

From the Desk of Lia Jensen-Abbott, President

Vol. LXVII No. 1 September 2020

It is bittersweet knowing that this is my last message to you all as President. I have truly enjoyed guiding MMTA through what turned out to be a very unique time in our musical, professional and personal lives. So as a final reflection, I would like to say Thank You. First, thank you to all of our members for your commitment to the educational and professional benefits which MMTA and MTNA offer. Thank you for having your students participate in MMTA and MTNA events, and thank you for being integral parts of your local associations. This organization is so much more than a professional community, however. After watching the events of the Covid-19 pandemic unfolding over the last few months, MTNA and MMTA have been guiding beacons as communities of friends and colleagues. We are so much stronger as a group than as individuals and never before in our collective histories has this perhaps been more apparent.

Second, I want to thank your Executive Board and your Board of Directors. Beginning in March, MMTA (along with MTNA and every local association) faced unprecedented challenges. Your Board worked tirelessly to discuss and make decisions in order to protect every aspect of MMTA's membership community and its community of students and parents. What I am proud of is that this board worked harmoniously and intentionally to make wise and thoughtful decisions during a time when all aspects of each of our lives was in question. And yet, they did their jobs. When you see one of our board members, please thank them—they have been amazing.

I am so hopeful and optimistic when I see local associations and their plans for online meetings and presenters. Everyone has adjusted to this new fluid type of learning and communicating. I know it has been a relief to see our colleagues, even if from a distance. Additionally I have welcomed being a part of the East Central Division and getting to see my fellow state presidents via a zoom call, and I have found great connection when we have had zoom board meetings in May and July. We are not alone when we have MMTA and MTNA, and this has never been more crucial than now. The MTNA Leadership Summit, which I have attended as President, will be held virtually this year. It will give me a chance to see my colleagues and to reflect and hear how other states are doing in this adjustment.

When I became president almost two years ago, I set out with the goal of providing a "what am I reading now" kind of address in these messages. I think I maybe didn't offer a reading selection in one newsletter. But in holding to my initial personal goal for these columns, I have a final parting scholarly book to recommend.

(Continued on pg. 4)

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MICHIGAN MUSIC TEACHER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE

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AFFILIATED WITH THE

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Full page \$140 2/3 page \$120 1/2 page \$95 1/4 page \$70 Less than 1/4 page \$60

Submit ads to the MMT editor with a check payable to MMTA. Fees are for one issue only. For multiple issue pricing, please contact the editor.

DEADLINE

FOR THE DECEMBER 2020 MMT:

November 23

All materials must be received by this date

ADDRESS OR E-MAIL CHANGE
Send to:
Lester Castellana
Membership Chair

~ or mail to: ~

lestercastellana@gmail.com

Lester Castellana, 7164 Palmer St., Dexter, MI 48130







President's message, continued from pg. 1

Back in 2015 I was fortunate to meet the late Dr. Rae Linda Brown at the University of Arkansas as part of a Florence Price symposium. In all regards, Dr. Brown was a powerful and eloquent keynote speaker, and her research and knowledge was unparalleled. When I began researching and performing the music of Florence Price around 2013, Dr. Brown's biography had been stalled in the publishing phase due to the economic crisis of 2008. Dr. Brown was born the same year Florence Price passed away, and sadly Dr. Brown passed away in 2017 due to cancer. She was a hero because she brought Florence Price's music to the public more than any other scholar. Her book, The Heart of a Woman: The Life and Music of Florence B. Price, published by the University of Illinois Press in 2020, is deserving of a place on any musician's bookshelf.

Brown creates a compelling picture of Price's music, woven into an historical account of her life as an African American growing up in the south, and then leaving her home for Chicago. It is a short read, about 265 pages, but well worth the musical discussions and the larger contextualization of Florence Price's life and times. In a time of uncertainty and anxiety, this critical account of the brilliant Florence Price gives one a feeling of hope and inspiration. With that optimism, I wish you the best in your new teaching year, however that happens!

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Lia Jensen-Abbott MMTA President

New Treasurer

As of July 1, 2020, MMTA's new treasurer is Barbara DuRussell. All treasurerrelated correspondence should be emailed to barbaradurussel46@gmail.com, or mailed to 2716 Plymouth St, Midland, MI 48642-3997.

