



# WMTA Newsletter

August 2025

Greetings, WMTA Members!

I hope you all had a wonderful summer! As we approach the new season and the start of the school year, I'm excited to share some upcoming events as well as a brief recap of the past few months.

To our new members—welcome! We hope to see you or your students at one of our competitions, judged recitals, or musicales. WMTA hosts several events throughout the year, and we'd love for you to be part of them. We're also looking forward to our first members' meeting, which will be held at the home of our president, Grace McFarlane. RSVP to Grace at [wmtadc@gmail.com](mailto:wmtadc@gmail.com); (202) 445-7505. We hope to see you there!

If you or your student have recently received an award, please email [rchen@levinmusic.org](mailto:rchen@levinmusic.org). We would love to include it in a future newsletter! Please also visit our WMTA website for other updates and past newsletters: <https://www.wmta-dc.org/>

Warm regards,

*Rachel Chen*, WMTA Newsletter Chair

## **REMINDER! RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!**

**Don't forget to renew your membership by August 31st to stay active and eligible for event participation. We highly encourage you to renew as early as possible—ideally, at least six weeks before any event in which you wish to enroll your students. This will ensure your membership is processed in time, as it can take a bit longer for national records to reflect on our end. Renew now to avoid any delays!**

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## **President's Message**

Dear WMTA Colleagues, Happy Midsummer!! I hope this finds you in good health and spirits, staying cool and safe amidst the sweltering Washington heat and humidity, and enjoying a more relaxed pace this summer. This season has usually been a welcome period for reflection and refreshment, travel and relaxation, as well as preparing lesson plans and exploring repertoire choices for students. Several of you have reached out regarding event dates for the coming year. We are still working to secure suitable venues and will be able to confirm all our dates and post them on the website by early August.

2024-25 was a busy year of activities for WMTA. My heartfelt thanks to all the event chairs whose care and commitment made each event successful. I am grateful to all who serve on the WMTA Board, faithfully chairing events and assuming roles that help to make our organization stronger and more effective. Thanks to their dedication, we are able to offer opportunities throughout the year for our students to participate in competitive and non-competitive events, to be encouraged in their performance and to benefit from insightful comments from experienced judges. As we prepare for the coming season, I'd like to welcome our newest event chairs – Karen Bartman (Chanaka), Rachel Chen & Ariel Nathanson (Hungarian) and Chelsea Wright (Student Composers Composition) – who have willingly stepped in to run these important events.

Several events are offered in biennial rotation. ***The Hungarian Competition***, the ***Chanaka Classical Music Festival*** and the ***Ylva Novik Piano Concerto Competition*** will be held this year, in addition to our annual competitions, festivals, musicales, recitals and award programs which remain on the calendar. All the event dates, information and deadlines will be posted on the WMTA website in early August. We look forward to increased participation from all our WMTA members.

The Fall season kicks off on **Sunday, October 5th at 5:00pm** with our annual **“Meet and Greet” Potluck Supper/Cocktails** at my home, 5117 Chevy Chase Pkwy NW, Washington DC. *Mark your calendar!* Not just for pianists, this is a great opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and meet new ones. Come and bring a friend. If you are able, please bring along a dish to share. **RSVP to Grace at [wmtadc@gmail.com](mailto:wmtadc@gmail.com); (202) 445-7505.**

Fall performance events include the MTNA Competitions, Saturday, November 1, Modern Piano Music Celebration, Saturday, November 22, and the Student Musicales & Judged Recital (age 12 and under) on Sunday, December 7. As your graduating seniors start the college application process, please encourage them to submit their essay for the WMTA Music Essay Award. I am looking forward to another successful year of sharing music together and hope to see you on October 5th. Enjoy the waning days of summer.

