



# Minnesota Music Teachers Association Newsletter

Fall 2024

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## A Letter from the President

MMTA Members, Colleagues, and Friends,  
Happy fall! This time of year we start a new school year and enjoy the buzz and excitement of new opportunities and new endeavors. Our students learn new music and continue their musical journey. At the same time, MMTA also continues its journey as we grow, tackle challenges, and find reasons to celebrate. Here's a short summary of some of those challenges and celebrations we had last summer:

MMTA held its 96th annual honors concert at the Minneapolis Convention Center. Hundreds of students performed duets under the baton of Dr. Josh Bauder. This music transcended through the audience, lifted spirits, and inspired parents, friends, teachers, and students themselves.

The very next day, MMTA made a milestone and held its 125th annual state convention. This year, Normandale Lutheran Church in Edina, MN hosted our convention. While done as a cost-saving measure, the intimate setting of a smaller church enabled us to connect on a more personal level and enjoy sessions, recitals, and be inspired from the keynote speakers, Alvin Chow and Angela Chang. This dynamic duo gave a performance, a keynote presentation, and a masterclass.

While our state convention is typically held every June, we also look forward to the upcoming national convention (MTNA) because this year it will be held in Minneapolis from March 15-19, 2025. The national convention is a perfect opportunity to meet with colleagues, friends, and vendors from all across the nation and world. You will also find other enriching activities: you can attend performances from the winners from the Chopin International Piano Competition, meet great pedagogy composers like Jennifer Linn and Kevin Olson, and enjoy the keynote presentation from Grammy-award winning composer, Libby Larsen. With the national convention in our own backyard, I highly recommend going – if not for the world-class experiences, teachers, performances, and classes – then at least because you can save money on travel expenses. You will also be invited to our national-division dinner (West-Central Division), where you can meet other teachers and colleagues from the midwest.

In addition to our honors concert and convention, MMTA sent a survey to the full membership and asked questions about diversity, equity, and inclusion. Those questions were, “For you, what does Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion look like in MMTA?”, “Were you aware that MMTA has a committee of diversity, equity, and inclusion?”, and “For you, what is the function of the committee of diversity, equity, and inclusion?” Naturally, with over 100 responses, we received over 100 opinions, no general consensus, no one-sided answers, nor was there a clear majority answer to any of the questions. So, MMTA held its first forum on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In this forum, the MMTA committee of diversity, equity, and inclusion explained what these concepts look like within our organization. For example, diversity can be embracing a diverse collection of music from all kinds of composers and places; equity can be making programs more accessible to students who face any number of challenges (like driving time, students with disabilities); and inclusion can be a visible presence to show that we welcome all members and students. During this forum, we also heard from members at large who raised concerns with the committee. And we also heard from board representatives to better explain the MMTA infrastructure.

Finally, we began working with a company called Watermelon to create MMTA a new website. While our new website appears to function some of the time, it is becoming plagued with viruses, insecurity, and inconsistency. People registered for events and registrations were coming through corrupt and incorrect, store purchases were going missing, and even credit card information was deemed insecure. This new website will be safer and more secure and offer a better user experience. You might see we have been raising money as well. If you wish to make a donation to help fund our a new website, you can donate to the MMTA Foundation – simply contact a foundation member and tell them you would like to contribute for the website. If every member gave \$20, we will have funded most of the project.

So as we move forward now into the fall, enjoy the new opportunities and buzz of the new year. We have dozens of wonderful student programs just around the corner, including ensemble festival, music bridges, theory exams, piano exams... and contest will be here before you can finish playing a C major scale!

I can't wait to see you and your students at one of our next events. We are an outstanding organization!

