertoire is not going to yield the results of musicianship if I do not take the time to develop the ear through aural training or to provide opportunities to improvise and create music on a regular basis.

I am a very task-oriented person, and my teaching reflects that: I want to make sure that my students play repertoire more musically than when they walked in the door. However, my students will be better musicians if I help them to hear what they are producing. This can partially be done by me performing a phrase in two different ways and asking what they hear? However, I think my students also hearing where the music is going having them listen for the direction without the notation in front of them. Can you hear that the music has a large, expressive interval? Can you hear that the music is moving in stepwise motion? Also, I think being "playful" by improvising on the notated music: what if you "decorated" a note? What if you rolled a chord? This is not to say that a student should change the music for a performance, but these opportunities added into the lesson become a more dimensional approach to making music. Rather than a direct line from learning the page to performing, the student should explore sound and time incorporated into the lesson rather than a separate activity. I hope this musing will inspire you to explore with your student, side-by-side in the lesson.

Continues on Next Page



Wisconsin Music Teachers Association

Part of Music Teachers National Association

Continued from Previous Page

Updates for Auditions: PLEASE BE AWARE AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

WMTA has passed a policy that every participant in WMTA auditions must be chaperoned throughout the Audition Day, including at the performance site.

By creating a mandate that minors remain under the supervision of a parent or guardian, WMTA is making the best effort to prioritize the safety and well-being of minors participating in auditions. This strategy of having a chaperone at the performance site provides a safeguard for all interactions between the judge and the student. The chaperone is not to serve as a third-party observer.

Please make sure you inform parents of this new policy and check the box on the Audition Summary form for District auditions.

There are going to be bumps in the road as this is the first year for this policy. Talk to your District Auditions Chair, and we will navigate through this together.

MTNA National Conference in March: I hope you will consider attending the National Conference in March as it is in Chicago—for most it will be a drive to attend! If you haven't been to a National Conference, the programming is robust, and I encourage you to read more about it on the MTNA website. Beyond the presentations, there is the opportunity to hear the finalists for all of the National Competitions (junior, senior and collegiate) and to hear some of the outstanding guest artists. The Exhibition Hall is always exciting with products and showcases. You will be able to talk directly to authors and publishers, and that can be very helpful in your decision making.

Enjoy this upcoming season with your students and make music!

Sincerely,

Mary Tollefson, NCTM
President, WMTA
marytolleffsonwmta@gmail.com



CONFERENCE MESSAGE



Did you get Wild about teaching again? I hope you found the state conference as invigorating and inspiring as I did. With a backdrop of Wisconsin in its fall splendor, it was a wonderful way to spend a beautiful weekend. I truly could not have done this alone, so to all those who helped in any way, thank you again!

Thank you to each and every one of our exhibitors at the 2025 State Conference and extend a special thank you to our sponsor, Hulbert Piano, for their donation in products and services.

I appreciate all the positive feedback verbally, through messages, and the survey. I look forward to refining what we did and incorporating ideas from you. Please know that I have taken every word into account, and there are so many great ideas that the committee can keep in mind for next year and the following years.

As announced at the conference, next year we will be at The Holiday Inn in Stevens Point, October 23 & 24, 2026! The 2026 theme is ***Soundtrack of America: Celebrating 250 years of Music in America*** and includes a recital featuring American composers.



Accommodation Rates

Our special room rates for Conference will be:

Standard Double: \$113.99

Standard King: \$113.99



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

Stacey Kraus, NCTM
WMTA VP of Conference
sakraus2@gmail.com

Soundtrack of America:

Celebrating 250 years of Making Music in America

Thank you for filling out the after-conference survey, as this information is so valuable in planning the next conference. The interactive/engagement aspect of this year's sessions was very well received, and we will continue to have this on the presentation proposal form. There were many suggestions for topics that would work very well for roundtable discussions, and we will be looking to add time for this.

We are looking for presentations that fit our theme (please reach out to me if you're looking for ideas), but also the following that have been requested:

- Meeting the needs of neurodivergent or special needs students
- Performance presentations
- Technique for beginners
- Pedagogy for those transitioning out of methods
- Progressing dedicated students to a bigger repertoire, potentially preparing them for eventual college auditions
- Brain-based learning
- 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 a short time
- duet/ensemble preparations

Submit your conference ideas here: <https://forms.gle/4uLMdvMEKpWQLK276>

Please note that general sessions are non-commercial in nature. Presenters must be MTNA members. Directions on how to submit a proposal will be available soon on the WMTA website.

Stacey Kraus, NCTM
WMTA VP of Conference
sakraus2@gmail.com



MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE

It was so great to see all those who were able to make the WMTA Conference. It is one of my favorite parts of being a member of WMTA. I love driving through our beautiful state in the fall. I love connecting with friends old and new. I enjoy the conversations about teaching, music, and the presentations. It is one of the benefits of our membership that, while it requires a fairly decent financial commitment, the benefit goes way beyond dollars and cents.