*Grace McFarlane*, WMTA President



## **Events Happening This Upcoming 2025 Fall School Year**

1. **WELCOME POTLUCK SUPPER “Meet and Greet”** on **Sunday October 5, 2025** at 5:00PM. Grace’s residence, 5117 Chevy Chase Pkwy NW, Washington, DC 20008
2. **SHOP TALK #1** (Chair, Hedy Bannon) on **October 3, 2025**
3. **MTNA COMPETITION** (Chair, Esperanza Berrocal) on **Saturday, November 1, 2025** at the Steinway Piano Gallery, 12PM-5:00PM
4. **MODERN PIANO MUSIC COMPETITION** (Chairs, Nancy Breth/Laura Marchisotto Bogart) on **Saturday November 22, 2025** at the Steinway Piano Gallery, 11:00AM-5:00PM
5. **HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR MUSIC ESSAY AWARD** (Chair, Mary Kading) due on **November 15, 2025**
6. **STUDENT MUSICALES #1** (Chair, Aglais Koras) at the Westmoreland UCC on **November 9th at 1:00PM**
7. **STUDENT MUSICALES #2** (Chair, Aglais Koras) **TBD**
8. **JUDGED RECITALS #1** (Chair, Christopher Kies) **TBD**

### **& What are They?**

**What is the “Welcome Potluck Supper”?:** This event is for everyone—whether you're already a WMTA member, thinking about joining, or just curious! Come enjoy some delicious food, meet fellow teachers, and connect in a relaxed, friendly setting. Not sure about joining? No pressure! Come chat with us, bring a friend, and enjoy some refreshments. We’d love to get to know you.

**What is “Shop Talk”?:** A Gathering for Independent Piano Teachers!! As independent piano teachers, we enjoy the freedom to run our own studios—choosing our students, setting our schedules, and shaping our businesses. However, one thing we often lack is a built-in community of colleagues to share ideas, solve challenges, and simply connect. “Shop Talk” was created to fill that gap!

We gather several times a year at Hedy Bannon’s home studio for informal, supportive conversations about all things related to teaching. Whether it’s solving a student-related issue, recommending a new pedagogical book, discovering the perfect piece for a particular student, or just enjoying camaraderie in a relaxed setting—SHOP TALK is a place to connect and grow. **This year’s meetings will be held at 10:00 a.m. on: October 3, 2025; January 8, 2026; May 1, 2026.** Location: 3812 Woodbine St. Chevy Chase, MD 20815. We hope you'll join us and bring your experiences and insights to the table!



**What are “Student Musicales”?**: They are non-competitive and non-judged performance opportunities for students of all levels through 12th grade. This is not just for pianists! Instrumentalists and voice students are welcome to participate. It’s a chance for your students to perform in front of their peers, gain valuable experience, and enjoy a supportive, encouraging environment. **Maximum performance time:** 12 minutes; **Memorization:** Optional. Encourage your students to participate in this wonderful opportunity to perform and grow! You can enroll one student or multiple—it’s sure to be a rewarding experience for all!

**What are “Judged Recitals?”**: This event is for piano only and provides an excellent opportunity for students through 12th grade to receive written feedback from experienced adjudicators. All participants will perform memorized pieces and should have prior performance experience. For this reason, it is recommended that students participate in a Student Musicale before registering for a Judged Recital. In addition to receiving judges’ comments, select students will be invited to perform in the prestigious Honors Recital. This event encourages growth, confidence, and musical refinement in a supportive, goal-oriented setting.

### **The 2025 Summer Scholarship Program Winners!**

The 2025 Summer Scholarship Program winners each received \$500. Nina Sejd is a student of Rachel Chen who attended the Indiana University Piano Academy. The second winner is Minjae Jeon who is a student of Jinha Park and attended the Levine PianoFest. The photo below is Nina Sejd at the Indiana University Piano Academy.



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## **Results from the 2025 Lichtenberg Competition**

The 2025 Lichtenberg Competition featured 20 contestants, and we were truly impressed by the high level of performance throughout the day. A heartfelt thank-you to our wonderful chair, Charles Timbrell, for hosting a very smooth event! Special thanks as well to our judges, Julian Trail and Kyle Johnson, for their time and expertise. The competition ran from 9:00 AM to 4:40 PM, with each performance reflecting the dedication and talent of our participants. Congratulations to the students, parents and teachers!

