



MMTA WINTER NEWSLETTER, February 2009

### **Letter from the President**

Dear MMTA Members,

I hope that you are all having a wonderful and productive teaching year! With the current economy, it may appear that the future looks bleak no matter where we turn. This is a time when an organization like MMTA can be so important, from giving us the professional credibility to stay competitive in our field; to providing opportunities for our students and thus increasing the value of our own studio; to being able to network and make friends who we can lean on during these times of trouble; to having advertising opportunities like the “Find a Teacher” engine on our website to help recruit new students! I hope that you take full advantage of MMTA and actively participate in our events and offerings! There are a lot of exciting events coming up in late winter and spring for our members: Judged Festivals, Musical Achievement Evaluations, MTNA National Conference, Bay State Contest, National Music Certificate Program, not to mention an array of offerings from our local associations GLMTA and Southeastern. I hope to see you all at some of these exciting events!

Sincerely,  
Vivian Tsang  
President

### **National Conference**

The MTNA National Conference this year is in Atlanta, Georgia from March 28 to April 1, 2009. The Conference is always a place where we get a chance to learn, listen to great music, make friends, and have fun! I encourage all of you to attend! I know that with the current economy, you may be apprehensive about spending the money to attend the conference, but it is in economies like this that reminds us that we must upgrade and improve ourselves in order to stay competitive! Besides, with the current economy, you will be able to find great deals on airfare. I was able to find a plane ticket out of Boston Logan Airport for under \$200! You can register for the conference and find more info on the MTNA website at [www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org).

**Do you want to know where your MTNA dues go and what programs they support?**

You can read the latest MTNA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes at

<http://www.mtna.org/AboutMTNA/BoardofDirectors/BoardMeetingMinutes/tabid/635/Default.aspx>.

### **MTNA National Dues Increase**

There will be a slight increase in the MTNA National Dues for 2009. Please note that MTNA goes through a meticulous process in determining dues increases. According to Dr. Gary Ingle, the Executive Director of MTNA, "The average CPI for calendar year 2008 has been calculated at 3.43%. It is lower than expected given that the November and December rates were significantly less than expected (1.07% and 0.09% respectively). Therefore, the dues increase will be only \$2.00 rather than \$3.00 as estimated. The dues will rise from \$63.00 to \$65.00 effective July 1, 2009."

### **MMTA Membership Questionnaire**

We have received many extremely useful responses from our membership questionnaire. We are continually evaluating your responses to improve on MMTA! Please go to <http://www.mmta.net/survey.php> and fill out the questionnaire if you haven't done so to make your voice heard!

### **REPORT FROM MAE CHAIR, Maria Reesman**

It's a new year and a new beginning. It's time to prepare for a year of new endeavors. Among them you can consider entering your piano students in the Musical Achievement Evaluations. It's a wonderful opportunity for your students to try out their performance skills for different reasons. It's very exciting for them to have a goal to refine and possibly memorize 2 very special pieces of their choice with the guidance of their teachers. Since there are no required levels is a very convenient way to have them evaluated.

MMTA members that have not yet entered students in this program should consider preparing some students to participate during March and April.

It's wonderful to see their smiles when they leave the room and the pride they take in showing their Certificates. If you go to [www.mmta.net](http://www.mmta.net) and open to Student Programs, you will find the description of the Musical Achievement Evaluation. If you were to have questions or more specific information you can contact the Chair of this event.

The 5 Centers and their locations are included on the website. Deadlines are a month ahead of the Evaluation and the Registration Form and Judges Certificate is available online.

For teachers who are not members of MMTA, we offer the opportunity to enter their students for a nominal one time fee of \$45.00 per teacher. Hope to see all the teachers that have experienced the MMTA/MAE in past years and new faces added to the Center's lists!

