

OMTA MUSIC NEWS

Opus 78, No. 5 · May 2024

UPCOMING EVENTS

Virtual Syllabus—Spring 2024

May 17-19, 2024
Virtual/Online

State Composition Festival Recital

June 1, 2024
Virtual/Online

Syllabus Level X Recital

June 8, 2024
Pianos Now, Beaverton, OR

2024 OMTA State Conference

July 12-13, 2024
Portland Community College—Sylvania Campus, Portland, OR



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Liz Willis, NCTM
OMTA President

Dear Colleagues,

This is my final "President's Corner"! I want to express my thanks to you all for the honor of serving as your President these past two years. OMTA is one of a kind.

Working with our amazing Executive Committee and Board, as well as our bookkeepers, sub-chairs, and our excellent OMTA Office staff, has been both an education and a distinct

pleasure. The dedication and generosity of spirit of these colleagues has definitely solidified my faith in our collective mission.

I thought that I knew quite a bit about OMTA after being a member for 35-plus years and serving in a number of district and state positions. However, it has been "continuing education 101" for me during these past two years. The scope of programs that we offer to our members and their students is truly significant, and there is an unusual wealth of opportunities available for continued growth within the association.

If I were asked to offer one piece of wisdom from my term, it would be: don't take OMTA for granted. It has taken 108 years of effort on the part of hundreds of Oregon's teachers to have achieved this amazing entity. Everyone's commitment will continue to be needed to keep it vibrant in the future. Counting the elected officers, Board of Directors, Committee Chairs and District Presidents, there are approximately 84 leadership positions that currently appear on our website. However, there are not 84 separate people handling these jobs. Quite a few colleagues currently serve in two, or sometimes three positions!



OREGON
MUSIC TEACHERS
ASSOCIATION

I hope this will change. As life demands constantly evolve, opportunities will arise to pay back or pay forward our time to OMTA. It's tempting to think of volunteering as only giving to others. Believe me, it is also a real possibility for personal growth, new friendships, expanded perspectives, and renewed creativity and motivation.

Keep an open mind and heart when asked to take on an office, chair position, or any supportive position—even in a new area that you may not have experience in. "You don't have to wait for the perfect circumstances, perfect cause, or perfect level of knowledge... Proceed step by step... and enjoy the process of engagement as much as the objective itself." (from *The Power of Giving: How Giving Back Enriches Us All*. Azim and McKinnon, 2008). It is worth it!

Thank you all, and I hope to see many of you at our conference in July.



Liz Willis, NCTM
OMTA President



Grand Scholarship Competition

Presented by the Piano Santa Foundation

Multiple winners can receive the use of a grand piano in their homes for 2 years, including moving costs, annual tuning, and maintenance. The competition is open to all students (regardless of income level), ages 12–16, who have passed at least Syllabus level 6 (or equivalent) and live in the Portland Metro area. Applications and more information are available at www.pianosanta.org.

Applications Due: May 20, 2024 | Auditions: June 15, 2024



The link below connects you to your local District Associations, OMTA Board of Directors, and Committee Chairs:

www.oregonmta.org/about/leadership

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2024 OMTA STATE CONFERENCE

July 12-13, 2024 · Portland Community College · Portland, OR



Heidi Evans, NCTM
2024 State Conference
Chair

Registration is now open for the 2024 OMTA Conference, held jointly with Portland Piano International this year!

Register at <https://oregonmta.org> before May 31 to get the Early Bird Pricing of \$155 per member. See the OMTA website for all the details.

I have a few new highlights to share. In addition to the artist recital to be given on Saturday night by Portland Piano International's Janina Fialkowska, you won't want to miss either Connor Chee performing his own works on Friday afternoon, or the Composer of the Year, Todd Marston, debuting his newly-commissioned work on Saturday afternoon. See the interview with Todd in this issue describing his work and linking out to his website where you can hear his music.

We're equally thrilled to have MTNA President Dr. Peter Mack, NCTM, giving the keynote address, *The Art of Volunteering*, to kick things off! Nor will you

want to miss the ever-popular Dr. Kate Boyd's two talks, one on teaching technique, the other on repertoire swaps for popular pieces, and Connor Chee with *Empowering Cultural Understanding: It's Okay to Be Afraid*.

Our Awards Banquet will be held at Brix Tavern in Tualatin, with its beautiful lakefront views, and it is next door to the Century Hotel, one of the two hotels where we've booked a block of rooms for the conference. The other hotel option is The Crowne Plaza in Lake Oswego, which is a few freeway exits closer to the conference site. During the days, you may want to take a stroll with a friend through the trails and gardens at PCC Sylvania. I've built in generous lunch times and breaks, with the hope that you can spend time reconnecting with friends and colleagues from around the state, and make some new acquaintances while you're there.

See you soon!



CERTIFICATION

Embracing Growth



Anastasia Kitaev, NCTM,
Certification Co-Chair



Sarah Barker Ball, NCTM,
Certification Co-Chair

The Teacher Profile Projects that comprise the NCTM certification process are just waiting for you, ripe for the picking, to feed your professional growth! How about starting (or completing) your National Certification now? <https://certification.mtna.org/>

As music educators, our mission is to continually inspire, guide, and nurture our students' talents. Committing to ongoing learning not only enriches our teaching practice but also ensures our relevance and effectiveness in a constantly-evolving field.

