

OMTA MUSIC NEWS

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UPCOMING EVENTS

State Board Meeting and Presidents Round Table

January 31, 2026 at 9:00-11:00 am
Virtual/Online

2026 MTNA National Conference

March 21-25, 2026
Chicago Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, Chicago, IL

2026 OMTA State Conference

August 7-8, 2026
Mt. Hood Oregon Resort, Welches, OR



PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Heidi Evans, NCTM
OMTA President

Happy New Year to all my esteemed colleagues! I hope you had a good holiday season and made some happy, funny, or meaningful memories.

I'd like to encourage each of you to take a moment to reflect back on 2025, on your accomplishments both large and small, and the places where you courageously dug into difficult tasks and persevered to completion. Some of OMTA's accomplishments over the past year include starting the

Virtual District (join us!), and the opening of Regista, OMTA's new online registration system on our own website.

I started to mentally calculate the number of volunteer hours that go into this organization, and I'm just in awe of every one of you who contributes to your district and to the state, despite the full lives we lead outside OMTA and teaching music.

My hope for each of you is that you will develop strong professional and personal ties with your colleagues, and that your personal and professional satisfaction will continue to grow. Working in a profession where personal growth is paramount, you are all an endless boost of inspiration and support. I hope to return that support right back to each one of you.



In that spirit, I would like to share my deepest thanks to OMTA's own Robin Power, whom many of you know as one of our two-member team who run the OMTA office so well.

Robin saw a need within OMTA and stepped up to support it. She gave OMTA a very generous donation of time, not only to update the OMTA Syllabus Repertoire list (publication still pending), but to have it formatted into a searchable database that will be available to all members through the OMTA website. We are working with our web developers to create this, and expect it to be online sometime in spring 2026. I'm incredibly grateful to Robin for providing the extra bump of support and enthusiasm that moved this project into its final phase. If you're as excited about this as I am, please take a minute to write to Robin and thank her for making this update possible!



*Heidi Evans, NCTM
OMTA President*



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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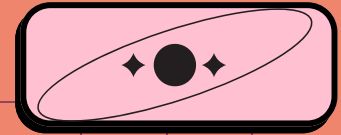
SYLLABUS

Barbara Roberts, NCTM

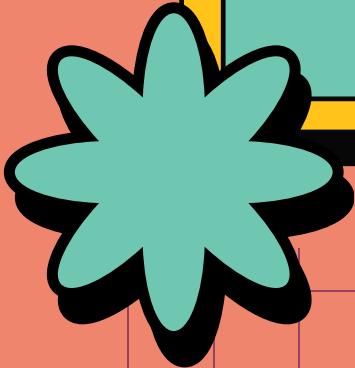




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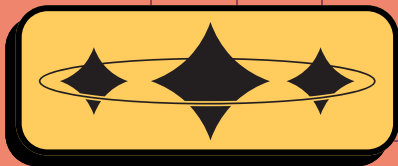
JOIN OUR DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

- **Build and engage membership**
- **Local perspectives**
- **Multi-generational**
- **Digital creativity**
- **Connect music communities**

Help us elevate statewide
outreach and engagement!



For members interested in sharing skills with a new collaborative team, reach out with interest or questions to:

president.elect@oregonmta.org

OMTA CONFERENCE NEWS

2026 OMTA State Conference: August 6-8 at Mt. Hood Resort



Amie Belisle, NCTM
OMTA President-Elect

Get Ready for Fun!

2026 OMTA Conference, August 6–8 at Mt. Hood Resort in Welches.

Trivia Night Kick-Off

On Thursday night—“Conference Eve”—get ready for laughter and some friendly competition, as we’ll be getting the party started with a fun-filled, music-themed Trivia Night organized by Debra Sostrin.

