



*Affiliated with the Music Teachers National Association, Inc.*

## **Massachusetts Music Teacher Association**

**Summer Newsletter, June 2008**

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## *From the President*

Dear Colleagues,

Spring is finally here, the days are longer, and the Azaleas and Rhododendrons are in full bloom. It's also a busy time for all of us teachers, as we are gearing up for the final events of the year. I hope it has been a productive teaching year for all of you.

Our association had a successful spring season. In March and April, the Musical Achievement Evaluations (MAE) took place in five different centers across the state, enjoying a significant increase in participating students and teachers. I want to thank **Maria Reesman**, MAE Chair, who meticulously coordinated this successful event, and to the center leaders who took care of the students and judges. Special thanks also to M. Steinert & Sons in Natick, and the Yamaha Music School in Lexington, for making their great facilities and pianos available for us.

The MTNA National Conference was held at the end of March in Denver, Colorado. It included five incredible days filled with lectures, concerts, meetings, competitions, and social gatherings with colleagues from all over the country. Our state was well represented this year, with 2 national award winners: **Dr. John McDonald**, the recipient of the 2008 MTNA Composer of the Year Award, and **Alison Barr, NCTM**, who received the 2008 Article of the Year Award. Congratulations John and Alison!

Our biggest event of the year, the Bay State Contest, was held in May. Thanks to all the students and teachers, judges, parents, and volunteers who took part in this event. I want to thank **Dr. Jane Fiske** from the Dept. of Humanities at Fitchburg State College, for supporting our association and hosting the event. Lastly, a special thank you to our contest coordinators, **Shelley Reeves** and **Vivian Tsang**, who worked so hard to make this event successful once again.

The July Jamboree, the final event of the year, will be held on July 13<sup>th</sup> at the Center for the Arts, in Westford, MA. Many students and teachers will participate in this summer recital, sponsored by the Greater Lowell Music Teachers Association (GLMTA). The registration form and more details can be found on our website, or by emailing the GLMTA president, Steve Zocchi, at spzocchi@yahoo.com. Thank you, Steve, for coordinating this event and for leading our Lowell Chapter so successfully and dedicatedly in the recent years!

As most of you must have seen on our website, our 2008 Teacher of the Year is **Shelley Reeves, NCTM**. Inspired by this award, Shelley has established the "Celebrate Certification Prize" to reward teachers who will pursue national certification. Congratulations, Shelley, and thanks for this generous gift!

Several board members are completing their term of office this year. I'd like to thank Lucy DeSa who served as Treasurer, Camille Buddecke who served as Membership Chair until she moved to Minnesota, and Janet Ainsworth who has successfully taken care of the MTNA Composition Competition for the past 3 years. Thanks to all of you for the generous donation of your time and skills. As of June 1, Shelley Reeves will be the new treasurer, Gwindale Cassity the Membership Chair, and Leslie Hitelman the Composition Competitions Coordinator. We welcome Gwindale and Leslie to the MMTA board, and appreciate Shelley's continued service!

The teaching year is coming to a close, and so is my term as MMTA president. The experience has been both challenging and rewarding, but most of all, I learned an enormous amount and got to know so many amazing people. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve together with the wonderful people on our board, and would like to thank all of those who helped me during my term. The position of President will be taken over by our capable and enthusiastic colleague, Vivian Tsang, who will skillfully lead our association for the next two years.

Wishing all of you a pleasant summer,

Dr. Nilly Shilo  
MMTA President

## LOCAL ASSOCIATION NEWS

### Greater Lowell MTA

GLMTA had another wonderful year. Our Piano Master Class with Max Levinson and our International Music Recital were already mentioned in the winter newsletter, so I'll move on to my favorite event of the year. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, GLMTA sponsored a fund-raising concert featuring several local music teachers. We had performances by Robert Curtis, Leslie Hitelman, Kathy Maskell, Houry Schmeizl, Josh Shapiro, and of course yours truly, Steve Zocchi. We were able to raise \$500, \$250 of which we sent to Feed the Children. It was a great feeling to be able to send a donation to such an important organization which does the crucial work of providing essentials for starving children world-wide. I have contacted representatives from Feed the Children, and they will help us promote future fundraising concerts with the goal of raising larger amounts.

We are also preparing for our upcoming July Jamboree student recital on July 13<sup>th</sup>. We will hold this event at the Parish Center for the Arts in Westford, home to a beautiful Steinway B. Registration forms can be found at the MMTA web-site. If you are interested in having students perform (all instruments are welcome) or if you have any questions, contact: Steve Zocchi (978)761-0633 [spzocchi@yahoo.com](mailto:spzocchi@yahoo.com).