We have found that the most common reason holding teachers back from achieving certification is the fear of lack of time. However, let's consider this: how frequently do we hear similar excuses from our students regarding practice? Amidst our bustling schedules, it's all too easy to overlook our own professional advancement. But the notion of being too busy holds no more value for teachers than it does for students. Just as we urge our students to allocate time for practice and skill refinement, we owe it to ourselves and our students to prioritize our professional development. If we want our teaching to be truly impactful, we must lead by example.

An anecdote illustrates this point well: A woman once sought advice from a monk-teacher regarding her son's excessive sugar consumption. The monk instructed her to return in a week. When she did, the monk advised her son to cut back on sweets. Puzzled, the woman asked why he hadn't given the same advice earlier. The monk replied, "I needed a week to discipline myself from sugar, so I could effectively counsel another. Otherwise, it wouldn't resonate."

Recognizing the challenges we face, OMTA has developed a certification program tailored to accommodate our busy lives. We warmly extend an invitation to you to join our Certification meetings on Zoom on the first Thursday of every month at 9:00 AM. Simply email certification@oregonmta.org to receive the link. During these sessions, we delve into topics such as time management, effective strategies for organizing work on the five projects required for certification, and much more. We eagerly anticipate your participation!



COMPOSITION



Dianne Davies, NCTM

OMTA State Composition Festival Chair

MTNA State Composition Chair

We are looking forward to experiencing the new music of our state's young composers! Please mark the following dates on your calendars:

May 1:

Completed forms due from each District Composition Chair to diannedavies00@gmail.com:

1. District Festival Report:
<https://oregonmta.org/wp-content/uploads/Composition-Festival-District-Report.pdf>
2. Honored Composers List:
<https://oregonmta.org/wp-content/uploads/Composition-Festival-Honored-Composers-List.pdf>

May 5:

1. Postmarked application form, \$15 entry fee, PDF Scores, and Honored Composers Book orders due to: Dianne Davies, 6995 SW Larkspur Place, Beaverton, OR 97008. Book orders are included on the State Application Form. After the books are printed, the final price will be set and checks are to be sent to Dianne Davies. Estimated cost is \$15-20 each.
2. Performance YouTube links due to Caris Power at office@oregonmta.org and Dianne Davies at diannedavies00@gmail.com. All Young Composer Project (YCP) participants are invited to participate in the State Honors Recital and have their scores included in the State Honored Composer Booklet upon submission. No District Festival is necessary.

Important YouTube Video Requirements:

- Must be set to "unlisted"
- Must NOT be set to "made for kids"
- **Do not use YouTube "Shorts"**

June 1:

Virtual Recital of recorded performances will be posted on the OMTA state website.

There is also a national student composition competition sponsored by the Music Teachers National Association. Visit www.mtna.org > Engage > Competition Guidelines > Composition Guidelines. The deadlines for this are in September. Students do not have to enter a District Festival or be a State Honored Composer to enter the National Competition.

Looking for composition materials or workshops to enrich your studio? I have some tips and notices to share that are open to teachers and students. Contact me about this or any other questions you may have at diannedavies00@gmail.com.



EDUCATION

Remarkable Resources Await



Laura Davis
OMTA Education Grant
Chair

Your OMTA membership is the key to opening a very special door: scholarships and grants for OMTA districts, individual teachers, and their deserving students.

All the requirements and application information is readily available and easy to locate on the OMTA website:

www.oregonmta.org

The various amounts available to be awarded each year are limited, so it is advisable to apply well before the annual deadline of September 30. No late applications can be considered. Scholarship and grant checks will be awarded in mid-October.

Student scholarships are on the "Programs for Students" page:

<https://oregonmta.org/programs/scholarships/>

This link: <https://oregonmta.org/teachers/grants/> lists all the OMTA resources for teachers and districts. Other grants from MTNA are also found on this link (scroll down for MTNA grants).

Grants for Teachers

Here are some of the ways these valuable grants can propel you on your professional growth:

- Help with costs of attending a professional conference
- Help with MTNA teacher certification fees
- Continuing study grants for teachers
- Study grant for teachers incorporating composition in their studio

Grants for Districts

District presidents, please note that there are two different Nellie Tholen grants for districts, so please be sure to carefully read all the information. These Nellie Tholen grants are handled by different volunteers. It is all explained on the website and links.

1. NEW: Technology Grant for Districts!

OMTA recently created a one-time District Technology Support Grant, and districts are encouraged to use this resource if needed.

2. OMTA/OCF Nellie Tholen District Enrichment Project Information

In late April, presidents outside of the Portland Metro area received a roster of grant program presenters and their presentations. Spring and summer are great times to plan for the coming school year.

3. Nellie Tholen Endowment Fund Grants

All district presidents may apply for funds to assist in payment for presenters subject to approval by the OMTA Education Grants Chair.

For this grant, please email or mail applications to

Laura Davis, OMTA Education Grant Chair
12877 SE Braemark Pl.
Clackamas, OR 97015
(503) 312-1162
lauradavis47@gmail.com



GRANT PROGRAMS

OMTA/OCF Nellie Tholen District Enrichment Project Programs: Teacher Enrichment for All!



