



WASHINGTON STATE  
MUSIC TEACHERS  
ASSOCIATION

# THE CLARION

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**February 19:** Entry Deadline for Young Composers Project

**March 13-17, 2021:** MTNA National Conference

**June 15, 2021:** Education Board Meeting

**June 16, 2021:** Board of Directors Meeting

**June 17-19, 2021:** WSM TA State Virtual Conference

## IN THIS ISSUE

### State News

President's Corner	1
COVID-19 Update: Reminders Regarding Health Protocols	3
2021 WSM TA Virtual Conference	4
MTNA Performance Competition Northwest Division Results	6
MTNA Composition Competition National Results	6
2022 Commissioned Composer	7
2021 Commissioned Composer	8
From the Archives	9
Student Study Grants	10
Hall of Fame 2021	11
Chapter of the Year	12
Vocal & Instrumental News	13

### Teacher Enrichment

Pedal Points	15
Studio Technology	17
Independent Music Teachers Forum	20

### Advertisers

Henry Bischofberger Violins	5
Classic Pianos	11

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



**Karen Hollenback, NCTM**  
*WSM TA President*

### Listening and Learning

My life has been defined by "C" periods: before/after college, before/after children, before/after cancer, and now, before Covid. I am so longing for the "after Covid" period!

School children have been described learning the three Rs: reading, writing, and 'rithmetic.

Of course as musicians we are familiar with the three Bs: Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms.

But, as music teachers, I think we deal with the three Ls: Listen, Learn, and Love.

Every lesson finds us working with students, encouraging them to move beyond the hearing (perceiving sound with the ear) to the listening (giving one's attention to the sound). It's a skill that is useful not only when we are working at our instrument, but one that is so necessary in our world at large today.

As teachers, we also recognize and confront a difficult challenge—moving from the "hearing" to the "Listening." This is part of the Learning.

How often have you, or a student, "heard" a piece only to say, "yuck" or "I don't like it" or "yikes, gross!" Limiting perceptions such as "this is too hard" or "there's too many pages, it will take forever to get to the end" or even "I quit" are common reactions as we face something new before we even manage to make it to the Listening stage.

As music teachers we encourage students to "Listen" again (and again and again) so as to begin to move deeper into the Learning:

"Wow, look at those patterns, can you hear/see/feel them?"

"Why did the composer put that chord there—wouldn't you expect this chord instead?"

"Those time signature changes are crazy, but it might be boring if they weren't there."

As the Learning progresses, we find we begin to Listen differently as well. Both Listening and Learning will allow us to experience the third L—Love—or, using some synonyms for the verb form of Love: appreciate, cherish, treasure, value.

While the initially unfamiliar piece might not ever be a student's (or our) favorite piece, we all begin to see it and hear it differently. Perhaps the piece now has value in moving a student to a new technical level. Perhaps it is appreciated for the new compositional techniques it exhibits. Perhaps it is cherished for the unusual sounds created.

Maybe, just maybe, the piece becomes one of those most treasured pieces for us.

But even if it doesn't, the three Ls have changed us, and the world around us, for we have experienced how to Listen, Learn and Love just a little better.

Have a wonderful February—by tradition, the month of Love. Don't forget the Listening and Learning!

*Karen Hollenback, NCTM*

Karen Hollenback, NCTM, WSM TA President



## WSMTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## COVID-19 UPDATE

### Reminders Regarding Health Protocols

As of this writing (January 18, 2021) all of Washington State is under Phase 1 of the Healthy Washington Plan. You can find up-to-date information on this here: <https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/covid-19-resources/covid-19-reopening-guidance-businesses-and-workers>

As we move into the spring musical events (MAP, MLP, festivals, chapter and studio recitals, chapter honors competitions, etc.) please be aware of both the state and your local county health directives.

Our overriding priority is the health and safety of our teachers, visiting artists, students and their family members.

Flexibility remains a key word in our lives these days, so having a back-up plan for any in-person music event is prudent in case safety protocols cannot be maintained according to the state and local health directives.

For additional insight into possible legal issues surrounding pandemic protocols, including liability caused by failure to follow state and county guidelines, the WSM TA website home page has a link to information provided by MTNA's legal counsel. Please familiarize yourself with this information.

WSMTA is not in a position to mandate how every event, festival, recital, etc. in your studio, local association, or District should be run. However, WSM TA unequivocally expects that every member will follow the health directives of Washington state and your local county health department. Let's all work together to stay safe, and healthy so we can continue to make music in the days ahead!

*Karen Hollenback, NCTM  
WSMTA President*

#### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Eastside Chapter**  
Conrad Sheridan

**Gig Harbor Chapter**  
Anna Hastings  
Briellen Link

**Kitsap County Chapter**  
Farida Roberts

**Lake Washington Chapter**  
Iris Hsu-Rose

**Lynden Chapter**  
Sara Hansen

**Moses Lake Chapter**  
Karly Powers

**Olympia Chapter**  
Dawn Sonntag

**Puyallup Valley Chapter**  
Amora Bussey

**Seattle Chapter**  
Rachel Hug  
Jill Kremer  
Liz Fraser

**Snohomish County Chapter**  
Ian Huh

**Tri-City Chapter**  
Olin Ensley  
Ciera Ewing  
Karen Edwards  
Melissa Whitney

**Yakima Ellensburg Chapter**  
Molly Fleming



Follow WSM TA on Instagram!  
**@WASStateMTA**

[www.instagram.com/wastatemta](https://www.instagram.com/wastatemta)

