



April 2018 Newsletter

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Next Meeting

Tuesday, April 10, 2018

Jordan Kitt's Music in Rockville

11726 Parklawn Dr., Rockville, MD

9:30 Networking

10:00 Information/Communication

10:30 Program by Alan Fraser

Arm Weight Technique, the Hand's Arch Structure & the Anti-Gravity Function: Myth and Reality

With rare exceptions, arm weight technique has been taught ubiquitously through most of the twentieth century. This lecture explores the logic behind the technique, its advantages, and its potential pitfalls. Discussing the hand's structure and function from a Feldenkrais perspective, Canadian pianist Alan Fraser will offer practical remedies for some of the most debilitating side effects of this well-intentioned technique..

Alan Fraser has developed a new approach to piano technique based on the Feldenkrais Method. Fraser's books on technique delve into the rich field of exploration that appears when we activate the hand instead of relaxing or tensing it. Likening the hand to a mini-body (the finger as a leg, the hand as pelvis, the arm as torso) sheds new light on its structure and function, and builds on our traditional

understanding of weight technique by introducing the anti-gravity function inherent in all standing, walking, running and jumping. Some of the musical results: a bigger, more colorful sound, greater dexterity, freedom from pain and injury, and, perhaps most important, a deeper, more meaningful musical communication.



Fraser teaches at the University of Novi Sad (Serbia) and runs the Alan Fraser Piano Institute in various European and North American cities. His teaching videos can be found at www.pianotechnique.org and books at www.alanfraserinstitute.com/natural-artistic-piano.php.

President's Page
Alice Ma

Attending the 2018 MTNA Conference has been a blast!! Thanks to the support from MCMTA!

Photos from the 2018 MTNA Conference will appear in the May newsletter.

Highlights from 2018 MTNA Conference – The Conference was filled with a full schedule every day, including a Plenary Session with everyone together, and workshops throughout the day, with five to six workshops to choose from in each time slot. In parallel with the workshops, there were Student Competitions. Therefore, at the end of each day after all workshops finished, teachers could still attend part of the winners' concert to watch talented young players and singers perform. In addition, there were also exhibitions, showcases, and poster sessions that provided much valuable information.

The opening keynote speaker was Dr. Eckart Altenmüller, who is both a medical doctor and a professional musician. His presentation included neurological and psychological factors of musicians. He emphasized the importance of being a healthy musician preventing overuse and curing injuries. His information is very helpful for many teachers. Another great Plenary Session was the Advanced Piano Master Class by Pavlina Dokovska, a first-prize winner of many international piano

competitions. Her in-depth explanation and demonstration was very clear and thorough!

All the workshops I attended were very well presented. There were two workshops which I found extremely interesting which I like to share with you. The first workshop was presented by four piano teachers who first met one another in 2013. Since then, they have visited each other's studios together, and summarized what works really well; they shared these results with the Conference attendees. The other workshop explained how a detailed examination of the evolution of the piano can inflect modern performance of works by historical composers. For example, some pieces cannot be played fast because of the limitation of the instrument at that period. It was an eye-opening workshop!

As your president, I also attended the meetings for East Division and local associations, which are mostly attended by state and local presidents or representatives. Through the sharing, discussion, and feedback, I found answers for some issues and was inspired by some great ideas that I would like to share with you in the future.

For your benefit, I would like to inform you that MTNA has posted handouts for some workshops ONLINE. You are welcome to go to MTNA website and visit the Conference page and click on the workshops which might interest you.

New Column: Sharing by NCTM members – Please make sure you check out the new column in this newsletter, including thoughts by NCTM members on how NCTM benefits their teaching.

Post Music News/Events on Facebook Page –Do you know that you

can also share your music news/events on our Facebook page in addition to seeing updated news from MCMTA? Interesting music-related articles are also welcome. Please make sure you LIKE the 'Montgomery County Music Teachers Association' Facebook page.

Grants for High School

Graduating Seniors– How exciting to announce that high school graduating seniors with a declared music MINOR can also apply for the grants starting this year! Applications must be postmarked by April 15, 2018. Please go to the MCMTA website for details.