This year, our overall membership has increased by about 2 percent. This means we have a number of new members among us. As we look into 2026, I encourage each of you to consider attending a conference - perhaps the National Conference in Chicago, or start making plans to attend the state conference. Both will not disappoint. And get to know some of your new fellow members. Volunteer for a new position. Participate for the first (or 40th time in auditions). Earn some points for the teacher award of excellence! Wishing each of you a wonderful end of 2025 and a prosperous start to 2026!



Justin Krueger, NCTM
WMTA VP of Membership
justind.krueger@gmail.com



You will be notified about your membership renewals in April 2026 and your membership renewal is due July 1st.





TREASURER REPORT

WMTA Treasurer Report – December 2025

The Balance Sheet is below and the Income Statement sheet can be referenced on the next page.

Current outstanding expenses for conference are for the professional sound technician.

As we go into audition season a couple of reminders:

1. Checks are cut twice a month. As checks have to be cut and then mailed to the president for signature it can take time for checks to arrive.
2. All Income and expenses need to be entered on the Income/Expense form.

WMTA CD 2957 was renewed for 13 months at 2.713% interest rate.

WMTA has filed an extension for this year's 990.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Fritz

WMTA Treasurer

wmtatreasurer@gmail.com

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)

Wisconsin Music Teachers Association

As of November 16, 2025

NOV 16, 2025

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents

100 - Checking	9,216.41
110 - CD 2597 (10/2027)	112,832.58
111 - CD 2363 (11/2026)	41,931.31
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	163,980.30

Total Current Assets 163,980.30

Total Assets 163,980.30

Liabilities and Equity

Equity

Current Year Earnings	410.34
300 - Net Assets	163,569.96
Total Equity	163,980.30

Total Liabilities and Equity 163,980.30



TREASURER REPORT

Report Continued from Page 3

WMTA Treasurer Report – December 2025

Statement of Activities (Income Statement)

Wisconsin Music Teachers Association

For the period July 1, 2025 to November 16, 2025

JUL 1-NOV 16, 2025

Income	
400 - Donations & Grants	750.00
410 - Membership	5,387.00
420 - Conference	9,225.00
430 - District Auditions	90.00
434 - Composition Festival	1,372.25
435 - MTNA Competitions	945.00
440 - Advertising	250.00
450 - Interest	1,929.19
Total Income	19,948.44
Gross Profit 19,948.44	
Operating Expenses	
500 - Wages	6,153.50
501 - Contractor Expenses	211.50
502 - Mileage	1,064.50
503 - Lodging	784.08
504 - Meals	5,110.30
511 - Technology	623.53
513 - Postage & Shipping	11.05
514 - Supplies	262.14
515 - Awards	2,405.50
516 - Background Checks	70.00
520 - Grants	2,400.00
541 - Insurance	442.00
Total Operating Expenses	19,538.10
Operating Income	410.34
Net Income	410.34

GREAT LAKES MUSIC FESTIVAL

FLORA & FAUNA

A weekend of music-making for 8th-12th grade pianists, instrumentalists, and vocalists

January 30-31, 2026

Register Today at MBU.EDU/MUSICFEST



27TH ANNUAL

Richard Record

RISING STARS

Concerto
Competition



**APPLICATION
DEADLINE:**

DECEMBER 15, 2025

**CLOSED
PRELIMINARIES:**

JANUARY 17, 2026,
8:30-2:00 PM

OPEN FINALS:

JANUARY 17, 2026,
3:30 PM

Location: Viterbo Fine Arts Center, 929 Jackson Street, La Crosse, WI 54601

Contestants:

high school students from Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa

Over \$5000 in prizes are awarded for this prestigious event. Previous winners have gone on to win international competitions and have flourishing musical careers.

Application and
Repertoire List:

www.lacrossesympphony.org/rising-stars/



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ALEXANDER PLATT | MUSIC DIRECTOR

Connection, Camaraderie, and Conferences

by Margaret Burton, Independent Music Teachers Forum Chair

As an independent studio owner, there's nothing quite like a state or national MTA gathering to rekindle and refresh one's motivation to teach. A recent Member Survey confirmed that conferences and networking with other music teachers rank among the top benefits of WMTA membership, and it's easy to see why: October's **2025 WMTA Annual Conference** was uplifting and fulfilling, providing personal connections, timely topics and exciting performances. Getting together with about 100 professional musicians is always an energetic, fun time, but this year's weekend was exceptionally memorable!

The setting at Elkhart Lake's Osthoff Resort was comfortable and serene, and the colorful foliage made for a beautiful drive, making many of us wish we'd booked an extra day just to enjoy the surroundings and great local food. The gorgeous Bechstein concert grand provided by technician Dave Hulbert of Milwaukee had a terrific sound, and the performances were top tier: On Friday night, Lawrence University's Michael Mizrahi premiered a brilliant new WMTA-commissioned piece, *"The Voice of Trees"* by noted Appleton composer Theresa Martin. (Find it here: <https://www.theresamartin.net/new-works>). The Fisher Piano Duo then performed a lovely set of pieces by Barber, Schubert, Rachmaninoff and Gluck.

