

FEBRUARY
2026

WMTA NEWSLETTER

*"There is nothing that gives
me so much pleasure as
music; it seems to make me
love the world more."*

— Robert Schumann



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear WMTA Colleagues,

Happy 2026! I hope this note finds you healthy and well as our routines return to normal but often include plans for a recital or audition that seems so far away! This month, I'd like to encourage you to invite students to practice "performing." That may seem a bit strange, but the reality is that, when we don't practice performing, the idea of performing can balloon into an intimidating experience in a hurry! Remember that sometimes it's the small, low-pressure environments where children share their music can inspire the most meaningful memories of their lessons!

Here are some ideas to help make the most of opportunities:

Create mini performances within lessons. Invite a student to move away from the piano and then move to the piano and get settled as if they were performing for an audience or even for a judge. Practicing those nerves when you first sit down to a piano, or practicing playing a piece when you need to play from beginning to end, can reduce that feeling of newness for an upcoming recital or audition. If it's to practice for a recital, have the student stand and bow afterward too—you'll be surprised when your perception of bowing and their perception of bowing are not the same!!

I have one student who brings a different stuffed animal "guest" to every piano lesson, and I always asked to be introduced to him (or her) before we start the lesson. (Know your students, though, this stuffed "guest" never distracts his attention—I couldn't do that with every student!).

Create short informal gatherings to play for each other. When I was growing up, my teacher would gather 8-9 of us at a time. We sat on the floor and usually he let us pick the order. Sometimes that's how I would aim for a new repertoire piece, finding out from my teacher "What will it take to play that?"

Invite students who are willing to come *once* on a Friday night or Saturday morning to play for other students. These informal events (wearing jeans, sitting on the floor, etc.) will remind kids that everyone is learning and that everyone is in process. Applaud bravery for trying!

If you have a smaller studio, see if another small studio would be interested in joining with yours!

Offer a themed recital, such as a "hat recital." (Everybody wears their favorite hat). I had a colleague, and she would require that students must make a mistake in their performance—she found that they were focusing so hard on making a mistake that the performance would be one of their most fluid performances!

Schedule a performance opportunity (not required) to play at the local senior or assisted living community (check ahead for the piano quality). I scheduled one of these, and after the first person played a so-so performance, one of the residents gave a standing ovation! It was really a wonderful exchange for both communities.

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Wisconsin Music Teachers Association

Part of Music Teachers National Association



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Incorporate low-stakes digital performances that can be confidence builders. Students can record from home where they feel comfortable, and you can compile videos into a showcase. Sharing music in this format is especially helpful for students who are shy or sensitive.

Before any performance, I like to remind students that music is a human art—and this performance will be unique and wonderful just like they are! Celebrate progress in the middle to help inspire moving forward.

Confidence comes from preparation but also being able to predict a performance situation. Even low-stress performances can answer questions such as: Where will they sit if it's a recital? When do you clap? When do you bow, and how do you bow? Is an introduction required? Answering these questions will reduce anxiety. A few minutes of "pretend recital" can do wonders.

Low-stress performance opportunities remind children why take lessons: to share something joyful, expressive, and deeply human. When performing feels safe, students begin to see themselves not just as learners, but as musicians with something meaningful to offer.

As we move into this year, may we continue to create performance experiences that uplift our students, build their confidence, and celebrate their unique musical voices—one brave note at a time.

Warmly,

Mary

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



Spam Reminder:

Email spam is a real threat. I use my email **exclusively for WMTA business**. I have a separate personal email for any communication **not related to WMTA**. Below is my **official signature**. If you see anything different, it is **definitely not from me!**

Dr. Mary J. Tollefson, NCTM
President, Wisconsin Music Teachers Association
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse



Wisconsin Music Teachers Association

Part of Music Teachers National Association

Greetings, Music Teachers,

Save the dates for the **2026 conference, October 23-24 at the Stevens Point Holiday Inn**. Plans are coming along well but we need you! Did you know we pay our presenters for sessions that are 45 minutes in length, leaving 5 minutes for questions, and a 10 minute break. Get those creative juices flowing and submit your proposal [HERE!](#) Our theme is **Soundtrack of America** and American-themed topics are encouraged but not required. The deadline is typically January 31 but it is now extended to February 15.