## 2021 WSM TA VIRTUAL STATE CONFERENCE

### June 17-19, 2021: The WSM TA State Conference is Coming to YOU!

Kira Theine, NCTM, and Laura Curtis, Conference Co-Chairs, and Carrie Kahler, WSM TA Administrative Coordinator

*Conference schedule subject to change.*

#### Tuesday, June 15 Pre-Conference

- **Education Board Meeting**

*All pre-recorded sessions open to conference attendees.*

- Anna Barbee: *Catching Creativity*
- Christine Damm: *Clarinet Playing Made Easy: Improve Your Section In 5 Easy Steps*
- Esther Hayter: *Teaching Strategies for Group Classes of Various Ages and Levels*
- Josh Lindberg: *Piano Class at the High School Level*
- Lark Powers: *Beethoven the Teacher: Insights on Beethoven's Teaching Creativity as seen through his exercises and his commentary on J.B. Cramer's Etudes*
- Dr. Mark Stevens: *Unlocking The Secrets of Modern Music Making*
- Sophia Tegart: *Where Are All the Women? Incorporating Music By Women Composers Into Our Teaching Repertoire*

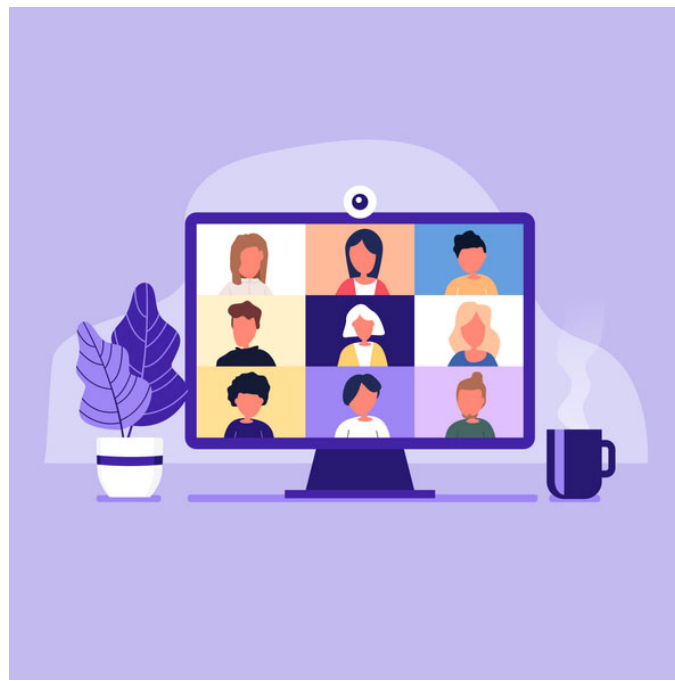
#### Wednesday, June 16 Pre-Conference

- **Board of Directors Meeting**
- **WSU Faculty Concert**

*Reception to follow*

#### Thursday, June 17 Conference Day 1

- Warm-Up: Meditation with Rose Freeman
- **WSM TA General Opening Meeting**
- Karen Savage: Presentation
- Davis Hill: *Business Plan For Your Studio*



- Jensina Oliver: Presentation
  - **Meal and Mentoring**
  - Mary Walby: *Skeletal Alignment*
  - Greg Pressley: *Music and Movement*
  - Dr. Jeffrey Savage: Masterclass
  - Q&A with Mark Stevens
  - **Close It Down Social**
  - **Washington Winners Concert**
- Reception to follow*

#### Friday, June 18 Conference Day 2

- Warm-Up Session
- Dr. Jeffrey Savage: Presentation
- Ryan Worswick: *Staging the Scene: Composing Your Online Studio*
- **Meal and Mentoring**
- RoseMarie Tamburri: *Independent Music Teacher Forum Session*

## Conference Day 2 Continued


- Q&A with Lark Powers
  - Dr. Karen Savage: Masterclass
  - Joann Richardson: *Singing With Our Fingers*
  - Q&A with Esther Hayter
  - **Close It Down Social**
  - **Guest Artists Concert**
- Reception to follow*



Conference Guest Artists Dr. Jeffrey Savage and Dr. Karen Savage

## Henry Bischofberger Violins

Third Generation Violin Maker



"Voted Evening Magazine's  
Best of Western WA!"

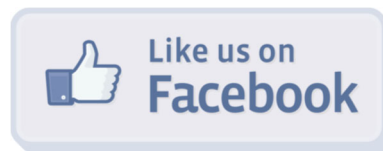
www.kirklandviolins.com  
(425)822-0717

Sales
Appraisals
Repairs
Rentals

## Saturday, June 19 Conference Day 3

### High School Track

- Warm-Up: Meditation with Rose Freeman
- **Closing General Meeting**
- **High School Session:** *Special Collections from the WSU Library to Inspire Students*
- **High School Session:** *Improvisation and the Jazz Musician: Hands-On Activities for the Beginning and Intermediate Jazz Player with Jake Svendsen*
- Q&A with Christine Damm
- **Meal and Mentoring**
- **High School Session:** *So You Want to be a Music Major? Tips for Success in Your Audition and Beyond with Mark Stevens*
- Andrew D'Antonio: *Autism Spectrum Disorder in Private Music Lessons*
- **High School Session:** *How to Memorize Music: Tips and Methods for Memorizing Music Securely*
- Q&A with Josh Lindberg
- Q&A with Sophia Tegar
- **Close It Down Social**



