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MTAC News

(February 2016)

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Greetings From the State President



Hello colleagues and friends!

And the happiest of New Year's to you all! It seems like we have hectic times during the holidays only to return to packed schedules including teaching, planning, thinking, and moving forward into the New Year. How happy I am that this is so.

I find that now is an exciting time: preparing students for Certificate of Merit, as well as planning for new events in my own studio. I know you feel the same way. It is such wonderful work to think that we do help to change and better lives, for music is all about changing attitudes, looking for productive and new ways of learning, looking for new inspirations.

I am thrilled by the plans for Convention 2016, July 1-5, "Composers Alive" and its exciting lineup of events. Here

are a few of the artists.

INNA FALIKS: Associate Professor of Piano at UCLA, gives us a session on Playable Contemporary Music.

DR. STEWART GORDON: will discuss articulation and pedaling puzzles in the Beethoven Sonatas.

ANDREW NORMAN is our Keynote Speaker. His title is: "Importance of Attending Concerts." He is a member of the Young Composers Program at the LA Philharmonic. (YOLA)

SUSAN SVRČEK: presents a session on Contemporary Music for early and intermediate levels, a Lecture Recital, and an intermediate master class.

STEPHEN PRUTSMAN: composer and pianist. He has collaborated with leading artists and ensembles from the Kronos Quartet to Yo-Yo Ma and Jon Anderson of "YES."

KENT TCHII: Kent presents a 75-minute session: "Piano Ensemble Extravaganza," including a lecture on preparing students for multiple piano ensembles and a performance of multiple pianos and multiple pianists.

In addition, there will be three meetings for all Presidents, Treasurers, and Secretaries with Breakout sessions for each officer group and for each meeting.

There will be two social events for our members: a Friday night members' social and a NEW Monday "Buffet Dinner," offered for a nominal fee.

As we move through this year 2016, we can reflect on how MTAC has enriched our lives. It is truly one of the best musical organizations in the world. It is because of your dedication to your students, your colleagues, to music, and to excellence that this is so. I am proud to be one among you.

Please read below in the NEWS about the new CM database. We are really moving in the right direction and want everyone to be prepared for 2017.

MUSINGS: I have been thinking recently about why we teach technique: scales, arpeggios, chords, etc. I know these are important, but I asked myself why? Is there something beyond mere finger wiggling? This answer came to me: These are the foreground of music but they are not just the foreground. They are also the primary aids to hearing the background of the music. They demonstrate what a key, say F# major, sounds like, how the combination of notes becomes a family. By practicing them, we learn to recognize the sound of a key. Therefore, I prodded further: What are the advantages to this mode of thought, I asked. Again an answer came: When you read music, we are looking primarily for what the patterns on the page sound like, not

just what the notes and rhythms sound like. The background of the music is a deeper dive and helps to move from one key to another in reading. Recognizing what a key sounds like aids in our search for ease in performance.



Dr. Louise Earhart
MTAC State President

Database News

New Database for MTAC – Phase Two: Certificate of Merit

As we enter into the busiest time in the CM season, members of the CM council and MTAC State Board, State Office personnel, and the design team at Low and Joe Creative are actively working to put the final touches on phase two of the new database system that will be used for CM 2017. Teachers, parents and students are becoming familiar with the new system through the release of Phase one for VOCE in September. Yes, within this new system, parents and students will take on a more active role in MTAC program participation. New within the database

- The Parent Portal, where parents can view student application information, including scheduled exam times and locations. Parents will also make payments for program applications directly to MTAC, freeing teachers from having to collect payments from the individual students.
- The new system will ultimately save teachers time, by simplifying some of the tasks involved in registering students. The database will include a music library which will make suggestions as teachers enter repertoire.
- Other automated features are designed to help teachers avoid errors on the applications that may cause a student to become ineligible for various honors.
- Additionally, the database will contain numerous help files to assist in the process of becoming familiar with the new system as well as learning about the various programs MTAC has to offer.

Local preview sessions will be scheduled in April and May at various locations both North and South, to give all teachers a first-hand look at the new system. Watch for emails with dates and locations of these preview sessions.

State Office News

It is with great excitement and pride that we announce the promotion of Rhonda Williams



from Operations Administrator to Executive Director, which will become effective on August 1, 2016. From now until August 1, Rhonda will be acting as Interim Executive Director to transition her current duties and assume this new role.

In this new position, Rhonda will strengthen management and organizational structures with clear governance protocols and financial planning; steward State Board, State Committees, Branches, members, employees, vendor, and community relationships; and support and elevate our Annual Convention and State Programs.