We are a wonderful social group and one comment I have seen in the surveys after the last two conferences is desire for more opportunity to network. Several topics have been suggested for presentations but don't necessarily need a full session. To merge those requests, we're offering a round table session this year. Please fill out this [FORM](#) to let me know what topics are of interest to you. More detailed information regarding registering and hotel will be in the May newsletter and registration will open in June.

GUEST ARTIST ANNOUNCEMENT!

You don't want to miss this year's conference! We have the talented **Mackenzie Melemed** lined up as our guest artist for a presentation, masterclass, and recital.

American pianist Mackenzie Melemed, recipient of the 2022 Avery Fisher Career Grant, is widely acclaimed for his nuanced interpretations, technical mastery, and profound artistic insight. Described by The New York Times as "an excellent young pianist," he has performed extensively as both soloist and chamber musician, appearing with major orchestras such as the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Helsinki Philharmonic, and in recital at iconic venues including Carnegie Hall. Melemed was a laureate of the 2021 American Pianists Awards, the 2019 China International Music Competition, and the 2017 Maj Lind International Piano Competition.



A native of Massachusetts, Melemed began performing at an early age—making his national television debut on The Rosie O'Donnell Show at six and appearing annually at the White House from ages nine to thirteen. Melemed is a Steinway Artist and graduate of The Juilliard School, where he earned his Bachelor's, Master's, and Artist Diploma degrees under the guidance of Robert McDonald and Emanuel Ax.

With a distinctive voice and unwavering commitment to uncovering rarely heard repertoire, Melemed continues to chart a bold, expressive path in today's classical music landscape. Keys Across America is one his bold initiatives, with the aim of bringing incredible American piano music to every corner of the country.

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.

The deadline is typically January 31 but it is now extended to February 15.

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

WMTA Treasurer Report – February 2026

Attached please find the Balance Sheet and the Income Statement.

January is the month when 1099s are sent out. These are sent out to anyone paid more than \$600 in the year. This does not include mileage or reimbursements. This year WMTA will be using Xero to send out and file 1099s as this a new, included, feature of the software. They will be filed by January 31, 2026. A special thank you to all of the contractors for quickly submitting their information.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Fritz

WMTA Treasurer

wmtatreasurer@gmail.com

Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)

Wisconsin Music Teachers Association

As of December 31, 2025

DEC 31, 2025

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents

100 - Checking	7,675.62
110 - CD 2597 (10/2027)	114,091.40
111 - CD 2363 (11/2026)	41,931.31
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	163,698.33

Total Current Assets

Total Assets

163,698.33

163,698.33

Liabilities and Equity

Equity

Current Year Earnings

300 - Net Assets

Total Equity

Total Liabilities and Equity

128.37

163,569.96

163,698.33

163,698.33

WMTA Treasurer Report – February 2026

Statement of Activities (Income Statement)

Wisconsin Music Teachers Association
For the 6 months ended December 31, 2025

JUL-DEC 2025

Income

400 - Donations & Grants	750.00
410 - Membership	6,026.00
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	3,188.22
Total Income	21,846.47

Gross Profit

21,846.47

Operating Expenses

500 - Wages	8,259.50
501 - Contractor Expenses	211.50
502 - Mileage	1,064.50
503 - Lodging	784.08
504 - Meals	5,110.30
511 - Technology	683.53
513 - Postage & Shipping	11.05
514 - Supplies	262.14
515 - Awards	2,405.50
516 - Background Checks	84.00
520 - Grants	2,400.00
541 - Insurance	442.00
Total Operating Expenses	21,718.10

Operating Income

128.37

Net Income

128.37



JOIN US IN WISCONSIN
THIS SUMMER!