Stay connected with WSMTA on Facebook! Find us at  
[www.facebook.com/WASateMTA](http://www.facebook.com/WASateMTA)

## MTNA PERFORMANCE COMPETITION

### Northwest Division Results

#### Junior Performance String

##### Alternate

Tokuji Miyasaka (WA), violin, student of Simon James

#### Junior Performance Woodwind

##### Alternate

Larry Zhao (WA), clarinet, student of Joanne Corr

#### Senior Performance Piano

##### Winner

Adrian King (WA), student of Peter Mack and Dainius Vaicekonis

#### Senior Performance String

##### Alternate

Yvette Kraft (WA), violin, student of Simon James

#### Senior Performance Woodwind

##### Winner

Johnathan Lee, saxophone, student of Fred Winkler

#### Senior Performance Piano Duet

##### Winner

Sarah Girges and Avah Girges, students of Barbara Miller

#### Young Artist Performance Woodwind

##### Winner

Jordan Marbach (WA), saxophone, student of Fred Winkler

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## MTNA COMPOSITION COMPETITION

### National Results

#### Elementary Composition

##### Second Place

Eli Antony (WA, Northwest), student of Sharon Van Valin





## 2022 COMMISSIONED COMPOSER OF THE YEAR A Call for Composers!



**Louise Nedela**  
*CCOY Chair*

WSMTA is seeking candidates for the 2022 Commissioned Composer of the Year (CCOY)! The CCOY will prepare a new composition according to the requirements listed herein. Further contract responsibilities, rights of a Commissioned Composer, and other information can be obtained from CCOY Chair Louise Nedela. If selected, the commissioned composer will

receive \$1500 when his/her composition is premiered at the 2022 WSMTA State Conference. The composer will be responsible for financial and logistics regarding performers, rehearsals, and performance of the winning composition at the conference, and also provide copies for archives. It is suggested that the piece be for one or two performers.

Composition Requirements: the piece written must be an advanced or professional level piano solo or duet, or piano and another instrument, or piano and voice. Composer must reside in Washington State and preferably be a WSMTA member. The winning composition will progress to the MTNA Distinguished Composer of the Year Competition.

If you wish to be considered, please submit to the address below by March 31, 2021:

- Two of your original compositions that you feel will be representative of your compositional ability for this project (no arrangements, please) in the format of PDF scores and MP3 recordings;
- A short bio;
- Contact information;
- A synopsis of your intended project that adheres to the requirements.

—Louise Nedela, CCOY Chair  
*[louisenedela@gmail.com](mailto:louisenedela@gmail.com), 360-448-8572*

## MEET DAWN SONNTAG

## 2021 WSM TA Commissioned Composer of the Year



Dawn Sonntag, 2021 Commissioned Composer of the Year

Dawn Sonntag is a multi-faceted Olympia-based composer. Her music, which includes opera, art song, chamber, choral, and orchestral music, has been performed by the Delgani Quartet, the Amphion Quartette, the Almeda Trio, Concert Black, the Fairbanks Arts Festival Orchestra, and the Hiram College and Community String orchestra, the Portland Choral Arts Ensemble, the Cleveland Chamber Choir, and numerous university, community, and church choirs across the U.S. and in Germany, France, and Norway. Her operas have been performed by the Cleveland Opera Theater, ContempOpera Cleveland, the Hartford Opera Theater, and at the Opera from Scratch festival in Halifax. Her new opera "For Life" will be premiered in May 2021 at the Cleveland Opera Theater's New Opera Works festival. She has won numerous competitions and awards, including an American Scandinavian Foundation creative artist grant, a 2019 Swedish Government Intercultural Exchange Residency Grant, the Inge Pitler prize for lied performance in both voice and piano, and the Kenwood Symphony Masters Aria Competition. She was the 2010 Ohio Music Teachers Association

Distinguished Composer of the Year. She is a lecturer in composition at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, WA and has also taught at Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA, the University of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio, where she chaired the Music Department from 2015-2019. She received her doctorate in composition and vocal performance at the University of Minnesota and completed masters' degrees in choral conducting, collaborative piano, and voice at the Ohio State University, the Hochschule für Kirchenmusik, Heidelberg, Germany and Antioch University's McGregor School of the Arts in Tübingen, Germany.

#### Artist Statement from Dawn Sonntag

"The pandemic has made us all sharply aware of how much we as human beings need interaction and joint purpose. It has reminded us how we depend upon one another in every facet of life, how we must be sensitive to the voices and perspectives of others in working towards common goals, and how rich and satisfying both the journey and goals are when we travel and learn together. So for this project, I would like to compose a three-movement sonata for violin and piano that is inspired by both the experience of isolation and the heightened awareness of diversity that has arisen during this challenging period in our history. Drawing from the Baroque concepts of rhetoric and affect, I will use techniques such as counterpoint, bi-tonality, poly-rhythms, multi-meter, and Western and non-Western melodies to create dialogue between the instruments. The themes of the three movements will be isolation and connection, fear and hope, and diversity and joint purpose and are based on quotations from three prominent figures in our nation's history."

