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the President's Message

I hope you and your families are well as we negotiate this new reality surrounding COVID-19. Information is coming to us at a rapid rate as we navigate online teaching, and remote exams, festivals and recitals. We have risen to the challenge where possible and a good percentage of students are continuing their music studies online thanks to your efforts.

Your contribution to students' musical education at this time just adds to the comfort and joy that music can bring. It is a time to encourage our students to spread this joy by sharing the results of their hard work with friends and family over the phone, through zoom or perhaps by sending recordings. And don't forget that any playing your students do as outreach to others can be considered for their MRMTA Community Service Award! For example, if your student phones grandma and plays or sings a few pieces for her and has a short visit, they can earn 15 minutes toward this award. Our organizer, Stephen Haiko-Pena, is happy to answer any questions you may have about this wonderful new initiative. By next year, we would love to hand out many of these community service awards!

We may not be able to gather for our old-fashioned :) recitals this spring, but many of us will find other creative ways to celebrate the end of the teaching year. Maybe you'll have a

zoom recital, or a pre-recorded concert. Maybe you'll ask each of your students to plan and perform a live stream recital for their families and teacher, complete with a homemade program. Or maybe our students will enjoy their music for themselves just for the sake of music, without the pressure of a performance or competition but because they have time to sit with a beautiful song, or make music with a family member.

It's a hard time, but good things are happening. Pets are happy to get more play time with their families around all day, and instruments are probably happy to be getting more play time too! Thanks to all of our essential workers across the country and thanks to you for keeping the music going-not essential, but certainly a necessity!

Lastly, a great big thank you to Dina Pollock for making our Magazine look so good over the past 7 years. Dina, you've been wonderful to work with and we wish you the best in all of your endeavors. We now welcome Rachel Dueck as our new Take Note magazine editor! Rachel is also Events/Social Coordinator, the Western Young Artist Tour Coordinator and is organizing our photos on Smugmug. Great to have you on our team Rachel!

Take care everyone,
Leanne



Happy teachers from Cookies and Computers event



Hello from the Editor

Hello Everyone,

This is my last issue of Take Note as your editor. It has been a joy working with everyone these last 7 years. I will treasure friendships that I have gained through this position, I am truly thankful; Thank you to everyone that has made my job easier. So to everyone, stay safe and be well.

I would like to introduce the new editor Rachel Dueck.

Dina



Introducing Our New Editor

The Provincial Executive would like to introduce the new *Take Note* editor, MRMTA member, Rachel Dueck! Rachel kindly agreed to answer a few questions from Vice-president Evangeline Keeley.

Evangeline Keeley: Welcome, Rachel, as our new *Take Note* editor!

Rachel Dueck: Thank you. I am so excited about the new task!

EK: Tell us a little about yourself and your music education.

RD: I am originally from South Korea. I had taken piano lessons from age of 4 until age of 15 in Korea from various teachers. Almost 15 years later, while completing my master in Public Admin, I made a life changing decision – going back to school for music degree. Luckily, I met great music mentors. MRMTA members Carole Pollard and Barbara Cornish revived and refined my musical senses. Prof. Charles Horton guided me to complete a B.Mus in piano performance at U of M. I am still educating myself every day since learning is ongoing process and no time limits.

EK: It's great that you have had so much MRMTA influence in your music! What's your favourite thing about teaching?

RD: Teaching never gets boring – varieties of students, music, and pedagogical approaches.

EK: Is there a truly memorable concert you've attended?

RD: Back in Korea, probably in 2000, the first Mahler concert I've ever been to. It was long but well worth it.

EK: *Experiencing Mahler* is unique, I'd have to agree. What is the last book you read?

RD: *Expressive Movement: Posture and Action in Daily Life, Sports, and the Performing Arts* by Alexandra Pierce and Roger Pierce.

EK: That sounds interesting and certainly confirms that you're continuing to learn. Do you have a favourite family tradition?



RD: We take out Chinese food for dinner on Christmas eve - giving mom a break.

EK: And lastly, almost everyone has a secret talent – yours is...

RD: I enjoy doing acrylic paintings and taking pictures.

EK: Thanks Rachel! It's been great getting to know you better.





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Announcing the Annual General Meeting of the Manitoba Registered Music Teachers' Association!



In the hope that the current State of Emergency and all Public Health Orders will be lifted, we are planning for the Annual General Meeting of the MRMTA to take place on:

- Sunday, September 20th, 2020
- St. Mark's Lutheran Church, 600 Cambridge Street.
- 1:30 - 2:30 pm AGM
- 2:30 - 3:15 pm Coffee and visiting
- 3:30 - Concert by the Western Young Artist Winner **Sydney Clarke**, voice with collaborative pianist Megan Dufurat - details to follow in August Take Note magazine.

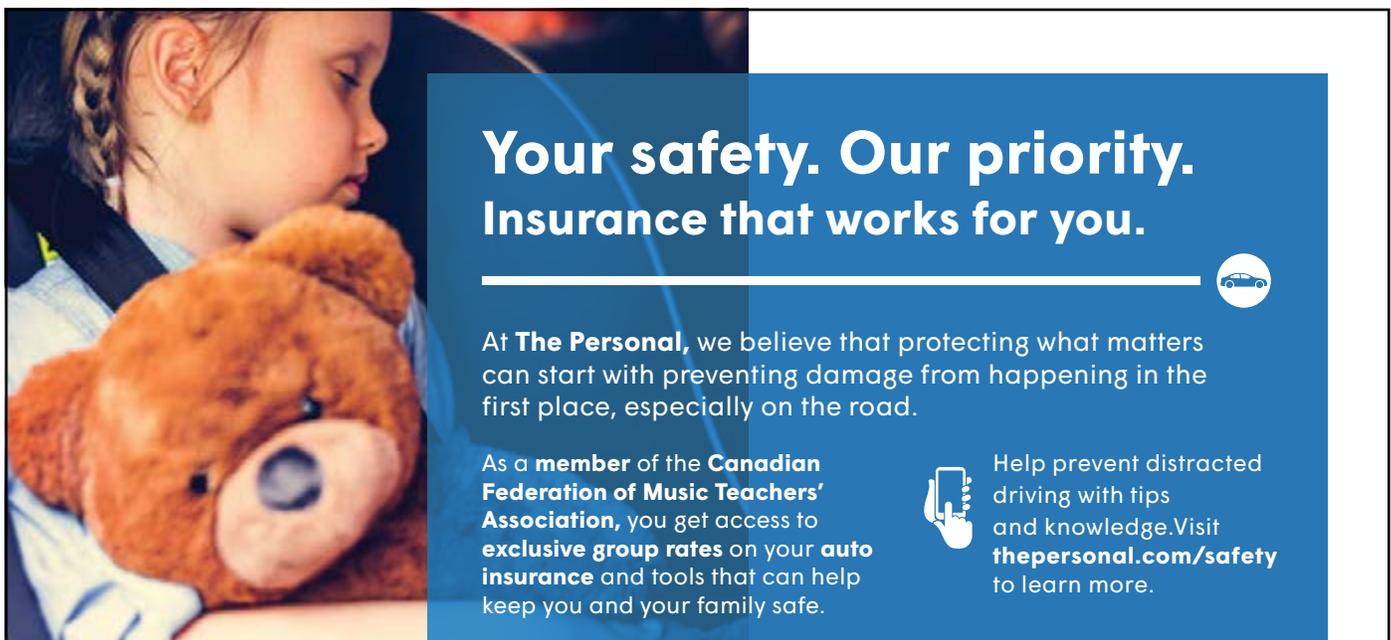
Nominees must be full MRMTA members:

