



Music Teacher's Association of California

San Mateo County Branch

Newsletter

April 2010

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President's Pen

Pat McNutt

We made it through Certificate of Merit with flying colors! There is not enough “thanks” to cover those who made valiant efforts and did expert work to make CM a great experience for our students. But, I will try:

Marcela Toma, Director – keeping it all on track.

Tom Hansen, IT Specialist – schedules, results and lists when needed.

Marjorie Lin, String Chair

Laurie Johnson, Voice Chair

Sumi Nagasawa, Honors Recital Programs

and every teacher who worked at evaluations.

Our reinstated Honors Recitals gave 80 students the opportunity to play and be honored at six recitals. Thank you to Allegro Music School for the use of your venue. Kudos also to teachers who presided and helped organize the recitals.

I look forward to seeing you all at the May 21 annual banquet. Janice Sheng has planned another terrific event – if you enjoyed last year, you will want to participate again. If you were unable to be with us last year, come and see what all the fun is about! Excellent food (at a good price), sharing with fellow members and prizes!! We will be electing officers for the next two year term. Your nominating committee has been hard at the task of filling our elected office positions.

At the end of this newsletter, there is a recap of the discussion members had at our general meeting in February. We had good attendance and a lively discussion. I think you will be interested in some of the ideas that were shared. Thank you to Barbara Barclay, Recording Secretary, for taking copious notes that we can share with you.

Membership

Laurie Johnson

Attention all members of the San Mateo Branch. The state will be sending annual dues invoices at the end of April. The state office has requested that each member verify their personal contact information as it appears in the state online database. This task should be completed by March 31st. You only need to do this if your personal contact information has changed since last year. You can make necessary changes by going to your Member Home Page. Members can access their Page by going to www.mtac.org and clicking on the MTAC Login link. The member's username and password is the same as the username and password used for CM registration.

If you have forgotten your username or password, please contact me at 593-4559 or email: laurlyn@comcast.net. I will be able to get that information for you. Remember, you only have to do this if your contact information has changed.

Recital Hall

Yvonne Ho

There are some available times for your rehearsals/recitals between May and June. Please submit requests to me by *the 15th of the previous month* to reserve a spot. For current dates and times, please check our calendar at: <http://www.mtacsanmateo.org/recital-hall/recital-hall-reservation-calendar.html>

Available times as of March 22nd:

May 1st: 12 pm - 2pm

May 8th: 7pm - 9pm

June 19th: 12 - 2pm

June 20th: 5 - 9pm

Note: When reserving a time slot, please be considerate and INCLUDE any set up or tear down and clean up time for your event. Please do not arrive earlier than your scheduled start time or leave later than your scheduled finish time. Arriving earlier or leaving later may cause an interruption to the other members' recitals/events. Please let your students and families know: **NO EARLY ARRIVALS AND LATE DEPARTURES**. Thank you for your cooperation.

I would like to remind our members regarding rental hall rules. These rules are also on our rental hall contract:

Cancellations – If a reservation is cancelled more than three months prior to the reserved date, all payment will be refunded minus a \$50.00 cancellation fee. If a reservation is cancelled less than three months in advance, the entire rental fee is forfeited.

Submitting Changes – You must email or call me by the 15th of the previous month in order for me to make any changes. This includes cancelling your event, switching to a different time or requesting the seating arrangement for your event. For example, if your event is on February 19th, you must let me know of any changes by the morning of January 15th.

Locking the Pianos – Teachers who reserve the hall to use the piano(s) are responsible of locking up the piano(s) after their events. The keys to the pianos are always with the Community Center receptionist. After the pianos are locked, please return the keys to the receptionist.

Moving the Pianos – When you are finished using the pianos, it is your responsibility to move the pianos back to the original storage spots on the north wall. Leave the piano benches near the pianos. **Do not expect the building attendants to move the pianos after your event.** If you need assistance with moving the pianos, you may ask one of the receptionists to help you.