*Dawn's commissioned work will premiere at the 2021 WSM TA Virtual State Conference.*

[www.dawnsonntag.com](http://www.dawnsonntag.com)



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

Carrie Kahler, WSMTA Administrative Coordinator

VOICE SYLLABUS

LEVELS X - XII

Sponsored and Issued by

THE WASHINGTON STATE MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Approved by the

Washington State Board of Education

January 1966

- THE SOUL OF A SINGER -

Overtones are its colors -

Rhythm is its heart beat.

Resonance is its body -

Vowels the forms it assumes.

Consonants are its hands -

Emotion is its life blood.

Imagination its ears and eyes.

Thought its feet -

Desire its wings -

Melody is its language.

The soul of the singer is the subconscious SELF.

This month's entry comes from the 1966 Voice Syllabus, Levels X-XII. Members of the WSMTA Education Committee (later renamed the Education Board) prepared the syllabus not only for WSMTA teachers, but also for Applied Music Teachers statewide seeking high school credit for their students.

Louis Bruno, the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction, wrote the forward noting that the syllabus established "high standards of attainment" and that the course should be studied "thoroughly."

Carolyn O. James and Esther Ford Hammer of the WSMTA wrote in their preface: "It is our sincere

hope that this outline and guide for the voice teacher will be helpful and instructive not only to those administering credit but to all who meet the challenge of guiding youth in the development of a musical and expressive voice."

The syllabus itself contains a semester-by-semester outline of skills and goals, repertoire suggestions for Soprano, Contralto, Tenor, Baritone, and Bass, and theory requirements. Before the Forward, the Preface, and the Repertoire suggestions, however, the WSMTA included this poem to remind teachers of those intangible, ineffable musical qualities which cannot be graded, but thrill singer and audience alike.

# STUDENT STUDY GRANTS

## Call for Lois Whitner Student Study Grant Applications

Connie Hungate, WSCTM, Grants & Scholarships Chair

- The WSMTA Student Study Grant Program was established in 2003 with a bequest from the Lois Whitner estate.
- The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance for continued private study to music students who demonstrate financial need and who show serious commitment to music study.

### Guidelines:

- The grant is open to music students currently in grades 8-11 who have studied a minimum of 4 years. Their teachers must be WSMTA members (of at least 12 months standing).
- The applicant will be considered on a basis of financial need and commitment to music study.
- The applicant must have participated in the WSMTA Music Artistry Program.
- Grants up to \$1,500 may be awarded. The applicant must explain specifically and in detail how the funds will be used. The grant will be for a period of one year. Students may re-apply in subsequent years by submitting another full application to the committee for consideration.
- The grant may be used to offset the cost of music lessons, theory, or composition classes, or tuition for music camps. Grant money will be sent directly to the teacher or camp/ program director.
- The five-part application form can be downloaded from [www.wsmta.org](http://www.wsmta.org). From the navigation bar, select "Programs for Students" and then "Scholarships."



If you have questions or need further information, please email me at [cchungate@comcast.net](mailto:cchungate@comcast.net) or contact me by phone 206-232-0117 (landline) or 206-849-4303 (cell).

Applications should be submitted to Selina Chu, 15446 SE 42nd Street, Sammamish, WA, 98029. The application deadline is May 1, 2021.

*Connie Hungate, WSCTM,  
Student Grants Chair*

## HALL OF FAME 2021

Mary Ellen Cavelti Beardsley, NCTM and Chris VanBuskirk, WSMTA Hall of Fame Co-Chairs

Congratulations to **Onnie Adams** of the Tri-Cities Chapter for acceptance into the WSMTA Hall of Fame 2021. Onnie was nominated by her colleagues for her forty-year commitment to excellence in her chapter, her studio, and her community. Admired for being a respected and innovative leader, Onnie initiated the first Ribbon Festival in 1981, then served as chapter president for six years followed by being an ambassador to other chapters, serving as District VI Vice President, and giving several programs at the state conference. Chapter president Ben Walley said "As a person, Onnie is interested in other people and loves to share what she has learned in her teaching because she cares about her students and her community of teachers, not only working as colleagues, but as dear friends."

Onnie's former student, now colleague Carissa Pitkin Cox, writes, "I started lessons with Onnie at age eight and she has been a very important teacher, mentor, and friend in my life ever since. Her approach to teaching, nurturing, and her ability to create a community around her work inspired me at a young age to follow in her path and become a piano teacher. Seeing the positive effect that she had on children is a true gift. I cannot think of anybody who has impacted me more, and I am pleased to write this letter in support of her nomination which is a wonderful capstone to all of her work, dedication and love of music."

Congratulations, Onnie Adams, and welcome to the WSMTA Hall of Fame!