- **Vice President** - This is a 2 year term, followed by 2 years as President, then 2 years as Past President. It's a big commitment, but very rewarding and there are a few perks, one of them getting to work closely with Evangeline Keeley and Leanne Hiebert as you learn this job!
- **Communications** - This is a 2 year term, we are hoping this role will take on more of a Public Relations/Marketing angle, helping to promote MRMTA in the community

If you have any questions regarding these positions, please contact: Leanne Hiebert, MRMTA President
president@mrmta.org

Call for Nominations

Nominations can be made in writing (or from the floor at the AGM on September 20th) with the nominee's consent for the following positions, each for a 2 year term.



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From the Registrar

Gina Wedel

We are happy to say that all membership forms are now online! Thank you to those who completed their membership renewal online. We had a few bugs to work out, but we think it looks great and takes us into the 21st century!

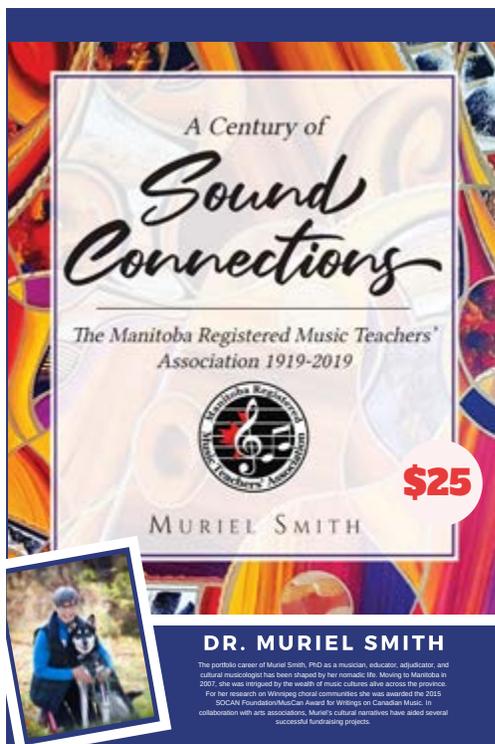
We currently have 150 MRMTA members and two new Auxiliary members! Our Early Bird Draw was done on February 14th and the winner was Agatha Warkentin. Congratulations! Enjoy your day at Thermëa when it reopens!

MEMBERSHIP INCENTIVE DRIVE! Until June 30, 2020, we will offer a half-price fee for new members or former members with a minimum 10-year membership lapse when registering online. Part of this great deal is to provide feedback to the executive regarding the online membership process. Spread the news to your students and any past members who might be interested in returning to the MRMTA. ✨

Announcing a Meeting for the Updating of the MRMTA Bylaws

An MRMTA Bylaws meeting will take place on Friday June 5th at 9:30am via Zoom technology. Details to follow in email

correspondence. We look forward to seeing you on Zoom for this important meeting as we update the MRMTA bylaws. ✨



A Century of Sound Connections: The Manitoba Registered Music Teachers' Association 1919 – 2019 can be purchased from McNally Robinson Booksellers

<https://www.mcnallyrobinson.com/home>

Price \$25 plus shipping.

Also available for sale at all MRMTA events.

DR. MURIEL SMITH

The prolific career of Muriel Smith, PhD as a musician, educator, adjudicator, and cultural musicologist has been shaped by her nomadic life. Moving to Manitoba in 2007, she was intrigued by the wealth of music cultures alive across the province. For her research on Winnipeg choral communities she was awarded the 2015 SOCAN Foundation/McCaig Award for Writings on Canadian Music. In collaboration with arts organizations, Muriel's cultural literacies have aided several successful fundraising projects.



20
21
SEASON

Alice (in wonderland)
OCT 2020

Nutcracker
DEC 2020

Swan Lake
MAR 2021

The Magic Flute
APR 2021

Spotlight
MAY 2021

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(L-R) CHENXIN LIU AS ODETTE AND YAYOI BAN AS ODILE IN SWAN LAKE; PHOTO BY DAVID COOPER



To teach online OR not to teach online?

by Linda Gould - BCRMTA Reprinted with permission

To teach online or not to teach online? That is no longer a question. The Covid virus has moved us into a whole new world and we, as music teachers, are fortunate to have options.

Since the release of the iPhone in 2007, we have taken up smartphones with enthusiasm¹. There are 28 million smartphone users in Canada representing 75% of the population². You will find most, if not all, of your students have smartphones and that's all you need to set up an online lesson.

Even before this health crisis, the effect of smartphones on society has been profound. There are positives like keeping in touch with family far away using Skype or Facebook. There are negatives, like children at school recess texting instead of playing and running around together. Here we are addressing a positive - teaching piano online.

I started to teach online eight years ago. I was nervous and full of questions and made a lot of mistakes but I wanted to give an option to students who lived in a different city. After teaching lessons on a cruise ship (that's a whole other story), several students wanted to continue taking lessons after we got back to our respective homes. My first online students were in the USA and Ireland.

Teaching online became so successful that I started asking students that lived in my city (and had smartphones) to stay at home if they were feeling under the weather but were still well enough for a lesson. Online teaching became a regular part of my studio. I still prefer the traditional way but in today's crazy world of social distancing, this is a fantastic option!