Karen Huntsberger, NCTM
Nellie Tholen Grant Coordinator

We're finishing out the year with two grant programs after many presentations in April.

Note to District Presidents and Program Coordinators: The 2024-2025 roster of presenters and presentations will be emailed to you on June 10, 2024. Email me at grant.coordinator@oregonmta.org with any questions.

Visit the Teacher Enrichment page for the latest workshop updates:
<https://oregonmta.org/teachers/enrichment-workshops>



Lincoln County District

Friday, May 3, 2024, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Location: Oregon Coast Community College, 400 SE College Way, Newport OR 97366

Dr. Alexander Tutunov, NCTM

Developing the Culture of Beautiful Tone Production on the Piano from an Early Age

There is a great deal of information available on how to improve the speed, velocity and stamina in a performance, on "how to get a difficult run up to speed" and there are more performances out there that are louder and faster than ever before... But this is only a part of the performance. The other half is the expression, control of the tone quality, the culture of creating a beautiful sound on the piano. It can be understood as the broader aspect of the general technique, and there is much to discuss and to discover. The focus of this presentation is on how to teach, control, and how to practice creating such tone.



Rogue Valley District

Saturday, June 1, 2024, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Location: Grace Lutheran Church, 660 Frances Lane, Ashland

Deborah Cleaver

Decoding a Baroque Score

In this presentation, we will analyze genre, articulation, ornamentation, and rhythmic expression in works of beginning-, intermediate-, and advanced-level pieces from the Baroque era. Special emphasis will be placed on how to communicate to students an approach for learning a new work. Because the notation in Baroque music is the least informative of all the eras, we need concepts to understand when and why we articulate, appropriate ornamentation, and how to decipher the complex rhythms.



MEMBERSHIP



Andrew D'Antonio, NCTM
Membership Chair

Over the past month I was in touch with a couple newer OMTA members from my district. While both of these members were expert pianists with experience teaching advanced students, they were looking for pedagogical guidance specifically for teaching beginners. I invited both over separately, and we spent time going through my teaching materials and discussing different approaches to working with beginners. After teaching beginners for over 15 years, it was really exciting for me to have the chance to share my experiences with these new up-and-coming teachers.

As membership chair, I get a lot of inquiries: new teachers are looking for guidance, not only for pedagogy, but for learning the Syllabus program, pursuing NCTM certification, marketing their studio, and making connections to start gigging, just to name a few things. There are often district and state chairs to whom I can refer them, but I know there are many wonderful members in our state who aren't chairs but probably have a wealth of information to share. If you feel like you might enjoy mentoring new

members, reach out to your district president or to me; we'd love to have your help and perspective! The perfect way to start is by welcoming new members into your district and asking if they have any questions or needs:

- **Mikhail Bozylev** is a new active collegiate member of Eugene
- **Dr. Charlene Chi** is a new active member of Central Oregon
- **Julie Hanney** is a new active member of Central Oregon
- **Alishan Merjanian** is a new active member of West Portland
- **Peter Sullivan** is a new active member of East Portland
- **Deborah Weeks** is a new active member of Rogue Valley

Welcome to OMTA! We look forward to meeting and working with you.



OMTA HONORS COMMITTEE CORNER

Fern McArthur, NCTM and Susan Todd, NCTM, Honors Committee Co-Chairs

2024 MTNA Foundation Fellow

Dr. Matt Cooper (Blue Mountain District)



Dr. Matt Cooper, 2024 Oregon MTNA Foundation Fellow



It was delightful to see our own Dr. Matt Cooper honored as the 2024 Oregon MTNA Foundation Fellow at the Conference Gala in Atlanta. The OMTA members attending the gala (Heidi Evans, NCTM, Cindy Peterson-Peart, NCTM, and Dr. Chiharu Sai) gave a great cheer when Matt's name was announced.

Matt was nominated by the OMTA board in spring 2023, and donations funding his nomination came from friends, colleagues, and family members. OMTA support included donations from our 2023 Conference Raffle, and support from the Central Oregon, Hillsboro, and West Portland Districts.

2025 MTNA Foundation Fellow Nominee

Sarah Barker Ball, NCTM (Hillsboro District)



Sarah Barker Ball, NCTM, 2024 Oregon MTNA Foundation Fellow Nominee

The OMTA Honors Committee is pleased to announce Sarah Barker Ball, NCTM, as the **2025 Oregon MTNA Foundation Fellow Nominee**. The MTNA Fellow program is a prestigious honor that recognizes outstanding individuals in the music community while supporting the efforts of the MTNA Foundation Fund through donations in the nominee's name. If Sarah's nomination is fully funded by January 15, 2025, she will be honored at the annual MTNA Conference in March 2025 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The OMTA Honors Committee encourages all members to consider adding a donation in Sarah Barker Ball's name to the MTNA Foundation when renewing their MTNA dues this spring, or otherwise sending a donation to MTNA directly. The MTNA Foundation actively supports students and teachers throughout the country through commissions of new music, awards for excellent performances, scholarships, study grants, and emergency assistance in times of crisis. Donating to the MTNA Foundation is a meaningful way to honor exceptional leaders in the music community like Sarah Barker Ball, while supporting the important work of the Foundation.