A few highlights from some outstanding presentations:

- Drea Wagner's opening session on teaching different personality types (Is your student an Ape? Bear? Dolphin? Owl?) really got everyone thinking and talking about special strategies to effectively teach each personality style, and how our own personality can help or hinder these student/teacher interactions.
- Michael Rector's fast-paced talk focused on cultivating student autonomy through long-term strategies. He emphasized modeling productive practice techniques, improving sight-reading skills, and helping students (and parents) to adopt a "growth mindset", framing small failures as an opportunity to improve, ultimately fostering musicians who are lifelong learners.
- Christopher Fisher's "Tiger" tips centered on keeping all parents engaged in and supportive of their students' practice habits and performances. He shared excellent ideas on creating a studio/family community to value, engage and encourage our young musicians.

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Continued from Previous Page

- Matthew Arau had everyone on their feet with a power-packed session on how instructors who develop an “Upbeat!” attitude can make a positive impact not only on their students, but on their organizations and communities. He shared steps on how to become a highly energized, motivational music educator who inspires others.

And there was so much more: Shad Ryan Wenzlaff’s talk about listening objectively as an adjudicator was insightful, the Master Class participants did a terrific job performing for and working with Christopher Fisher, Katherine Fisher’s introduction to Piano Safari provided a new paradigm on rote teaching, and “Lightning Games” was a fun-filled session to share favorite studio/group activities. UWO’s Marty Robinson finished off the weekend providing ideas for middle and high school piano students to succeed in their school jazz bands.

According to the conference survey, many attendees brought home ideas that they plan to implement right away. Of course the *real* stars of the weekend were the attendees themselves, and the many volunteers who made the weekend happen. It was delightful to reconnect, share, and meet new colleagues! Bravo to Stacey Kraus, Katie Butler, Mary Tollefson, and the WMTA Board for an exceptional conference. For those who couldn’t make it this year, plan to treat yourself next October in Steven’s Point, or join us in Chicago for an even bigger party.

See you there!

Margaret Burton

WMTA Independent Music Teachers Forum Chair

wmta.margaretb@gmail.com



AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

November Newsletter Announcement from the Award of Excellence Chair

Many thanks to Sandra Statz for serving as the WMTA Teacher Award of Excellence chair the last few years! At the recent 2025 WMTA conference, I took over the responsibilities of chairperson from Sandra.

A correction regarding the last newsletter: Instead of receiving an award for 150 points, Judy Stafslieen has received the 300-point award!

If you are new to WMTA and are wondering “How does the Award of Excellence process work?” ... Teachers earn a point each time one of their students receives an award for their participation in WMTA District, Regional or State events. As a teacher’s points accumulate from year to year, awards are given when they reach the following number of points: 10, 50, 75, 100, etc. Awards continue to be awarded in 25-point increments.

New Award of Excellence point tracking:

For the 2026 season, I will track the number of WMTA points that all teachers earn. At the end of May, I will gather the data from each district and then prepare the Awards of Excellence to distribute at the 2026 WMTA conference.

What this means: teachers do not need to track and turn in their own points!

Additional notes:

- Teachers may continue tracking their own points as a back-up if they choose.
- 2026 will be a trial run – if the new process proves to be unreasonably time consuming, we will change back to the previous system (teachers track their own points and turn them in to the Award of Excellence chair.)
- For teachers that have never turned in any points, that’s ok! Points will start being recorded for you in 2026.
- For teachers that have previously turned in points, you will continue to accumulate points, and they will be added to the total that you’ve already earned.

Feel free to email me with any questions!

Warmly,
Rita Schuman, NCTM



DISTRICT AUDITIONS

WMTA District Audition News

It was a great meeting with District Chairs in person and on Zoom during the District Chair meeting at the 2025 Conference in Elkhart Lake. It was a very productive and informative meeting.

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 rewarding experience for the students.

Members have received an email from Mary Tollefson with a letter to be distributed to all parents of students entering the 2026 auditions. This letter explains the new Child Protection Policy. Make sure you follow through with this task as there is a box to check on the audition summary sheet stating you have done so.

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 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 2026 auditions with great enthusiasm.

