



**Music Teacher's Association of California
San Mateo County Branch
Newsletter
May 2019**

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President's Pen - Natalie Griffin, President

Dear Teachers,

A big thank you goes to the Board of Directors and all of the teachers who continuously give their time, energy, ideas, and positivity to our Branch. It has been a stellar year and I thoroughly enjoy working with you to promote music and music education in our community.

I'm especially grateful to the teachers who agreed to be interviewed for our newsletter over the last year. It's inspiring to be reminded that the lineage of music education continues on!

I hope to see you all at the annual luncheon this month on May 17 and at the YAG concert on May 23. We also have the convention next month and I encourage everyone to attend for fresh ideas, continuing education, and socializing with other teachers. Let's continue to grow together!

Natalie

Branch Programs - Millie Lee Siu, Vice President

Dear Teachers,

Thank you very much for joining our branch events. I look forward to seeing many of you at these two upcoming events:

Annual Business Luncheon Friday May 17, 2019, 11:30–1:30 PM at Blue Line Pizza 1108 Burlingame Ave, Burlingame. Please sign up by sending me your check of \$28 per guest at 2960 Dolores Way, Burlingame, Ca. 94010. (made to MTAC San Mateo Branch) before May 14.

Young Artist Guild Recital with pianist Misha Galant on Thursday, May 23 at 7:00pm, Foster City Library Wind Room. This is a free concert, due to the generous sponsorship of the Foster City Library and Foster City Parks and Recreation Department. Please spread the word and invite your students. **Please note change of time: the concert will start at 7:00 PM** (not 7:30 as previously announced)

We had a lovely new meeting venue this year at Lessons on B. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cynthia Brown, the owner of Lessons on B, for letting us use her recital room. I would also like to thank Vija Norkvesta for helping me with set up and clean up each time.

Millie

Branch Recitals - Angeline Branson

Dear teachers,

It's been a great year for our Branch Recitals, thanks to all of our dedicated teachers who have contributed their talented students! It's been a pleasure to organize and attend these recitals. I especially enjoy when there is a variety of instruments being represented. Our last Branch Recital for 2019 is scheduled for November 3rd, 4:30-6:30. It will also be our last one taking place in the Wind Room :(

But, I am confident that we will find another venue, and I am looking forward to continuing putting on these recitals for your students, beyond December 2019.

Hope to see you at one of our Branch Recitals in the Wind Room, this Sunday, May 5th at 2:30 or at 3:30. If not, I hope to see you at our luncheon on May 17th!

Warm regards,

Angeline

Recital Hall - Sandra Gu

Dear teachers,

It's recital season and we are busy in the Wind Room! As you may know, I took over as Recital Hall Director in January. I've enjoyed corresponding with many of you and helping out with your scheduling needs. It's great to see so many teachers making use of the facility and the wonderful instruments we have!

We are still looking for a space to host recitals after December 2019, so if you have any suggestions please email me at mtacsm.recital.hall@gmail.com, or get in touch with one of our board members.

I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Luncheon on May 17th!

Sandra

Membership - Irina Behrendt, Membership Secretary

Dear Teachers,

Just a few reminders:

Remember to renew your membership before July 31 to be eligible to enter students for CM.

Please keep your profile information current. Log in to your teacher's portal and check everything.

Let our webmaster, Kevin Imbimbo, know of any changes you'd like to make to your listing in our Branch Teacher Directory.

Thank you,

Irina

Teacher Spotlight: Sumi Nagasawa

Why/how did you become a piano teacher?

SN: I like children and immensely enjoy teaching them music. It's the highlight of my day. Our long time member, Marjorie Lin helped me join MTAC in 1986. I also taught music classes in the schools for many years. After working as an entertainer on a TV show in my youth, I worked in night clubs playing piano and singing. It was a very hard job; it's difficult to play music for drunk people.

Who were some of your mentors before you became a teacher?

SN: My elementary school teacher. She kept me after school everyday and taught me piano lessons for free. Also my high school music director who was a good pianist, singer, conductor, and wonderful educator, though she was very strict and scary!

Here are some past and present Branch pioneer members who greatly inspired me and educated me wonderfully:

Jim Barnhart ---He mentioned the hard time at The Julliard School right after WW II in NYC.