MUSIC+DRAMA CAMP

JUNE 8 - 12, 2026

Overnight Camp

Ages 12 - 18

\$415 | \$365 by April 10

- ✓ Piano
- ✓ Band
- ✓ Strings
- ✓ Musical Drama
- ✓ Stage Crew

Day Camp

Ages 11 - 12 | 9AM - 5PM

\$310 | \$260 by April 10

- ✓ Band
- ✓ Strings

Morning Camp

AGES 7 - 10 | 9AM - NOON

\$240 | \$190 by April 10

- ✓ Band
- ✓ Strings

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR FIRST-TIME CAMPERS!

Available to rising 11th and 12th graders enrolled in
Music and Drama Camp

COMPOSING & ARRANGING CAMP

High school + college students

JUNE 15 - 18, 2026

\$345 | \$295 by April 10

MBU.EDU/CACAMP



SCAN TO
LEARN MORE!

MBU.EDU/CAMP
920.206.2350

WMTA 2025 Membership Survey

Responses, Suggestions, & Conclusions Regarding Auditions/ Competitions

*Mary Anne Olvera, NCTM, WMTA Regional & State Keyboard Chair and
Roberta Grube, WMTA District Auditions Chair*

Immediate Past President Mickey Lytle asked WMTA members to complete a 2025 Membership Survey and provide input regarding our WMTA organization. This report looks at those questions focused on Auditions and Competitions.

DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN DISTRICT/REGIONAL/STATE AUDITIONS - Overwhelmingly, most members do participate in district (89.3%) regional/state auditions (57.4%). Those not participating responded that the time of year is very inconvenient, or that their studio population is very young. Several stated that the point system is too complicated and stops them from participating.

ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY STUDENTS DO YOU ENTER IN WMTA AUDITIONS - Most teachers enter 1-5 students. This is the single most critical factor supporting the need for volunteering at every level of auditions, i.e. district, regional and state. In many districts it is very difficult to find enough volunteers and without volunteers the smooth-running of the event is seriously challenged.

WHAT DRIVES YOUR STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN AUDITIONS OPPORTUNITIES - The greatest driver to participation was performance opportunity with feedback (75%), motivation to learn new materials (70%), point accumulation (65%), and ranking and placement at Regionals (38.3%).

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF AUDITIONS IN YOUR STUDIO - There were several factors that were the strongest purpose of auditions, including:

- To encourage students to step out of their comfort zone, perform, and get feedback from someone else
- Set student goals
- Accountability to teach leveled theory
- Prepare students on a deadline for performance
- Points, recognitions, motivation, and provide another learning experience
- To encourage musical growth in my students by having them pursue a goal
- To provide an opportunity to learn a variety of repertoire at a high-level to perform for feedback

WOULD YOU SUPPORT ALLOWING STUDENTS IN 1ST-3RD GRADE FOR ADVANCEMENT TO REGIONAL - There was not overwhelming support for including grades one – three in the regional track.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE WMTA POINTS AWARD SYSTEM TO YOU - Most studios do thrive on tangible awards (59%). A small number of respondents stated that there was no need for a cumulative points system, and others stated that they would find a way to reward their students in the absence of a cumulative points system

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MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

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WOULD YOU SUPPORT ENTERING STUDENTS BY AGE INSTEAD OF BY GRADE - This question drew the most varied and split response. Of the 61 respondents to this question, 29 want to enter students by age rather than grade. Several respondents want to enter students by level/ability, requiring a significant revamp of auditions. Others stated that most homeschooled do have grade equivalency and do know their grade. Some were concerned for those students who had been held back or advanced a grade – placement here would be left to teacher discretion. Others were comfortable with leaving the process as we now have it, avoiding confusion.

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN SERVING AS DC - 80.3% responded no. While it wasn't a question on the survey, most teachers will say that auditions are the primary reason for WMTA membership. The District Chair is the lead and support for facilitating auditions. With 80% turning down a DC opportunity, it is most important to be kind and respectful to that person that has stepped up as DC and offer assistance.

DO YOU CONSISTENTLY ENTER STUDENTS IN THE NON -MEMORIZED CATEGORY - 75.8% responded no

WOULD AUDITION PARTICIPATION BE GREATER IF A THEORY TEST WAS NOT A REQUIREMENT - 60.3% responded no

DO YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS FOR IMPROVEMENTS - Include track on the district form, consider including a sightreading component for regional/state track, pay judges more. There were several other suggestions that have been addressed/changed since this survey was put out.