Programs

Janice Sheng

We're looking forward to seeing you at our upcoming branch programs:

- *Annual luncheon:* Friday, May 21, 2010
- *Teachers' Concert "Celebrating Music and Friendships":* Sunday June, 13, 2010

LUNCHEON

- Date: Friday, May 21, 2010
- Time: 11am to 1pm
- Venue: The Van's Restaurant

- Address: 815 Belmont Ave., Belmont, CA (restaurant phone number: 650-591-2565)

Cost: \$15 per person (the same fee applies to your guest)

Cost includes a 3-course meal, coffee and/or tea, tax and gratuity. Cost excludes other drinks.

- RSVP by May 7th, to Janice Sheng (jsheng.piano@gmail.com; 650-430-1384).
- Check payable to: MTAC San Mateo
- Mailing address: 1748 Pierce St. San Mateo, 94403

TEACHERS' CONCERT: "CELEBRATING MUSIC & FRIENDSHIPS"

- Sunday, June 13, 2010
- 7:00-9:00pm
- Foster City Community Center, Wind Room
- Solo & Chamber Music (each entry is limited to maximum 15 minutes)
- Free admission, refreshments served.
- Now accepting applications, please contact Janice at jsheng.piano@gmail.com

Certificate of Merit

Marcela Toma

I sincerely hope that the evaluation of your students went smoothly this year and the ratings and comments received will be a stepping stone towards higher grounds! Tom Hansen, Pat McNutt, Janet Williams and Gina Vandellos – your tremendous efforts and outstanding work ethics are truly an inspiration to me. Thank you to all of the CM teachers for everything you did to make our branch's CM program a success!

Wishing you a sunny spring and a relaxing and exciting summer!

Please don't forget to sign up (early) for the Convention this year.

MTAC 2010 Convention

- *When:* Friday, July 2 2010 7:30am to Tuesday, July 6, 2010 12:00pm
- *Where:* LAX Marriott, 5855 West Century Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90045

Additional News Items

Barbara Barclay

Nominating Committee

All members of the MTAC San Mateo branch Board of Directors serve two-year terms.

Consequently, in each even-year (such as 2010) a Nominating Committee is formed to recommend Active members of the branch to serve for the following two-year period. Directors may serve for more than a single two-year period, so the Nominating Committee solicits current board members to determine if they would be willing to remain on the board for another term. The Nominating Committee is then charged with finding Active members to join the Board and assume the responsibilities of those who have decided not to serve another term.

Members of this year's Nominating Committee are Irina Carrenca, Larissa Konnaya, Joyce Morse, Vija Norkvesta, Vera Shamis and Li-Ying Wu with Barbara Barclay representing the Board. The Nominating Committee is very close to having a complete slate to recommend and expects to present this slate to the entire membership soon. Ballots will be sent to all branch members and election of all Board members will be finalized at the Annual Banquet and business meeting in May.

San Mateo County By-Laws Revisions

During the fall of 2009, the State MTAC notified all MTAC branches that their by-laws needed to be revised to reflect the changes that the State made. These changes were primarily concerned with the membership process. The State provided the language for the changes required in the by-laws of each branch and also sent a check list of things that needed to be included in the branch by-laws. The goal of the revisions is to bring all of the branch by-laws into conformity with the State MTAC. Branches were given until January 31, 2010 to submit revised versions of their by-laws. These needed to be approved by the individual branch board of directors. The State would then review the revised by-laws and make recommendations. Each branch board then must address the recommendations made by the State, have further revisions approved and submit that version to the State before May 1, 2010.

The San Mateo County branch submitted its revised changes before the January 31 deadline. We received communication from the State that provided three paragraphs to be added to the existing by-laws, altered some language concerning the relationship between the State and the local branch and requested that the Preamble and Code of Ethics be separated from the By-Laws. The San Mateo County Branch board is now in the process of reviewing these changes. If approved, we will send the second revision of the branch by-laws to the State for its approval. Pending approval of the State, the revised version of the San Mateo County MTAC will be submitted to the membership for final approval.

TEACHING IDEAS!!!

The notes in this article are from the Brainstorming Session held at our Branch General Meeting on February 12, 2010. Questions were written down by teachers and the group shared their experiences. Enjoy!!