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

**REPORT FROM NATIONAL MUSIC CERTIFICATE PROGRAM,  
Alison I. Vannah Ph.D., Chair**

Great News! Last year, we filled a half day of examinations in the winter session. This past December, we filled a very full complete day!  
The State Certificate of Excellence winners for the 2007-2008 sessions have been announced:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
Preparatory B	Sophie M. Deutsch	Piano	Andrea Kowalski
Grade 1	Connor V. Shea	Piano	Anna Rogozin
Grade 2	Joy Tianle Zhang	Piano	Lise Wallace
Grade 3	Alexandra M. Kennedy	Piano	Larissa Kennedy
Grade 4	Margaret Liu	Piano	Zhou Hongjuan
Grade 5	Carol Tianyue Zhang	Piano	Lise Wallace
Grade 8	Wilson W. Qin	Piano	Mary Xu
Grade 1	Tessa Beatrice	Violin	Catherine T. Tai
Grade 3	Keshav R. Prabu Schlosser	Violin	Catherine T. Tai

Congratulations to students and teachers!

Registration for Spring Examinations will be from January 20 to February 24. Registration is online at [www.nationalmusiccertificate.org](http://www.nationalmusiccertificate.org). Theory exams will be held May 8 and May 9. Practical examinations will be held May 29, May 30, May 31, and June 1.

**REPORT FROM CERTIFICATION CHAIR, Kathleen Maskell**

We are pleased to announce that Tanya Schwartzman passed the proficiency examinations required for national certification by MTNA. Becoming a certified teacher through MTNA shows pride in our profession and a willingness to keep learning, right along with our students. Congratulations, Tanya.

*For more information on certification go to [www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org)  
or contact Kathy Maskell, NCTM at [kathy@musicworks-studio.com](mailto:kathy@musicworks-studio.com)*

**2008-09 MTNA State and Eastern Division Competition Results**

The MTNA State Competition was held on November 22<sup>nd</sup> at Brandeis University. The winners and State Representatives of the piano and string competitions competed at the Division level, which was held at West Chester University in West Chester, Pa on January 9-10, 2009.

***Young Artist Piano Competition***

**Ivan Todorov**-State Representative  
Student of Eda Shlyam

***Senior Piano Competition***

**Richard Chen**-Winner  
Student of Nilly Shilo

**Carl Lian**-Alternate  
Student of Nilly Shilo

***Junior Piano Competition***

**Yong Murray**-Winner  
Student of Niva Fried

**Kevin Sherman**-Alternate  
Student of Valerie Henkin

***Junior String Competition***

**Eleanor Bragg**-State Representative  
Student of Barbara Paschke

***Young Artist Competition***

**Miles Bergsma**-Winner  
Roberto Toscano-Honorable Mention  
Students of Alla Elana Cohen

Honorable Mention at Eastern Division

***Senior Composition***

**Danielle Galler-Rabinowitz**-Winner  
Dayton Kinney-Honorable Mention  
Students of Alla Elana Cohen  
Jeremiah Klarman-Honorable Mention  
Student of Rodney Lister

Winner at Eastern Division

***Junior Composition***

**Eleanor Bragg**-Winner  
Eric Kim-Honorable Mention  
Students of Alla Elana Cohen

***Elementary Composition***

**Anna Larsen**-State Representative  
Student of Alla Elana Cohen

Winner at Eastern Division

**LOOKING AHEAD TO THE 2009 MTNA State Competition**

The State MTNA Competition usually occurs each November before the Thanksgiving holiday. Students must register in early September, so repertoire should be chosen well ahead of this date as no changes may occur once they have registered on the National website.

The competition date and registration dates for 2009 have not been chosen yet, but will be published over the summer on the MTNA website along with the repertoire requirements and registration guidelines. This information may be found at [www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org)

**2009-2010 Competition Changes:**

In 2009 there are several changes in the state and national guidelines and rules.