1st Prize: Caroline Su (student of Lisa Emenheiser Sarratt); 2nd Prize: Clark Hu (student of Bok Hwa Kim); Honorable Mentions: Julian Chen (student of Dmitri Nazarenko), Thai Nguyen (student of Marjorie Lee), Lucas Liu (student of Tzu-yi Chen).

## **Honors Recital at Calvary Lutheran Church**

On June 1, 2025, the Honors Recital at Calvary Lutheran Church showcased 11 exceptionally talented students. These young musicians performed a diverse repertoire, demonstrating remarkable virtuosity and expressive depth. The featured students were Grace Zhuang, Ryan Qin, Erya Chai, Rose Li, Thai Nguyen, Megan Lai, Ellie Jiang, Lucas Liu, Theodore Kim, Yunbo Li, and Zach Lam. The audience was visibly moved, their faces lighting up with amazement and admiration for the skill, maturity, and musical sensitivity displayed on stage. These students represented the studios of Junko Takahashi, Katerina Zaitseva, Marjorie Lee, Patricia Huff-Palumbo, Tzu-yi Chen, Nancy Breth, and Silva Blazquez. Congratulations to all!

## **Results from the Hartman Competition**

The annual Hartman Competition was once again a great success! Held at the Catholic University, the event brought together 155 talented students for a day of impressive performances and spirited competition. As always, our incredible chair, Junko Takahashi, hosted a warm and well-organized event, ensuring a memorable experience for all involved. Congratulations to all participants and a heartfelt thank-you to Junko for her continued leadership and dedication! A heartfelt thank-you to our 2025 judges for their time, expertise, and support. This year's panel included Laura Bogart, Yuri Chayama, Rachel Chen, Li-Ly Chang, David Kosutic, Jaewon Lee, James Litzelman, Haewon Min, Patricia Huff-Palombo, Margarita Gramaticova, Minna Han, Doug Guiles, Chenli Tzeng, Tomoko Uchino-Thomas, Faith Zuniga, and Katerina Zaitseva. We are grateful for your dedication to our students and this event!



**Group 10A:** 1st Prize: Alex Wang (student of Bonnie Kellert) and Khanh-Ly Ouy (student of Marjorie Lee); 2nd Prize: Brian Xin (student of Katerina Zaitseva), Jun Yasuda (student of Tomoko Uchino-Thomas); 3rd Prize: Grace Zhuang (student of Patricia Huff-Palombo)

**Group 10B:** 1st Prize: Adele Amaral (student of Timothy Krippner); 2nd Prize: Louis Xie (student of Laura Bogart); 3rd Prize: Caleb Ding (student of Marjorie Lee); HM: Valentina Song-Ye (student of Marjorie Lee), Henry Cheng (student of Dmitri Nazarenko)

**Group 11A:** 1st Prize: Theodore Kim (student of Marjorie Lee); 2nd Prize: Ethan Yang (student of Margarita Gramaticova); 3rd Prize: Thorin Kao (student of Silva Blazquez); HM: Avery Wen (student of Jun Yang), Anton Li (student of Faith Zuniga)

**Group 11B:** 1st Prize: Chloe Hu (student of Margarita Gramaticova); 2nd Prize: Anne Tang (student of Margarita Gramaticova); 3rd Prize: Sandy Chou (student of Marjorie Lee)

**Group 12A:** 1st Prize: Bowen Wu (student of Marjorie Lee); 2nd Prize: Andrew Xia (student of Chenli Tzeng); 3rd Prize: Felix Liu (student of Tzu-yi Chen); HM: Rebecca Yan (student of Dmitri Nazarenko)

**Group 12B:** 1st Prize: Yuan Fu (student of Chenli Tzeng); 2nd Prize: Nora Ma (student of Dmitri Nazarenko); 3rd Prize: Joanna Wang (student of Junko Takahashi); HM: Yuxin Jia (student of Margarita Gramaticova)