Grants for Continuing

Education for Teachers – Summer will be here in around two months. It's not too early to plan for your enrichment opportunities, such as classes, workshops, and even learning with a local teacher for teaching methods. This year, MCMTA will provide \$500 each for up to eight member teachers. Please go to the MCMTA website for details.

Alice Ma
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Upcoming Events

- **MCMTA Elementary “Spring Fling” Recital** (Olga Soukhoveeva)
April 7, 2018
Deadline past
Jordan Kitt’s Music, Rockville
- **MCMTA Swarthout Hayes Piano Competition** (Junko Takahashi)
April 8, 2018
Deadline past
PianoCraft, Gaithersburg
- **MSMTA Strings Plus** (Kelly Hsu)
April 8, 2018
Deadline past
Landon School, Bethesda
- **MCMTA Intermediate/Advanced Recital** (Olga Soukhoveeva; Elena Eliseeva)
April 14/15, 2018
Deadline past
Jordan Kitt’s Music, Rockville
- **MSMTA E. R. Davis Piano Competition** (Junko Takahashi; Hyun Park)
April 15, 2018
Deadline past
Washington Adventist University
- **MCMTA Judged Recital** (Miri Frenkel-Yacubovich)
April 22, 2018
Deadline past
Jordan Kitt’s Music, Rockville
- **MCMTA Senior Recognition Awards Day** (Eugenia Posey-Marcos)
April 28, 2018
Deadline past
Strathmore Mansion
- **MCMTA Adult Recital** (Linda Benoit)
April 28, 2018
Deadline April 8, 2018
Strathmore Mansion
- **MSMTA Spring Festival: Piano Solo** (Carol Wolfe-Ralph; John Ralph)
May 5, 2018
Deadline past
Univ. of Maryland, College Park
- **MSMTA Weaver Competition (Strings)** (Mia Choi)
May 12, 2018
Deadline April 21, 2018
Jordan Kitt’s Music, Rockville
- **MSMTA Solo String Festival** (Brian Liu; Preston Hawes)
April 15, 2018
Deadline April 2, 2018
Washington Adventist University
- **MSMTA Sonata Competition** (Douglas Guiles)
MSMTA Gottlieb Competition (Douglas Guiles)
May 20, 2018
Deadline past
Univ. of Maryland, Baltimore County

April 15, 2018 is the deadline to apply for two \$1,000 Scholarships available primarily for graduating high school seniors who have been accepted into college music departments (major or minor); freshmen already in college who formerly studied with an MCMTA member can also apply. Contact Sharon Carr with questions. Application forms are in the Student Activities Packet as well as in the March newsletter.

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At the state level, the deadline to apply for MSMTA Scholarship for High School Graduating Seniors with a Declared Music Major in College is **April 30, 2018**. Contact Junko Takahashi.

June 30, 2018, is the deadline to apply for Weissenfluh grants. These need-based grants are intended “To assist children who are musically inclined and wish to study and learn to play but who otherwise would not be able to do so.”) Contact Ingrid Mongini. Application forms are in the Student Activities Packet.

June 1, 2018, is the deadline to apply for MCMTA Grants for Continuing Education for Teachers. Eight grants of \$500 each are available for continuing study summer courses, participation in workshops, teacher training by a mentor, or festivals. Contact Sharon Carr.

At the state level, the deadline to apply for MSMTA Grants for Continuing Education for Teachers is **April 30, 2018**. Contact Junko Takahashi.

At the state level, the deadline to apply for MSMTA Scholarship for High School Graduating Seniors with a Declared Music Major in College is **April 30, 2018**. Contact Junko Takahashi.

More Reminders for Teachers

The **Friday Morning Music Club Competition for High School Pianists** will take place on April 14, 2018, at National Presbyterian Church, 4101 Nebraska Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20016. For more information, contact Chenli Tzeng, highschoolpiano@fmmc.org.

The 2018 **International Young Artist Piano Competition** begins with regional rounds April 22 and 29, 2018 (deadline March 15, 2018). Final rounds take place June 21–23, 2018, at Catholic University of America. For information and applications, contact Li-Ly Chang at musicalartsinternational@yahoo.com, or go to www.musicalartsinternational.org/IYAPC.