Rhonda started with MTAC in 1996, and throughout the years has served in a variety of roles and capacities including Accounting Assistant, Finance Coordinator and Operations Administrator. She has consistently demonstrated her ability to work competently and productively in every role on a multitude of projects and tasks, working closely with many different Boards of Directors while managing State Officer personnel. She has been responsible for implementing complex administrative, financial, human resources, and operations systems in the State Office that have contributed to MTAC's growth to almost 5,000 members, 64 Branches, and State Programs that attract over 100,000 students each year.

MTAC has been working towards this change over the past several years, with a view towards the long-term health and longevity of the organization in professionalizing and streamlining its business systems and practices. We are pleased that this day is finally here through the focus and efforts of our State Board predecessors and the current State Board of Directors. With an Executive Director in place, MTAC will be able to move to the next level in furthering our mission to pursue excellence in music education and advance the profession of music teaching through innovative programs that foster artistic growth and achievement for our members and their students.

Please join the State Board of Directors and State Office Staff in welcoming and supporting Rhonda as she steps into the role of Executive Director. We look forward to making this announcement in person, and having Rhonda meet with our Branches and members at the MTAC State Annual Convention this year, at the Los Angeles Airport (LAX) Hilton from July 1 through July 5, 2016. See you all there!

The MTAC State Board of Directors

New in the MTAC Store

The new Certificate of Merit® Ear Training materials are now available!

Please log on to your [Teacher Home Page](#) and click on shopping to order Ear Training sets for:

- Piano

- Violin/Viola
- Voice
- Cello
- Winds

All Sets will include the Ear Training worksheets, answer keys, and audio CD. The member price will be \$19 including shipping and tax.



Contact [Meg Tomasetti](#), Programs Associate for more information.

Convention Piano Policy

To keep our Convention pianos in good working condition for the duration of the Convention, teachers and artists are asked to refrain from selecting pieces for “prepared piano” for performance at the Convention.

Specifically, works using any foreign object in the pianos or to strum, pluck or vibrate on the strings. Some limited use of the hands inside the piano is allowed with certain restrictions. Our pianos this year are being graciously provided by Steinway & Sons for our exclusive use. Please read the following paragraph to make sure our students are in compliance with the guidelines:

Hand-muting, string tapping, strumming or the plucking of the piano strings is allowed, as long as only the performer’s hands or fingers are used for these effects and the essential integrity and tuning of the piano is not affected. Not allowed is the insertion in the piano or on the strings of metallic objects, stones, paper or any other foreign object, intentional de-tuning of the strings or the excessive pounding of chord clusters, which has the danger of de-tuning the piano for following performers.

ASCAP

ASCAP PROGRAMS

Please remember that all programs from Branch recitals, master classes, and competitions, plus programs from private studio recitals of MTAC members, are to be mailed to the MTAC

State Office Attn: ASCAP, 833 Market St., Suite 900, San Francisco, CA 94103 or emailed to Maria Mercado at mariam@mtac.org. Some Branches collect these programs all year, and mail them in the spring. That time is approaching, so collect these programs, and send them all in together – or separately as the events occur.

MTAC has an overall licensing agreement with ASCAP which assures that ASCAP member composers and arrangers will receive royalties from the music which MTAC students and members perform. But in order for ASCAP to know what is performed, they must have programs. There is no charge to the Branches for this service, except for your mailing cost. The State will take care of mailing all programs directly to ASCAP. Should you have any questions about ASCAP, you may access their website at www.ascap.com.

Association

Convention 2016

Verna Balch, Convention Program Chair

MTAC's 106th Annual Convention: 'Composers Alive' **Hilton Los Angeles Airport** **July 1-5, 2016**

COMPOSERS ALIVE!

If there ever was a Convention you would not want to miss – this is the one! Each day is packed with a dynamic line-up of top notch Artists and knowledgeable Sessions presenters. Starting off the opening ceremony is Composer Andrew Norman who is the Keynote Speaker. He studied with our own Martha Ashleigh and was a Panel Master Class student in 1977. His remarkable composing career took off while in high school, it has advanced rapidly, and in December the New York Philharmonic premiered his newly commissioned piano concerto. He has been appointed director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Composer Fellowship Program. Also on Friday you will meet and hear the new Piano Department Chair at UCLA, Inna Faliks. She takes off from her concert schedule to play a recital for us, give a session on contemporary music, and conduct the Panel Master Class. Other pianists joining the Convention Team will be Dr. Susan Svrček of Piano Spheres fame, and well respected Dr. Stewart Gordon of USC, who everyone knows as the Editor of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas. Our Monday evening Artist is Stephen Prutsman, pianist, composer, conductor, known as one of the most innovative musicians of his time, moving easily between classical, jazz, and world styles. Adding to other awards, Prutsman was a Medal winner at the Tchaikovsky and Queen Elisabeth Piano Competitions.

