



**Massachusetts Music Teachers Association**

**Spring Newsletter**

**2018**

# President's Message

June 2018

Congratulations to all of our wonderful MMTA Teachers and Graduates!

*'Tis the season of growth... It is that time of year again for teachers to showcase blossoming musicians... and to strengthen new roots...*

I am so proud and honored to have collaborated within these two past years with many new and "old familiar" colleagues and friends during my Presidential term. I am very thankful for having had the opportunity to help support MMTA's invaluable music and scholarship programs (*Thank you Alison Barr!*) for our students and teachers. Without you, the passionate teacher, student and volunteer, our vibrant musical organization would not sustain its flourishing growth.

**A subtle reminder to please renew your dues by June 30<sup>th</sup> on the MTNA website.**

The MMTA music teacher has many beneficial resources within both the State and National affiliations. I urge you to please visit and explore all of the new and exciting professional MMTA and MTNA programs, wellness and studio resources that you might currently not be aware of for your studio and personal well being.

< <http://www.mmta.net>> < <https://www.mtna.org>>

**Our MMTA Spring season was filled with glorious music and busy bees!**

The Judged Festival was held on March 3<sup>rd</sup> at Gordon College and again was a huge success! The Impressionists, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century was this year's theme. MMTA is very fortunate and thankful to Gordon College in all of their continuing support for our students. The student experience of performing in a beautiful performing music venue was very inspiring and fun! Bravo and thank you to Judged Festival Chairperson Heather Riley for organizing an exciting student event!

Congratulations to all of the students and teachers!

The Musical Achievement Evaluations (MAE) for piano and strings were held on April 14<sup>th</sup> at the Yamaha School of Music in Lexington and on April 22<sup>nd</sup> again at the Indian Hill School of Music in Littleton, MA. We are so incredibly fortunate to have had MAE Chair Person Amy Lee and new member Penny Oulette organizing MAE's beneficial MMTA student performance opportunity. Thank you Amy and Penny!

The MTNA 2018 National Conference held at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort, Lake Buena Vista, Florida was enthusiastically represented by many of our MMTA Teachers, Students, Chair Committee and Board members. A special congratulations to our Massachusetts Cellist William Suh, student of Paul Katz, First Place Winner of MTNA's 2017-2018 Senior Performance String Competition. Bravo to you both!

Some of my favorite highlights of the Conference included attending the Inaugural MTNA-Stecher and Horowitz's Two Piano Competition Winners concert. The First Place winners, Duo Happy Dog, performed Frederic Rzewski's "Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues" dramatically during an intense thunderstorm with tornado warnings blaring out of some audience cell phones. (No, there were no tornados)

Pianist Jeremy Denk's concert was a sublime dessert... His performance of the Schubert's last Sonata in B-flat Major, D.960 was hypnotic... These two concert events were my favorite rides that day at Disney.

If you have never attended a MTNA Annual Conference, you are surely missing out on all of the professional networking and educational fun! I guarantee that you will feel completely refreshed, invigorated and motivated to come back home to your students with exciting new teaching perspectives. Added note... It was so nice to see palm trees instead of snow banks! Plan ahead now to head northwest next year to MTNA's 2019 Conference in Spokane, Washington.

**\*\*Please visit the MMTA Facebook page to view pictures and posts of your fellow colleagues enjoying the MTNA Conference!**

Our last two performing MMTA events of the season for students was celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bay State Piano Contest, held on May 13<sup>th</sup> at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee and The Bay State Contest for Strings, held on May 19<sup>th</sup> at the Boston University College of Fine Arts. We are indebted and thankful to our chairs Pianist Esther

Ning Yau and Violinist Vera Rubin for all of their dedication to organizing, coordinating and making these events possible for all of our music students. Bravo!

I would like to thank all of you, the amazing volunteers and colleagues on the Executive Board and Committee and non-committee members who work numerous and selfless hours to help maintain and provide MMTA's commitment to excellence. I discovered years ago the invaluable asset MMTA has provided for me in my growth as a teacher, musician and volunteer colleague. Have you ever considered volunteering to help strengthen your personal growth and student's musical future?

Fortunately, I did!

It has been a privilege to serve as your State President for the past two years. I look forward to seeing many of you next year at MMTA events!

Have a wonderful summer!