Start organizing your teams now! Teams may be composed of 1-8 players with team sizes of 4-6 players recommended. Gather your friends now and choose a clever name for your team; extra points will be awarded for the best team name! Feel free to team up with members from OMTA districts other than your own. More specific guidelines will be announced at a later date, as well as additional optional activities to get to know each other better.

District Awards

Celebrate someone in your district that has contributed in a significant way by honoring them with an OMTA District Leadership Award at the conference banquet. The deadline for these will be May 15.



Discussion Topics

What topics would you benefit from discussing with colleagues at the next conference? Share your ideas through this survey link:

<https://forms.gle/4C9hNALHoalWbYXJ7>.



CERTIFICATION

Newly Certified Teacher Spotlight



Anastasia Kitaev, NCTM
Certification Co-Chair



Sarah Barker Ball, NCTM
Certification Co-Chair



We have another Nationally Certified Teacher of Music in our midst! Congratulations to Ruth Sadilek, newly designated NCTM who shared, "I am so grateful to have just received the MTNA Certification in piano and violin! This opens the path for me to be able to train for OMTA Syllabus adjudication. It also means a lot for me to share this designation with my late mother, Sharon Sadilek, NCTM—she would be so happy!"

her mother, Sharon Sadilek, NCTM, in piano and composition, but also in violin from Catherine Petersen, long-time OMTA member. Ruth was also greatly influenced by conductor Jacob Avshalomov, as she grew up in Portland Youth Philharmonic's orchestras (1974–1985), eventually spending three years as concertmaster of the PYP. As an adult, she was mentored by one of OMTA's legacy teachers, Dorothy Fahlman, NCTM.



Ruth Sadilek, NCTM

Ruth teaches piano, violin and viola, chamber music and composition with enthusiasm in her Tigard studio. Ruth's professional career illustrates OMTA's mission statement of "Musical Growth for All." As a young person, she received guidance not only from

Ruth has persistently and lovingly shared that commitment to musical excellence with her students, with notable success. By highlighting some of her recent work in the photos below, and celebrating her new National Certification, we hope to inspire others!



Ruth with student Adrian Valenzuela after his high school senior recital, winning the national MusicLink Foundation's Senior Award of Achievement





Ruth Sadilek with student Andrew J. Kim.

In 2020, Andrew J. Kim won ML's Senior Award of Achievement, also passing OMTA Level X Piano Syllabus "With Distinction." Pictured is Andrew with Ruth and his First Place Certificate from OFMC's Pauline Eidemiller Scholarship, 2018. Each year, Ruth involves some of her students in Fear No Music's Young Composers Project. Several have had pieces commissioned by PYP and Metropolitan Youth Symphony orchestras.

Another highlight of Ruth's teaching career is her summer recitals—a time to focus on ensembles of all kinds, borrowing cello students to complete string

quartets, piano trios, or string orchestra. Biennially is "Theater Summer," when all school-age students sing in two or three choreographed songs. August 2025's theme was "International," with all ensembles performing ethnic music, expanded by parent performers in South African song, African-American spirituals, Vietnamese zither, and Bollywood dance. Participants wore colorful, traditional ethnic costumes, and an array of international foods completed the night.

As Ruth's story demonstrates, becoming a nationally certified teacher publicly acknowledges a teacher's competence, unique contributions to the field, and ongoing commitment to musical excellence. The process of becoming certified is a path for professional growth open to any music teacher, regardless of their academic background. It validates your accomplishments and opens new possibilities for your career.

To learn more, please watch this video: <https://youtu.be/OJPHnW1DpK0> and look for all the details at <https://certification.mtna.org>. You can always email us with your questions and participate in our monthly Zoom meetings. The next one will be January 8 at 9:00 AM.



EDUCATION AND FESTIVALS

Updates on the Adult Category, Ensemble Festival Honors Recital, and Composition Festival

Dr. Janet Pollack, Education and State Festivals Chair

Non-Competitive Adult Category

There is now a non-competitive **adult category** added to both the **Ensemble** and **Composition** festivals, beginning fall 2025. This is a welcome addition to our festivals, for it allows participation in OMTA events by an important demographic. For those members who teach adults, please inform them of this opportunity and encourage them to share their music.