Need other excitement? Broadway performer Tiffany Haas, 2002's Miss Ohio, will undoubtedly attract many voice students to her recital and Master Class. Los Angeles Philharmonic string players will be at the convention on Saturday and Sunday with string and trio recitals. And, ever wanted to learn how to flutter tongue? Come to the extended flute technique session given by exceptionally fine flutist Viviana Guzman.

Director of Accompanying at Colburn Conservatory, Dr. Vivian Fan, will give a lecture demonstration on accompanying. She will also give a master class with students accompanying students. Those of you who have piano students who accompany their compatriots, are invited to apply for a possible spot on this master class. Email Program Chair vbach@mtac.org for details.

Fun Session events include learning how to teach by Skype and Face Time. How to Zoom, Text, Tweet with your students. Jazz Improvisation instruction. How to avoid injury with Body Mapping. Sophisticated Syncopations. One session will trace the execution of all those strange ornaments in the Romantic period. Another will instruct on pedaling. Want to know more about Bartók and Harbison – we have that covered for you. And of course there will be plenty of sessions on recommended new music for all levels.

Great artists to hear, much to learn, lots of fun, inspired presentations. You have it all here this year at the LAX Hilton from July 1 – 5. Why be anywhere else?

Verna Balch, Program Chair

Notes From the Convention Registrar

Happy New Year from your Convention 2016 Registrar, Jennifer Cruz!

While it's still early, now would be the perfect time to begin making plans for this year's Convention 2016 registration! Don't forget to take advantage of our early bird registration rate of \$250, if registered on or before May 15, 2016. After May 15, the rate increases to \$300 (from 5/16-6/15). After this date, onsite registration fees are \$340.00.

Hotel Accommodations

This year's MTAC Convention brings us back again to the Los Angeles Airport (LAX) Hilton Hotel. As before, a great room rate of only \$99/night + tax (Single/double occupancy) is available to all Convention guests (before June 15th). After this, room rates will be higher and subject to being sold-out based on demand and availability. The room rates for a Triple occupancy room are \$109 and \$119 for Quad occupancy room (before the deadline). Parking Rates=\$10 Self / \$20 Valet

Free Convention Registration

A free registration is offered from the State to any first time attendee who has never attended an MTAC State Convention. Each MTAC Branch is given one free first time attendee registration and may freely decide how this member will be chosen. Please register using the First Time Attendee Form, on or before June 15th, if you have been selected by your Branch. A signature from your Branch President is required. The first time attendee free registration will not be accepted on site at the convention.

State Programs

Adult Performance North

Jennifer Griest, Adult Performance Chair North

Adult Performance North will take place on Saturday **March 12, 2016** at Contra Costa College in San Pablo. This year's judges are Dr. Sonia Leong of The University of the

Pacific and Richard Cionco of Sacramento State University. Participants can choose private lesson, master class, or recital performance opportunities – or a combination of all three. This year Professor Cionco will present a special master class focusing on ensemble repertoire. Find a duo partner and take advantage of this great opportunity! Recital participants will be considered for performance in the Adult Performance Recital at the MTAC State Convention in July.

Please Contact Jennifer Griest at jgriest@contracosta.edu for more information.

Application deadline is Feb. 15, 2016

Friends of Today's Music

Friends of Today's Music: *The Old Man and the Sea*

Piano Trio by Composer Michael Daugherty



MTAC's *Friends of Today's Music* Program engages the young musicians by commissioning and premiering level-appropriate works written by some of today's most prominent composers like Joan Tower and William Bolcom. We celebrate 30-year anniversary of this unique program this year. This year's commissioned composer is a Grammy-Award winning composer, Michael Daugherty, whose eclectic style encompasses influences from his training in serialism with European composers like Ligeti and his personal experiences in American pop and jazz music. Inspired by Hemingway's Nobel Prize-winning novel, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), the composer has written a piano trio by the same title (violin, cello and piano) for students, ages 13-18 as "an elegy to the struggle of life and death between man and nature".

The premiere will take place during the MTAC State Conference in July 2016 (July 3rd, 1 PM) during which the students will have a chance to work closely with the composer. Those interested in taking a sneak peek at the brand new score, please contact the *Friends of Today's Music* program chair, Dr. Minji Noh at minz319@gmail.com. For more detailed info on the composer, please visit www.michaeldaugherty.net. The application due date for the program is April 1st.

Dr. Minji Noh, Friends of Today's Music Chair

Piano Concerto-Solo Competition North

Anna Lin, North Chair

We are now accepting applications for our Annual Piano Solo and Concerto competitions. The Northern Regional will be held on Saturday, April 2, at Santa Clara University. The Northern Regional finalists will be competing with the finalists from the Southern Regional at the convention, to be held at the LAX Hilton on July 2, 2016. It is always a highly anticipated and breathtaking event! We hope that you will recommend your best students to participate in this high-caliber competition. Applications are available online only. For more information, please login to your teacher page. Looking forward to seeing you and your students there!