Warmly,  
Dr. Jake Fitzpatrick, President of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association

### MMTA Board of Directors

- ▶ **Dr. Jake Fitzpatrick**  
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- ▶ **Alexandra Theien**  
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- ▶ **Karen Stiles**  
*VP-convention*
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- ▶ **Katie Johnson**  
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*VP-marketing*
- ▶ **Dr. Matthew Wilson, NCTM**  
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- ▶ **Sara Smolensky**  
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- ▶ **Jim Lansing**  
*treasurer -*  
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## **Local Associations**

Kay Hawkins, NCTM, Chair

**All events/meetings are open to all MMTA members.**

### **Central Minnesota Music Teachers Association**

- Wednesday, Oct. 2, 10:00 - 11:00: "Contest and Beyond" with presenter Dr. Amy Grinsteiner. St John's University, Sexton Commons.
- Wednesday, Dec. 4, 11:00: "Christmas 'Moosical' Party" with presenter Jennifer Harris. Luncheon to follow. The home of Jennifer Harris, 3016 19th St. S, St Cloud 56301.

### **MMTF**

- See MMTA Weekly Updates for the schedule of Contest Workshops

### **Rochester Area Keyboard Club**

- Thursday, Oct. 10, 9:00 a.m. – "The Magic of Pedal" with presenter Suzanne Greer. Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Rochester.
- Thursday, Nov. 14, 9:00 a.m. – "Shall We Dance?" with presenter Stella Branzburg Sick. Mount Olive Lutheran Church, Rochester.

### **St. Paul Piano Teachers Association and MMTF**

Weekend with Jeremy Siskind:

- Friday, Nov. 8, 11:00-12:30: "5 Things Every Piano Teacher Should Know About Jazz (But Probably Doesn't Know Yet)" with presenter Jeremy Siskind. 7:00-9:00 p.m. Recital and Coaching Session with Mr. Siskind. Schmitt Music, 7800 Harmony Drive, Bloomington 55439.
- Saturday, Nov. 9, 10:00-11:00 a.m. – Workshop 1 "From Scales to Melodies – Stepping Toward Improvisation" with Mr. Siskind. 11:15-12:15 -Workshop 2 "My Piano Arrangement is Better Than Yours (and Here's Why)" with Mr. Siskind. Schmitt Music, Bloomington.
- Registration fee required. For more information or to register online, visit [https://www.appimn.org/store/p10/A\\_Weekend\\_with\\_Jeremy\\_Siskind\\_-\\_SPPTA%2FMMTF\\_Members.html](https://www.appimn.org/store/p10/A_Weekend_with_Jeremy_Siskind_-_SPPTA%2FMMTF_Members.html)
- Tuesday, Dec. 3 – TBA. Zoom.

### **South Suburban Music Teachers Association**

- Tuesday, Oct. 1, 10:00-11:30 a.m. – Get-together and discussion of new NFMC bulletin music. Location TBD.
- Tuesday, Dec. 10, 10:00-11:30 a.m. – Brunch meeting at Suzie's Kitchen in Rosemount.

### **West Suburban Music Teachers Association**

- Friday, Oct. 11, 9:30 Social Time, 10:00 Business Meeting, 10:30-11:30: "How to Plan Ahead and Organize, So That Students Can Successfully and Happily Do More" with presenter Sharon Kaplan. Westgate Church, 705 County Rd 101, Plymouth 55447.
- Friday, Dec. 13, 9:30 Social Time, 10:00 Business Meeting, 10:30-11:30: Mini-Presentations by members, followed by Salad Potluck. Westgate Church, 705 County Rd 101, Plymouth 55447.

### **Willmar Music Teachers Association**

- Saturday, Oct. 5, 9:30 a.m.-Discuss any webinars or teaching strategies- Chamber Festival. Zoom.



## Piano Contest Info:

### Piano Contest Preliminaries:

Teachers can generally expect to receive schedule information **approximately 10 days** before the date of the Piano Contest. If the teacher does not receive information within one week of the event, contact the site administrator.

**For preliminaries, time change requests can be made up until January 4, 2025.**

**For finals, time change requests can be made until February 22, 2025.**

**Sign-up deadline for Contest finals: TC February 2, all others February 9**

**Finals Dates: March 8-9, 2025: University of Minnesota, Twin Cities**

# MTNA Composition Competition

Nancy Van Kampen, MN-MTNA Competition Chair

Congratulations to the winners the Regional Composition competition!