The WMTA Survey was conducted in the spring of 2025 and results were distributed to members in the fall of 2025. The gathering of membership input provides a valuable overview of our state organization and affords leadership suggestions for improvement.

Robert Grube & Mary Anne Ohera, NCTM



Facebook / Instagram
Photos or Shoutouts?

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

The Big Picture: Navigating Life Changes as An Independent Music Teacher

by Margaret Burton, Independent Music Teachers Forum Chair

The landscape for independent music teachers is ever-changing. Each October at the **WMTA conference**, I am struck by the wide variety of successful and innovative business models our colleagues employ in running their studios. “Success” is a fluid definition; it shifts based on our age, our stage of life, and the personal circumstances we encounter along the way. While there is no “one size fits all” model for an entrepreneurial music business, it’s important to regularly audit our goals to ensure our studios evolve with us.

Five-Minute Self-Reflection

Take a moment to consider how your studio runs, and how it’s working for you. To record your thoughts for deeper analysis, you can download our

[Reflection Worksheet here](#)

- **Joy vs. Friction:** Are you happy? Which aspects of teaching and business ownership bring you joy, and which cause frustration?
- **Sustainability:** Is your current schedule sustainable? Financially, are you thriving, breaking even, or losing ground?
- **Evolution:** What has changed in your business or personal life over the past year?
- **Optimization:** What is one specific change that would make you feel healthier, happier, and more successful?
- **Support:** Who can offer fresh perspectives? What community resources are available to help you make needed changes?

Looking Ahead

Over the next few issues of the **WMTA Newsletter**, we will explore the typical phases of an independent teaching career. We’ll be tapping into the wisdom of colleagues and mentors to discuss navigating key transitions, including:

- Starting and growing a studio.
- Hitting your stride without hitting burnout.
- Balancing professional work with family life.
- Managing the business through serious injury or illness.
- Approaching a fulfilling retirement

As always if you have any ideas for topics you’d like to explore further, or have comments on these articles, please reach out!

Margaret Burton
WMTA Independent Music Teachers Forum Chair
wmta.margaretb@gmail.com



AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

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. If you are new to WMTA and are wondering "How does the Award of Excellence process work?" ... this information was printed in the last newsletter. But feel free to reach out to me directly if you have questions.

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. *Teachers do not need to track and turn in their own points!*

Additional notes:

- ***NOTE: If you are not interested in receiving Award of Excellence recognition, you can opt-out. Email me to let me know and I won't record your points.***
- 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 in which teachers track their own points and submit them to the Award of Excellence chair.
- For teachers that have never turned in any points, that's ok! I will start recording your points 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

MTNA COMPETITION RESULTS

The Wisconsin portion of the MTNA Performance Competition was held on November 1, 2025, at the Lawrence Conservatory in Appleton, WI. Five students participated in the Young Artist category, and there were seven participants in the Senior

Performance Category. Qiaochuhan Lo (Young Artist, teacher Anthony Padilla) and Cooper Buehl (Senior Performance, teacher Karen Boe) won their respective categories. Congratulations to all the participants and congratulations to Qiaochuhan and Cooper, who represented Wisconsin at the East Central Divisional Competition held in December.

Exciting News!! The Lawrence University piano trio, the Wisconsin Representative for the Chamber Music category, advanced to the East Central Division representative. This trio will be performing in the final round of the MTNA Chamber Music Competition in Chicago on March 20-22, during the MTNA National Conference! Congratulations to Qiaochuhan Li, piano; Benjamin Freuh, violin; and David Smith, cello. WMTA members--if you are attending the National Conference, they are performing Saturday, March 21 in the morning!!



DISTRICT AUDITIONS

District Auditions 2026!

Check out all the audition information on our WMTA website. There are easy-to-follow updated 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.

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. Exceptions do apply if the student qualifies for keyboard and V/I/E.

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. When a student earns a 5 (90% or better) on a test for two years in a row they will need to advance to the next test level. State track entries must follow the minimum theory guidelines for their grade listed on the website.