### CLASSIC PIANOS HAS MOVED!

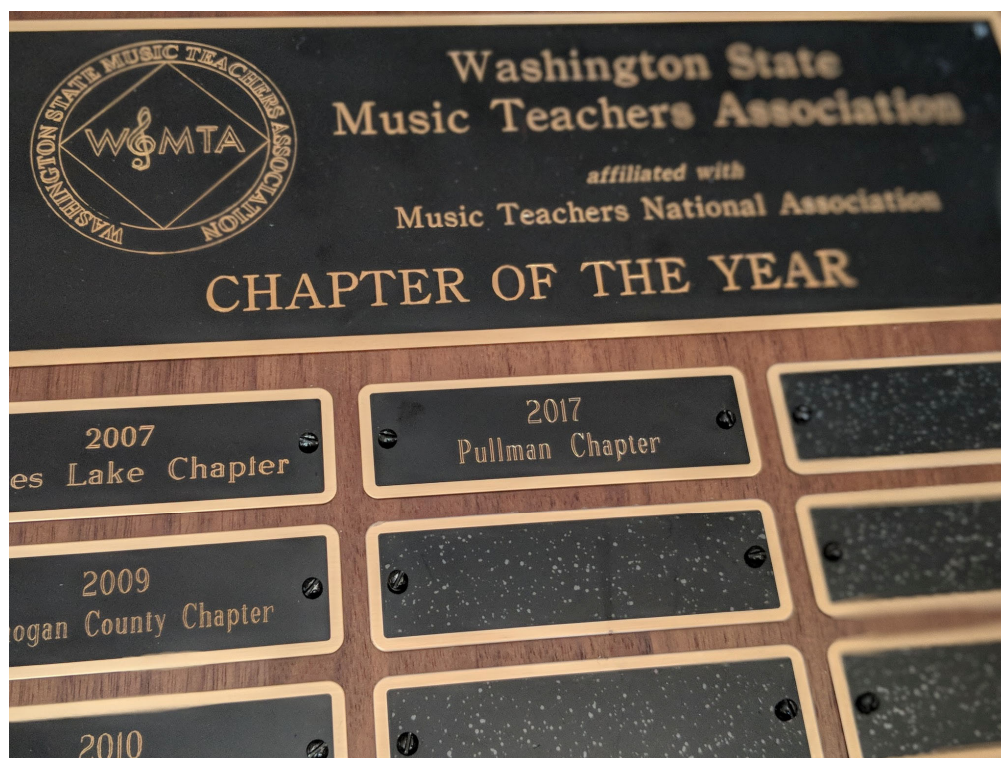
Schedule a Virtual or In-Person Appointment:  
13013 NE 20th Street, Bellevue, WA 98005



# CHAPTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

## "I Love to Tell the Story"

Harriet West, WSMTA Chapter of the Year Chair



I became a church musician at age 13 when a pastor came to my piano teacher looking for a pianist/organist. Since my teacher had started me (one lesson each month) on her large church organ sitting in the living room, she suggested he talk to me and my parents. I remember him coming to our home to visit. At that time, the church met in a school cafeteria and would move their Baldwin home organ out each Sunday. I would be responsible for a prelude, offertory, postlude, hymns and accompanying the choir, with rehearsals on Wednesday nights. The "job" would pay \$5 per Sunday service. For some reason (it may have been the salary!) I said, "I'll try it if you are willing to try me." Within a year and half, I was also playing the early service at my church and my parents were driving me around!

Of course, as a church musician, I learned and played many much-cherished hymns of the faith

including "I Love to Tell the Story." The words to this hymn were taken from a 100-verse poem written by English evangelist (Arabella) Katherine "Kate" Hankey and published in 1866. The text of the refrain was written in 1869 by the composer of the music, William Fischer, co-owner of a piano business and music store in Philadelphia. The hymn was published the same year.

Each WSMTA Chapter has a story to tell—what is yours? Since honoring the first Chapter of the Year in 2007, we've heard stories from 9 of 32 chapters in WSMTA—we'd love to hear yours! Who doesn't love a story with a happy ending? You will have a happy ending to part of your Chapter's ongoing story if it's selected as the 2021 Chapter of the Year. This honor comes with the Chapter's name engraved on the plaque and a \$500 check from WSMTA. The application can be found at [www.wsmta.org](http://www.wsmta.org) and must be received by May 1.

## VOCAL &amp; INSTRUMENTAL NEWS

## Survey Results and Music Literacy Program for Strings



**Jane Melin, NCTM**  
Vocal & Instrumental Chair

In November, we conducted a survey of WSMTA's 225 members who teach an instrument besides the piano. Thank you to the 34 Vocal and Instrumental teachers who responded with their candid feedback. If you wanted to participate but just didn't get around to it,

you can still respond – find the survey email (dated 11/19/2020) and click through to add your voice!

What I found most interesting were the frequency of words that respondents used to describe how their WSMTA membership benefits them. In this “word cloud,” the bigger the word, the more often it was mentioned. The Music Artistry Program (MAP) came in #1, and tied for #2 were the words Local and Relationships. While other instrument-specific professional associations offer some programs similar to MAP and MLP, I think where WSMTA really shines is in the hyper-local connections we are able to make with our colleagues. The smaller the population of your local community, the more valuable you probably will find it to get to know the other independent music teachers down your street or across town. A cautionary tale: based on several teachers' personal experiences, chapters that are made up of mostly piano teachers should be especially mindful to help vocal and instrumental teachers feel welcome at their meetings. We're all in this together!

Several respondents requested expansion of the MAP and Music Literacy (MLP) programs to their specific instruments, especially for smaller studios in more remote areas. MAP Visiting Artists are available for many instruments and voice; MLP tests are available for many bowed strings, with treble winds hopefully coming online soon. With what we



are learning right now about virtual events, these programs may soon be available even to chapters with few vocal and instrumental members.