Sarah is a founding member of Lincoln County District and added membership in West Portland and Hillsboro Districts after moving from Newport to Forest Grove. Sarah held nearly every office in



Lincoln County District. She brought inspiration from her time there to Hillsboro, founding the Westside Ribbon Festival in 2020. Sarah will be president of Hillsboro District for the 2024–2026 term.

After completing her term as OMTA President from 2020–2022, Sarah has been actively working with OMTA Certification Chair, Anastasia Kitaev, NCTM, to mentor OMTA members interested in becoming Nationally Certified Teachers of Music. Oregon was recognized at the MTNA conference as having the second-highest number of newly certified members, coming in just after Texas, which has more than twice the number of members.

Sarah has enthusiastically served in many roles during her more than thirty years as an active member of OMTA. Her interest was sparked by attending the 1986 MTNA conference in Portland, Oregon, and was followed by spearheading the formation of the Lincoln County District of OMTA in 1989 and serving as its President for many years. She successfully completed the projects to become a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music in 2017 and currently serves as a syllabus adjudicator.

Sarah agreed to serve as OMTA’s newly-created Bookkeeper of Operations in 2017 and agreed to step in halfway through the OMTA President-Elect term in 2019. Her term as OMTA President (2020–2022) included working intensely with others to pivot to virtual events, including the 2020 OMTA Conference and the 2020 Fall Board Retreat, among many other events and meetings. In July of 2021, on behalf of the music teachers of Oregon for their unflinching efforts to keep music alive, she received The American Eagle Award from the National Music Council of the United States.

Sarah was nominated by Rita Warton and Susan Todd. Rita wrote: “Sarah was part of the first cohort of Nellie Tholen members. She was always such fun to be with, carried no biases, always looked for the best in everyone, and was the person who made it possible for me to become a member of OMTA in the days when you needed a degree to join. She was and is such a charismatic leader, a real light for music in our midst.” Susan added: “Sarah has been an OMTA friend since I met her while planning the 2007

OMTA Conference in Newport. She was so welcoming and helped me run the conference, with both of us learning as we went. We stayed in touch at conferences and board meetings, but I was so delighted when she moved to Forest Grove. Sarah is an inspiration to me as a teacher and a delight to my heart as a friend. I would be thrilled for her to receive this honor.”

Honorary Life Member Award

In January your Honors Committee also received OMTA Board approval for three new Honorary Life Members: **Rebecca Gooch, Kelli Stephens** and **Paula Watt, NCTM**. The Oregon Music Teachers Association State Honorary Life Member award brings recognition to individuals who have given extraordinary service to OMTA at both the district and state levels, and who have been members of OMTA for at least 25 years. Recipients are recognized at the OMTA Conference and receive free membership at the state level for life.

Rebecca Gooch (Mid-Columbia District)



Rebecca Gooch, Honorary Life Member

Rebecca Gooch is a private piano and voice teacher in The Dalles, Oregon. She also teaches Fifth Grade and Middle School choirs at St. Mary’s Academy in The Dalles. Her musical development has been a lifelong journey through many forms of music education and creation. She

was blessed with music in the household growing up and piano lessons from a young age. Rebecca studied with Harold Gray at PSU and Don Lehmann from George Fox in her early years. Oregon Music Teachers Association has been a central part of her



musical development and growth as a teacher through its offerings of workshops and master classes. She and three other teachers from the Gorge were recipients of a Nellie Tholen Grant that funded two years of lessons with master teacher Tatiana loudenitch.

As a Lyric Soprano, Rebecca studied with Ruth Dobson of PSU, Corrine Walker, and the American soprano and master teacher Ellen Faull. She has always been active as a performer. She has performed several solo vocal recitals, was lead vocalist in the klezmer group Europatopia, and has been in several local musical theater productions and local choirs, most recently singing "Rejoice, O Daughter of Zion" in The Dalles performance of Handel's Messiah.

Rebecca is the current President of Mid-Columbia Music Teachers, which is the Gorge chapter of OMTA. She is also a member of the Oregon Federation of Music Clubs and the National Association for Music Education. For most of her career, she has been a private piano and voice teacher of school-aged students. She especially enjoys working with older adults for vocal health through singing, and volunteering as musical director of the children's theater group Civic Kids in The Dalles.

Rebecca is appreciated by her fellow Mid-Columbia District members, who wrote us that "she runs our meetings with enthusiasm and great people skills. She is quick to help out when there is a need, and we are blessed to have her expertise and leadership skills in our district." Rebecca served as OMTA Foundation Chair for many years, putting on entertaining and successful auctions and raffles at the state conference in support of the OMTA Foundation and Oregon's MTNA Foundation Fellow nominees.

Kelli Stephens (West Portland District)

Kelli Brown Stephens is an active recitalist, teacher, adjudicator and clinician. She served for over 20 years on the music faculty at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon, and maintains a private studio in Portland. Her students have won many awards in



Kelli Stephens, Honorary Life Member

national, and international competitions. Her principal studies were with Paul Parmelee and James Cook, and she coached with Mark Westcott, Gyorgy Sebok and Storm Bull, a student of Bartok. She received a Master of Music from the University of Colorado at Boulder and a Bachelor of Music from Willamette University, both degrees in piano performance.