Respectfully submitted,
Roberta Grube
District Auditions Chair

DISTRICT	SITE	AUDITIONS DATE	ENTRY DEADLINE
Appleton	Lawrence University	Saturday, March 21, 2026	Saturday, February 21, 2026
Eau Claire	UW-Eau Claire Haas Fine Arts Center	Saturday, March 14, 2026	Saturday, February 14, 2026
Kenosha	UW-Parkside	Saturday, March 14, 2026	Saturday, February 14, 2026
La Crosse	First Presbyterian Church	Saturday, March 14, 2026	Friday, February 13, 2026
Madison	UW-Madison School of Music	Saturday, March 28, 2026	Friday, February 27, 2026
Merrill	Our Savior's Lutheran	Saturday, March 7, 2026	Saturday, February 14, 2026
Oshkosh	UW-Oshkosh	Saturday, March 14, 2026	Saturday, February 21, 2026
River Falls	UW-River Falls	Saturday, March 28, 2026	Wednesday, February 18, 2026
Sheboygan / West Bend	Lakeland University	Saturday, March 7, 2026	Saturday, February 7, 2026
Stevens Point	UW-Stevens Point Noel Fine Arts Center	Saturday, March 14, 2026	Saturday, February 21, 2026
Superior	UW-Superior	Sunday, March 1, 2026	Monday, February 3, 2025
Milwaukee	UW-Milwaukee	Sunday, March 8, 2026	Saturday, February 7, 2026
Wausau	Wausau Conservatory	Saturday, March 14, 2026	Monday, February 23, 2026
Whitewater	UW-Whitewater Center of the Arts	Saturday, March 21, 2026	Saturday, February 14, 2026

DISTRICT	CHAIR(S)	EMAIL	PHONE
STATE CHAIR	Roberta Grube	rfrinkman@gmail.com	715-364-2537 / 218-349-6419
Appleton	Catherine Walby	catherine.walby@lawrence.e	920-832-7448
Eau Claire	Joe Krause	josephkrause771@gmail.com	715-797-0692
Kenosha	Flora Lim	floralim_piano@yahoo.com	262-945-3934 (Flora)
	Anna Kojovic-Frodl	annakrmta@gmail.com	262-880-8586 (Anna)
La Crosse	Lori Lawson	lajt lax@yahoo.com	608-799-3346
Madison	John Scoville	johnharrisonscoville@gmail.c	913-488-1693 (John)
	Denise Taylor	dtaylorpiano@gmail.com	608-438-2754 (Denise)
Merrill	Katie Livingston	katzpianostudio@msn.com	715-218-6894
	Carolyn O'Brien	cobrienpiano@gmail.com	715-966-2592
Oshkosh	Dr. Kirstin Ihde	ihdek@uwosh.edu	319-830-3264 (Kirstin)
	Annemarie Birschbach	abirschbachmusic@icloud.co	920-379-1968 (Annemarie)
River Falls	Teresa Lindahl	btbjgf@gmail.com	715-690-4282
Sheboygan / West Bend	Louise Mann , Sarah Hikade, Shelba DeMaster	louisemannpiano@gmail.com	920-912-2106 (Louise)
Stevens Point	Rachel Snyder-Turney Gail Heywood	rsnyder131@hotmail.com gailheywood@gmail.com	715--254-5649 (Rachel) 715-459-8180 (Gail)
Superior	Roberta Grube	rfrinkman@gmail.com	715-364-2537 / 218-349-6419
Milwaukee	Jennifer Kottke	jen.wmta.dc@gmail.com	262-622-5092
Wausau	Mona Grote	monagrote@yahoo.com	715-721-5122
Whitewater	Christine Groth	cgroth47@outlook.com	414-491-3102 (Christine)
	Julie Hilderbrandt	julie.hilderbrandt@gmail.com	920-988-1794 (Julie)

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VIII E & COMPOSITION

The 2025 State Vocal | Instrumental | Ensemble Competition is Saturday, May 9th at UW-Stevens Point.

Registration deadline for the State VIE Competition: April 6, 2026

Ensemble Registration Fee Increase

The District & State registration fees for students participating in ensembles has increased.

The new fees are as follows:

- ⇒ Duet: \$40
- ⇒ 3-5 person ensemble: \$50
- ⇒ 6-10 person ensemble: \$60

New WMTA Audition Policy For VIE Accompanists

The new WMTA child protection policy states that, “custodial care throughout the day remains fully with the parent, the guardian, or someone the legal guardian designates as a responsible adult.”

Please be advised that a students’ parent/legal guardian MAY designate an accompanist as a “responsible adult.”

Submitted,
Opala Bilhorn, NCTM
WMTA Vocal | Instrumental | Ensemble Chair

State Winner List			
Place	Name	Instrument	Teacher(s)
Wisconsin Junior Composition - 1 entry			
Representative	Gregory Rottinger		Amy Hansel
Wisconsin Junior Performance Piano - 1 entry			
Representative	Tyler Fang	Piano	Adam Chlastawa
Wisconsin Junior Performance Woodwind - 1 entry			
Representative	Elisa Fowler	Flute	Wendy Stern
Wisconsin Senior Composition - 1 entry			
Representative	Liam Bradley		Amber Bruns
Wisconsin Senior Performance Piano - 6 entries			
Winner	Cooper Buehl	Piano	Karen Boe
Alternate	Ben Teller	Piano	Catherine Kautsky
Honorable mention	Elliot Block	Piano	Anthony Padilla
Wisconsin Young Artist Performance Piano - 5 entries			
Winner	Qiaochuhan Li	Piano	Anthony Padilla
Alternate	Kyle Roberts	Piano	Catherine Kautsky