Ensemble Festival Honors Recital

The 2025 festival took place Saturday, December 6, 2025 in the Frohnmyer Music Building, University of Oregon (Eugene) and was co-chaired by Dr. Janet Pollack and Marla Hansen, and hosted by Dr. Pollack. This fall was the first time a non-competitive adult category was added to this festival at the district level! Participation was down by sixteen students from last year, with nine teachers from three districts participating. However, the quality of playing was consistently high, and the event, as always, was delightful. On a personal note, this is my favorite festival because the students clearly enjoy participating, and the musicality displayed is often of the highest quality. Learning to listen, feel, and breathe with other musicians to produce an artistic performance are some of the most important skills a pianist can develop. And to watch young pianists skillfully synchronize their timing and expression is always stunning.

All students performed extremely well, but I cannot help but to comment on a few that stood out. The opening "Celebration" performed by Anant Agarwal and Jayson Qiao, students of Leslie Chen, made for an excellent upbeat beginning. Lindsey Osburn and Sarah Nguyen, students of Alexis Gibbons, NCTM, performed a lovely movement from Nancy Teifer's "Newfoundland Suite;" Yoshiya and Isaya Rapp,

students of Annette Demsey, NCTM, performed "Valse sentimentale à deux" by Catherine Rollin, and played it with intense musicality. The concluding Piano Trio in B-flat Major, Op. 13 (Adagio movement) by Beethoven, performed by Sabine Voelker (violin), Reese Melton (cello) and Noah Lowen (piano), piano student of Dr. Brian Hsu, was simply gorgeous. The music and the courteous and appreciative demeanor of the attendees made hosting the recital a joy. **I urge all members to encourage their students to participate in the Ensemble Festival in the future.**

For any questions concerning future ensemble festivals please contact Marla Hansen at (4marlarae@gmail.com) or Dr. Janet Pollack (janetkippollack@comcast.net).

Baroque Festival Honors Recital

The OMTA 2026 state event is confirmed for **Saturday, March 14, 2026** at the Saint Mark's Lutheran Church in NE Salem. Natalya Klimov and Marla Hansen are co-chairing the event. Registration is through OMTA's new registration system, Regista, located on the OMTA website. **Please note that all payment is now done online through OMTA's registration system.** Therefore, teachers and district chairs are no longer expected to mail in their entry fees. For questions concerning the registration process, please contact **Marla Hansen** (4marlarae@gmail.com); for all other concerns and questions concerning the 2026 Baroque Festival Honors Recital, reach out to **Natalya Klimov** (romanatalya@gmail.com).

Keep in mind the changes to the rules for the State Baroque Festival Honors Recital, as set forth by the Education Committee in fall 2025. Those changes will remain in place for the 2026 event. They are as follows:



1. The 3x winners' program is eliminated;
2. Last year's percentage of 30% selected winners in each division is reduced to 25% per division;
3. There will no longer be alternates selected;
4. No videoing will be permitted during adjudication (i.e., when an adjudicator is in the room);
5. The state entry fee is now \$35 for OMTA members to bring it in line with other state festivals. Non OMTA members pay an added fee.

Composition Festival

The **2026 State Composition Festival** is now chaired by **Robin Ziari**. Adults are welcome to participate in this festival! For all information concerning the 2026 festival, please reach out to Robin Ziari at zremusicpdx@gmail.com.

ESMAR

ESMAR took place on June 7, 2025 in the Department of Music on the campus of Willamette University, Salem. **Lorraine Alner** is the chair and can

be reached at lyant@samford.edu for additional information about future ESMAR events.