Anna Lin
Piano Concerto/Solo North Chair

Piano Concerto-Solo Competition South

Kristi Lobitz, South Chair

The 2016 Piano Concerto-Solo Southern Regionals will be held all day on Saturday, March 26, at El Camino College, Torrance.

Registration is by online application only on the MTAC website. Interested teachers should log onto the website using their personal password, and then follow the links to the piano concerto-solo application form.

Payment is securely handled online using a credit card. Please do not mail personal checks to the State Chairs. The application fee is \$90 per student.

Proof of age documents including a copy of the student's birth certificate or drivers' license should be sent by snail mail or as an e-mail attachment. For email attachments, please list teacher name, student and division clearly in the subject bar. **Please do not sent birth certificate documents by certified mail!!**

The online registration opens January 15th and closes March 1st at 11:59 p.m. Any questions about the application procedure may be directed to either Kristi Lobitz, Chair-South at klobitz@sbcglobal.net or Anna Lin, Chair-North at yunghsueh@hotmail.com.

We are pleased to announce that the piano concerto master class will be reinstated among the sessions at the 2016 State Convention in Los Angeles. The class will feature four of the first alternate winners from both North and South working with one of the Convention artists. Specific age divisions are still to be determined.

VOCE

The VOCE program is the first of the MTAC programs to be released within the new database system. As of the writing of this article, there have been three VOCE events completed and there are over 200 soloists and ensembles enrolled in events to be held across the state, with more enrolling each day.

As with anything new, there have been some bumps along the way, however, teachers and parents are becoming familiar with this new system and seeing the new features it has to offer, such as the ability to view the student's scheduled evaluation time as well as the results of the branch evaluations once they have been posted to the system. If a student has been chosen to attend the finals, the teachers can login to new.mtac.org and click on the "open" button under the column labeled "State". This will create an application for the state event, and teachers can indicate that the student will attend the finals. Once this is done, the parent can login to make the payment for the finals.

This year, the first place finalists will compete at the state finals which will be held on April 17, 2016 at Chapman University. The winners of each of the divisions will perform at our annual convention on July 3, 2016 at 7:45 at the LAX Hilton.

A big thank you goes to the branch chairs and the teachers for working together to make VOCE a success this year. The new State Chairs, Xuefeng Stanley Wang and Kathy You, were thrown into the jobs with the new database in addition to learning the ropes. But the biggest Thank You needs to go to Nancy Woo, our database liaison, who often worked in the wee hours of the morning to solve all questions and problems with grace and patience, often calling teachers and Branch Chairs to instruct them through the new system. Thank you Nancy from all of us in VOCE.

Jane Masur, VOCE liaison

Foundation

The holidays are over and now we must think strongly about our donations to the MTAC Foundation. Unfortunately we have gotten off to a slow start. A few Branches and several loyal and dedicated members have sent in their donation, and we thank you for that. ***What strong and loyal MTAC Branches and members you are!!!***

Now it is time to collect your thoughts on what you can donate to the Foundation. We had almost 100% of our Branches donate last year. Can we reach that magical 100%? We did it one year in the past, and it would be fabulous if we could do it once again! Remember, it is not the amount that you give, but just that ***YOU GIVE***. Yes, we need and greatly appreciate those large amounts that we receive from several Branches and members, but we also need and appreciate the other amounts that you give.

Convention is just around the corner!

Are you going?

Will your Branch be represented?

*Will your favorite MTAC programs have sufficient funds to keep them on a high level?
Will the students be able to receive the scholarships that we have given in the past?*

Will you feel proud that you are financially part of a specific program at Convention?

Hopefully your answer will be “Yes” to all the above questions. Your check should be made out to MTAC Foundation and mailed to the State Office. Designate the specific program or programs that you want to receive your donation. If you have no preference, mark 2nd Century Fund. Make the check out to MTAC Foundation. Remember that it is tax-deductible.

AND yes, you might have some stocks that you would like to donate to the Foundation! *Easy to do.* Contact Rhonda at the State Office and she will lead you through the procedure.

We encourage you to designate your donation to someone important to you and/or someone who encouraged you in your chosen field of music by stating “In honor of” or “In memory of” on your check.

Happy donating!!!

Thank you for reading the MTAC News!

MTAC NEWS is published in September, February, and April. Deadlines for submissions are the tenth of each of the above months. Please send all information with “MTAC NEWS” in the subject column electronically to Gwen Churchill, editor, gchurchill@mtac.org. The MTAC News is posted online at www.mtac.org on the Teacher Home Page under *MTAC*.

Comments and suggestions should be addressed to Gwen Churchill, Editor.
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