Report from Past President, Adrienne Wiley

The Nominating Committee, consisting of Sookyung Cho, Gail
Lytle Lira, Gary Pedersen, and myself, bring to the membership the nomination
of Derek Polischuk for the office of Vice President.



From the Vice-President:

As promised, I am happy to share with you the outcome of the survey you filled out last June about the future of the MMTA State conference. The committee composed of Janice Derian, Derek Polischuk, Yelena Wells, Michael Zutis and myself, met twice over the summer and made some recommendations based on the survey, research and experience.

- **Participation:** 214 members responded by the closing date of June 26, which represent over 35% of the entire membership.
- **Relevance:** The conference is seen as an important part of MMTA's mission in providing a meeting place for teachers as well as a source of professional growth. Also a majority of members said they were willing to change their teaching schedule.

Timing and frequency:

- October is definitively a more popular time.
- Sunday to Tuesday (3 days) is clearly rejected, as well as Sunday-Monday (2 days)
- Saturday/Sunday comes second
- The Friday/Saturday option is the clear winner, though the one day conference elicited a lot of positive responses as well as an on-line component.

The idea of having regional conferences and a state conference every 3 years did not garner a lot of interest and the committee discarded this option. Rather than having a 2-year cycle, the committee thinks that a yearly conference is preferable for consistency. The committee suggests the possibility of alternating the format: on odd years, have a full 2 day conference and, on even years, only a one day conference.

• Programming:

Most popular choices:

- Teaching of Intermediate Students, then Elementary Students, and less interest for Advanced levels or collegiate.
- Use of available materials on-line (Covid 19 might have provoked a higher than normal rate of responses to that question.)
- Studio building
- General Education subjects
- SAT
- Student winners' recital



What the committee proposes to discard:

- College master classes
- Local chapter concert (which was held on Sunday evening)
- Gala in the current form: though it was not mentioned in the state survey, the Grand Rapid's own chapter survey, which had 33 responses, deemed the gala as one of the least favorite part of the conference, mostly because it is rushed between sessions and the guest artist recital. The same sentiment was expressed by CAMTA. However, there is a need to find another way to encourage fellowship and honor the recipients of the Teacher Of the Year Award and of the Distinguished Service Award.

There is a dilemma MMTA needs to reckon with:

- On one hand, the choice of subjects for presentation clearly reflects the fact that most MMTA members are independent piano teachers and want programs that have a direct impact on their teaching.
- On the other hand, MMTA must create programs that also attract ALL other instrumental or vocal teachers, who do not attend because they do not perceive the current programming relevant enough to them.

Encouraging participation from college students/collegiate chapters is key as they represent future members of the organization.

Logistics:

With a 2-day conference, lodging will still be an issue but could be handled independently by members. A one-day conference would make the use of a hotel questionable for sessions and concerts. Universities or other music education institutions seem a more appropriate location for the conference as they offer large rooms, recital spaces, reception areas, cafeterias, sound system, etc.). Involving its students and faculty to a larger extent would also be a benefit.

Without the need to negotiate a full contract with a hotel -a year in advance- or the need for piano transportation, tuning, building a stage, sitting configuration, renting sounding system, the logistics will be simpler.

In order to share resources and gather a larger audience -especially for concerts- timing the conference with another event could be explored when possible. Some states have their conference in conjunction with the MTNA competition. This year, plans were made to cooperate with the Liszt Society National Conference.



The conference could include or be scheduled in conjunction with a piano pedagogy workshop as a way to attract local teachers who are not MMTA or MTNA members.

General organization:

Shortening the length of the conference, and canceling both the concert and the gala in its current form will greatly alleviate the hosting chapter's duties both financially and logistically.

So far there has been an 8-year rotation between chapters. The committee proposes to shorten the cycle and establish a new sequence based on regions. This will give an opportunity for smaller chapters to work with larger ones who often have more resources.

Job descriptions and time constraints need to be clearly delineated for the Vice President, the Arts Advocate, the Treasurer and the Marketing Coordinator. Contact info for soliciting financial support via ads or sponsorship need to be updated each year for easier communication.