REGIONAL KEYBOARD

2026 REGIONAL KEYBOARD COMPETITION DATES AND VENUES

S REGIONAL

SATURDAY MAY 9, 2026

UW-Parkside

The Rita Center for the Arts

(Parking, Lot B, C)

900 Wood Road, Kenosha

NE REGIONAL

SATURDAY MAY 9, 2026

UW-Stevens Point

Noel Fine Arts Center

1800 Portage, Stevens Point

NW REGIONAL

SATURDAY MAY 9, 2026

UW-La Crosse

Low Center for the Arts

333 North 16th Street, La Crosse

Deadline: postmarked by **April 6, 2026**.

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

Effective 2026, WMTA requires a parent or guardian be present (in the audition room) for any audition performance.

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



STATE KEYBOARD

WMTA 2026 STATE KEYBOARD COMPETITION

SATURDAY, MAY 16, 2026

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

Registration Deadline: May 12, 2026. 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 a designated Regional winners - S, NE, and NW - at grades 7-12.

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 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



2025 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.

Chippewa Valley MTA: Joe Krause

CVMTA is proud to recognize Joseph Krause as our 2025 Member of the Year. Joe has been a part of CVMTA for 6 years. As an active member he has participated in educational programs and student performance events, as well as social events and the WMTA State Conference. He has also been willing to help when needed, sharing his knowledge and expertise along the way. As a local association, we deeply appreciate Joe's leadership of the District Auditions in Eau Claire. It is a demanding job and Joe accomplishes it with a great attitude, strong organization and a lot of grace. Thank you, Joe, for giving your time and energy to this event; we look forward to your continued leadership. In addition to CVMTA, Joe is an active performer and maintains a private studio teaching piano and composition. He also participates in the greater Eau Claire community accompanying for various organizations and schools.

Thank you, Joe, for your dedication to CVMTA. We appreciate you and congratulate you.

Kenosha Racine MTA: Dr. Deborah Masloski

KRMTA is very proud to present the Member of the Year Award to Dr. Deborah Masloski. An esteemed member of KRMTA, she took over the position as president of the organization in 2019. Dr. Masloski assumed the position during two of KRMTA's most crucial times – the merging of Kenosha and Racine Music Teachers Associations and staying afloat, active, and relevant as an organization during the pandemic. From virtual meetings, presentations, festivals, and competitions to hybrid and in-person events, her demonstrated leadership has enabled KRMTA to pursue its goals for its members and their students. Year after year, she is deeply committed to bringing in and creating the best line-up of presenters on various topics to educate and inspire its members.

Dr. Masloski is an Associate Professor of Music at Carthage College. She is a competition winner, has performed as a soloist with orchestras, and has played on WFMT radio. Her students are competition winners and have been accepted into renowned music schools. She has been invited to speak to MTNA organizations across the country. She presents master classes and is active as an adjudicator in the U.S. and China. As an advocate for underrepresented composers, her research on Women in Music was selected for presentation at the MTNA National Conference. She is a member of the Carthage Trio, bringing a wide spectrum of repertoire to audiences. A sought-after collaborator, she performs with members of the Chicago Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony and National Symphony Orchestra Mexico.

Her formal training began at the Mozart Conservatory in Germany. She received her masters from the Juilliard School and doctorate from Northwestern University, where her research examined the influence of social and religious trends on the piano literature. Passionate about the intersection of art and culture, she leads a study tour to Africa each year. As a teacher, she believes that music is an art form that can lead to paths of discovery, self-expression, and reflection. A committed educator, she is on the faculty of Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory and the Academy of the Music Institute of Chicago and Northwestern University.

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Fox Valley MTA: Margaret Murray

FVMTA is proud to announce Margaret Murray as our 2025 Member of the Year. As someone with a dual background in music performance and computing, she has not only stepped up as a performer, but also as our local association's webmaster and overall Tech Guru. From presenting on digitizing sheet music libraries to updating our online presence as an organization, she has been an invaluable resource— Not only keeping our website up to date but streamlining our event registrations for Young Artists Concerto Competition and Monster Concerts in the last three years. Margaret also has performed regularly on our teacher duet presentations and helped run the "Roomful of Pianos" event this summer (in collaboration between FVMTA and Heid Music as part of International Make Music Day). A regular at meetings, she is a tireless volunteer and wonderful presence in our midst.

Madison Area Music Educators: Stacy Regehr

Congratulations to Stacy Regehr, MAME's Member of the Year for 2025. Stacy has served as MAME's treasurer for five years, working tirelessly to manage MAME's expenses, income, reimbursements and much more. She has also served MAME in the past as Nuances editor, programs co-chair and recital chair.