Musically,

Janet Ainsworth  
MMTA President

## **Announcing MMTA's Music Connect Program!**

MMTA's Executive Board is thrilled to announce the approval and implementation of a scholarship opportunity for students of MMTA members, called *MMTA's Music Connect Program*. About ten months ago, your Board unanimously approved a proposal to support this program with a first year of start-up funds and permission to go ahead with research, legal feasibility and plans for this program to become a reality!

The opening of *MMTA's Music Connect Program* description is as follows: MMTA believes that any child who has musical ability and interest in playing an instrument or singing deserves the opportunity to explore this talent. MMTA's Music Connect Program (MCP) offers music lessons

tuition-free to students who have a demonstrated financial need and will study with an MMTA member in good standing. MMTA is thrilled to offer this program to our member teachers and their students!

*MMTA's Music Connect Program* link will very soon appear on our website with descriptions of how the program works and forms that teachers and student families may use to participate. We plan to be able to have our first MCP recipients in place by this fall. Members will be sent a message from our President when the program is posted online. It is important to note that participating teachers will be paid an hourly tuition rate to teach participating students and will not be expected to fully donate teaching time.

I wish to thank all of my colleagues on the Board and especially Valerie Stark, Dorothy Travis, Ellyses Kuan and MMTA President, Janet Ainsworth, for the support they have given this project and their close attention to all of its details. And, I must acknowledge and deeply thank Attorney Peter Katz of Newton, MA, who served as our pro bono attorney provided by "Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts." *MMTA's Music Connect Program* would never have reached fruition without Attorney Katz's patient and brilliant understanding of all the legalities involved and his ability to make the way forward clear and understandable to a layperson.

We will soon be rolling out publicity for this program so that we may let the greater public know of MMTA's commitment to music lessons for ALL students.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alison Barr

## **MMTA Annual Social Occasion**

This always-fun event will be held at the lovely home of Vera Rubin, 89 Columbus Ave., Waltham, MA 02451, on Sunday, June 17, 2018, from  
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Lovely catered food, drink and networking with colleagues!

Please come if you can.

Vera's phone number: 781-789-0857

# **MTNA National Conference at Disney World March 2018**

As a longtime MTNA attendee, I am always thrilled to feel the excitement and warm camaraderie of being with “old” friends and colleagues in March, a time when music teachers can use some new energy! I’m appreciative that we have MMTA’s support, through the Teacher Enrichment Grants, to help us with expenses.

Coronado Springs Resort was far from your typical MTNA Conference venue, but it was great fun to go to the “park” during a free day, under the expert guidance of Ellyses Kuan.

The highlight of the conference for me has now turned into what I know will be a life-changing experience! During my last full day in attendance, I went to a session called “Teaching Music in Difficult Places,” knowing that they meant someplace more difficult than the suburbs of Boston. At this session, Dr. Scott Donald from Austin, Texas, and Dr. Bradley Bolen of Baylor University, also in Texas, spoke fervently and honestly about their participation in a program called “American Voices YES Academy,” led by Executive Director, pianist John Ferguson. This program organizes summer music academies in recent stable areas of the world, and places American teachers in these academies. Most of the locations are in the Middle East. As I listened and looked at their videos, tears streamed down my face. The kids were regular kids who had huge stories of conflict, interruption of study and loss, but all they wanted was to go to music camp with other kids and have a great experience. I thought, right then and there, “This is what I’ve been building towards my whole life.” I went up and thanked them, wondering inside myself whether I would have the courage to do what they had done.

A month of deep deliberation went by before I contacted John Ferguson. He was in the Middle East; so getting a time to talk was difficult. When he settled back into his office in Bangkok, we set up a Skype call. I explained my passionate response to the session I had heard at MTNA, and told him that, if he felt I was a good fit, I was ready to go this summer. He said, “There are two kinds of people – those who run the

opposite direction when they hear of this type of program and those who run towards it with their eyes wide open, embracing the opportunity.” There was an opening and I am going to Beirut on July 26, flying out of JFK with two of my new colleagues. This is a self-funded trip and there is no salary per se, but all my expenses are paid once I get to Beirut. I’ll stay in the American University there, a very nice modern facility.

Here is the website if you would like to explore the program or even donate to this work! More when I get back! For now, please know that this is the power of MTNA, your professional organization! And thank you, MMTA, for your support!

<http://www.americanartsfestival.org>

Respectfully submitted,  
Alison Barr, Newsletter Editor