The 2018 **Rockville Competition for Solo Piano and Solo Strings** will be held Sunday, May 1, at Montgomery College, Music Building, Rockville, MD. For information and applications, see: www.rockvillecompetition.com. All entries should be postmarked by April 1, 2016. For assistance, contact Dr. Deborah Brown at 301-838-5594 or email: rockvillecompetition@gmail.com.

The **New Brass Quintet** presents a free brass and organ recital on April 22, 3 pm, at Calvary Lutheran Church, 9545 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring, MD. The program includes compositions and arrangements by members of the Composer’s Society of Montgomery County.

TIPS for TEACHERS

A New Monthly Column by Carol Brody and Bonnie Kellert

Do You Have Summer Plans for Your Students?

It's not too early to start thinking about plans for your students during the summer months!

Of course, if your students are in town, be sure to encourage them to continue lessons. This ensures the best results in their music education. If they do not have lessons to prepare for they will not feel compelled to practice! Some students will say, "Why practice if I don't have to play for my teacher? Why practice if I don't have an event to prepare for? Why do I have to practice the same ol' stuff?" For those not self-motivated, a large gap in lessons can be disadvantageous. Consistency in practicing AND practicing on a regular basis AND having goals - All of these factors can impress upon our students (and parents!) the necessity for continuing lessons /and or practicing during the summer break. After all, that's why the schools give homework packets for the summer! Use it or lose it! (Waiting until the last days of vacation is not to anyone's advantage!)

Now, how to deal with kids who attend camp and/or go on family vacation, AND for teachers who just feel they need a break from it all. This can be more challenging. Why not set up goals that can be attained without a piano? Well, they can take Xerox copies of their music (allowed for teaching purposes when just 1/10 of the entire music). While there are breaks in their schedule at a camp—they all have "rest periods" —your student can "finger play" pieces on a table or ask to play on the piano in the "all purpose room" or "rec" room. This will keep the patterns in their finger memory as well as reinforce the patterns. They can tap the rhythms in their music to maintain this important aspect of the music. If traveling by car, silent practice ideas (in their lap or on their legs, for example) work really well.

If students have a piano during the summer months, but don't receive instruction from you, this is the perfect time to assign them new piece(s) to see how they can learn on their own. The repertoire can be a mixture of easy to challenging. Hopefully, they have learned how to practice effectively during the school year. You can also assign them a lot of sight reading materials so that they can improve that aspect of their music. Also, you can stress technical challenges: lots of scale work (building speed, for example, or evenness), working on finger strength, or finger independence, arpeggio work...this type of practicing does not entail a lot of time for the younger student, so it is ideal for someone who isn't inspired to practice on their own. Be sure to set specific goals and encourage them to keep a log. One parent of mine insisted on a log for her Middle School child. It was amazing how much she accomplished that summer!

And, wouldn't be great if we could encourage all of our students to sing or hum their pieces? This is such an important skill that helps with breathing and shaping the phrases and reinforces aural memory. My teacher, Leon Fleisher has said on many occasions: "If you can sing it, you can play it!" If they just look at the music and sing the parts—especially the

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melodic lines—it will enhance their understanding of shaping lines and reinforce the aural memory. They can sing the melody and silently finger play the accompaniment, or sing the melody and play the accompaniment on the piano.

Ideally, it would be great if kids attended a music camp. Many have extra-curricular (non-music) activities that are fun and encourage camaraderie. Camps in this area can be searched online. If parents don't like this idea, perhaps you'd consider organizing one for your students? It can be a one-week camp, meeting each day for, say, 3-5 hours. Or you could work with other teachers to organize something. The camp activities could include learning new music, how to practice, using theory to help with learning, analyzing and memorizing, and, lastly, just listening to music. This last one opens SO many doors to students! Not just piano music! Vocal music shows kids how breathing and a beautiful tone are so important. Orchestral music lets them hear colors that they can try to imitate on the piano. You could have "master classes" where you give lessons in a group setting. You can show videos of great performers (via YouTube if you don't have DVD's.). You can play games of all kinds with them which can be purchased online or at music stores. Trivial Pursuit, puzzles, board games, and so on, have a learning curve and can be fun and entertaining at the same time. All those catalogues we receive in the mail have advertisements for games and auxiliary activities.