Stacy does so much work behind the scenes to ensure all of MAME's financial records are in order: from helping us create and follow a responsible budget, to managing accounts and attending meetings at the bank, to regularly going to the post office to check MAME's P.O. Box and more. This mostly invisible labor helps MAME events and offerings for members to run smoothly and better serve all of us, and we are so grateful to Stacy for her reliable service and wisdom.

Michibago MTA: Shelba DeMaster

Shelba has taken a leadership role with our organization for many years. She is currently festival chair, making certain that the Fall Festival, Composition Contest and Young Music Stars programs run without a hitch. Additionally she assists each year with District Auditions. Shelba's positive attitude, can-do spirit, and ability to work together with everyone in our organization makes her invaluable to accomplishing our mission. We are grateful for all the time and effort that she has given our organization.

Rock River MTA: Carroll Stevens

Carroll Stevens has been a long-time member of the Rock River Music Teachers Association based in Jefferson. She has been the treasurer of the group for 31 years. She graduated from UW-Whitewater with a double major, taught 1st grade before her 3 sons were born and then started teaching piano to a few neighbor children. It eventually grew to over 45 weekly students including four grandsons. She recently completed 50 years of teaching.

As full-time organist and Director of Music at her church for most of her 62 years of married life, the piano lessons her family provided at \$1.00 per lesson when she was growing up have been a lifetime fulfillment of enjoyment.

Continues on Next Page



LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

Continued from Previous Page

Oshkosh Area MTA: Annemarie Birschbach

The Oshkosh Area MTA has selected Annemarie Birschbach as our member of the year for 2025. She has held several officer positions and has been our current president for the past few years. She is a dedicated district chair for auditions and is currently helping with the organization of the 2026 Monster Concert. She brings energy and enthusiasm to every meeting and strives to make everyone feel welcome and involved.

We are pleased to honor her by choosing her as our member of the year for 2025.

St. Croix Valley MTA: Teresa Lindahl, NCTM

It has been almost 20 years since I joined WMTA, a decision I have never regretted. As an active member, my teaching has changed drastically due to four things: preparing students for auditions and theory tests, monthly speakers at our SCVMTA meetings, preparing for and receiving my NCTM, and friendships with other WMTA teachers. I currently serve as the District Chair and participate in all facets of our local group.

My studio has evolved over the past 28 years of teaching, from five students to a current load of 64 students per week, ranging in age from 6 to 81. My expertise is making music fun. When students enter my studio, they are seen, heard, and unconditionally loved. All students are encouraged in their progress, no matter how fast or slow, musically inclined or challenged. A world without music is like a world without color. Everyone deserves the chance to experience the gift of music and to be positively encouraged in the process.

When I am not at the piano, you will find me walking my Siberian Husky, reading voraciously, or publishing weekly articles on my Substack (Pursuing Perfection, tessalind.substack.com).



Facebook / Instagram Photos or Shoutouts?

Send your WMTA-related photos to Ashley Jehn, our Social Media chair: hanke.ashl32@gmail.com



FOUNDATION FELLOW



Wisconsin Fellow Update:

Before conference our Fellows were funded at \$800 each. After the conference they are both up to \$987. Thank you to all the participants and everyone who's given thus far for our amazing Fellows, Bill Lutes and Martha Fischer. We are over half way to our goal!! What can you contribute individually and what has your local association contributed to the fellows? If you haven't seen or heard anything from your local association about contributing, please bring it up at

your next meeting. We'd like to see each local contribute something. All contributions should go straight to MTNA Foundation, list the Wisconsin Fellows as who you'd like to honor. <https://www.mtnafoundation.org/foundation-overview/> to donate by Credit card or to print out the form to mail in. Deadline for our goal of \$1500 per person is January 15. That's a hard deadline so please don't hesitate to contribute.

Why donate? MTNA national uses these funds as grants to teachers for various enrichments (travel grants for collegiate members), Affiliates, Collegiate Chapters, Community Engagement initiatives, and Program Developments to help grow music around the United States.

Martha Fischer is Emeritus Professor of Piano and Collaborative Piano at the University of Wisconsin-Madison Mead Witter School of Music. A pedagogue and a singer as well as pianist, Fischer performs frequently with her husband Bill Lutes and can be heard in numerous recordings including their recent release of *Four Hand Works by Robert Schumann* on the Centaur Label.

Bill Lutes is a pianist and independent piano teacher in Madison where his students have won many prestigious competitions and awards. He served as opera coach for UW-Madison and as a popular classical music host on WI Public Radio. For the past 14 years, he curated, hosted and performed with his wife, Martha Fischer on the annual *Schubertiade* at the Mead Witter School of Music.