Conference Budget:

Hopefully, the revised format of the conference will put less strain on MMTA resources and less stress on the Vice-President while keeping the registration fee affordable. However, there is a need (via fundraising) to provide incentives to attract more members to attend, especially first time attendees and college students.

Now, what is next?

Though the conference is cancelled this year, I am currently planning a zoom event with a mixture of live and prerecorded sessions. All details will be posted on the website in a couple weeks and I will make sure to send the program and the website link to all president chapters.

Please, save the date:

Friday October 16, 2020 4:30 PM to 8:30 PM

The Ann Arbor Area Piano Teachers Guild will host the 2021 MMTA conference.

If you have questions or comments, you can email me at: octbb47@sbcglobal.net. See you soon online!

Béatrice Ellis



Fall 2020 Official Virtual Business Meeting—E-Participation

Procedures for Business Items and Electronic Voting

Due to COVID-19 and by the approval of the MMTA Board of Directors, the in-person fall 2020 state MMTA Conference was cancelled in April, 2020. In order to proceed with the legal work of MMTA, the in-person business meeting is being substituted by electronic participation for Fall 2020. This serves as notice of the procedural change for the Fall, 2020 business of MMTA.

Three items of business must be transacted by the fall October 4, 2020 official electronic participation deadline:

1. One office needs to be filled for Fall, 2020.

The Nominating Committee reports that the nominee for Vice-President is Dr. Derek Polischuk. Additional nominations will be accepted until midnight, Oct. 4, 2020. Once the nominations have closed on midnight, October 4, 2020, a list of choices for the nomination of Vice President will be distributed with voting instructions.

Additional Nomination (mอง	/ ha suhmittad HNITH	midnight October	7 20°	νη.
	(IIIa)	, be submitted on the		4 , ∠∪∠	- 0)

The E-Vote for the Office of Vice President Nominees will be communicated after the nominations deadline of Midnight, October 4, 2020 has passed. After that time, a list of nominees and electronic voting instructions will be presented. Voting for the Vice President will end at Midnight, Sunday, October 11, 2020.

Link to vote on items 2 and 3: bit.ly/MMTAVote2020

2. One officer needs to be confirmed by the electronic voting participation deadline of midnight, October 4, 2020:

The President, who, according to MMTA By-Laws, must have served as a Vice President.

Electronic Voting for Item #2 is open until Midnight, October 4, 2020

3. The third item of business:

A Motion comes from the General Board, which has been seconded, for your approval: the 2021 MMTA Budget, presented in the September MMT (beginning on page 14) to the membership at large.

Electronic Voting for Item #3 is Open until Midnight, October 4, 2020.



MMTA Budget Fiscal Year 2020-2021

The current year proposed budget which is being submitted to the membership for your review and approval can be found beginning on page 14 of this newsletter.

Because of the uncertainties caused by the pandemic, it is impossible at this point to create a totally realistic and accurate budget for this year. Instead, we have chosen to create a budget which reflects revenue and disbursements of recent years and the level of programming which MMTA plans to continue to support. This will allow us to maintain a template for future years when things will hopefully be more normal and predictable. Allowances for some items, such as the annual fall conference which will occur only virtually, if at all, are clearly too high. Hopefully, activities occurring later in the fiscal year will prove to be more in line with reality.

If you have questions regarding the budget, please contact me via email at barbaradurussel46@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted, Barbara DuRussel, Treasurer

National Certification

As MMTA's Certification chair, I welcome you to contact me if you are interested in pursuing National Certification. MMTA no longer has a State Certification program, but MTNA has an active certification program. I encourage those who are interested in keeping a competitive edge when recruiting students, wish to refresh or increase your pedagogical skill set and increase your earning potential to investigate the program. There are two routes available to our members based on your credentials: Teacher Profile Project, for teachers who are not collegiate faculty and administrative verification for college faculty. For those teachers who are not college educators there are five sections to the certification process. This information can be found at the MTNA website. I would also like to introduce you to Meggie Young, Certification Commissioner for the East Central Division. She would be glad to talk with any MMTA member interested in learning more about the program. Her contact info is: young.1661@osu.edu. Feel free to reach out to your local chair Janice Derian: janice@derian-toth.us if you would like to have more information. Certification Chair

Janice Derian, SCTM, NCTM



2020-2021 MTNA Michigan Performance Competitions

The MTNA Performance Competitions are among the most prestigious and competitive events with Michigan becoming the third largest and one of the most competitive nationally. This summer, MTNA Michigan Performance Competitions moved to a video format following the lead of MTNA National and Division events.