Sonatina Festival

The OMTA fall 2025 Sonatina Festival was held on Saturday, October 11, 2025 in the Frohnmayer Music Building, University of Oregon in Eugene. Marla Hansen, Sandy Hull, NCTM and Dr. Janet Pollack co-chaired the event, and all results were posted to *Music News* shortly after. **Since this is a biennial event, it will not be offered again in fall 2026.** The next one will take place fall 2027, so keep an eye out for information. For additional questions, please reach out to either Marla Hansen (4marlarae@gmail.com) or Dr. Janet Pollack (janetkippollack@comcast.net).



GRANT PROGRAMS

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



Karen Huntsberger, NCTM
Nellie Tholen Grant Coordinator

There are many opportunities to attend a free grant program in January and February! Make a plan to attend one or more to hear outstanding presenters and topics of interest for all teachers. Two will be on Zoom. You can check with the district president for the link: <https://oregonmta.org/about/leadership/district-presidents>.

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

Questions? Email me at grant.coordinator@oregonmta.org.



Hillsboro District

Wednesday, January 7, 2026, 10:30 AM–12:00 PM

Location: Calvary Lutheran Church, 937 NE Jackson School Rd., Hillsboro, OR

Dr. Lisa Neher

Burnout Prevention Kit for Music Teachers

Teaching one-on-one and managing your own studio can be rewarding, but it can also lead to exhaustion, overscheduled lives, and eventually the dreaded burnout. Meanwhile, “self-care” and “wellness” have become products to buy and impossible images that we can never live up to, rather than ways to actually reclaim agency in our lives. We’ll discuss causes of burnout for music teachers and explore practical solutions, including time management during lessons, establishing & maintaining boundaries, holding time for recreation and a social life, and the balance of supporting your students’ musical goals with nurturing your own artistic growth.



Eugene District

Monday, January 19, 2026, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Location: Zoom

Susan Bruckner

An Auditory Lifespan

Susan Bruckner will present an overview of each life stage from birth to end of life, and how music and the brain work in tandem each step of the way. Based on sabbatical interviews with twenty-four neuroscientists studying music and the brain.





Virtual District

Monday, February 2, 2026, 11:00 AM–12:30 PM

Location: Zoom

Susan Bruckner

An Auditory Lifespan

Presents an overview of each life stage from birth to end of life, and how music and the brain work in tandem each step of the way. Based on sabbatical interviews with twenty-four neuroscientists studying music and the brain.



Salem District

Friday, February 13, 2026, 10:00 AM–11:30 AM

Location: TBA

Heidi Evans, NCTM

Syllabus from a Teacher's Point of View—Syllabus from an Adjudicator's Point of View

Heidi shares tips on preparing students for Syllabus exams at all levels and tiers, combining the perspective of a teacher of average students, and the perspective of a Syllabus adjudicator, to make the most of each student's and teacher's Syllabus experience.



Blue Mountain District

Saturday, February 21, 2026, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Location: Eastern Oregon University, Groth Recital Hall, One University Boulevard, La Grande, OR

Dianne Davies, NCTM

Making Syllabus Relevant: Using OMTA Syllabus Skills to Play Music

Dianne Davies uses a series of Folksongs and Christmas Carols to teach all levels of the OMTA Syllabus chord progressions and put them into music. The right-hand melodies are given in scale degree numbers, and the left-hand accompaniment is given in roman numerals following each level of Syllabus. This way, students easily transpose the ideas into all keys and understand the concepts.



Rogue Valley District

Saturday, February 28, 2026, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

Location: Jacksonville Public Library, 340 W C St., Jacksonville, OR 97530

Melissa Terrall

Mexican Harmonies: Exploring Piano Repertoire from Mexico

From Tomás León and Guadalupe Olmeda to José Rolón, Melissa presents profiles and representative works of notable Mexican composers. Drawing on her experience as a Fulbright scholar in Mexico City, she will showcase the diversity of Mexican piano repertoire—from salon pieces to folkloric music—while also discussing common misconceptions about Mexican classical music. Attendees are sure to leave more knowledgeable about Mexican composers, as well as inspired to interact with their music in a culturally robust way as teachers and performers.