Notes from the session:

Question 1: What are some good ways to motivate students during the summer and winter months?

Suggestions: Have a student recital in October and give the pieces to the students before summer vacation.

Have students who are around during the summer give a recital at a nursing home.

Have a recital at the end of summer, arrange for students to play duets with each other, include games such as croquet – make it a party.

Play theory and rhythm games, perhaps in the morning, and have the students perform for each other.

Put away the students' regular music in the fall and bring out Christmas music until January.

San Mateo has a piano competition in August.

Question 2: How often should a teacher raise rates and at what time of year?

Suggestions: Raise the rates every year in September, even if it is just a small raise.

Lee Galloway, who gave a program for the branch a year or so ago, says that parents should expect a raise every year.

If you are going to raise the rates in September, it is a good idea to let the parents know in advance.

If there are fees (CM registration, copying music, etc.), ask for those fees at the end of the year for the upcoming year.

Maybe it is time to do a survey of rates.

Question 3: What methods can be used effectively to teach a bright child who can't sit still?

Suggestions: Divide the lesson into activities that do not always involve the piano (or other instrument)

It seems to be effective if the teacher does not sit at the level of the student, but rather stands so that the teacher can touch the student's shoulders. That seems to work with autistic children.

Give the student a very challenging piece. Sometimes the student will become very interested and involved with it.

Reward good behavior – chocolate or other candy seem to work for many students and the student knows what behavior will merit a reward.

Play concentration games (have them look you in the eye steadily for a certain count).

This is especially good for young students.

Question 4: What works best to advertise your studio?

Suggestions: Word of mouth is probably the best method. One might put an advertisement in programs for high school musical theater productions – but that is not always successful.

Put ads in the magazines that one finds in doctor's offices that specialize in treating children.

Advertise on Craig's List or other internet service (www.privatelessons.com)

Question 5: What positive ways do you encourage practice?

Suggestions: Some teachers have students keep notebooks so they can earn points for the number of hours practiced each week, attending live concerts, and/or performing in a concert.

Students can earn points for practice, for being prepared, for good behavior – and they will receive some reward at a given time.

Ask students to make a program for the pieces they want to play.

Question 6: Some students are resistant to correction and have a hard time making corrections during a lesson. What are some ways to overcome this situation?

Suggestions: Student needs to be more involved with his or her playing, take more ownership in their work.

Teacher could play the piece the student is working on to demonstrate how it should sound, and ask the student to copy.

For those students who are psychologically resistant – praise them for what they do well. Record the student's playing and have them listen to it.

The teacher could play the piece incorrectly (the way the student played it) and then play it correctly.

Imagine a story to fit with the music.

Question 7: What do you do if a student smells bad?

Suggestions: Open a window. If the student is sweating, turn on a fan. Have the student wash hands before a lesson.

Question 8: What are some ways to deal with bad behavior (discipline)?

Suggestions: You can always try bribery. In a severe case, have the student go into another room, call the parents and have them pick up the student.

Separate behavior from piano playing – two separate things. Try to involve the students in the music.

Keep your voice soft (never raise your voice), close the piano lid and say something like “If you want to study with me, this is what you need to do” and then tell them what is expected.

Question 9: What books and resources are effective in building a pianist's technique (ages 7 and below)?

Suggestions: Piano Adventures
Alfred – Premier Piano Course
Yamaha Method

Sources for purchasing music:

Clock Tower Music (San Carlos)
Bronstein Music (South San Francisco) www.bronsteinmusic.com
Manor Music (Pacifica)

Online:

www.Bookmarkmusic.com (Pacific Grove)
www.Primamusic.com
www.jwpepper.com
www.sheetmusicplus.com
www.musicworldstores.com

Performance Award

Serena Wang, (five years), a student of Sumi Nagasawa, won the performance award in the Junior Bach Festival on January 30th. Serena performed two Preludes by J. S. Bach in the Winners' Concert Friday, March 19, 7:30pm at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Berkeley.

Do you have a change of address, phone or email? Please send any changes to Laurie Johnson: laurlyn@comcast.net or 650-593-4559.