The links below will provide you with the most current information. Please read each thoroughly before registering.

Registration is completed exclusively through the MTNA website. **Registration deadline is Wednesday, September 16, 2020, 3:00 PM Eastern Time**. There are no exceptions.

Once MTNA verified registration is received, you will receive an email within two weeks with your student's MTNA Michigan contestant number. **USE THAT NUMBER IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE AND VIDEO LINK TITLES.**

Email the following complete information to MTNA Michigan Competition Chair, Laurie M Marshall by October 31, 2020, noon Eastern Time at Laurie@TheChildrensAcademy.us or TCA.Laurie@gmail.com. Late or incomplete entries will not be accepted. There are no exceptions. An email response serves as your receipt.

Emailed information must include:

- Student MTNA Michigan contestant number.
- 2. Teacher Name, email, phone number matching the MTNA registration.
- 3. Student Name, email, phone number matching the MTNA registration.
- 4. One, YouTube unlisted or public link of the performance. The performance should mirror the same format as a live competition performance. For example, if the student is performing four compositions, play all four compositions on one link with a pause between each composition.
- 5. Repertoire list, which must match the MTNA registration, but in the order of the video performance.

Sample programs are available on the MMTA website as well as past results: https://michiganmusicteachers.org/mtna-mmta-competitions/

Looking forward to another exciting competition year as you are among the very best! Laurie



MTNA Competition Peformance Guidelines and Registration Information

MTNA Performance Competitions:

https://www.mtna.org/MTNA/Engage/Competitions/Competitions.aspx

MTNA Performance Guidelines:

https://www.mtna.org/MTNA/Engage/Competitions/Competitions Guidelines.aspx

MTNA Junior Division Guidelines:

https://www.mtna.org/MTNA/Engage/Competitions/Junior Performance Competitions.aspx

MTNA Senior Division Guidelines:

https://www.mtna.org/MTNA/Engage/Competitions/Senior_Performance_Competitions.aspx

MTNA Junior Division Guidelines:

https://www.mtna.org/MTNA/Engage/Competitions/Young Artist Performance Competitions.aspx

Student Achievement Testing Semifinals and Finals

The dates have been set for our 2021 Student Achievement Testing Semifinals and Finals. Semifinals will be held Saturday, April 17th, 2021 and Finals will be Saturday, May 1, 2021. Although the local level SAT's may either be virtual or in person depending on that chapter's decision, semifinals and finals will be held virtually, so not to run the risk of cancelling them as we were forced to in 2020. More information is sure to follow on the logistics of the online auditions.

Our semi-finals Chairpersons for each district are as follows:

Central District: James Hohmeyer and Susan Mercy Eastern District: Alisha Snyder and Michelle Mitchum

Western District: Alisha Snyder

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. Michelle Mitchum, SAT Auditions Chairperson



Musical Musings HEAR HERE

By Louis Nagel

Many of our readers will remember with fondness the telephone booth. They dotted the landscape in my home town of Louisville, and were ever present in New York in the fifties through the seventies — I don't know if this was a local bon mot in Louisville, or present on all phone booths nationwide, but "HEAR HERE" appealed to my love of word play. In thinking about this column that cute little phrase came to mind and inspired what I am about to write.

"Oh, never listen to a recording before you learn a new piece" is a favorite comment among music teachers. "It will hurt your interpretation!" This was not a comment ever directed at me as I was growing up but I certainly heard it from other students about their instruction. I simply thought "what interpretation—what is being hurt"?

We have two ways to study a piece of music. One is tedious and the way of many musicians to this day—take the music and read it as you would a book. This is the way conductors learn a score. This is how Mozart would have become familiar with the Well-tempered Clavier of Bach, or Beethoven would have studied just about anything in the latter part of his life as he grew ncreasingly deaf. This is how eighteenth and nineteenth century performers would have become acquainted with much of their literature. This is the way I have studied many pieces, including even, a work which I have begun before but not completed, the first English Suite of Bach. Many of us now have CDs and had record players when were younger. And also, by now, we may know a large chunk of repertoire. Mozart and Beethoven primarily had score study. They heard the music in their minds before they ever began to make it part of their own musicality.