**Group 13A:** 1st Prize: Declan Gregory (student of Dmitri Nazarenko); 2nd Prize: Jinger Xu (student of Margarita Gramaticova); 3rd Prize: Gloria Ouyang (student of Dmitri Nazarenko); HM: Ethan Zhang (student of Yue Chen), Hannah Tang (student of Chenli Tzeng)

**Group 13B:** 1st Prize: Jingwei Zhao (student of Dmitri Nazarenko); 2nd Prize: Charles Cross (student of Dmitri Nazarenko); 3rd Prize: Ellie Yan (student of Chenli Tzeng); HM: Erya Chai (student of Katerina Zaitseva)

**Group 14-15A:** 1st Prize: Emery Que (student of Margarita Gramaticova); 2nd Prize: Kevin Shen (student of Silva Blazquez); 3rd Prize: Bo-yuan Liang (student of Dmitri Nazarenko); HM: Owen Smith (student of Mardon Sharipov)

**Group 16-18A:** 1st Prize: Melody Chen (student of Dmitri Nazarenko); 2nd Prize: Francesca Cho (student of Anastassia Ivanova); 3rd Prize: Serene Zhu (student of Eric Himy); HM: Anna Halich (student of Haewon Min)



**Group 16-18B:** 1st Prize: Elizabeth Spence (student of James Litzelman); 2nd Prize: Yolanda Zhang (student of Meri Gugushvili); 3rd Prize: Cameron Wang (student of Silva Blazquez); HM: Felix Xu (student of Margarita Gramaticova)

**Group 6-7A:** 1st Prize: Daniel Du (student of Marjorie Lee); 2nd Prize: Naomi Yu (student of Junko Takahashi); 3rd Prize: Claire Zhu (student of Yue Chen); HM: Aurora Remy Yee (student of Katerina Zaitseva), Jacob You (student of Junko Takahashi), Kevin Zhou (student of Yue Chen)

**Group 8-9A:** 1st Prize: Ellie Zhao (student of Marjorie Lee); 2nd Prize: Anna Yang (student of Jun Yang); 3rd Prize: Seren Shen (student of Laura Bogart)

**Group 8-9B:** 1st Prize: Boya Wu (student of Marjorie Lee); 2nd Prize: Carolyn Tang (student of Jun Yang); 3rd Prize: Hanke Kang (student of Laura Bogart)

**Group 8-9C:** 1st Prize: Fermi McChen (student of Dmitri Nazarenko); 2nd Prize: Oliver Zhang (student of Patricia Huff-Palumbo); 3rd Prize: Sophia Lee (student of Chenli Tzeng); HM: Darius Lim (student of Marjorie Lee), Sakura Sasaki (student of Junko Takahashi)

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SAVE THE DATE for the 2025 MSMTA Conference Virtual on Zoom  
Sunday, October 12, 2025 from 12:45 PM – 6:30 PM

## 2025 MSMTA Conference Save the Date

Sunday, October 12, 2025  
Virtual on Zoom  
12:45 PM – 6:30 PM

- 12:45 PM** Meet and Greet
- 1:00 PM** Impact on performance  
“The Healthy Pianist: Strategies for Avoiding Injury and Building Strong Foundations.” Studies indicate that between 70-90% of musicians experience an injury over the course of their careers. This presentation will focus on the most common injuries afflicting pianists and provide teaching strategies for their prevention.  
**Dr. Michael Finlay - Piano Keys Academy**  
Master’s from the Peabody Conservatory  
Doctorate from the University of Montreal
- 2:00 PM** General Membership Meeting -Edwina Hunter - MSMTA President
- 2:45 Break**
- 3:00 PM** Mini recital: Dr. Thomas Hecht, Faculty, Peabody Institute~ Professor of Piano ~ Steinway Artist ~ Recording Artist
- 3:30 – 5:00** Master Class for Intermediate/Advanced Students, Dr. Thomas Hecht
- 5:00** MTNA Presentation  
*MTNA President –Dr. Kevin T. Chance, NCTM,  
Gloria Narramore Moody Piano Area, University of Alabama*
- 5:30** “Guide to Successful Sight Reading”  
*MTNA President –Kevin Chance, NCTM*
- 6:30** End of conference

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