Elementary: Representative - **Arthur Scott**, Student of Sarah Miller, MN

Junior: Winner - **Max Zhang**, Student of Sarah Miller, MN

Honorable mention: Harper Shoemaker, Student of Nancy Schoen, NE

Senior: Winner - Coby Kassner, Student of Aaron Stampfl, CO

Honorable mention: **Kevin Chen**, Student of Sarah Miller, MN

Young Artist: Winner - Ivy Kocher, Student of Paul Lombardi, SD

Honorable mention: **Gideon Scheeler**, Student of Alexander Braginsky, MN

This year, the West Central Division judges were:

Ian Dicke

Sam Magrill

Matthew Aaron Mason

# Piano Contest: An Overview

To encourage high performance standards, MMTA sponsors an annual Piano Contest. Pianists select repertoire from an annual list, published in July of the previous year. Students with the highest scores in the Final Contest are invited to an ensemble performance in the Honors Concert, which will take place on May 31st 2025. The concert is a gala event involving around 500 young performers playing on 20 grand pianos in ensemble groups.

## Challenge Awards

When students participate in the piano contest, they earn challenge award points as follows:

- 100 points for participating in the preliminary contest.
- 100 points for participating in the finals contest.
- 100 points for participating in the honors concert.

## Dates and Locations

*Note: In the event an in-person event needs to be changed to a virtual event, student video submissions are due the day of the contest or as announced.*

## Preliminary Contest

- January 18, 2025: **Southeast (SE) District** – Rochester Community & Technical College, Rochester
- January 25, 2025: **Northwest (NW) District** – First Lutheran Church, Detroit Lakes
- January 25 and 26, 2025: **Twin Cities (TC) District** – Bethel University, Arden Hills
- January 26, 2025: **Virtual Contest – Video submissions due by 11:59pm**
- February 1, 2025:
  - **Central (C) District** – Benedicta Arts Center, College of St. Benedict, St. Cloud
  - **Northeast (NE) District** – Tower Hall, College of St. Scholastica, Duluth
  - **West-Alexandria (WA) District** – Calvary Lutheran Church, Alexandria
  - **Southwest-Marshall (SW) District** – St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, Marshall

## Finals Contest

- March 8-9, 2025: Ferguson Hall, University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Minneapolis

### **Opinion: Will Artificial Intelligence be able to compose music like a human can?**

With AI use on the rise in academic circles, the question arises: can artificial intelligence replicate the nuanced creativity of human composers?

While AI can certainly analyze patterns in existing music and produce compositions that adhere to certain styles or genres, the essence of music creation often lies in its emotional depth and spontaneous inspiration, elements that are inherently human. AI can certainly assist by generating new ideas or providing structure: but the human touch—imbued with personal experiences, emotions, and cultural influences—remains irreplaceable.

As educators, it's important for us to embrace technological advancements while also emphasizing the irreplaceable value of human creativity and intuition in music. Encouraging students to explore their own musical voices and express themselves authentically can coexist with the use of technology. By fostering environments where technology supports rather than overshadows human artistry, we can cultivate a generation of musicians who are not only skilled but also more deeply connected to their craft.  
- A.S.

### **Pomodoro Technique: A method for staying mentally fresh and getting things done** (from todoist.com)

The Pomodoro Technique is a time management method in which you do focused work during 25-minute intervals – known as pomodoros – and take a five-minute break.

- Improves focus
- Minimizes distractions
- Prevents burnout
- Promotes accountability
- Boosts motivation

Here's how it works:

1. Pick a task
2. Work on your task for 25 minutes
3. Take a 5 minute break
4. Work for further 25 minute stretches (with breaks) until task is completed
5. Every 4 “pomodoros” take a 15-30 minute break

There are a couple rules for creating effectiveness:

1. Make sure to break down larger tasks into small, achievable increments.
2. Combine small tasks if needed to fill the 25 minutes of time.
3. Once the timer is set, it must go off- don't break your focus in the middle of a pomodoro!