How it works

Each of you download a video conferencing app. This will be the program that allows you to see and hear each other during the lesson. You will download the same app on each phone so check which operating system your student uses. If both you and your student have an iPhone, you can use Facetime, which comes with all Apple phones. If one or both of you use Android phones you will need to download one of the other apps that work on both android and Apple operating systems. Facetime is specific to Apple.

Facetime, Skype and Zoom are the apps I recommend and use. Zoom was voted the best video conferencing software for 2020 by PC Magazine with Facetime and Skype close behind. They are easy to understand with minimal setup and Zoom has a free version that works perfectly for a piano lesson.

They also work on tablets and laptops, but I prefer to use a smartphone for online lessons. I can pick up my phone and hover it over my hand if I need to do a closeup to show hand position, fingering, or other details. I like its flexibility.

Place your smartphone on a music stand that can adjust up and down and put it at the end of your piano's keyboard so the student can see a profile of your face and hands. Make sure there is lots of light. Students can prop their phone up on a footstool with some books so you can see their face and hands.

It's that simple. No extra equipment like microphones or speakers is required.

The differences between teaching in-person and online

It was so exciting to see and hear my student when I taught my first online lesson! The sound quality was great and I could see their body language and hand position. My first frustration was that I couldn't touch the student's hands or arms or shoulders. There were various tactile things I would do to help students' awareness of unnecessary tension that I simply couldn't do online. Now if I see tension in the shoulders in an online lesson, I ask them to scrunch up their shoulders with me and then release with a big breath out. For wrist tension I demonstrate by holding my phone close to one hand and demonstrating a fluid wrist technique. They need to concentrate on my online demo and surprisingly, without any touch, the results often come faster!

Another frustration was a lag in the sound as information was transmitted through satellites and cables. I like to sing, count and play along with my students and I couldn't do it as easily. I would adjust to their lag and then they adjusted to mine and it all disintegrated from there. Now if I want to count while they play, I will record myself on a separate recording device, playing the passage and counting out loud. Then I play it back to them



To teach online OR not to teach online? - cont.



and have them play along with the recording. I have done this so often that I can hear past the lag and get a good sense of how well they are playing and if further ideas are needed. Even if you can't hear past the lag, it is still a good option for the student. The student can use a screen record option on their smartphone and they will have a good recording to practice with during the week. Every phone has a different way to access the screen recorder so it's best to Google 'screen recording for iPhone' or 'screen recording for Android'.

One of the biggest Pros to teaching online is peering into a students' music space and seeing what kind of piano they practice on;

- spring-weighted 61-note keyboard? (Yikes!, if they have been playing more than 6 months)
- out-of-tune old upright? (How can they develop a good ear?, and playing together will be abrasive.)
- In-tune acoustic upright? (Fabulous!)
- 88-note weighted digital (Great!).

You can also see where their piano is - a dark room in the basement or sunny room near the kitchen? The online lesson gives you a more intimate experience with their piano world at home. Be prepared to have your piano tuner/technician's phone number nearby :-)

Teaching Kids

Kids that are younger than 8 or 9 need a parent in the online lesson with them. Phone calls and notifications eat up lesson time and parents will minimize interruptions and take notes for weekly practice. Bonus, the parents become more involved in the practicing when they write the notes.

Teaching online is an opportunity to use the children's toys in their lesson.

- Find some Lego and put all red Lego on the C's and blue Lego on the F's.
- Take a bar of music and arrange the coloured blocks rhythmically. Use blue Lego for quarter notes, yellow for half notes, red is eighth notes and white is a whole note.

- Grab a favorite stuffy and practice stroking its soft fur. This helps to create a 'stroke-not-poke' feeling for the piano.
- Grab some pots and wooden spoons from the kitchen and bang out the rhythm of their music.

Using toys from home adds to their comfort level and they are likely to continue using them in their practice during the week.

Teaching Adults

Ask your adult or teen student to turn off notifications on their phone for the duration of the online lesson. Notifications = distractions that eat up lesson time.

Before the lesson ask them to email you photo's or pdf's of the music they are working on. I import these into ForScore on my iPad or you can print them out on your printer. Start with a clean copy instead of one that has been marked if possible. It is important you both have the same edition of the music they are working on so time isn't wasted explaining different fingering or editing.

ForScore allows you to annotate music with all sorts of colours and various pen widths. You can be creative with your marks and get their attention. For example – we have all had students with a musical passage that comes back every week with the same problem. I zoom in on that passage, take a screen shot and email it to the student with instructions that for the first 3 days of practice, this is the ONLY part of the music to work on. The concept of 'not always starting at the beginning and playing through to the end' starts to become a reality!





To teach online OR not to teach online? - cont.

How much should I charge?

Some teachers feel they should charge less for an online lesson. This is not the case. It may feel new to you and there may be some adjustments along the way, but you are giving a 'live' lesson that has the same value as one in your studio. Online lessons are not to be compared to online YouTube lessons where there is no interaction. You are very much there to give your sage advice and create a better piano player.

I know there are many teachers currently teaching some online lessons at a discount or at no charge during this health crisis. That is to be commended. If parents are having financial hardship, offering to continue lessons for less is a wonderful gift. These are exceptional times.

Bonus

There are a few bonuses when you teach online;

- You get less colds.
- Students taking a piano exam or competing in a festival can have short 15 minute 'check-in' lessons without having to travel to your studio. At exam time I charge for an extra 1-hour lesson and give four 15-minute online lessons. It's a short lesson to keep them focused and give practice tips.
- Parts of the online lesson can be videoed and sent using wettransfer.com. We Transfer is a free app that allows large files to be sent.

Summary

Online teaching is here to stay. Teaching online is simply an option when a traditional in-person piano lesson doesn't work. Traditional lessons will always be the norm and teaching online is part of teaching in the 21st century! I hope this article has given you a few tips and increased your confidence to teach online. Please email me³ if you have any questions or fabulous online teaching ideas you want to share.

Works Cited

- 1 - [en.wikipedia.org › wiki › History_of_iPhone](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_iPhone)
- 2 - Mobile usage in Canada - Statistics & Facts <https://www.statista.com/topics/3529/mobile-usage-in-canada/23.Oct 8, 2019>
- 3 - playpianochordstoday@gmail.com

April 26 Update

The internet is a-buzz with online teaching success's and issues. I would like to address three of the most common problems, sound quality, sore throats with back aches and why we are here.

Sound Quality – if you are using Zoom there are a few buttons in the advanced audio section you need to know about. Zoom is designed for voice meetings not music and by fixing these buttons you will get a much better sound. Here is a YouTube link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50NoWliYECA&feature=youtu.be> to watch so you can follow along and fix your Zoom account.