Others mentioned that they would like to know more about “doing” MAP and MLP in order to involve their students. There is nothing like experience! Before signing your own students up for the MLP, for example, it would be invaluable to tag along with an experienced piano teacher on a testing day and see for yourself how the tests are conducted for piano students. Procedures are very similar for other instruments. Reach out to me for more information about your specific instrument if you need it.

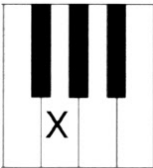
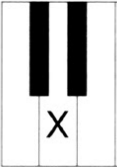
I'll close with a little more information about the MLP tests for Strings. Differentiated tests are offered for Theory (violin), Technique (violin-violoncello-bass), Sightreading (violin to Level 10, viola and cello to Level 6), and Listening (any instrument). Levels 9 and 10 of everything but Technique and Sightreading use the piano tests. The Rhythm test is the same for all instruments. Here is an example of how a question on the Piano Theory test has been modified for the Violin.



Level 1 Piano, the answer is G:

A. Write the letter name of each key that has an X. (2 pts each – 10 pts. possible)

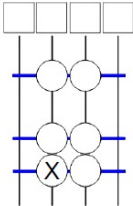
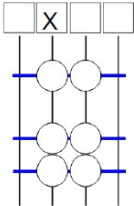
Example:



  D                                  

Level 1 Violin, the answer is also G:

A. On each fingerboard diagram, write the letter name (with a # if required) of each note location that has an X. Open string names go in the squares at the top. (2 pts each – 10 pts. possible)



Example:   D                                  

Here are some other differentiations:

Piano Tests	Strings Tests
Identifying and building chords	Identifying and building arpeggios
Harmonic intervals and chords, introduced at	Double stops, beginning from Level 4
"Skips and Steps"	Half steps and whole steps
"Touch"	"Articulation"

We need some editors to come forward to create similar theory tests for Viola, Cello and Bass. MLP tests for treble winds have been developed in a pilot program, and we hope to be able to use them soon statewide.

To prepare your students for the test topics, start first with the **MLP Curriculum Guide for Strings:**  
<https://wsmta.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/WSMTA-MLP-Curriculum-Guide-Strings.pdf>.

If you need more information about using the Strings MLP tests this spring in your chapter or studio, please contact me, or get in touch directly with Karen Scholten, MLP Chair.



## PEDAL POINTS

### Potholes into Swimming Pools



**Joann Richardson, NCTM**  
*Organ Chair*

While out on my daily walk a few months ago, I was in a particularly sour mood. I was tired. Tired of politics. Tired of pandemics. Tired of injustice and instability. Just plain old tired.

On my usual walking route there is a pothole in the road that had been growing larger by day. On a previous walk, I was on the receiving end of a

soaking spray courtesy of that pothole and a car that hit it at just the right angle. As I rounded the corner, I grouched "when are they going to fix that thing!"

Suddenly, a bird dropped out of the sky and landed in that pothole, which was filled to the brim with rainwater. The bird was using the pothole as a birdbath, happily splashing away. To me, the pothole was a nuisance. To the bird, it was a swimming pool! Watching that bird have a good time in its own private resort provided me with a few moments for quiet reflection. Although the world was experiencing

a period of distress, nature didn't care. Nature went on being its usual beautiful self— I just needed to shift my focus away from current events in order to realize that the beauty of the world is something that is eternally present, no matter how much human beings screw up.

Throughout this last year as we watched human beings say and do some pretty terrible things, repeatedly one heard the refrain of "this is not who we are." I agree. I believe that the human spirit is fundamentally full of goodness, even when individuals veer down horribly wrong paths.

Why do I believe this? Because of art. Every generation has wars, pandemics, injustices, and instability. These events relatively quickly become relegated to dry accounts to be read about in history books. The expression of the human spirit, however, lives on. Human beings create transcendent art, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the circumstances in which they live. This is who we are. We still marvel at the sculpture and literature of the ancient Greeks. The drama of the human condition still resonates with us in the plays of Shakespeare and in the operas of Verdi. And the music— for us as musicians, the music may speak loudest of all. Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Schubert, Debussy, Messiaen— all of these composers experienced personal or societal hardships, yet they were able to produce music that transcended it all. Centuries later, their music

continues to reach the depths of our souls. In talking with friends and family, colleagues, and students, I have repeatedly heard the same thing— music has been a source of solace during these trying times.

So— when you are playing music to a camera for a live-stream church service and wondering if it makes a difference, know that it does. Somebody out there is listening. You are broadcasting beauty and comfort to a world in desperate need of it. When you patiently work with your students, you are giving them the tools to become musical artists. Your positive influence now allows your students to experience the healing power of the music that they make themselves. The music made by your students edifies their families and friends. Although we may sometimes feel powerless as individuals, the web of positivity that we send into the world through playing and teaching music is most likely greater than we will ever know.

For every negative act perpetrated by a human being, there are thousands of positive acts that bring love and light into this world. We are fortunate that our work as musicians and teachers allows us to bring positive energy into the world every single day. Perhaps through our music, in some small way, we can be like that little bird and turn someone's pothole into a swimming pool. Because this is who we are.