## Teachers' Pets

Have a pet that deserves a shout out?

Send us a photo and a bio at [mmta@mnmusicteachers.com](mailto:mmta@mnmusicteachers.com)



Name: Tallie  
Teacher: Dr. Jake Fitzpatrick  
Breed: Belgian Malinois  
Special Trick: Can jump a 5 foot fence.



Name: Rumble  
Teacher: Anna Baker  
Breed: Sassy  
Special Trick: Plays “soccer” with his favorite toy ball. He'll kick and chase it all on his own!

La Crosse Symphony Orchestra  
presents the:

La Crosse Symphony Orchestra

ALEXANDER PLATT | MUSIC DIRECTOR

# 26th Annual Richard Record Rising Stars Concerto Competition Saturday, January 18, 2025

24  
25  
SEASON

Viterbo University, Fine Arts Center  
929 Jackson Street, La Crosse, WI 54601

Closed Preliminaries: 8:30am – 2:00pm (approx.) / Open Finals: 3:30pm

## Fee and Application:

Non-refundable \$40 entry fee payable to the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra must accompany the application form. Application, fee, and biography must be postmarked no later than December 16, 2024.

## Eligibility:

High school students (grades 9-12) from Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. Students completing high school early are eligible if they are not currently enrolled in higher education at the time of the competition.

*\*First-prize winner is not eligible to enter the year following their win.*

## Prizes & Awards

**\$2,250 Cash Award**  
**\$1,500 Cash Award**  
**\$1,000 Cash Award**  
**2 \$500 Cash Awards**

The first and second prize winners will perform on the March 1 LSO concert.

For any further questions, please contact  
Concerto Competition Chairperson Janet Roth  
at [theroths07@msn.com](mailto:theroths07@msn.com)



For complete details visit:  
<https://www.lacrossesympphony.org/rising-stars/>

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**The MMTA Newsletter**

Official Publication of the  
Minnesota Music Teachers Association  
affiliated with the  
Music Teachers National Association.

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association is to advance the profession of music teaching through education, certification, networking and advocacy.

**MMTA Purpose**

The purpose of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association is to enhance the professional status of its members, to sponsor and participate in programs for the enrichment of music education, and to encourage music performance and creativity. All members are committed to the highest standards of music teaching and are dedicated to upholding and improving the standards of all music education in Minnesota.

**Statement of Function**

The function of the MMTA Newsletter is to reflect the Purpose of MMTA, to serve as a vehicle of communication to the membership, to inform the membership of events and ideas; to report musical activity in the state and to stimulate and encourage active interest, participation and support for the MMTA as it maintains a role of leadership in the State of Minnesota.

**MMTA Newsletter Policy**

Promotions of recitals, workshops or other events of interest to music teachers which have a charge or fee must be inserts as advertisements. Exceptions are MTNA and MMTA-sponsored events, and the fall education classes on contest materials (i.e., SPPTA, MMTF, St. Cloud, New Ulm, etc.).

**Issues and deadlines**

Oct./Nov./Dec. September 1st  
Jan./Feb./Mar.: December 1st  
April/May/June: March 1st

**Paid Advertisements**

The statements of the advertisers  
are not necessarily those of MMTA.

**Advertisement Rates**

Full Page 7 1/2w x 10 h \$175  
Half page 7 1/2 w x 4 3/4 h \$115  
One-fourth page 3 1/2 w x 4 3/4 h \$80  
One-eighth page 2 1/4 h x 3 1/2 w \$45

**Want Ad Rate Schedule**

6 Lines \$20 3 Lines \$10  
(MMTA members pay half price on Want Ad rate.)

**Submit Articles & Advertisements to:**

[mmta@mnmusicteachers.com](mailto:mmta@mnmusicteachers.com)

OR

MMTA, 10800 Lyndale Ave. S, Ste. 120  
Bloomington, MN 55420



**MINNESOTA**  
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