1. Junior Brass competition has been discontinued due to very low number of entrants over the past several years.
2. The piano concerto requirement for the Senior and Young Artist levels has been discontinued for the following reasons:
  - a. There are many concerto competitions available to pianists with the end result being a performance with an orchestra.
  - b. The time constraints of our competitions did not allow the students to perform the entire concerto (one movement for Senior level; entire concerto for Young Artist level). This results in the student being stopped many times in their performance.
  - c. By eliminating the concerto requirement, the students and teachers will be able to plan a solo program within our time limits that can be performed without so many interruptions, especially at the division and national levels.
3. Starting in 2009, the State teacher's fee is \$25.00 for the first 4 students, and \$5 more for each student over 4. This fee is not part of the registration done on the MTNA website but must be completed at the same time. This application is mailed to the MTNA Stated Chair in order for a registration to be complete. The teacher's application may be found on the state website at: [www.mmta.net](http://www.mmta.net)

## **LOCAL NEWS**

### **News from Greater Lowell MTA**

On Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, GLMTA held our annual International Folk Music Concert at the Parish Center for the Arts in Westford. Fifteen young students (and even some of their parents and teachers) performed a diverse program of music from around the world. We heard Chinese folk songs, music from India, Armenia, Korea, Italy, Germany, Russia, American music, and much more. Of course some students also played standard repertoire. One student played piano while her grandfather accompanied her on the Chinese violin. Parents brought delicious foods from their ethnic background and we had a feast at the reception following the concert.

The teachers involved were Houry Schmeizl who MC'd the event and did most of the work for the concert, (These international recitals were her idea) Josh Shapiro, Leslie Hitelman, and myself, Steve Zocchi. All the teachers performed and accompanied

What I liked most of all, however, was seeing all the children playing and socializing with each other after the concert. It was a virtual rainbow of ethnicities. All getting along, all joyful, all sharing a part of themselves. It was one of the most beautiful moments I've ever witnessed.

Now we are ramping up for the GLMTA teachers fundraising concert. Leslie Hitelman, Marguerite Samoorian and I will be performing in a concert from which half of the proceeds will be donated to Feed The Children and half will be used to fund musical/educational events in the future. The concert will be held Sunday, February 15<sup>th</sup> at 3:00, at the Parish Center for the Arts in Westford on a beautiful Steinway B.

The program includes works by Bach, Chopin, I will be performing my most recent composition. I call it "Hubris". Irony anyone? There will also be Jazz, of course.

## **News from Southeastern Massachusetts Local**

A Winter Honors Recital for students of SEMTA teachers was held on January 26, at the First Baptist Church in Fall River.

## **MMTA MEMBER NEWS**

Duo Con Anima, Fern Abrams and Joan Garniss have been busy with 4-hand performances this year. They will continue at the Waltham Public Library on Saturday March 14 at 2:30. The program consists of: Three Legends by Dvorak, Schubert Grand Rondo, Debussy Petite Suite and Ewazen Suite from the Cloud Forest.

On Friday June 19 at noon they will make their 23 appearance in the First Parish on the Green, Lexington summer concert series. This concert will feature two-piano music by American composers: Copland, Appalachian Spring; Bernstein, Overture to Candide; Dello Joio, Aria and Toccata; and Creston, Prelude and Dance. The first two have been transcribed from two pianos by Joan Garniss. The series is free and runs all summer.

## **Notes from China, Leslie Hitelman**

Recently, Robert Schumann, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a Chinese teenager, and American pianist Leslie Hitelman (me), came together in the Chinese City of Harbin. In this pivotal moment, the real meaning and depth of the term “globalization” came home to me. As musicians, we have always seen ourselves as part of a global community. But from my experiences in China, I clearly see how we can be of service to the rest of the world as role models in communication, respect, understanding, peace and harmony.

In late December 2008, I conducted an eight-day concert tour in China. My manager, Qiao, president of Ocean Arts and our translator, Stewart, my husband, and I visited three Chinese cities: Beijing, Harbin and Qingdao. I gave solo recitals in Harbin and Qingdao and two master classes in Harbin.