If a student is using legally downloaded music a completed and signed "Copyright Representation and Indemnification Agreement Form" must accompany the music when presented to the judge.

Teachers who enter students are expected to be available to work the day of the auditions. If the teacher is not available it is their responsibility to find a reliable substitute to fulfill the work shift. If a teacher or substitute does not fulfill their job, a fine of \$75 will be charged to the teacher. If the fee is not paid within 30 days of being issued, the teacher is not eligible to enter students in the event the following year.

Make sure you have shared the WMTA Youth Protection Policy with your student's parent / guardian. There is a box on the fee summary sheet that you must check stating you have shared the policy.

Happy Audition Day!

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.edu	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	lajtlax@yahoo.com	608-799-3346
Madison	John Scoville	johnharrisonscoville@gmail.com	913-488-1693 (John)
	Denise Taylor	dtaylorpiano@gmail.com	608-438-2754 (Denise)
Merrill	Katie Livingston	katrzpianostudio@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.com	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 Julie Hilderbrandt	cgroth47@outlook.com julie.hilderbrandt@gmail.com	414-491-3102 (Christine) 920-988-1794 (Julie)



VOCAL-INSTRUMENTAL-ENSEMBLE

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

Submitted,

Opala Bilhorn, NCTM

WMTA Vocal | Instrumental | Ensemble Chair

VOCAL | INSTRUMENTAL | ENSEMBLE STATE INFORMATION

Date: Saturday, May 9, 2026

Location: UW-Stevens Point

Noel Fine Arts Center

1800 Portage St., Stevens Point, WI

Registration deadline: April 6, 2025

Fees:

Solos: \$30

Ensembles (2 students/duets): \$40

Ensembles (3-5 student performers): \$50

Ensembles (6-10 student performers): \$60

Make Checks Payable to WMTA

Send Checks & Fee Summary Form to Opala Bilhorn 282 Northside Dr., Milton, WI 53563



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

Lowe 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



FOUNDATION FELLOWS

Wisconsin Fellow Update:

We are grateful and pleased to announce that we have raised the full \$3,000 needed to fully fund and honor our recipients at this year's National Conference in Chicago. Thank you to our members and to everyone who supported our efforts in any way.

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

MTNA COMPOSITION COMPETITIONS

Thank you for entrusting me with the duties related to the State Composition event. For those of us who are unfamiliar with how the composition festival offerings work within WMTA/MTNA, it is noteworthy that is a separate event from the summer young composers event that Amber organizes. Our deadline for entering this festival will be September 9, 2026. I am in the process of securing our adjudicator for this festival - I will announce that name and some additional detail with our May newsletter.

Shad Ryan Wenzlaff
MTNA Student Composition Competition Chair

WMTA YOUNG COMPOSER FESTIVAL



Are your students lacking motivation during those long summer months?

Want to try something new in lessons?

Looking for an online competition?

How about composition?!

The WMTA Young Composer Festival provides a chance for students in Wisconsin to create their own original works and receive feedback from a composition teacher.

This festival is open to any music student living in Wisconsin with three age levels (Elementary, Junior, and, Senior). Non-competitive options are available and everything is completed online anonymously.

All styles of music are welcome!

Registration is due July 1st and compositions are due August 15th.

Check out our website:

<https://www.wisconsinmusicteachers.com/competition-for-young-composers>

Contact the WMTA Young Composer Festival Chair, Amber Bruns, NCTM,
amber@bluemaplemusic.com with any questions.

Hope to see you at the WMTA Young Composer Festival!

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.



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 Michibago Music Teachers Association

President: Tricia Marton, NCTM, musicalmarton@gmail.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

Executive Board

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

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REGIONAL AND STATE KEYBOARD COMPETITION CHAIR:

Mary Anne Olvera, NCTM | Maryanneolvera@gmail.com

VOCAL/INSTRUMENTAL/ENSEMBLE STATE COMPETITION CHAIR:

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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 | shapiro@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: Shad Ryan Wenzlaff | wenzlaffsh@yahoo.com

MTNA JR. /SR. COMPETITIONS: Dr. Diana Shapiro | shapiro@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.