Paula Watt, NCTM (West Portland District)

Paula Watt, NCTM, is a master teacher in the Portland area. Her students have won numerous awards at Portland festivals, Young Artist Debut, Vancouver Young Artist Competition, and she has had several students place in the MTNA National Student Performance Competitions. Active in OMTA, She co-chaired the OMTA Scholarship Competitions for many years. She has mentored many teachers in the Portland area.

Paula studied undergraduate Piano Performance at the Peabody Conservatory of Music under Fernando Lares. She also completed her ARCT in Piano Performance at the Royal Conservatory of Toronto.





Paula Watt, Honorary Life Member

After completing her Bachelor of Music Degree at the University of Toronto, she went on to complete her Master's Degree at the University of Illinois under Charles Leonard.

Kelli and Paula were nominated by West Portland District president, Marla Hansen, who wrote us that "they served as OMTA Scholarship Competition co-chairs for over ten years. Kelli and Paula posted the

guidelines, received applications, reserved the venue and hired adjudicators, and were on-site the full weekend to run the competition. Before becoming

chairs, they were active in helping run this and other OMTA events." Irene Huang, NCTM, added: "Kelli and Paula were very supportive to me and gave me words of encouragement when I first started teaching piano in Portland, both sharing teaching tips and giving me great suggestions to resolve difficult parent situations. They are wonderful colleagues in OMTA." Cindy Peterson-Peart added: "Kelli and Paula have shared their expertise countless times with their OMTA colleagues, through service as Portland District Programs chair, through participation in master classes and through their coaching of colleagues."

The Honors Committee reviews nominations for the above awards as well as the OMTA Nellie Tholen Excellence in Teaching Award, presents nominations to the board, and follows through with publicity work and communicating with MTNA. The work is important, but not very time-consuming. If you would like to help serve on this very fun committee, please contact OMTA President, Liz Willis, NCTM.

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COMPOSER OF THE YEAR

An Interview with 2024 OMTA Composer of the Year Todd Marston

Lisa Marsh, Composer of the Year Committee Chair

I spoke with Todd Marston about his journey as a composer and the piece he is creating for the 2024 OMTA conference. His responses to my questions reveal his strong creative spirit.

What inspired you to start writing your own music?

I have early memories, at age six, of a Casio keyboard that had all the drums on it, and I would play along with that and make up chord progressions. I found punk music and played guitar, and wrote punk songs until I was 15. Then I found jazz music when I went to Berklee College of Music.

Where has that inspiration taken you today?

I have been starting with the jazz piano trio, piano, bass and drums, and then layering horns and percussion on top of that. Creating the *Solidarity Themes* album was a big growing experience for me, in the sense of writing for more instruments. At the same time, I was working on music on my computer. For the most recent record I put out, *Seven Songs for Six Drummers*, I was both layering in the computer and asking people to record, both long-distance and in-person.

How would you describe your music?

I am less of a textural, atmospheric musician, and more of a melody-, harmony-, rhythm-oriented musician. Sticking to the fundamentals is kind of my playground.

Tell us about the piece you are creating for the 2024 OMTA Conference.

I am composing a series of pieces for trumpet and piano. I have known trumpeter Justin Copeland for more than five years. The first time I played with him, I heard his sound resonating in my imagination after the gig was over. I have two pieces written that I will use as sections of a larger collection. One is called "Held", and the other is called "Meant to Break." Both pieces are very much within the theme of what is it to be alive right now.

What advice or encouragement do you have for other musicians who want to start composing?

Musicians and artists are at the forefront of change. Some of that is dark because the structures are crumbling, and the artists are seeing this and documenting it. At the same time, we are faced with the fact that we need to find a new way. My mantra is that we are made of music and can do no wrong.

Hear Todd's original music here:

<https://toddmarston.bandcamp.com/>



Todd Marston, 2024 OMTA Composer of the Year



MTNA NATIONAL COMPETITION WINNERS

Oregon Students Take Top Prizes at MTNA National Competitions

The Editors, Music News

Two Oregon students, **Hansen Berrett** and **Alexis Zou**, won first prize in the Senior Piano Duet category at the 2023-2024 MTNA Competition Finals in Atlanta, Georgia on March 17, 2024, in a competition that included a winning duet group from each of the seven regional divisions. Berrett and Zou, both 16 years old, are currently studying with OMTA teacher Dr. Renato Fabbro in the Portland, Oregon area.

The pair began playing piano four-hands together about two years ago. This is not the first win for these two talented pianists. They also won the 2022 Charleston International Piano Competition for piano duo, the 2022 Oregon MTNA Senior Piano Duet Competition, as well as winning second prize in the 2022 Enkor International Music Competition Ensemble division.



Alexis Zou and Hansen Berrett, students of Dr. Renato Fabbro

Berrett currently attends West Linn High School while Zou attends Lake Oswego High School.

They both compete individually as solo pianists as well, and have won or placed in numerous competitions such as Oregon MTNA, OMTA scholarship, PYP Piano Concerto, Pacific Northwest Piano Competitions, Bellegrande International Music Competition and others.



Macy Gong, student of Dr. Sydney Carlson

We also extend our applause to Oregon flutist, **Macy Gong**, who took home the third place prize in the Senior Woodwinds final.