—Joann Richardson, NCTM,  
WSMTA Organ Chair  
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## STUDIO TECHNOLOGY

## What I Love About Teaching Online



**Ryan Worswick**  
*Studio Technology Chair*

I'll be the first to admit that the transition to teaching online has been anything but easy. I sauntered into March with lots of big plans that had next to nothing to do with technology of any kind. I certainly didn't aspire to take on the herculean task of building my own best practices for teaching music online. Now, sussing out plans for 2021, feeling as though a decade has passed, I must confess I'm a full convert.

Yes, the learning, the product research, the organization, the troubleshooting, and the general suite of adjustment and optimization work that goes into building an online studio can feel endless. But the summed result has yielded a connection with my students and their parents that surpasses in depth and quality what I've often gotten in person. Prior to the online era, my time with my students was limited to the lesson. My relationship with their parents was mostly composed of the brief moments at pickup, pleasant but rarely substantial. Group classes and recitals presented opportunities to deepen things somewhat, but for the most part there was still a divide between how things happened in lessons and how things happened at home.

Now we have regular conversations about how well their current setup works, how it could be improved, and what the effects will be on the learning experience. In turn, this has nurtured a burgeoning sense of responsibility for the growth and care of their context in students and parents alike. Further still, the flexibility of being online has allowed me to try things like offering office hours to help with



practice technique, something that wouldn't have happened in a million years prior to our transition online.

Likewise there are infrastructural changes that I adore, not least of which is no driving. As a continuing student myself, I love my lessons about as much as I hate the commute; a great deal. Depending on proximity, dispensing with that travel means there's as much time as the lesson itself recuperated per student, for them and their parents. Inverting that, for those times when the lesson is forgotten until the last minute? That's fine, you're already there.

Another happy consequence is that recitals have become global affairs, to the delight of aunts, uncles, and grandparents nationwide. In my experience, recitals had included a delicate balance of tasks to ensure decent recordings, respectful distribution, and so on to provide access to the fruits of our endeavors. Now they can attend themselves, see it all happen in real time, and celebrate with the rest of us, latency notwithstanding.

Finally, I am an unrepentant sentimentalist. I relish the opportunity to capture moments that students



and family can treasure for years to come, snapshots of how they became who they'll become. Pursuing that I've adopted the habit of encouraging my students to maintain a short list of pieces, updating as we go, and taking monthly recordings of those pieces. At least we get an audible record of our progress, and for the best of them we get some really special recordings. With the powers of Zoom and Google Drive combined this has become a snap, all the trouble of an afterthought.

I don't blame anyone for continuing to rue the arrival of this new normal, but I hope this has helped convince you that there are lights at the end of the tunnel, there's grass that's green on the other side, and there's still a lot of joy and good fortune to be found in our work, even if we must sometimes grapple with the unknown between here and there. Take care, keep trying, we can turn surviving into thriving yet.

## MORE STUDIO TECHNOLOGY

### Alternatives to Zoom: Strengths and Weaknesses

Allow me if you will, dear reader, to begin with a bit of heresy; I like Zoom. I know it's not built for teaching music online. I know it can be a big hassle getting used to it's dual interface (app vs. website settings), and that its default configuration for sound settings are diametrically opposed to what we, as music teachers, require. Most of all I know the time and energy it can take to overcome those obstacles.

But having done so, I love the whiteboard, I love the way screen sharing works, and I love that it's universally accessible. I love the breakout rooms and the polls, and the general steadiness of the software. I love that every bit of third-party 'please just make this work' software I have to use for cameras or sound explicitly makes sure that their thing works well with Zoom.

However, I know for many it remains a nightmare with each update more confounding than the last. Wherever you lay on the spectrum from confusion to comfort, the good news is there are other options worth exploring! More than I have space to detail in fact, so below is the beginning of a short series I'll be writing looking at different alternatives emerging to serve our rather niche (but ever so vital) needs.

#### RockOutLoud

(a browser/app based option)

<https://rockoutloud.live>



We begin with a Chrome based teaching platform born from the foundation laid by Jitsi Meet, an open-source (read: free but relies on crowd-sourced tech support) video meeting platform. As a teacher you'll need to log in through a computer, but they've built an app for iOS/android devices that your students can use to join. Built by a music teacher (Mike Grande) for music teachers, as with Zoom there is a simple hierarchy of features available for free, and those that attend only the paid version.

The free user experience is straightforward and intuitive, assuming you enjoy working with chrome.



You can highlight this or that video feed, share YouTube videos in a clean and convenient way, and share PDFs for immediate use or download with ease. Selecting different video sources for multiple angles is easy enough, and in terms of audio tech a ~\$50 USB mic and headphones will leave you feeling well set.

You can have multiple attendees, but the video quality drops precipitously, and in general it seems to excel much more at one-on-one meetings than anything group based. I also couldn't find a way to remove my video feed short of highlighting some other person's feed, in the way you can tell Zoom to ignore non-video participants in gallery view. Past that they have a low-bandwidth mode, which so far as I can tell basically turns off video if your connection speeds drop.



For the \$10/month paid membership you unlock features like a musician's whiteboard replete with stamps for tablature, spans of the keyboard, chords laid across the same, and more, as well as access to their burgeoning music library. You both get and can name a personal meeting room (as opposed to having a new meeting ID every time you begin a meeting, or something that's strictly numeric), and they have a waiting room and password setup available for security.