MTNA COMPETITIONS

Oregon State Results for the MTNA Composition and Performance Competitions



Cindy Peterson-Peart,
NCTM

Oregon MTNA Performance
Competitions Senior
Coordinator

The Oregon state level of the MTNA Composition and Performance Competitions were held this fall. In September, ten high school composers submitted scores. The winner's entry has been entered in the Northwest Division level of the competition. In addition, one collegiate level student submitted a score. As the only entry, it automatically advances to the NW Division Competition. The winners of the NW Division Competition will advance to the National level of the competition.

The Performance Competition was held November 1–2 at Portland State University. A record 68 students entered the Junior, Senior, and Young Artist divisions of the piano, string and woodwind categories. The winner of each competition has submitted a video entry to the NW Division Competition. The NW Division winners will advance to the National Competition and will compete in person at the MTNA Conference in Chicago in March.

The winners of both competitions are listed below. The full results of the competitions, including alternate and honorable mention awards, can be found on the OMTA website here:

<https://oregonmta.org/programs/mtna-competitions/results/>

Congratulations to these talented students and their teachers!

Composition Competition

Senior Winner
Young Artist Representative

Adeline Friberg, student of Tanya Stojanovic
Megann Cox, student of Jill Gambill

Performance Competition

Junior Piano Winner
Junior String Winner
Junior Woodwind Winner

Zachary Cheng, student of Dr. Renato Fabbro
Hyun Lee (cello), student of Hyun-Jin Kim
Ellie Yoon (flute), student of Sydney Carlson

Senior Piano Winner
Senior Piano Duet Winners
Senior String Winner
Senior Woodwind Winner

Elizabeth Shen, student of Dr. Renato Fabbro
Ashley and Maggie Ma, students of Leslie Chen
Kaylee Nah (violin), student of Hae-Jin Kim
Marilyn Ruthruff (flute), student of Sydney Carlson

Young Artist Piano Winner
Young Artist Woodwind Representative

Jun Yun, student of Dr. Alexandre Dossin
Evan Ney (saxophone), student of Dr. Idit Shner

Oregon State MTNA Competition Committee: Dr. Julia Lee, Chair; Cindy Peterson-Peart, NCTM, Senior Coordinator; Susan Todd, NCTM, Junior Coordinator; Will Chou, Young Artist Coordinator; Dianne Davies, NCTM, Composition



MEMBERSHIP



Andrew D'Antonio, NCTM
Membership Chair

We have three new members! Please give them a warm welcome:

Eugene/UO

Xuan Liu, collegiate member

Asher Kochersberger, collegiate member

West Portland/Virtual

Patrick Beaulieu-Hardin, active member

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

MUSICLINK

Annette Demsey, NCTM, Oregon Coordinator for the MusicLink Foundation

Oregon MusicLink works to expand access to music lessons for students from low-income families all over Oregon. It also offers assistance with related expenses such as sheet music, instrument rentals, and piano tuning, through partner organizations and businesses.

If you're interested in joining our growing organization, either by teaching a MusicLink student or by helping us spread the word around the state, please let us know!

For more information, please visit oregonmusiclink.org, or contact me via phone (503-313-0793) or email (OregonMusicLink@gmail.com).



SYLLABUS



Dr. Barbara Roberts, NCTM
OMTA Syllabus Chair

I hope you all had a wonderful winter break and are eager to get your students ready for Spring Syllabus! In the fall, we started using Regista, and despite a few hiccups, it has been working really well. Things can only get better from here, so stay the course and sign up!