Berdine Ehrman --- She encouraged me to set up the studio policy including a monthly tuition non-refundable. A great suggestion.

Joan Stennet --- (CM Chair in early 1990) She had a couple dozen hand-knitted booties in her studio for her students. A good mathematician!

Robert Wolverton (pres.1976-77), Sharon Elliot Cheek (1979-82), --- They are the ones who started using high tech-devices.

Ann Williams (pres. 1985-88) --- After Ann moved to Colorado, she started up a similar State music evaluation as our CM programs from the scratch.

William Sveglini (pres. 1990-92) --- Bill told us at the Board meetings, "Do not pinch pennies for the Branch

events" We did not have much money though! Bill owned "ABC" music store in San Bruno. Pat McNutt, (CM Chair from 1996 ~ 2004) The CM teachers work ended almost at midnight every year. JoAnn Stenberg, Marjorie Lin, Jean Hsia, Rena Ling, and others for rooming together at the various State Conventions in North and South.

The above Presidential years info was provided by JoAnn Stenberg. We are here because our great pioneer members worked from a 100 years ago! Let's continue carrying our torch high!!

How has the piano teaching field changed over the years?

SN: The students were able to and willing to spend a few hours each day practicing piano on the weekdays and more on the weekends. Some of my student used to say, "I play piano for a couple of hours right after school everyday. I can do the school homework when I am dead tired late at night but piano takes a lot of energy". I do not see nor can expect this kind of commitment on today's students. They are overly competitive with school work, grades, tests, earning volunteer credits, and etc., as we all know. I think that private art lessons are like a parenting job. Each child is different physically mentally, and of course in capability.

What are some of your most memorable teaching experiences?

SN: Sometimes I contact my former students who left for college and ask them if they want to play piano in the studio recitals with the current students. Almost everybody says, "Yes! I want to play in the recital!" What else could make a piano teacher happier!

With so many students contacting you for lessons how do you decide who to work with?

SN: I used to provide new students a two months trial period. But I found out that at the end of the trial period, it was very hard for me to give the student a disappointing discontinuation notice. Now, I work with whomever comes to me. Jewel students are rare, but every now and then you get a student who is really awesome and it's like winning the jackpot!

How did the San Mateo County Fair Classical Piano competition get started?

SN: About 30 years ago, the program was called a talent show which included singing, dancing, some instruments, skits in a casual style, all ages and levels with no categories or structure. With the late Mrs. Darlene Haney, program director's cooperation, The Fair began hosting a "Classical Piano Competition" for the students and teachers resides in the San Mateo County. Judges included Dorian Ho, Joan Stennet, Vera Shamis, Shulamit Hoffman, Rena Ling, Machiko Kobialka, Daniel Glover, Betty Wu, John Hillberandt, and others.

What advice would you give to a new teacher?

SN: I have been encouraging students on strengthening the sight reading skill. If they master the reading skill, they can enjoy learning the ensemble literature, could handle many other performing opportunities, even the gigs.

Do you have time to practice?

SN: Yes, in the late morning hours. My dog is the audience who patiently sits through my practice, but my cat used to walk away as soon as I stated playing piano.

Local Concerts/Announcements

On Sunday May 5th, at 1:00 PM, 777 Miramontes avenue, Half Moon Bay, **Concert for Children** with Amy Zanrosso and Irina Behrendt, piano duo, focusing on dance-inspired music by a variety of composers. Admission by donation.

On Sunday May 19th, at 5:00 PM. at Carlmont Theater in Belmont, concert by the [Peninsula Youth Orchestra](#). Tickets: \$15 adults/ \$5 students, seniors.

The 2019 San Mateo County Fair Classical Piano Youth Competition will be held on Tuesday, June 11 at the San Mateo County Fairgrounds in San Mateo (Cypress Hall). The application deadline is May 20. In order to participate, both students and teachers must be residents of San Mateo County. Please send your students; we need a large number of participants in order for the Fair to keep providing this event in the future.

The application forms can be found under “Classical Piano” on the website: <http://sanmateocountyfair.com/creative-kids> For more information please contact Sumi Nagasawa at snpiano2001@yahoo.com