It was thrilling to experience firsthand how much piano music and teaching is valued in China. There are millions of people who play and want to understand Western Classical music. The audiences in China helped me put into words what an important role the audience “plays” during a performance because I was keenly aware that not only was I giving the music to them, but I was receiving something from them and then putting that “something” back into the music. In this way, the music was always being created anew. This kind of experience is why, for me, classical music remains relevant and exciting. Great music can hold all people’s wishes from all different cultures. We cannot always communicate well through verbal language, but we can communicate through music.

Music can transcend cultural and personal experiences and unite us with each other and with leaders from the past. In one of my master classes there, a young man played Traumerei by Robert Schumann. Traumerei means “dreaming.” I have always thought of it as the dreams we have while sleeping. As I tried to understand the meaning of this piece while the student played, I had a revelation. I asked him if he knew who Dr. Martin Luther King was. He said yes. I recounted to him that Dr. King had given a very powerful speech in which he spoke about his dreams for freedom and equality and dignity for all men and women. This translation was made for the audience.

I then played the opening ascending fourth of the Traumerei. To me, the quality of that reaching up is one of dreaming, of longing. Schumann starts each phrase with the same C reaching up to F. It has the emotional quality of Dr. King starting each of his phrases with “I have a dream...” The student and I explored phrase by phrase the use of the fourth and then the expanded reaching and longing and dreaming of the sixth: C up to A. I instructed him to remember his dreams and play the piece again. His playing soared to another level of emotional intensity. As he played, I also experienced my own dreams as a musician, a teacher and as a human being -- dreams that had brought me to this place far away from my hometown and which was still a familiar place.

These kinds of gifts – tangible and intangible -- were exchanged again and again throughout this trip between gracious hosts and wide-eyed travelers, a pianist and her audiences, a teacher and a student, the composer and musicians, a great leader of the past and new leadership for the future. As musicians, we have worked hard to train our ears and our hearts. Let us also re-dedicate ourselves to how our art can transcend time and space and engage us as members of a global community.



Masterclass in Harbin. Leslie along with the teachers of the other students who performed.



Recital in Harbin



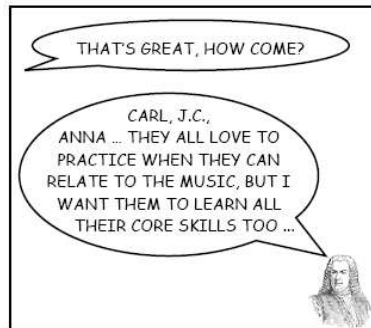
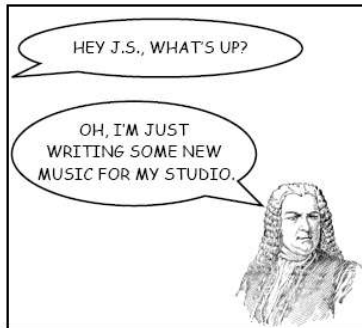
Publicity Poster for Recital

## FROM THE TOP

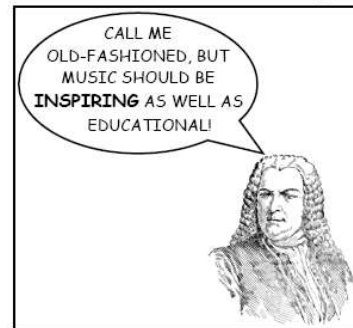
“From The Top” is pleased to extend an offer of discounted tickets for its upcoming live radio concert taping at New England Conservatory’s Jordan Hall in Boston on March 29, 2009, at 2pm.

The discount group rate for MMTA members and their students is **\$10 per ticket**, nearly half off the regular \$25 ticket price at the box office. For more information and to reserve your tickets, please contact Erin MacCurtain at [emaccurtain@fromthetop.org](mailto:emaccurtain@fromthetop.org) or call (617)437-0707 x117.

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