Sore throat and sore back –My #1 recommendation... use a set of headphones with comfortable earbuds that has a microphone built in. Either use wireless or get a cable extender for your headphone jack. You need to move around as though you were in a live lesson. Students don't need to see you in their screen 100% of the time. We teachers all close our eyes in lessons to listen more intently to a student, so you don't need to see them 100% of the time either! A microphone will allow you to speak at a lower volume and the headphones will allow you to hear more clearly.

Keep it simple and be there for your student emotionally as well as musically. These are strange times and "music hath charms to soothe a savage breast!"



When Linda Gould was a child her friends called her Linderace because she loved playing boogie woogie as well as classical piano. She's lived in the classical and jazz worlds for most of her life.

Linda is an award winning pianist, educator and RMT with an honours BMus from UVic and an ARCT in performance.

She is the author of a piano chording course, Play Piano Chords Today. When she isn't writing, she loves to teach and travel the world performing on two pianos with her husband, Dave Paulson or her sister Susan Gould.





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MRMTA Out and About!

by Leanne Hiebert

Remember the days of going out to concerts? Well, if you were at Virtuosi, the RWB, MOC, or MCO concerts and productions this past season you may have seen our ads in their programs. We are working hard to get our name known, and besides getting ads in these wonderful publications, we have been distributing posters throughout the city, and organizing interviews and performances at Classic 107FM. Chris Wolf, one of this station's announcers interviewed MRMTA executive members about MRMTA's scholarship competition and annual Musicthon. Two scholarship winners got a chance to perform on the radio and were interviewed. Also, we have had some beautiful leaflets printed to leave at various book stores, community clubs, and events, etc. to make sure that people hear about the Manitoba Registered Music Teachers' Association. Please make other teachers aware of us and our programs. We are stronger together!

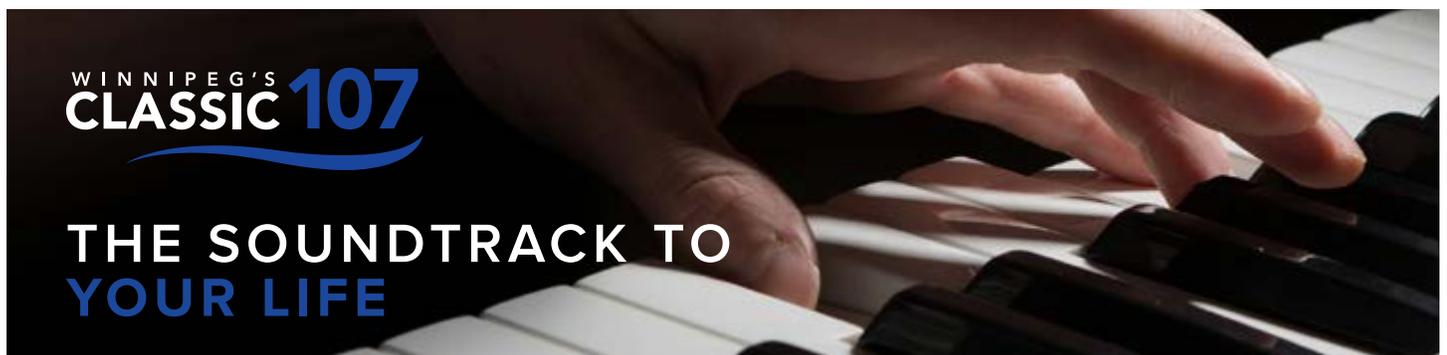


Christina and Evangeline at 107fm talking about Musicthon

Social gatherings of course are on hold for now, but the annual Cookie and Computers event did take place way back in December. It was a lovely gathering to not only get some work done for our members by helping them get their information online, but also to touch base and support one another in our work.



Interviewer Chris Wolf from Classic 107 with scholarship winners Kendra Palles and Vivian Zhao





Scholarships 2020

Submitted by Norinne Danzinger-Dueck

January 27th to 30th we had another wonderful week of scholarship performances. The following were the adjudicators for this event: **Tracey Regier Sawatzky** – Piano, **Rosemarie van der Hooft** – Voice, **Rennie Regehr** – Instrumental.

We were privileged to have many talented performers in the various levels making adjudicating and choosing a winner difficult. The winners of each category are as follows:

VOCAL:

Junior: Sophie Caron

(Valdine Anderson)

Runner Up: Charlton Turcotte

(Tiffany Wilson)

Intermediate: Alice McGregor

(Tracy Dahl)

Runner up: Kacy Tkachuk

(Tracy Dahl)

Senior: Isabel Friesen

(Valdine Anderson)

Runners up: Julia Davis

(Tracy Dahl)

Advanced: Sydney Clarke

(Tracy Dahl)

Runner Up: Pauline Gonzalez

(Tracy Dahl)

INSTRUMENTAL:

Junior: Vivian Zhao

(Lori Jede)

Runner up: Thomas Jeffrey

(Andrea Bell)

Intermediate: Grace Lu

(Lori Jede)

Runner up: Polina Bogomol

(Karin Erhardt)

Senior: none

PIANO:

Junior: Alexis Lee

(Jacqueline Ryz)

Runner up: Vienna Chang Lu

(Caron Whitlaw-Hiebert)

Intermediate: Victoria Lee

(Jacqueline Ryz)

Runner up: William Pang

(Jane Petroni)

Senior: Kendra Palles

(Jane Petroni)

Runner up: Anna-Lucia Mena Shevchenko

(Yaroslava Shevchenko)

Advanced: Ari Hooker

(Darryl Friesen)

Runner up: Callum Goulet-Kilgour

(David Moroz)

On February 2nd the Gala Concert featured all the scholarship winners. It was a wonderful evening indeed and I encourage all our members to attend next year's Gala. We are truly blessed to have an array of very talented students in Manitoba, something to be very proud of.

Thank you to the following volunteers for their time during the scholarship: Jane Petroni, Gwen Allison, Gail Singer, Myra Mitchell (friend of Gail's), Andrea Bell, Leanne Lee, Tetyana Rodionova (twice), Kyla McKee, Helen LaRue, Barbara Anhang, Linda De Pauw, Evangeline Keeley, Leanne Hiebert, Margot Harding, Norinne Danzinger-Dueck, Ally Loyns.