A few reminders:

- Register early!
- Use the 2025 updated Manual, which members can download online.
- Check your repertoire—remember that the guidelines have been slightly expanded this year, especially with regard to contemporary composers.
- Consider hosting! A grand piano is no longer a requirement for a host studio with Upper Division students. The piano needs to be “in good condition.” If this describes your studio, we always need more hosts!
- Thank the Syllabus District Chairs who work so hard to make this all happen. We couldn’t do it without them!
- There is a weekly Zoom call “Help Desk” for anyone having questions about how to register in the new system. Look for the times and links, and take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to learn more about how Regista works and get your questions answered.

All the best for 2026!



CENTRAL OREGON DISTRICT

Grace King, Central Oregon District President Elect

Our Central Oregon autumn has been full of music.

In November, we had a presentation by Dr. Ricardo de la Torre on *Getting to Know Our Neighbor*, where we heard some amazing music from Mexico. This was to prepare and inspire our teachers for our upcoming Winter Festival, "Music from Latin America."

We also hosted an Ensemble Festival at Central Oregon Community College, with good student participation.

In December, we gathered at the home of Margaret Littlehales for a holiday luncheon, where we shared our favorite holiday music.



The Central Oregon District trying out a multi-person ensemble during our Holiday luncheon!



EUGENE DISTRICT

Dr. Janet Pollack, Eugene District Corresponding Secretary

On October 25, the Eugene District held two festivals: our first **Silent Film Festival** and the **Popular Music Festival**. The well-attended Silent Film Festival, co-chaired by Nick Rieser and Ayden Katterman, was a resounding success. It provided an opportunity for young pianists and adult students to play alongside one another in a fun, non-competitive event. The background music for the silent film was provided by approximately seventeen pianists, of which three or more were adults, from seven teachers. Each pianist played for one or two scenes (30–90 seconds per scene) from *The Blacksmith*, a 1920s silent film starring Buster Keaton. Two keyboards were used to allow performers to seamlessly alternate between sections of the film. This was the first opportunity for adult students to participate in an OMTA-sponsored event along with young players, and rather than feeling



Silent Film Festival

uncomfortable, these adults reported enjoying the experience immensely. Immediately following the film festival, the district's Festival of Popular Music, chaired by Ayden Katterman and Michelle Sulaiman, took place in the same venue. This popular event celebrated musical arrangements of popular music, themes from TV, movies, video games, original works in popular styles, new age, jazz, ragtime, blues, improvisations, and more. Both events took place at the Unity of the Valley, 3912 Dillard Road, Eugene.

On Saturday, November 8, our district held its first professional-development workshop of the season. Dr. Stephen Lewis, NCTM, discussed *The Four Senses of Piano Playing*, an in-depth look at how our senses—hearing, sight, touch, and proprioception—aid in learning and performing music. A strong aspect of this presentation was its reliance on the most current scientific understanding of the interconnectedness of brains and bodies. For those teachers who have students who suffer from performance anxiety, this presentation made several good points. In particular, Dr. Lewis addressed the performers' fears of missed notes, and showed how these fears break the brain's connections to the music and the musical flow. This severed connection in turn causes the pianist's focus away from the music, and memory fails. Also of interest was how silent practice engages proprioception. This excellent and engaging presentation was well-received by those in attendance and is highly recommended to other districts.

Our members around town: Paul Safar and Sandy Holder offered an evening of "night music" on Thursday, December 4, at Tsunami Books. This "Nocturnal" featured the music of Chopin, Fields, Price, Grieg and more. Members Dr. Genevieve Mason and Nick Rieser offered their time and musical talents at a fundraiser concert on Saturday, December 13, at Dharmalaya, 356 Horn Lane, Eugene. This benefit concert aimed to raise money for those in need.



The year culminated with an all members gathering on Monday, December 15 at the Palace Bakery, Eugene, for a holiday celebration.

Upcoming events: On Thursday, January 8 the **GREAT ALL-BEATLES SING ALONG** will take place at Tsunami Books. Members Sophie Phillips Meadow (cello), Sandy Holder (accordion and guitar) along with Paul Safar (piano) will make up the band accompanying those singing their hearts out to twenty-five or so Beatles classics. Donations for OCAN (Oregon Community Asylum Network) will be taken at the door.