As important as it is to learn from score study, I suspect that most younger students are not likely to take the Pathetique Sonata out under a tree and settle down to read it as they would a book. And truly it can be tedious—reading the Opus 19 of Schoenberg for example, was hard work for me years ago. For me it is unthinkable to bypass hearing a performance of a new piece along with score study. With a younger student I often shared both the hearing and the score study at a lesson. If it was a Beethoven sonata I always put on a recording of Artur Schnabel playing it. On a few occasions, especially with certain Chopin Nocturnes or Preludes or Bach Preludes and Fugues, I would play the music myself. The student could HEAR HERE in the lesson. When the sound sources are available THEY'RE THERE to be used. Just as one has to hear a language in order to learn to speak it, so one has to hear a piece of music in order to get some sense of the ultimate goal in performance. The point is not to imitate but rather to familiarize. There is a world of difference.

It often happens that we hear a piece of music and we want to learn it. Let me cite a few personal examples, some of which I have referred to in earlier columns. I was (I think) thirteen or fourteen



when Rudolf Serkin came to Louisville to perform a recital. I don't remember the first half but the second half was devoted to the Schubert Sonata in B-flat, his final piano sonata and one of his last compositions before his tragic death at age thirty-one. For me it was a life-cycle event. I had to learn this piece, and as soon as I got my Schirmer's copy of ten Schubert sonatas, I opened it to the B-flat and began tonow learn it. I did not—could not-- imitate Mr. Serkin. Rather, I was captivated by the sounds he made at the piano, discovered I could make them myself and tried, (I have no idea how my thirteen year old ear and mind rendered this heavenly music) and that sonata remains for me a piece unlike any other in our repertoire—my favorite composition to play. Hearing Mr. Serkin is how I was introduced to the music. Similarly a few years later an equally marvelous pianist, Clifford Curzon, came to Louisville and ended the first half of his recital with the Schubert D Major Sonata. Again I went wild——I recall going back stage afterwards and asking him "How do you play so softly"? (Boy, did I have chutzpah at age fifteen !!!) He expressed his surprise at my question, admitting he had never had so young a student ask him that before. Regrettably, I do not recall his reply beyond that, but I learned the D Major Sonata and offered it as a central work in my second New York Town Hall recital. Two other works that mean a lot to me I heard first then learned. One, in Rosina Lhevinne's studio class when I was still studying with her, a young student perhaps two years my senior played the Ravel Sonatine. I thought this was one of the most beautiful pieces I had ever heard, again got the music—I do not recall actually studying it either with Mrs. Lhevinne or Mr Raieff, but I learned it. Curiously I have never performed it, but I taught it with great pleasure to several students over the years. Maybe it is high time I perform it? And In one of Joseph Bloch's piano literature classes where we heard everything imaginable, from Arensky to Zemlinsky and back again a student played the Chopin C-sharp Minor Nocturne Op. 27/1 Again I had not heard this work before, and fell in love with it. Though Chopin does not figure in my concert repertoire. I do occasionally perform this gorgeous nocturne and taught it devotedly. Many other piano and chamber music works that I love and play I first heard performed by students during my Juilliard years.

My point is we often HEAR music that we want to learn. And that is fine. But it is not fine if we imitate a performance. Once we become aware of a work and decide (with teacher's endorsement hopefully) we want to learn it we STUDY THE SCORE. Assuming the teacher directs the student to a worthy edition, every marking is there to be learned, not just the little black stemmed dots or circles. "Lang Lang played it faster than the metronome marking" or "I never noticed there is a rest there"—that is not studying carefully. The most important teacher anyone has is the score and the ear. Once we know we want to begin work on a piece, whether it is slight as the Schumann "Knight Rupert" or huge as the Schumann Fantasy, we need to look at the composer's instructions carefully at each practice session. The print doesn't change ever, but somehow as we grow we continually find new things and meaning despite the constancy of the notation! We take NOTE of the NOTES. Our relationship to the music changes, our interpretations grow as we continue to study the score. In that sense we are always learning a piece we had thought we played pretty well and the challenge of adding to our repertoires and musical souls is ongoing and exciting.