Macy Gong, 18, is a senior at Oregon Episcopal School. She began studying the flute at the age of six and is currently a student of Dr. Sydney Carlson. Besides winning first prize at the National Flute Association's High School Soloist Competition in 2022, Macy has won many other awards, including Winner in the 2022 YoungArts National Competition, second place in the 2023 VSO Young Artists Competition, third place in the NFA Junior Soloist Competition, and she has won the GPFS Young Artist Competition multiple times. As a three-time OSAA State Solo Competition first-place winner, Macy performed as a soloist with the Oregon Symphony in 2022, and has won the Cognizart Young Artist Debut! Concerto Competition, soloing with members of the Oregon Ballet and Oregon Symphony Orchestras.

Additionally, she was one of three flutists across the nation selected to participate in the National Youth Orchestra 2 (NYO2) 2020, and attended the Flute Workshop at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute in 2022. Currently, she is in her seventh season with the Portland Youth Philharmonic, serving as principal flute for the last five years. She was the winner of the PYP Concerto Competition for the centennial season and will be performing with PYP in May.

Bravo to these fine young musicians!



SYLLABUS



Dr. Barbara Roberts, NCTM
OMTA Syllabus Chair

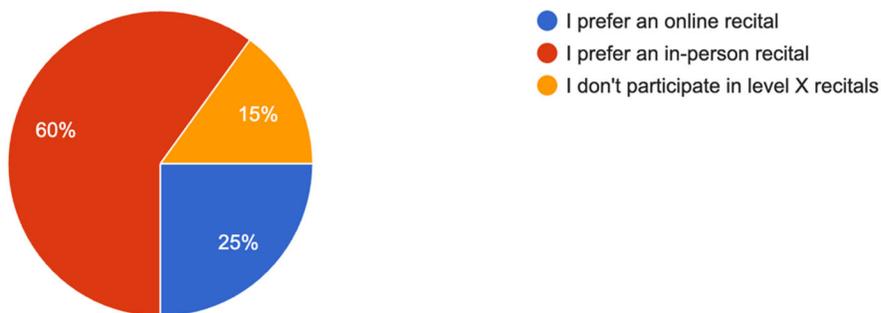
I sent out a poll to the membership last fall about the Level X Recital, and the overwhelming majority of those responding favored an in-person recital. We have decided to try both an in-person and possibly an online recital as well this year. Lacie Mitts, our Level X Recital Chair, has reserved Pianos Now in Beaverton on June 8 at 3:00 PM for the in-person recital. Sign-ups for both recitals are due May 30. I hope all of you attend at least one of these!

Please see page vi of the Classical Piano Syllabus Manual for information about Level X Recognition:
<https://oregonmta.org/programs/syllabus/syllabus-manuals/>

The Recital Application Form is on the Syllabus page at the very bottom, and is due May 30.
<https://oregonmta.org/wp-content/uploads/Level-10-Recital-Form.pdf>

What are your level X recital preferences?

40 responses



CENTRAL OREGON DISTRICT

Grace King, Central Oregon District Secretary

Happy May from the Central Oregon District!

We enjoyed hearing from students playing 20th- and 21st-century music at our Winter Festival on March 16. Twenty-eight students participated, representing seven studios.

In April, following our district meeting, Dr. Lark Powers from Pacific Lutheran University presented *Practice Smarter, Not Longer*. It was an excellent talk, with something to benefit everyone.



AUGUST 10-23, 2024

47TH SEASON

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Sunriver
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Festival

BRETT MITCHELL
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CLASSICAL ELEMENTS



sunrivermusic.org



EAST PORTLAND DISTRICT



Andrew D'Antonio, NCTM
East Portland District President

East Portland has been active! Through a stroke of good luck, right as we learned of the cancellation of our scheduled March presenter, we received an inquiry from Derek Chiu, a Calgary-based pianist who just so happened to be giving a concert in Portland that same week, and wondered if he could give a presentation. His talk, *Unlocking Performance Potential*, received rave reviews from our members.

April was exceptionally busy! We had our second-ever district Composition Festival, which included written feedback from an adjudicator, a printed booklet of all the compositions, and a culminating recital full of world premieres. Top selections will go on to the State Composition Festival. Our first All Periods Festival was non-competitive and welcomed students to play any music outlined in the Syllabus guidelines and receive feedback from an adjudicator. And of course, our students participated in spring Syllabus.



East Portland District Spring Social

Just for the teachers, we had our monthly performance and repertoire share group, and did a bike ride around Sauvie Island (flat tire again! I was the culprit this time), and a hike in beautiful Powell Butte. The bike group is evolving into more of a social group, and each month we plan to explore something in our area, be it biking, hiking, or maybe even a coffee meetup.

Given how much happened in April, we decided a formal district presentation felt like too much, so we opted for a party! Past president Patti Duthie hosted us at her home in Vancouver, and we got to socialize with the Clark County WSMTA district.

On May 22, we look forward to seeing our friends from West Portland for a joint district masterclass led by Dr. Oksana Ezhokina from Pacific Lutheran University. The advanced masterclass will take place at 10:00 AM at Portland State University, Lincoln Hall LH75.



EUGENE DISTRICT

Dr. Janet Pollack, Eugene District Corresponding Secretary

The Eugene District has much to celebrate this year: an updated and expanded website; increased student participation in district recitals; excellent and informative monthly educational programs; an expanded district library; outstanding member recitals; creation of a women's choir; and increased membership.