Cascadia Composers' annual event **In Good Hands** will again offer a Eugene concert sometime in July 2026 at Unity of the Valley. Steven James and our district's Paul Safar are organizing the Eugene concert. This event pairs students of OMTA teachers with pieces by Cascadia Composer members to perform on the recital.

We wish all our colleagues a very productive and happy new year!



Silent Film Festival



HILLSBORO AREA DISTRICT



Sarah Ball, NCTM

Hillsboro Area District President

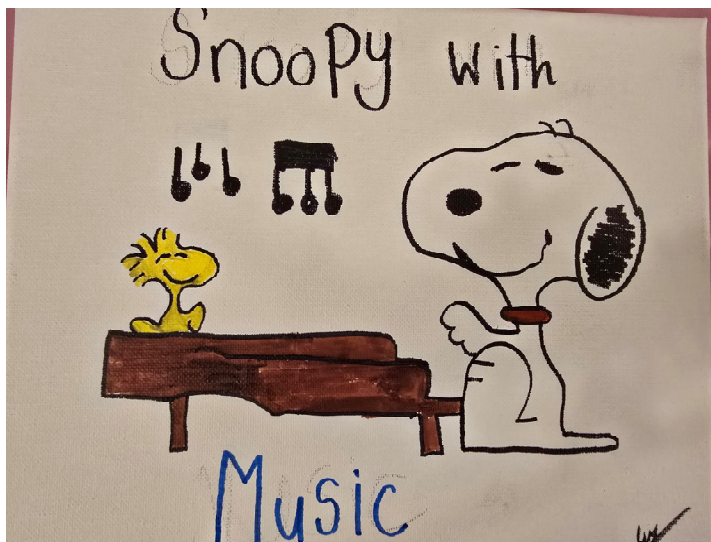
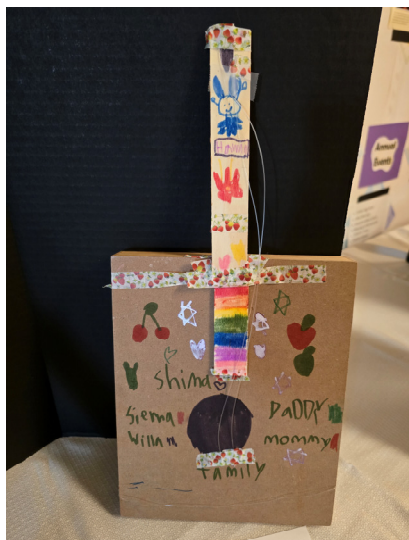
The next meeting of Hillsboro Area OMTA will be January 7, featuring Dr. Lisa Neher with her presentation, *Burnout Prevention Kit for Teachers*, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Calvary Lutheran Church, 937 Northeast Jackson School Road, Hillsboro, OR, 97124. We will begin with a brief meeting, followed by the presentation. You are welcome to join us!

Recently we have started putting a new emphasis on community service through our students' performances. In early December we took our students to play their holiday and classical music for residents at Merrill Gardens Assisted Living in Hillsboro, calling it our Westside CS Recital (CS stands for "community service"). Thanks to our

President-elect, Cathy Pousson, for spearheading this new approach at a new venue!

The Westside Ribbon Festival is coming up February 7–8 with a theme of "Animals." We are encouraging teachers and students to get creative, selecting music and making musical artwork along that theme. Below are some samples of students' artwork from the 2024 Westside Ribbon Festival.

New in 2026: we will accept donations to support the Bonnie L. Hays Small Animal Shelter in Hillsboro. We are excited that making music together can have a positive impact on this important nonprofit organization. Many thanks to our new Ribbon Festival co-chair, Lila Riley for her creativity and enthusiasm.