Shannon Whaples
Foundation Fellow Chair

[Donation Link](#)



Local Association News

A New Event! Fox Valley Music Teachers Association (FVMTA) sponsored **KeysFest**, a new skills performance opportunity for area piano students this past November 8. KeysFest is a non-competitive audition in which piano students test their skill levels in playing scales, arpeggios, chords and cadences by a teacher other than their own. Critiques, judge ratings and certificates were awarded the thirty-one participants. Chairwomen Jodie Gawron, Lynn Orlando and Shuk-ki Wong based the event on one similar to that of Racine-Kenosha MTA; Thanks to Heid Music Appleton for hosting the event!

Preparations for a collaborative **Monster Concert 15** are underway for Saturday, January 31, 2026 for students, families and teachers of FVMTA, OAMTA, and the greater Green Bay area. The collaborative event will feature duets and a trio on 8 keyboards (a combination of grand and digital pianos) under the batons of several teacher conductors - an "orchestra" for pianists!! Attendees will hear a wide range of literature and music levels in the performance Chapel at Lawrence University, Appleton.

Fourteen previous **Monster Concerts** have been produced periodically since 1991 presenting the opportunity for piano students to experience a large ensemble performance. A special feature for **Monster Concert 15** will be a commissioned work by Wynn Ann-Rossi - a suite of several duets in varying student levels, hopefully to be used in future collaborative ensembles. According to concert chair Justin Krueger, each concert participant will receive a copy of the new composition!

Barbara Froelich, NCTM
Publicity Co-chair, FVMTA



WMTA Youth Protection Policy June 2025

Policy Statement:

WMTA requires that a parent or guardian be present (in the room) for any audition performance.

Purpose of the Policy

This policy has been established to prioritize the safety and well-being of minor participants by ensuring compliance with legal requirements and best practices for youth protection, as outlined in the [Universities of Wisconsin System’s Youth Protection and Compliance guidelines](#), as well as the [Access to Vulnerable Population Criminal Background Check protocol](#).

Key objectives for this policy include:

Legal and Institutional Compliance: Ensures WMTA adheres to [UWSA Policy 625](#) and relevant laws governing the protection of minors.

- **Supervision by a Responsible Adult:** Mandates that minors remain under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian during the audition process. For the purposes of this policy, a “guardian” may also refer to a family member as defined in UWSA Policy 625—such as a parent, stepparent, legal guardian, grandparent, or adult sibling (18 years or older and not participating in auditions).
 - **Transparency in Adult-Minor Interactions:** Provides a safeguard by ensuring that any interaction between the performer and judge is observable by a third party.
 - **Liability Mitigation:** Limits the assumption of liability by WMTA and the host venue in the event of an incident involving a minor.
-

Additional Outcomes

This policy yields several operational and financial benefits, including:

- **Enhanced Protection for Minors:** All minor participants are accompanied by a chaperone throughout the audition process.
 - **Cost Savings:** Eliminates the need for criminal background checks (CBCs) for volunteers, resulting in direct budgetary savings. (In 2025, the CBC expense totaled \$861, but this is an ongoing expense due to new volunteers, teachers and CBC renewals).
 - **Privacy Safeguards:** Removes the requirement for volunteers to submit sensitive personal data, such as Social Security Numbers, to third-party screening platforms.
 - **Administrative Streamlining:** Audition chairs and educators are relieved from the obligation to track and verify CBC completion for volunteers and judges.
-

Addressing Concerns that might arise for WMTA Auditions Chairs

What if a minor does not want a chaperone in the audition room?

Compliance with this policy is mandatory. WMTA encourage teachers and parents to prepare students in advance for this requirement. While change may be challenging, particularly at first, the policy is in place to protect all involved.

Possible Recommendations for Compliance:

- The chaperone *may* use noise-cancelling devices while remaining present for supervision purposes. (Thinking of the child who does not want the chaperone to “listen” to the audition).
- If the room is small (such as a faculty office) the chaperone *may* stand discreetly near the door or sit in a designated area within the audition space—ideally away from both judge and performer. If the audition room is isolated, the door *may* remain ajar to maintain visibility. However, this option should be used sparingly as it may introduce external noise.

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What if the audition room is too small to accommodate a chaperone?

Audition rooms must be selected and arranged to comfortably accommodate three individuals: the performer, the judge, and the chaperone.

Best Practices for Audition Chairs:

- Secure the audition venue early and confirm the necessary documents, such as a Facility Use Agreement (FUA) which might require signatures, the MTNA General Liability Insurance for MTNA-affiliated State and Local Associations (which may take up to two weeks to process) and WMTA’s additional liability coverage (Physical or Sexual Abuse or Sexual Molestation Liability Coverage-available upon request from the WMTA Treasurer).
- Designate a clear, specific space within the room for chaperones. This will be helpful to door monitors and will prepare judges for the third person in the room.
- Provide guidance to door monitors and judges on where chaperones should be seated or positioned.