I hope you all have a wonderful summer.

### MUSICAL ACHIEVEMENT EVALUATIONS

I open with a word of appreciation and congratulation to all the **MAE Chairs** that participated in the Musical Achievement Evaluations. Again, it was a very successful year and we attribute the results to good organizing skills, dedication and attention to detail. The Centers mostly increased their numbers of entrants and the effective participation of the judges made it a very exciting experience.

Here are the numbers of teachers and students that participated in February, March and April in the Musical Achievement Evaluations.

|                              |                    |                     |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Metro West-Natick</b>     | 10 teachers        | 39 students.        |
| <b>Metro-West- Lexington</b> | 8 teachers         | 52 students         |
| <b>North Shore</b>           | 6 teachers         | 25 students         |
| <b>Southeastern</b>          | 4 teacher          | 15 students         |
| <b>South Shore</b>           | 3 teachers         | 22students          |
| <b>Totals</b>                | <b>31 teachers</b> | <b>153 students</b> |

This reflects an increase in new teachers and entering students!

We will post the information for the 2009 MAE Centers on the Website as soon as all the information is available. Click on Student Programs to find the updated list.

#### ***We need your help!!***

We are in need of a Chair for the Central MA. Camille Buddecke moved out of State. In order for the Central MA Venue to reopen in 2009, this position needs to be filled. Co-chairs would also make it easier to share the organizing of the Central MA Center. Please volunteer and do your part to make this happen for the benefit of the Central MA students.

**Thanks to:**

- Steinert & Sons in Natick for their continued support allowing our teachers and students to participate in the MAE Event.
- Yamaha Music School for use of their wonderful facility in Lexington.

Here are some of the participating teacher's remarks about the MAE experience at the Yamaha Music School on April 6<sup>th</sup> :

"Fabulous facilities" "smooth and flawless floor plan" "fine pianos in the comfortable and well-lit studios" "A very attractive waiting area" "ease of parking"

"I was impressed with the facility, a professional building which made us feel welcome with all the modern details of contemporary architecture."

All of us involved are thankful that such a nice setting was open to us in support of our efforts to promote music education.

*Special thanks* go to Jim Keenan Director and Michael Veloso Administrative Assistant. Their enthusiasm and efforts to facilitate the use of the Yamaha Music School were a key component to the wonderful MAE Event this spring!! Thank you.

If any questions about our Program, please feel free to contact me.

Maria Reesman  
Chair MMTA/MAE  
781-750-8840  
[mmreesman@yahoo.com](mailto:mmreesman@yahoo.com)

## NATIONAL MUSIC CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

### Report of NMCP Chair

#### **WOW! We are growing!**

In this Spring Session of examinations, we topped 100 registrations: 17 theory exams, 79 piano exams, and 6 violin exams. There were over 20 teachers who submitted student. We had so many registrations for practical exams that we had to open up a fourth day of examinations.

All this fabulous growth has brought me to plead for help in registering students on the days of examination. If everyone who has students taking examinations would volunteer 2 hours as a presiding officer, we will be able to continue to grow. It's not difficult to do. You have to check off the students as they come in, see that they have the requisite forms and books, and show them where to wait their turn. Then, when you hear that the exam has reached the point of the ear tests and sight reading – always the last segments of an exam – you go and get the next candidate, and show him/her where to wait. Easy! If you haven't yet had a student do an exam, it would be a good way to see how the program works!

I'll be calling you!

Alison I. Vannah Ph.D.

## MEMBERS CORNER

**MICHELLE GORDON**, in collaboration with Michelle Sisler from Minnesota, has written “Studio Makeover: Technology Addition – All the tools you need to build a studio lab from the ground up!”. This book includes information on setting up a lab in your studio with ideas on what to charge, how to communicate your lab to parents and answer common questions, equipment and software recommendations, software content and carefully planned correlation charts for *Alfred*, *Bastien*, *FJH Piano Adventures* and *Hal Leonard* method books at all levels. This easy to read format is perfect for teachers and a must have reference in any studio interested in using technology, or already using technology. You can read about it at <http://www.keystoimagination.com/StudioMakeover.htm>

**KEITH SNELL**, piano pedagogue, has a new official website [www.keithsnellpianist.com](http://www.keithsnellpianist.com)

### **ALISON BARR Named *American Music Teacher* Article of the Year**

**CINCINNATI (May 2008)**—Alison Barr’s article “Reversing the Pyramid: Keeping High School Students in the Independent Studio,” was selected as the 2008 *American Music Teacher (AMT)* Article of the Year. This award is presented by Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) to the outstanding author of a feature article written expressly for the *AMT*. The article was published in the August/September 2007 issue. The author will receive a \$1,000 award made possible by the MTNA FOUNDATION FUND.