Looking forward to Scholarship 2021



PRESENTS



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2020 WESTERN

YOUNG ARTIST CONCERT TOUR



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Saturday, September 19th 3:00 pm
Contact: Muriel Smith • Email: muriel.smith58@gmail.com
Phone or text: 204.781.2307

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Sunday, September 20th 3:30 pm
Contact: Evangeline Keeley • Email: vicepresident@mrmta.org
Phone: 204.269.7549

BOISSEVAIN, MANITOBA

Sunday, September 27th 3:00 pm
Contact: Marla Winters • Email: mwinters_vln@yahoo.ca
Phone: 204.570.1936

REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

Friday, October 2nd 7:30 pm
Contact: Diana Woolrich • Email: woolrich.diana@gmail.com
Phone: 306.737.3278

ROSETOWN, SASKATCHEWAN

Saturday, October 3rd 7:00 pm
Contact: Claire Seibold • Email: rcseibold@sasktel.net
Phone: 306.831.8102

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

Sunday, October 4th 3:00 pm
Contact: Matthew Praksas • Email: matthew.praksas@outlook.com
Phone: 306.229.6275

PRINCE ALBERT, SASKATCHEWAN

Monday, October 5th 7:00 pm
Contact: Marilyn Lohrenz • Email: wmlz@shaw.ca
Phone: 306.763.7382

Saskatchewan
Registered
Music
Teachers'
Association



Young Artist Series



Western Tour



Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Association

PRESS RELEASE

Western Young Artist Concerts Announced

Manitoba and Saskatchewan Communities to host the Western Young Artist

The public is invited to attend an exciting concert by Soprano, Sydney Clarke along with a collaborative pianist, Megan Dufurat as part of her seven city Young Artist Tour throughout the prairie provinces.

The Concert venues, Concert dates and contact personnel are as follows:

Gimli: Saturday, September 19th, 3 pm at 17 Sunrise Drive, Gimli, MB. Contact Muriel Smith Muriel.smith58@gmail.com for ticket information.

Winnipeg: Sunday, September 20th, 3:30 pm at St. Mark Lutheran Church, 600 Cambridge street, Winnipeg, MB. Contact: Evangeline Keeley vicepresident@mrmmta.org for ticket information.

Boissevain: Sunday, September 27th, 3:00 pm at Whitewater Mennonite Church, 158 Aberdeen Street, Boissevain, MB. Contact: Marla Winters mwinters_vln@yahoo.ca for ticket information.

Regina: Friday, October 2nd, 7:30 pm at University of Regina Conservatory of the Performing arts room 210, 2155 College Ave. Contact: Diana Woolrich woolrich.diana@gmail.com for ticket information.

Rosetown: Saturday, October 3rd, 7:00pm at Rosetown United Church Upper Hall, 118 – 2nd Ave. East., Rosetown, SK. Contact: Claire Seibold rcseibold@sasktel.net for ticket information.

Saskatoon: Sunday, October 4th, 3:00 pm at Emmanuel Anglican Church, 609 Dufferin Street, Saskatoon, SK. Contact: Matthew Praksas matthew.praksas@outlook.com for ticket information.

Prince Albert: Monday, October 5th, 7 pm, Venue TBA. Contact: Marilyn Lohrenz wmlz@shaw.ca for ticket information.

The program will include artsongs by Mozart, Larsen, Morlock and Weinzwieg, The Pocketbook by Cipullo and Selections from Sieben Frühe Lieder by Berg.

Sydney Clarke is an active performer and teacher in Winnipeg's musical community. This past summer, Sydney performed the role of HELENA in Opera NUOVA's production of Britten's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Previous roles include DONNA ANNA in Manitoba Underground Opera's production of Mozart's Don Giovanni, and the role of FIRST LADY in Opera Nuova's production of Mozart's The Magic Flute. Sydney has performed as the soprano soloist for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's staged production of Carmina Burana. Most recently, Sydney has won first place in the Manitoba Registered Music Teacher's Association Scholarship Competition for Advanced Voice.



Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Association

PRESS RELEASE

Western Young Artist Concerts Announced

Manitoba and Saskatchewan Communities to host the Western

Sydney currently holds a Master of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of Manitoba, under the tutelage of Tracy Dahl (CM), and a Bachelor Degree of Music from the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music.

The Western Young Artist Competition and Tour are projects of the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Association and its provincial counterparts in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The competition is open to pianists, singers and instrumentalists of high calibre who are currently studying with a Registered Music Teacher. For more information on the Young Artist Series please visit www.cfmta.org

For more information on the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Association and its projects, please visit www.cfmta.org

Source: Rachel Dueck
Convenor, Western Young Artist Tour
Email: Piano.with.Rachel@gmail.com

The Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Association 302-550 Berkshire Drive, London, ON Canada N6J 3S2



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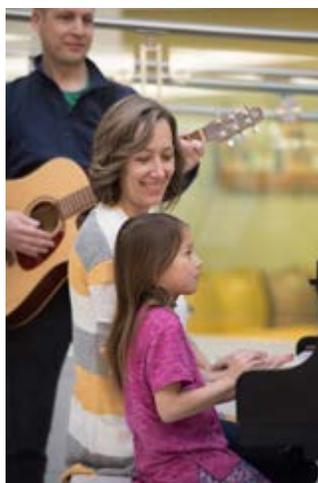


Musicthon 2020 Results

Submitted by Eleanore McLeod

What a great time we had at the Grant Park Shopping Centre, February 8 & 9! Students came from all over the city to perform their best music for everyone who stopped by our display. Members of the MRMTA showed enthusiastic support by volunteering and encouraging their students. Our goal was to raise funds for several specialized music programs for pre-school children in Winnipeg's inner city. We far surpassed last year's result of about \$4300 with this year's whopping \$6098.23, mostly from the sponsors students had enlisted. We thanked our top fundraisers with prizes donated by various businesses. The piano supplied by St. John's Music was so appreciated along with the support and publicity provided by Classic 107! We also owe a great debt of gratitude to Christina Hutton who worked tirelessly to expand the event by setting up online donation features as well as more information about the event on the website.

Next year's Musicthon event is scheduled February 6 - 7, 2021 at Kildonan Place Shopping Centre. We would like to encourage even more teachers to participate and would be happy to answer any questions you may have about this exciting event (email mrmtamusicthon@gmail.com). Your students get to share their musical achievements with a wide audience and also give to a very good cause!





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The Importance of Music at an Early Age

by Margot Harding

I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music, for the patterns in music and all the arts are the keys to learning.” – Plato

Many experts agree that the early intervention of specialty programs such as music with preschoolers, is important to improve the quality of life as they grow.