Non-Compliance and Consequences

- The intent of this policy is to observe and, if necessary, intervene in adult-minor interactions to protect all parties. ***It is the responsibility of the teachers to communicate this WMTA policy*** and notify parents of this change.
 - ***It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to acknowledge this WMTA policy and adhere to the requirement.*** Failure to do so will result in forfeiture of the right to hold WMTA liable for incidents occurring during the audition.
 - Non-compliance of this policy will not penalize the minor performer. However, a formal notification will be issued by the WMTA Office after the audition.
- Non-compliance of the policy by parents and teachers will necessitate the introduction of an additional waiver process for all auditions, requiring signed consent forms (like field trip permission slips) for each minor participant prior to every audition event.

Welcome!

WMTA welcomes our newest leadership team member, Rita Schuman who is taking over Awards of Excellence from Sandra Statz!

Thank you to our current leadership team members who are shifting roles: Kaju Lee is shifting to Wellness Forum Chair and Diana Shapiro is taking on a greater role with the MTNA Competitions.

Many thanks to our chairs who are stepping away at this time: Anthony Padilla for MTNA Jr./Sr. Competitions and Suki Wong for the Collaborative Performance Forum.

WMTA is grateful for our members who are willing to volunteer for leadership? If you're interested in joining the leadership team, reach out to any Officer or email your interest to wisconsinmta@gmail.com

Executive Board

PRESIDENT: Dr. Mary Tollefson, NCTM | marytollefsonwmta@gmail.com

IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT: Mickey Lytle, NCTM | MickeyWMTA@gmail.com

1ST VP-CONFERENCE: Stacey Kraus, NCTM | sakraus2@gmail.com

2ND VP-MEMBERSHIP: Dr. Justin Krueger, NCTM | justind.krueger@gmail.com

TREASURER: Rachel Fritz | wmtatreasurer@gmail.com

REGIONAL AND STATE KEYBOARD COMPETITION CHAIR:

Mary Anne Olvera, NCTM | Maryanneolvera@gmail.com

VOCAL/INSTRUMENTAL/ENSEMBLE STATE COMPETITION CHAIR:

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

COLLEGIATE FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE: Dr. Nick Phillips, NCTM | phillins@uwec.edu

DISTRICT AUDITIONS CHAIR: Roberta Grube | rfrinkman@gmail.com

INDEPENDENT MUSIC TEACHERS FORUM: Margaret Burton | wmta.margaretb@gmail.com

LOCAL ASSOCIATION CHAIR: Catherine Walby, NCTM | Catherine.walby@lawrence.edu

Administrative Council

COLLABORATIVE PERFORMANCE FORUM: N/A

MEDIA CHAIR: Ashley Jehn | hanke.ashl32@gmail.com

MTNA CERTIFICATION: Sandra Statz, NCTM | sandra.statz2@gmail.com

MTNA COMPETITIONS COORDINATOR: Dr. Diana Shapiro | shapirod@uww.edu

MTNA COMPOSER COMMISSIONING: Dr. Michael Mizrahi | michael.d.mizrahi@lawrence.edu

MTNA FOUNDATION CHAIR: Shannon Whaples, NCTM | shannonspianostudio@hotmail.com

MTNA STUDENT COMPOSITION COMPETITION: N/A

MTNA JR. /SR. COMPETITIONS: Dr. Diana Shapiro | shapirod@uww.edu

MTNA YOUNG ARTIST/CHAMBER MUSIC: N/A

TEACHER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE: Rita Schuman | ritaschuman1@gmail.com

THEORY CHAIR: Sydney Rinkleff | wmtatheory@gmail.com

WELLNESS FORUM CHAIR: Dr. Kaju Lee, NCTM | leekaju@uwplatt.edu

WMTA YOUNG COMPOSER FESTIVAL: Amber Bruns, NCTM | amber@bluemaplemusic.com

The WMTA Administrative Council also includes all Local Association Presidents and District Chairpersons.



LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

[CVMTA Chippewa Valley Music Teachers Association](#)

President: Esther Pedigo, esther.pedigo@gmail.com

[FVMTA Fox Valley Music Teachers Association](#)

President: Margaret Burton, margnet25@gmail.com

[GMC WMTA Greater Milwaukee Chapter](#)

President: Chrissy Deal, chrissy.deal@gmail.com

[KRMTA Kenosha Racine Music Teachers Association](#)

President: Deborah Masloski, dmasloski@gmail.com

[LAMTA La Crosse Area Music Teachers Association](#)

President: Reene Sampson, reene.ann.sampson@gmail.com

[MAME Madison Area Music Educators](#)

President: Lisa Allred, lisaallredmusic@gmail.com

[MMTA Michigago Music Teachers Association](#)

President: Tricia Marton, NCTM, tm@martonmusicstudio.com

[OAMTA Oshkosh Area Music Teachers Association](#)

President: Annemarie Birschbach, ajbach@att.net

[RRMTA Rock River Music Teachers Association](#)

President: Julie Hildebrandt, davidh53@frontier.com

[SAMTA Superior Area Music Teachers Association](#)

President: Roberta Grube, rfrinkman@gmail.com

[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