Our district was a recipient of the OMTA State Technology Grant which allowed two of our members, Nick Rieser and Alexis Gibbons, NCTM, to create a new, attractive and vastly updated district website. It has taken two years of considerable work, but now the anticipated website has been launched. New features include access to an expanded member library and a link to the state OMTA member information lookup.

In other news, Eugene held its Spring District Recitals on Sunday, March 10 at St. Paul Catholic Church in Eugene. It boasted three recitals, with 34 students and 10 members. Pieces varied in style and complexity, and students performed with poise and displayed thorough preparation. Our Contemporary Music Festival took place on Sunday, April 14 at Unity of the Valley Church.

The district's lending library was expanded to include three varied and very important new sources: *Autism & Piano Study* (Dr. Scott Price), *The Savvy Music Teacher* (David Cutler), and *With Your Own Two Hands* (Seymour Bernstein). These three books, among many others, may be checked out to members and are available at monthly meetings.

Monthly educational programs continued to enlighten and enrich our understanding of how our brain processes music, and thereby how better to instruct our students. We were fortunate to engage Dr. Michelle Huang as presenter for our April 8

program. Dr. Huang, who resides in and maintains a private studio in Seattle, has conducted numerous workshops on performance anxiety and is a strong advocate of the mind and body connection. Dr. Huang's excellent program dealt with *The Art of Memorization*, where she emphasized the all-important interconnection of the visual, tactile, aural, and analytical modes of memory.

Our members continue to promote the appreciation and enjoyment of music in the Eugene community in various ways. Dr. Grace Ho presented a recital on Saturday, April 20 in Berwick Hall on the University of Oregon campus. Her program, entitled *A Neoclassical Homage*, included works by Franz Schubert, Maurice Ravel, and Eugene composer David Sprung. Sarah Rose created and conducts *Rose Women's Choir*, currently a 35-voice ensemble. If interested in joining, please contact Sarah at songbirdsarahb@gmail.com. Nick Rieser, Eugene District President and enthusiastic exponent of jazz, can be heard often performing with his Tonewood Trio at the Jazzy Ladies Café in downtown Eugene.

We held the Soule Scholarship Auditions on April 21, and coming up will be an informal evening of music-making at the home of Alexis Gibbons on June 7. Eugene's MTNA Collegiate Chapter will sponsor the annual Piano UO Festival on May 4 from 2:00–5:00 pm at the Marabel B. Frohnmayer Music Building on the University of Oregon campus. For more information, see: <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/pianouofestival>.

The district end-of-the-year potluck and election of officers is Monday, May 13.

We wish everyone a revitalizing spring, and a relaxing yet productive summer.



HILLSBORO AREA DISTRICT



Holly Counts

Hillsboro Area District President

In March, we had our second annual Hillsboro All Period Festival. Teachers and students alike enjoyed the presence of our adjudicator for this event, Marcia Stratman, NCTM. Students played over two days, one in Hillsboro and one in Forest Grove. Later in the month, we had a debrief meeting with the committees for our Period Festival and our Ribbon Festival, which were helpful to discuss at the same time. As a newer district, we are still figuring out the best timing for each festival and event throughout the year for maximum participation.

On April 10, we had a fantastic Nellie Tholen Grant Presentation by Dr. Lisa Nehar, called *The Sustainable Studio*. She helped us consider how we can make the business side of our studio more efficient, how to reduce burnout, and what kind of students are a good fit for our studio. This was followed by a weekend of Upper Division Syllabus exams. Congrats to all students who played!



ROGUE VALLEY DISTRICT

Rogue Valley District Members

The annual Joyce Stevens Scholarship Benefit Recital was held this year on February 17 at the First Presbyterian Church in Medford. The master of ceremonies was Pat Daly, a retired OMTA member, and the participating musicians included Tereza Golombkova, Bernadette Keller, Rebeka Harnois, Pat Daly, Michele Alspach, Edward Boyce, Anna Christina Streletz, Iryna Kudielina, Thor Polson, Brian Hall, and Dr. Alexander Tutunov, NCTM. Our chapter raised over \$1,600 in proceeds, money which annually benefits high school and college students who plan to major or minor in music.



Recital participants (not pictured: Iryna K. and Tereza G.)

On March 11, our Vice President Michele Alspach gave a presentation entitled *How Suzuki Changed My Life* at the First United Methodist Church in Medford. Michele's teaching approach has been largely inspired and informed by the Suzuki Method, which includes the following principles: starting early, learning and memorizing in small steps without written music, repetition, maintaining the repertoire



Michele Alspach

of pieces learned, listening to recordings (including Suzuki pieces and other classical music), parental involvement, positive encouragement, the step-by-step mastering of each piece, reading when ready, group work,

demonstration, and the notion that every child is innately musical and capable of developing that skill by adhering to these principles. Michele concluded her presentation by introducing and discussing particular pieces at the piano.