The crown jewel of the whole endeavor is the E.A.R. Mode (short for Enhanced Audio Recognition), which takes advantage of a custom audio processing system to code and decode sound

information. Along with a more direct connection between participants than Zoom, the two combine to offer something approximating simultaneous play. It requires both parties (you and your student) be logged in with a computer or chromebook, and both of you must be wearing headphones.

Although the audio quality is certainly improved with E.A.R. mode, it makes explicit the 'meant for two' quality of the service at large, and I've yet to successfully play a duet with somebody. My efforts to do so have been between two people in the same city, with each of us on a hardwired ethernet connection, and working through audio interfaces. Considering that's more or less the gold standard for tech setups these days, I find it hard to believe that it's worked all that well for others, but there are plenty who claim it has so perhaps you'll have better luck than I.

Rock Out Loud is a great option for anyone who's working from a minimal equipment base, and it has plenty to offer to anyone at their wits' end with Zoom. I don't love Chrome, and if you find yourself using multiple services that interact with your computer's sound settings then you may run into trouble when you initially open RockOutLoud, including but not limited to oddball effects that make one end sound out of tune with the other by about half a step. That stuff aside, it's an evolving service built for us in particular and, if you need, the founder makes himself very available to help people get acquainted.

I hope this helps spark some optimism as we carry on with our novel path, and that you'll be sure to tune in next issue when we visit a brand new platform called *Musico*logy that should debut in March of this year, another exciting service being built by musicians and music teachers for the same.

Get a preview of *Musico*logy here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD6eJaFKdXwwltZR8ULQ9Qw/about>

Cheers!

*Ryan Worswick, WSM TA Studio Technology Chair*

## PEDAL POINTS

### Redefining Our Studios: Lessons Learned from 2020



**RoseMarie Tamburri**  
*IMTF Chair*

Welcome to February 2021! While there is hope on the horizon for an end to the restrictions of quarantine, we have not yet returned to “full normal.”

Some of us have returned to in-person lessons, at least in a modified fashion. Some of us continue to teach only online, and some of us teach both virtually and in our studios.

Regardless of how we are teaching, we are all faced with similar questions and challenges in running our businesses:

- What were the strengths we learned from online teaching? How can we incorporate those strengths in our in-person lessons?
- What added value can we bring to both the virtual and in-studio environments? Do our policies and tuition structures reflect that added value?
- Do we have students who have thrived with virtual learning who should continue with that format? Do we have students whose optimal learning environment is in person?

Let's discuss these challenges. I will draw on my own experiences as well as ideas shared by several colleagues.

As teachers, we use the best practices we have been taught to teach others. No matter the topic or instrument, the learning to acquire a new skill involves similar steps:

- Clear explanation
- Check for understanding
- Practice the skill
- Evaluate progress
- Repeat



The importance of these steps in the learning process was quickly highlighted when I had to learn several new technology skills. To learn Zoom, for example, I needed a clear explanation from someone with more expertise (often a student!); I needed to ask questions to clarify my understanding of the concept; I had to practice the skill and then move on to the next step. One of the biggest gains from having to switch to online teaching was underscoring these steps for myself and creating new ways to follow these steps in my teaching.

Interpersonal communication took on a different, yet vital, role in lessons. Keeping students focused on their music rather than the camera, planning when and how to interrupt the student's playing or how to engage the student in a “game” or activity away from the instrument; trying to stay upbeat yet acknowledge a student's less positive feelings—all of these skills required new ideas and strategies, and often a new vocabulary.

Dealing with these challenges creatively added value in a number of ways. Students are becoming more observant, willing to explore, more confident in their skills, and independent in their practice routine. (I, too, have become more comfortable and confident using technology.)

## TEACHER ENRICHMENT

From a business perspective, here is a sampling of “added value” ideas from colleagues as well as myself:

- **Hold “office” hours.** Schedule open Zoom sessions where students can drop in to practice or review a specific question about a piece.
- **Email or text links to online music sites** where students can learn music theory, review notation and symbols, practice interval recognition, play rhythm games, learn about composers, and do other musical enrichment activities.
- **Involve parents.** By necessity, many of my younger students need a parent or older sibling in the lesson to help read directions or guide instruction. While this adds a task to the parents’

to-do list, without exception all of my students’ parents have loved being engaged in their child’s learning process and can better support their practice. In fact, many parents who do not read music or play the piano have signed up for lessons themselves!

Being suddenly thrust into the world of virtual teaching posed unique challenges and caused a great deal of stress but also provided an opportunity to gain new pedagogical skills. While I look forward to the day when I can again teach safely in person, I am eager to incorporate new technologies, new strategies and new learning tools into my teaching plans.

—RoseMarie Tamburri,  
*Independent Music Teachers Forum Chair*



## ABOUT *THE CLARION*

### Submit Articles for *The Clarion*

Please send articles and accompanying graphics in JPEG, PNG, or PDF format to Samantha Yeung, WSM TA Communications Coordinator, via email: [c.samantha.yeung@gmail.com](mailto:c.samantha.yeung@gmail.com). Google Docs and Microsoft Word files are preferred.

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### Submission Deadlines

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

September	August 15
October/November	September 15
December/January	November 15
February/March	January 15
April/May	March 15
June/July	May 15

### Upcoming Deadlines

March 15, 2021  
May 15, 2021



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