One study finds children receiving music benefit from improvements in their verbal memory skills. Tests showed these children achieved significantly higher scores in verbal memory tasks than those who did not. They also learned 20% more words as compared to the non-music ones and showed better verbal retention abilities.

The MB government found;

- 1) There is a shared sound connection between the learning mechanism for language and music at preschool age.
- 2) Well implemented programs at an early age, tend to benefit children from low-income or “at risk” families more than they benefit middle income families.
- 3) During a program, or for about 1 year thereafter, specialty programs produce significant gains in school achievement, are significantly less likely to need special education and are less likely to engage in anti-social activities (juvenile delinquency).
- 4) Music and other specialty programs are all about breaking the cycle of poverty and its negative effects.

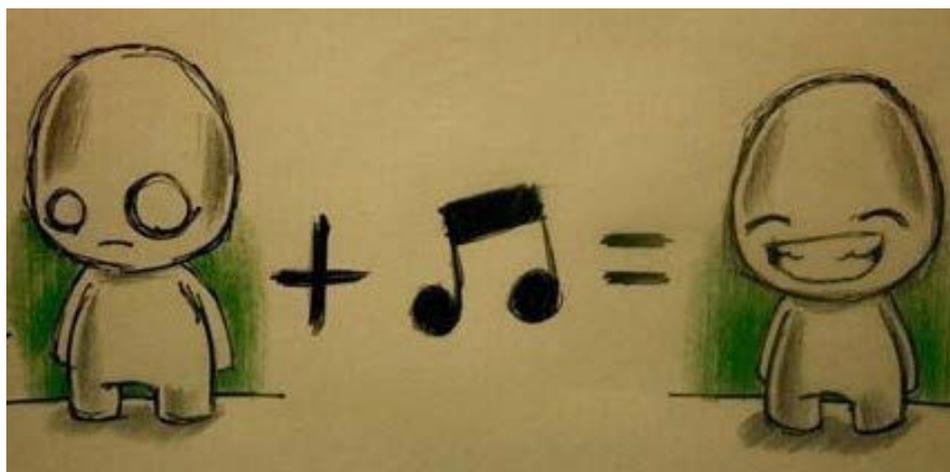
The above are all the “hidden” effects of music.

- The obvious ones are children who don’t speak or participate in activities, doing both in music class.
- Children coming out of their shell and showing their personalities and using their imaginations.
- The children’s joy and excitement at seeing their music teacher arrive at the daycare.

I see all of these results every time I teach a music class and learning is always better and longer lasting when one enjoys the process.

For people who don’t believe the effects of music, simply look at nursing homes where seniors have trouble remembering their children’s name but remember the words and melodies to long ago learned songs. The power of music is undeniable.

Today, many schools have cut music from their classrooms due to budget cuts and it’s the children who miss out. A wonderful and important head start is music in day cares when children are most open and receptive to learning. To go on to being creative and productive adults no matter how they began, is the greatest gift we can give them!



Winners of Paper Scholarship Awards 2020

Submitted by Eleanor Lwiwski

There was a total of 20 applicants for 7 awards this year. It was a bit disappointing that there were no applicants for the **Harry Reginald Rowlin Memorial String Award**, and the new **Marian Nelson Pedagogy Award**.

These are sizable awards. Hopefully there will be applicants in the coming years.

Congratulations to the following students and their teachers.

Grace Rich-Bastin Keyboard Award

Angela Ng

Student of David Moroz

Madeleine Gauvin Scholarship

Peter Klassen

Student of Annette Hay

Nita Eamer Memorial Scholarship Award

Alice Nie

Student of Jane Petroni

Judith Ritchie Memorial Music Scholarship

Dariyan Dubik

Student of Norinne Danzinger-Dueck

Dorothy Lothar Scholarship

Tirian Plett

Student of Leanne Regehr Lee

Grave Rich-Bastin Memorial Award

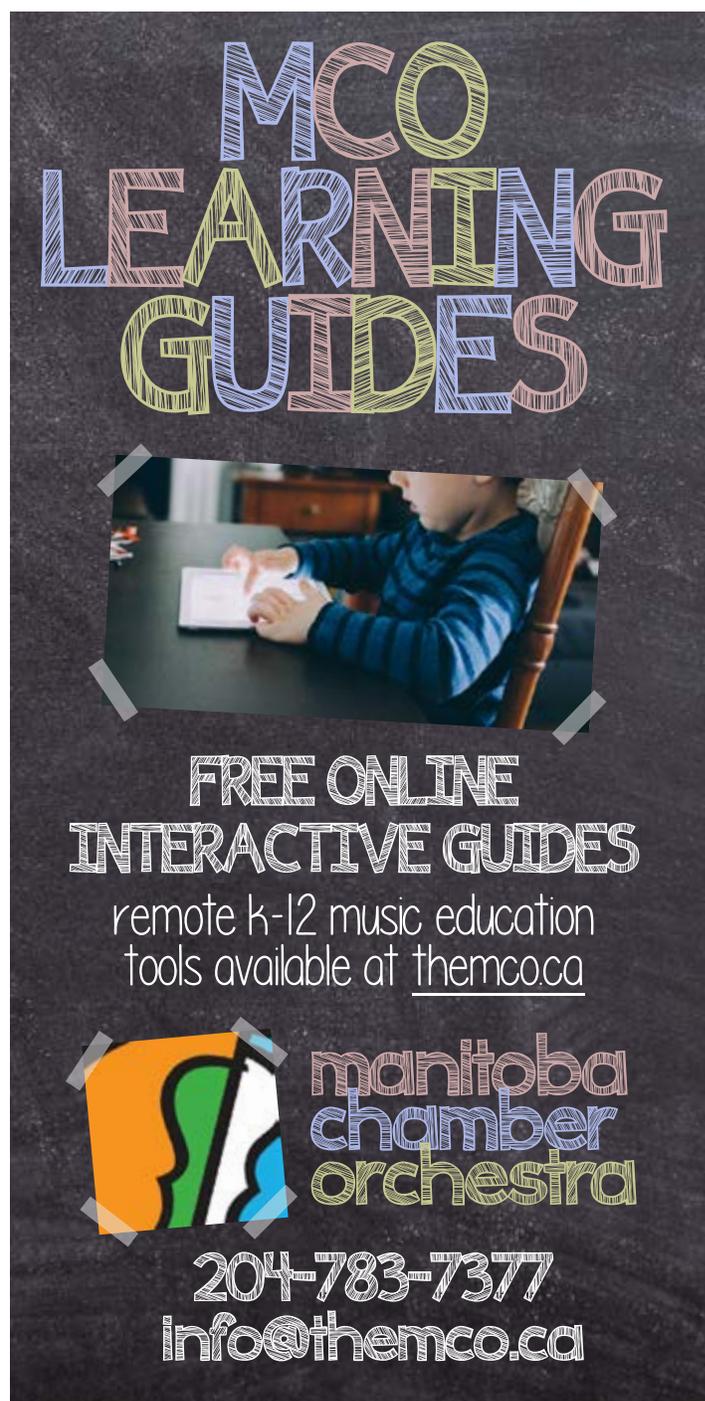
Corinne Plett

Student of Karin Erhardt

Edith Motley Vocal Award

Kathleen Murphy

Student of Mel Braun



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MRMTA Masterclasses at U of M