On April 8, our members met for a business meeting at the First United Methodist Church in Medford, and this was followed by a talk about performance anxiety presented by Dr. Diane Baxter, NCTM. From the beginning, it was clear from the many examples cited that Dr. Baxter is thoroughly acquainted with this topic. Among many things mentioned were the following:

1. A new mindset can only be achieved through action, not through compulsion.
2. Careful attention to detail relieves anxiety, and with that in mind, it is important to be aware of all of the factors involved in the memorization process.
3. Nothing relieves anxiety more than regular performing.
4. Breathing plays a large role in reducing anxiety, and for that reason, it is advisable to add breath marks to the score.
5. It is also important that one film oneself and others in performance situations, so that one can monitor for any problems, potential or real.

Dr. Baxter concluded her talk with several breathing exercises designed to relieve anxiety in the performer.

With deep gratitude, we wish to thank the participants in the benefit recital, as well as Michele Alspach and Dr. Diane Baxter for their valuable insights into the topics presented. Thank you!



Dr. Diane Baxter



TUALATIN VALLEY DISTRICT



Auksuole Jackunaite
Tualatin Valley
Co-President



Karen Huntsberger, NCTM
Tualatin Valley
Co-President

Our annual Teachers' Recital on March 15 was both a delight and an inspiration for the audience. Auksuole Jackunaite introduced us to the Prelude in C minor by a composer from her native Lithuania—M. K. Ciurlionis—and Dianne Davies, NCTM, shared the Allegro movement of her own piano sonata. The program opened with Mozart's Sonata for Piano Four-Hands in B-flat, performed by member Abigail Gerhardt, NCTM and her sister Lydia Sauble, and continued with Victoria Drozdova playing Haydn's *Andante con variazioni* in F minor and Debussy's *Reflets dans l'eau*. Dr. Lilin Chen, NCTM, performed a Haydn Sonata in F major, Dr. Kaori Noland, NCTM, played the first movement of Mozart's Sonata K. 311, and Lilin and Kaori together performed the Brahms Hungarian Dances for four hands. The program closed with Myrna Setiawan's rousing interpretation of Ravel's *La Valse*. These teachers, with the addition of Heidi Evans, NCTM, also performed at The Old Church on April 17.



Annual Teachers Recital (L-R): Lydia Sauble, Abigail Gerhardt, Victoria Drozdova, Myrna Setiawan, Dianne Davies, Auksuole Jackunaite, Kaori Noland, Lilin Chen

Nine students entered our Composition Celebration this year, with three going on to the State Composition Festival.

We are excited that new members are bringing in lots of energy as they become actively involved in the district.

Our playing class, PLTL, meets most months. See our website, <https://tvomta.org>, for class dates. All are welcome, whether you plan to play or not.

For a complete list of our meetings, festivals, programs and deadlines, please visit our website.



Abigail Gerhardt and Lydia Sauble



Victoria Drozdova



WEST PORTLAND DISTRICT



Marla Hansen

West Portland District President

Our activities are starting to wrap up for the year in West Portland, but we still have some exciting opportunities coming up before summer! Registration is currently open for our E-Festival. Students submit pre-recorded videos and receive written feedback from an adjudicator. Original solo repertoire from all periods is eligible, and memorization is required. To celebrate their accomplishments together, students can opt to share their performance on the 2024 E-Festival YouTube playlist. Registration closes on Friday, May 17 and videos are due by Saturday, June 1. Festival instructions can be found on the West Portland website.

We'll also be hosting the Trula Whelan Concerto Festival at Portland Piano Company on Saturday, June 8. In this non-competitive, adjudicated event, students perform concerto repertoire with an accompanist.

East and West Portland districts will have a joint meeting to close out the year. A masterclass for advanced students will be taught by Dr. Oksana Ezhokina at Portland State University, Wednesday May 22 at 10:00 AM. Dr. Ezhokina is Coordinator of Keyboard Studies and Associate Professor of Music at Pacific Lutheran University.

West Portland members are excited to attend the OMTA State Conference this July in our own backyard! Have a great rest of the spring and summer, and happy teaching!



IN MEMORIAM: MARK WESTCOTT

Nicholas Fontana

Local piano legend, former concert pianist and teacher Mark Westcott passed away peacefully in the care of his sister on Saturday, March 30, at the age of 75.

Mark grew up in Eastmoreland near Reed College, and studied in his early years with Aurora Underwood, whom he often mentioned as having had a profound impact on him. Mark went on to study with other famed pedagogues, including Cecile Genhardt, Frank Mannheimer, John Perry, and Eugene List.

Following a bronze medal win in the 1969 Van Cliburn Competition when he was only 21, and a gold medal win in the 1972 William Kapell Competition, Mark had a wonderful career performing throughout America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. He was personal friends with many great artists, including Van Cliburn, Samuel Barber, Leonard Bernstein, and Vladimir Ashkenazy. Many of these stories are detailed in his book *Playing with Love*, which is still available on Amazon. He leaves behind a treasure trove of recordings on YouTube.

As a pianist of the highest level, he played with an intensity, passion, and level of control I had never before heard, and he was as fiery in real life as he was in his artistry. His intensity about living and playing according to his personal ideals made him one of the



most uncompromising people I have ever met. As someone who managed to benefit from (and survive) Mark's master classes and four-hour lessons, I feel so, so grateful to have known and been brushed by his fire. May we all dare to be a little fiery in his memory.

Mark performing the Ravel piano concerto:

<https://youtu.be/MFW7Xxx3rL0>

Mark's archive of performances on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@mhwestcott/videos>



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May	April 15
September	August 15
November	October 15



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