I hope some of these ideas inspire you to try out new approaches during the summer months.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions or suggestions for this column.

I wish you continued success with your teaching! Enjoy your students!

Bonnie Kellert
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NCTM: Why Certify? My Story

I received NCTM certification sometime in the 1980's, so long ago that I no longer remember exactly which year. The reasoning behind certification appeals to me. It makes sense that when a customer chooses a professional in a field outside their own, it helps to know that the individual has been qualified to certain standards by their boards and associations. Think of professionals certified in medicine, dentistry, physical therapy, accounting, financial investment, and law. Not only has the professional met high criteria for study and experience, these credentials include continuing study in future years to update one's training.

Since my marriage, I've relocated repeatedly because of my husband's job. As a result, I've had to build my studio from scratch in four different states: Florida, Virginia, Louisiana, and Maryland. But my national NCTM certification always came with me.

In my experience, the new kid in town starts at the bottom of the ladder, teaching beginners or the students that nobody else wants. As I tried to reboot in each location, one of my first steps was to telephone NCTM teachers in my new area. These teachers always welcomed my questions and were happy to share tips from their wealth of experience. The insights I got from those conversations were accurate and valuable. NCTM teachers helped to "break the ice" when I was a newcomer in a community with no students or classroom teaching lined up. The friendships I made with these colleagues lasted for years, even after I was living elsewhere. They were excellent teachers, whose names always came to mind first when people asked me about a recommendation for a piano studio.

My certification helped when I applied for adjunct teaching at local colleges. "NCTM" meant that I had continued fine-tuning my training long after degrees were completed. It meant that I remained curious and wanted to incorporate recent developments in music pedagogy.

I have found that NCTM teachers embody the best of our profession: love of music, love of teaching, and love for our students. I feel proud to be one of them. Let me encourage you and other teachers to embark on the commitment to earn certification.

Bonny Miller
Newsletter Editor



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MCMTA GENERAL MEETING MINUTES MARCH 13, 2018

President Alice Ma called the meeting to order at 10:18 AM at Jordan Kitt's showroom at 11726 Parklawn Drive in Rockville.

The minutes from the general meeting of February 13, 2018, were sent electronically in advance.

Alice encouraged everyone with friends and colleagues who may be interested, to let them know that this is a good time to join MTNA and MSMTA due to a discounted 50% off rate.

The link to the newsletter will now be posted on the Facebook page. Alice asked everyone to visit the page and "like" it.

Alice wants MCMTA members to respond to a survey she has created to find out how to better serve people. She will be sending it out sometime before the end of March, and also mailing it in order to reach those who do not use computers.

Sharon Carr encouraged members to enroll in the Teachers grant. Annually, MCMTA awards \$4,000 which is split into \$500 grants for eight teachers. Bonnie Kellert has offered to do mentoring in a structured program. The grant can be used to cover mentoring fees, conferences, to take lessons, or any other educational purpose which furthers professional growth. Teachers who have received a grant in the past can reapply again in 4 years. When given, the grant should be used within that year. All the forms are available on the website.

Alice said, as an expansion of the mentoring program, we are going to offer informal gatherings at teachers' homes. Bonnie Kellert has offered her home for the first two meetings.

Carol Brody and Bonnie Kellert are collaborating on the new "Tips for Teachers" column in the newsletter. Carol asked members to contribute ideas to put in the column.

Registration for the Adult Recital and Senior Recognition event are now available online through the MCMTA website.

Alice will be attending the MTNA 2018 Conference in Florida. She expressed her gratitude for receiving the support from MCMTA which helped to make her trip more affordable.

Alice adjourned the business meeting at 10:28 AM. Immanuela Gruenberg then introduced the program "Playing for Singers: Practical Tips for the Collaborative Pianist", with pianist George Peachey and soprano Diane Atherton.

Respectfully submitted, Tina Sinclair Smith, Recording Secretary