It was a cold Sunday afternoon, on January 19th, but it was warm inside the walls of the Faculty of Music, as we celebrated our annual event “MRMTA Masterclasses at U of M”. Four masterclasses were taking place simultaneously in different rooms: piano, voice, cello and flute, and we all gathered together at the end to share our experience, listen to performances, and eat pizza!

The piano masterclass was conducted by David Moroz. Judy Kehler Siebert, who is usually presenting the masterclass with David, was not feeling well, so David took charge of the entire class, and he did it with brio. Four students were playing: Elijah Padilla, student of Nadia Orlov, Anthony Ngo, student of Virginia Heinrichs, Dexter Furber, student of Lori Jede, and Chuhang Sun, student of Laura Liu. We heard a nice variety of composers, as they played Rachmaninoff, Chopin, Beethoven and Scarlatti.

David emphasized the importance of choosing the “big moment” in the piece, the climax, called “the point” in Rachmaninoff pieces, and to plan how to approach this moment. He also insisted on the balance between right and left hand, especially in Chopin and Rachmaninoff, giving 3 dimensions to the music: bass note, other activity in the left, and melody in the right. Many other details were discussed: choice of tempo, length of staccatos (an eighth note and a quarter note played staccato don’t have the same length, the second one being twice longer than the first one), style, pedal, dynamics...and, of course, David always had some details about the composer’s life, to enhance his explanation of the music.

During this time, the vocal masterclass was facilitated by U of M Faculty members Dr. Laura Loewen and Professor Mel Braun. The four students, Stephan Paches, Yaroslav Paches and Alexander Paches, studying with Miroslava Paches, as well as Diana Sanders, studying with Linda DePauw, were asked to sing their three selections. Following that, Dr. Loewen and Prof. Braun chose which repertoire to work on. The pieces they chose included songs in English, German, Italian and French. Students were encouraged to remember the use of dental consonants in Italian and to work on placing consonants before the beat, helping to maintain the impetus in the music. It was pointed out that when being expressive, it was important to “choose the moment”.

Ah...same point mentioned in the piano class! Students were reminded to practice expressing the text in their own words and to think in terms of long phrases that complete a thought. Many useful ways of achieving these ideas were suggested: stepping on the beat while placing consonants before, letting the “air come to you” when breathing, and using the fingers to help release the tension in the jaw. Collaboration with the piano was also examined with students being reminded to keep the phrases moving and to allow the piano to “feed” them as they shaped the phrase.

In a different room, another masterclass “chock-full” of new ideas was going on for flute players, conducted by Layla Roberts. Layla suggested many tips regarding posture, such as “lockdown your abs to free up tension in your face”, “think that you break the belt around your waist for ab support”, “let your head rest comfortably on your spine, if you try to hold it, tension results (bobble-head balance)”, and “free up muscles in your neck to free up your sound”. Then, she prepared the mind: “grant yourself permission to play the wrong notes, throw your fear out the window and tell the story you want to tell. There is nothing you can’t play, go to the edge without fearing what might happen.” In that spirit, our four students, Jane Tully, Lisa Anderson, Holly Penner and Shelley Shen, all studying with Lori Jede, played beautifully Lelouch, Schubert, Telemann and Chaminade. Layla also talked about the 3 “air” ingredients to mix in different ways to get unique results: amount, speed and direction. “Imagine pulling the air out of your mouth like a ribbon...which direction do you need to pull it for each phrase? For drama, use vibrato, dynamics and movement of the line, like a ribbon dance.” Our participants were very happy because it was the first time that we had a flute class in our annual event!

Finally, the cello masterclass was taking place in Dr. Minna Chung’s office: Minna offered kindly to do it in her room since we had only one participant and this was a more intimate and comfortable space for one student. Leni Reppchen, student of Andrea Bell, played *I Dropped my Ice Cream Cone* by Edward Laut. Evangeline Keeley, who was the host of this class, replacing Annette Hay at the last minute, wrote:





"This selection, in spite of its cute name, seemed pretty challenging to a non-string player like me. Minna's thoughtful approach and instruction was very appreciated."

And we want to thank sincerely Minna for taking the time to be there for only one student. We hope to have more participants in this class next year, and we dream to add one more class: a violin masterclass!

Thank you to the professors of the Faculty of Music who gave generously of their time to our students and made this day a

very special moment for them! It was an inspiring learning experience for all, and to see such a significant improvement in the student's performances at the end was simply amazing!

Michele Leclerc - MRMTA Members Programming Coordinator

With the collaboration of Linda DePauw, Lori Jede and Evangeline Keeley





Why Music In Our Schools Matters

Submitted by Evangeline Keeley

Early in January on a cold, clear Saturday morning I headed out to Altona to meet with members of the Southern Manitoba Branch of MRMTA. As I drove south on Hwy. 75 I enjoyed seeing the sun come up on my left, and the moon all beautiful and still in the sky on my right. The purpose of the journey was two-fold; first – I was interested in meeting and getting to know branch members, and second – I was attending their meeting to determine how the MRMTA provincial executive might support them in their concerns regarding music in Manitoba schools.

During the course of the morning’s conversation I realized how important music-making was and continues to be in the communities represented by those attending. I also began to understand the struggle some classroom music teachers were facing as a result of a change in curriculum focus and/or lack of support from school administration. There is also the persistent trend of reducing funding to music programs in public schools right across the province which is another cause for concern.

The morning closed with a commitment from branch president, Wes Hamm, and me as provincial vice-president to show support to public school music teachers by putting together a letter voicing the above concerns. Such a letter would then be sent to provincial government officials and other administrative bodies.