Barr, a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music, owns and operates an independent music studio in Hanover, Massachusetts, where she teaches 50 students of all ages and levels. She has also maintained a multi-teacher studio in Brookline Village, Massachusetts, for more than 24 years. Barr, who has a master’s of music degree from Boston University, is certified to teach flute, music theory, choral singing, accompanying and ensemble playing.

Barr has been state president for the Maine Music Teachers Association and the Massachusetts Music Teachers Association, and has served as MTNA Independent Music Teachers Forum chair. She has developed a series of music appreciation lectures, “Joyful Listening!” which she has offered in the Boston area and at the Avocational Adult Piano Workshop in the Czech Republic.

Along with *AMT*, Barr has also written articles for *Clavier* and *Keyboard Companion*, as well as a book called *Successful Studio Teaching*.

**DUO CON ANIMA, FERN ABRAMS AND JOAN GARNISS**, will be making their 22nd appearance in the Lexington First Parish Summer Music series on Friday, July 11 at noon. This free concert will feature two piano music by Clementi, Amy Beach, Shostakovich and Copland.

**VERA RUBIN** will be teaching a five-week course beginning June 23-July 24 which covers five topics of interest to the developing and professional violinist. Each week (three meetings) addresses a different topic. Topics covered include *Tone Production Quality in the Performance of Stringed Instruments*, *The Left Hand Technique - Relaxation and Virtuosity Training*, *Posture - Relaxation and the Relationship between Player and Instrument*, *The Essential Bow Skills and Development of Virtuoso Bow Strokes and Baroque and Modern Bows: A Practical Analysis*. Some classes are available to both students and professionals, others are only appropriate for professional violinists. Credit is available. More information is available at [www.newenglandconservatory.edu/summer/index.html](http://www.newenglandconservatory.edu/summer/index.html).

### **SUSAN CAPESTRO, NCTM creates website *WholeOctave.com***

We pianists and piano teachers are a lonely group. While school teachers facilitate group learning in classrooms and have regular contact with colleagues, the social interactions of an independent piano teacher are often severely limited. Singers gather together in choirs. Instrumentalists play together in ensembles. But pianists are often cordoned off into little practice rooms. Many composers work best in isolation, but still require interaction with others for stimulation and inspiration. Yearly conferences help, but they're not nearly enough. Why not use technology to prevent us from suffering in seclusion?

That is why Susan Capestro, NCTM, founded WholeOctave.com, a central place online where keyboardists share ideas, learn, grow, teach, improvise, communicate, network and innovate. There is a blog at WholeOctave.com, where many different keyboard teachers and pianists contribute current news articles and comments. WholeOctave.com has a wikipedia type encyclopedia, but it centers around information about all things piano and keyboard.

Best of all, it's free. You can explore WholeOctave.com any time; even take a tour of the site. Or, when you join WholeOctave.com as a member (a bargain at \$30 for a whole year), you're able to create your own pages, make your own news articles, and upload your own photos, recordings and videos. WholeOctave.com's monthly email newsletter is also free; you can sign up for it right at the website.

### **SUSAN CAPESTRO Fights Cancer with *Pan Mass Challenge***

Who among us has not been affected by cancer? I personally have witnessed too much of this insidious plague; it's time, once again, to take action! George Gershwin and Paul Robeson were both athletic, so why not? In August 2008, I'll bicycle my third *PMC*, to raise money for cancer research. I hope you'll be one of my sponsors. The *PMC*, a lean, volunteer organization, has raised over \$204 million that has been used to improve the lives of those suffering with cancer. This year's goal is \$34 million, nearly 50 percent of the *Jimmy Fund's* annual revenue! In 2007, 100 percent of all money raised was donated; not one cent was used for administration. I'm happy now to be part of a cycling team, *Kinetic Karma*. I've been asked to write our theme song, based on *Instant Karma* by the Beatles! In just a few years, *Team Kinetic Karma* alone has raised over \$350,000. We are also riding in honor of our pedal partner, a pediatric oncology patient. We support this family during their trials and tribulations, and they cheer us on during our arduous training. At the *PMC* website [www.pmc.org](http://www.pmc.org), you can access my profile, photo gallery, sign my guestbook and leave a message. It's easy to make a donation with a credit card. Just click on "make a donation," "credit cards," then egifts. Type in my name, **Susan Capestro**, or my egift ID, SC0155. Any amount is appreciated, but please be generous; let's make Gershwin and Robeson proud!

**Send us your news, concert dates and ideas. We will put them in the next Members Corner. We want to know what you are doing!**