MICHIGAN MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Proposed Budget for 2020-2021

REVENUE:	
Certification Fees	\$250.00
Conference	
Registration Fees	\$7,000.00
Conference Advertising	\$3,000.00
MTNA Grant (Comm.Composer)	\$750.00
Gala Banquet & Concert	\$1,400.00
Dues	\$20,000.00
MTNA Foundation Fundraising	\$500.00
Ach Testing Regis	\$19,000.00
MMTA Concerto	\$1,500.00
MTNA Competitions	\$6,000.00
Miscellaneous Income.	\$500.00
Total Revenue	\$59,900.00
DISBURSEMENTS	
Administrative Expenses	
Office Expenses	\$1,500.00
MTNA Foundation	\$500.00
PresidentECD/ MTNA Travel	\$1,000.00
Mileage	\$1,000.00
Professional Fees/Accountant	\$1,500.00
Treasurer Stipend	
Total Administrative Expenses	\$5,500.00
Member Services	
Awareness/Advocacy	\$100.00
Certification Expenses	\$250.00
Membership	
Office Expenses	\$50.00
Directory	\$1,700.00
Total Membership Expenses	\$2,100.00
MMT Newsletter Expenses	\$350.00
Technology Expenses	
Domain, hosting & security	\$400.00
Website Maintenance	\$1,500.00
Total Technology Expenses	\$1,900.00
Total Member Services Expenses	\$4,350.00
Member Activities	
Total College Fac/Stud Chapters	\$500.00
Commissioned Composer	
Composer Commission	\$1,500.00
Total Commissioned Composer	\$1,500.00
	Ψ1,500.00

Teacher of the Year Awards Total IMTF/LA Expenses	\$125.00 \$275.00
Total IMTF/LA Expenses	
Teacher Education Expenses	
Office Expenses	\$150.00
Local Association Grants	\$1,600.00
Total Teacher Education Expenses	\$1,750.00
Total Member Activities Expenses	\$17,125.00
Student Activities	
Achievement Testing	
Office Expenses (all instruments +PayPal exp)	\$500.00
Awards (physical)	\$7,500.00
Awards (monetary)	\$1,000.00
Events(SAT Conference Meeting)	\$700.00
Handbook Office Expenses	
SAT Test Preparers (all instruments)	\$2,500.00
Judge Fees	\$4,500.00
Judges Travel	\$2,500.00
Total Achievement Testing Exp	\$19,200.00
MMTA Concerto Competition	
Office Expenses	1000.00
Awards (physical)	
Awards (monetary)	
Judges Fees	
Judges Travel	
Total Concerto Competition	\$1,000.00
MTNA Competitions	
MTNA Competitions Office Expenses & Food	\$1,000,00
Office Expenses & Food	\$1,000.00 \$6,000.00
Office Expenses & Food Judges Fees	\$6,000.00
Office Expenses & Food Judges Fees Judges Travel	\$6,000.00 \$3,000.00
Office Expenses & Food Judges Fees Judges Travel Judges Meals	\$6,000.00
Office Expenses & Food Judges Fees Judges Travel Judges Meals Tuning	\$6,000.00 \$3,000.00 \$1,000.00
Office Expenses & Food Judges Fees Judges Travel Judges Meals	\$6,000.00 \$3,000.00 \$1,000.00
Office Expenses & Food Judges Fees Judges Travel Judges Meals Tuning Student Day Awards	\$6,000.00 \$3,000.00 \$1,000.00
Office Expenses & Food Judges Fees Judges Travel Judges Meals Tuning Student Day Awards Venue	\$6,000.00 \$3,000.00 \$1,000.00
Office Expenses & Food Judges Fees Judges Travel Judges Meals Tuning Student Day Awards Venue Travel Grants to MTNA Conf (from Savings)	\$6,000.00 \$3,000.00 \$1,000.00 \$375.00

Total Disbursements	\$59,550.00
Net Surplus	\$350.00