Wes and myself, with additional input from some executive members, put together a letter that was emailed and mailed (yes, with a stamp!) in mid-February to the following:

- MB Minister of Education - Kelvin Goertzen,
- MB Minister of Health, Seniors, and Active Living - Cameron Friesen (at his request),
- MLA Ian Wishart (with a request to forward the letter to the education review committee),
- President of the Manitoba School Boards Association - Alan Campbell,
- Executive Director, Manitoba School Boards Association – Josh Watt.

The quotes below give a sense of the letter’s content.

“... classroom music teachers continue to demonstrate a high level of competence and commitment. However, their efforts are sometimes compromised by administrative decisions. This is particularly frustrating in communities – both urban and rural – where there is a legacy of music making, a strong history of access to music opportunities, and a high quality of music performance.”

“Clearly, researchers have connected the dots for us; participation in music uniquely increases long-term cognitive function in almost every area of perception and learning, and in every discipline.”

“Students with the social advantages that are nurtured in [music] ensembles are at their best when they attend their other classes.”

“Manitoba students are cheated out of a valuable learning tool and sense of well being when decisions are made at any level that relegate music to a peripheral area of study.”





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Southern Manitoba Branch A Tribute to Justina Wiebe

Justina Wiebe was born August 5th, 1920. On February 16, 2020, members of the Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church hosted friends, family, colleagues and students in an early celebration of her 100th birthday. The Sunday morning included tributes, congregational and choral singing, and pictures and sound tracks of Justina's work. Those in attendance were also challenged to cherish the experience and wisdom of older members of our families and community, and to honour the many ways in which they have shown their commitment to us.

Justina Wiebe grew up on a farm in the village of Krongart, northeast of Winkler. Her early memories of music in the family are varied. Justina remembers her father singing happy tunes in the barn while cranking the cream separator in time. And while the family was not particularly committed to music, Justina's parents recognized and supported her gift from an early age. So, with the help of a neighbour, she learned to play a seven-string guitar which her parents had ordered from Germany. Justina sang and played at many school and church functions.

Justina's musical goals took a fortuitous leap when she tagged along with her cousin, Elizabeth, to voice lessons in Winnipeg. Elizabeth's teacher, Mrs. Nina Dempsey, accepted Justina as her student. Although some community members thought that the weekly drive to Winnipeg on poor roads was an extravagance, Justina's parents were ever supportive. Their commitment was well worth the gift that Justina has shared with her community. In May of 1946, Justina graduated from the University of Manitoba with the title of "Associate in Music, Manitoba" as a singing teacher.

In 1948, Justina became a member of the Manitoba Registered Music Teachers' Association. She was later instrumental in organizing the first rural branch of the MRMTA. Justina was also very active in the local music festival, serving as voice and choral convenor as early as 1954, and as late as 1980.

Beginning at age 17, Justina captured many awards and accolades through participation in both local and Winnipeg Music Festivals. She was happy to sing solos for various events: weddings, Christmas programs, and oratorios. Justina was also committed to sharing her gift with her community by leading choirs. She led the senior choir in her church and the high school girls' choir. Remarkably, she committed twenty-five years of conducting her church girls' choir.



*Receiving Girls' Choir trophy
from Jake Redekop*



*Justina, age 17, with
trophy won for singing*



Justina's First Girls Choir

With such a legacy, Justina has impacted many. Invariably, her voice students and choir members convey the same message about their beloved teacher and mentor: Justina demanded excellence, and she was always encouraging. Clearly, the effort she put into her relationship with students is exemplary. Several students who have gone on to become professional musicians are a tribute to Justina's skill. However, the multitude of local and regional amateur singers who have experienced great joy through music are equally indebted to Justina. When one considers the audiences who have also been blessed by Justina's singing and conducting, it is no exaggeration to say that her commitment to music and community has had a significant and positive impact on thousands.



Teaching during COVID-19

Submitted by Jacqueline Ryz



My husband chuckles as he sees the look on my face when a beginner piano student submits his WeChat video of his Leila Fletcher piece and doubles the time half way through. That day I receive 38 lesson videos and this little boy, who is rather casual at the best of times, is not making my day any easier... I ask him to resubmit the video, being sure to give the half notes two full beats and ask him to take more ownership for his work.

Who knew six months ago that we would be in such an unusual situation and teaching remotely. I am trying especially now more than ever to praise good work and discipline, while at the same time, letting a couple of students know that their weekly practise could have been more focused. It is one constant they have right now, and this is a crucial point to remember. I make sure when I connect with each student that I ask them how they are doing, and if everyone in their family is healthy. For the most part, the vast majority of my students have taken on this distance piano lesson challenge in great stride, and are practising and learning new repertoire regularly.

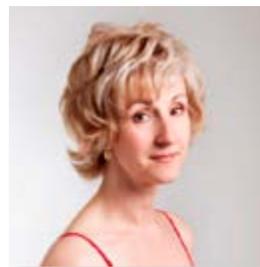
It hasn't been that difficult to "correct" basic elements in the students' playing, but what has been especially challenging is trying to guide the senior students remotely, as there is not much nuance or colour that can be heard online. With 4 playing full ARCT programmes, this is a challenge. One of them is now learning the third movement of Beethoven's Waldstein sonata, and I now need to help him with the devilishly difficult trill passages, which are not notated with great precision. So I re-practise all those parts carefully, diligently referencing my score from when I performed it years ago, and then send him videos of me playing these passages in "slow motion" (with the

camera close up on my fingers), so that he can learn it with some sort of accuracy. I then have him send me back the videos of his trill practise to ensure that he understands what to do. It works, but is time consuming.

On Easter Sunday I watch Andrea Bocelli on his YouTube channel give a short live performance from Milan's famous Cathedral. The performance is hauntingly eerie, with no applause and complete silence after each piece in the completely empty and vast church. I feel the implied isolation and it resonates with me.

What also really resonates with me is that I realize that Bocelli is really putting himself out there. He gave this impromptu performance out of his own volition not to win any accolades, but so that people around the world could have some type of motivational inspiration during this trying time. He did what he knew best how to do, in difficult circumstances, in order to make that day just a little bit brighter for others who tuned in.

Let's all take our cue from Bocelli, and put ourselves out there as teachers, in the best way we can under the circumstances. That's about all we can do right now.



Jacqueline Ryz is a longtime MRMTA member who has taught piano for over 30 years. She recently was awarded the RCM "Teacher of Distinction Award" for 2019.



We are so glad to see so many (over 50!) members on our MRMTA Facebook group page. Let's meet there to discuss your experiences with teaching online.

See you there!

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