ROGUE VALLEY DISTRICT

Terri Horn, Rogue Valley District President

Our district is enjoying a productive and fun year! Our newer members becoming actively involved has re-energized our long-time members. As President, I am so grateful for the dedication of our officers: Michele Alspach, Vice-President; Dea Kiss, Secretary; and our Treasurer and Website Coordinator, Anna Streletz. These competent individuals get things done!

We hosted presenters in October and November who were well-prepared and engaged with their audience. Dr. Lark Powers talked about *Revisiting Roots: Reviving Folk Songs*, and Deborah Cleaver spoke about and demonstrated *Artistic Pedaling*. Both were well-received by members and invited guests.

Our December social, which we referred to as our "Holiday Blowout Party," was hosted by Rebeka Harnois. She and I introduced a goofy game; the ensuing laughter was refreshing for all of us! We look forward to upcoming events in 2026. In January, we will host a master class with the one and only Dr. Alexander Tutunov, who is such an inspiration for students who participate. Our annual Scholarship Recital, Sonatina Festival, Syllabus, and two more programs will round out the spring calendar. Another "Blowout Party" will wrap up the year in June.



I sometimes wonder if we are too comfortable doing things the way they have always been done? Although, thanks to Anna and Nic Temple, our website designer, we have a respectable image online now. This is progress! Also, our secretary, Dea, is a whiz with technology and keeps us informed about meetings, event deadlines, and community concerts. Michele is our "rock," who remembers everything and everybody, and coordinates many activities. We all work well together—a secret to success for our district!

We look forward to reading news from other districts. I hope two or three of us can attend the summer conference in Welches, which will be sentimental for me, as the first conference I attended was held there! I was overwhelmed by the camaraderie of music teachers, and by the generosity of this organization.

This reads like my annual Christmas letter—I think it's time to sign off!



Above: Holiday Blowout Party!

Left: Members enjoying Deborah Cleaver's presentation on *Artistic Pedaling*



TUALATIN VALLEY DISTRICT



Mahroo Hamedani
Tualatin Valley
Co-President

November was a full and energizing month for our district. We held our monthly meeting at Rise Church, followed by a wonderful Teachers' Recital. It was inspiring to hear colleagues share their artistry, and to celebrate the dedication, creativity, and musicality within our teaching community.

We also wrapped up our fall Syllabus event, held on October 31, November 1, and November 2. We are grateful to all teachers and participating students for making the weekend a success. The sessions ran smoothly, and many students left feeling proud of their progress.

In October, we also held our PLTL (Play, Listen, Teach, Learn) gathering on Friday, October 24. These sessions continue to be a meaningful space for teachers to share repertoire, exchange ideas, and support one another in our ongoing professional growth.

We held our annual Holiday Brunch Party on Friday, December 12. This is always a warm and festive gathering, a chance to connect, celebrate the season, and enjoy a delicious potluck together.



VIRTUAL DISTRICT

Madeleine Gendron, Virtual District President.

Please join us at the Virtual District meeting on Monday, January 5, at 10:30 AM. Joshua Hegg will present *Virtual Lessons: Most Desirable Devices*. Each participant will also be invited to share about their most efficient visual and sound tricks while teaching online.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81640489726>

For more information, contact me via email:

madeleinegendron@yahoo.com.

Looking forward, our following meeting will be held Monday, February 2, at 10:30 AM. Susan Bruckner will present *An Auditory Lifespan*. This presentation gives an overview of each life stage from birth to end of life, and how music and the brain work in tandem each step of the way. Based on sabbatical interviews with twenty-four neuroscientists studying music and the brain.



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The submission deadline is always the 15th of the month preceding the date of publication.

September <i>Music News</i>	August 15
November <i>Music News</i>	October 15
January <i>Music News</i>	December 15
March <i>Music News</i>	February 15
May <i>Music News</i>	April 15



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