

Volume 24 - Issue 1
Fall - September 2026

take note . . .

In this issue:

- *Scholarship Competitions*
- *Student Composer Competition*
- *and so much more . . .*



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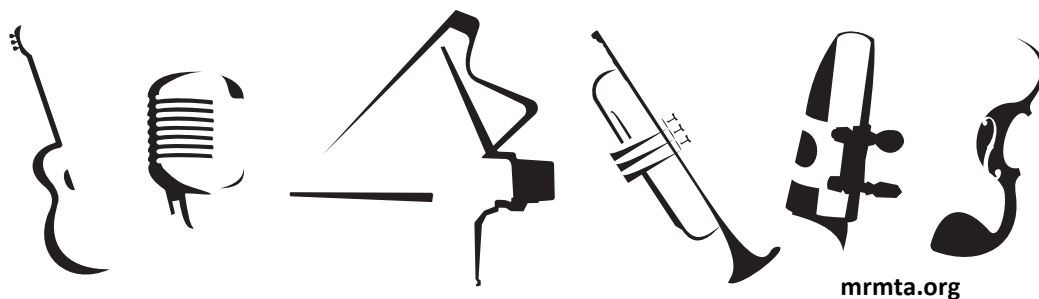
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The President's Message

Bennet Charter



Whether your summer was full of rest, relaxation, and vacation, or you kept yourself busy with teaching or other projects, I hope you had a very enjoyable summer and that you are, as I am, looking forward to the 2026 - 2027 academic year with excitement and optimism.

Though spring is traditionally associated with new beginnings, I have always found something particularly exciting in the new beginnings autumn has to offer. In our profession, that can mean new students, new repertoire, and new opportunities for learning, both for us and for our students.

It feels like not long ago that I first became a member of the MRMTA. I remember being warmly welcomed and being given a lot of information in regard to the benefits of being a member. At the time, I had no idea how deeply involved I would become with the MRMTA and I feel that it is through this deep involvement that I have come to truly understand why our organization is so important.

The encouragement and support the MRMTA is able to offer aspiring young musicians through the Performance Scholarships Competition, Paper Scholarships, and Young Artist Competition matters so much. The fact that these students can feel that our organization truly believes in what they can accomplish if they combine their passion for music with the hard work required to achieve at a high level is incredibly valuable. The performance

opportunities provided by such events as Canada Music Week, Musicthon, and the annual masterclasses held in partnership with the Desautels Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba are vital to the development of Manitoba's next generation of great musicians.

The connections that can be made simply by attending events, be they masterclasses or brunch gatherings, and striking up conversations with other teachers can be so enlightening. The mutual feeling of understanding and support that can be found in these conversations is something very special.

As we head into this new academic year, I encourage any of you who are reading this, if you haven't already, to consider becoming more involved in the inner workings of our organization. We have a number of vacant positions on the Executive that we would love to be able to fill with very passionate colleagues. None of the above-mentioned events can take place without people to organize them and the more of us who become involved, the more the MRMTA will thrive and the benefit of that will be felt not only by us as teachers, but by our students. I wish all of you a very happy, successful, and rewarding 2026-27 teaching year!

Bennet Charter- MRMTA President

**Questions,
Comments,
or Concerns?**

Notify your Executive by emailing
president@mrmta.org



Registrar's Report

John Himes

Welcome back to all members as we begin our 108th year! This year MRMTA will continue to offer various events, competitions, and scholarships. This programming is meant for you to supplement your studio practice and provide performance and scholarships opportunities to your students. Members are encouraged to take advantage of all offerings. You can learn more at mrmta.org.

Events & Programming

Consult the calendar of events for events and deadlines. Of particular interest to many will be our performance and paper scholarships. There are many opportunities for MRMTA students to earn money. As well, teachers should take advantage of Musicthon and Canada Music Week events for more performance opportunities for their students.

Insurance

All members will have received their certificate of insurance with their membership receipts. If you need assistance requesting an insurance certificate for a recital, please email registrar@mrmta.org at least one week before the event.

Volunteer Rebate

Winnipeg & Area members can earn a rebate of \$50 in return for four hours of volunteer service. This is a great way to reduce your membership fee and be involved with MRMTA!

Suggested Minimum Rate

MRMTA's suggested minimum rate for Registered Music Teachers is \$35/half-hour.

Teacher Directory

As a benefit of membership, RMTs are listed in our Teacher Directory (<https://mrmta.org/teacher-search/>). Please check the directory to ensure your entry is correct. Requests for changes may be sent to registrar@mrmta.org. You may also include a link to your website or include a PDF bio.

Registrar's Update on Membership

As of August 15th, 2026 there are 122 MRMTA members.

- 106 Full members
- 1 Affiliate member
- 10 Retired members
- 3 Honorary Life members
- 2 Auxiliary members

In Closing

Please contact me at registrar@mrmta.org with any questions or requests for help and have a fantastic year!

John Himes - MRMTA Registrar

Have you moved? Changing Emails?

To ensure your ***Take Note Magazine*** is delivered, please update your **email address & mailing address** with our Provincial Registrar.

registrar@mrmta.org

Thank you!



IMPORTANT DATES 2026 - 2027

Monday – September 14 th 9:30 am	Executive Meeting (via Zoom)	Bennet Charter president@mrmta.org
Friday – October 2 nd 6:30 pm	Young Artist Tour - Paulina Salisbury Whitewater Mennonite Church Boissevain, Manitoba	Alla Turbanova tselyakov@hotmail.com
October 16 th – 17 th	CNCM's Composers & Kids Boissevain, MB	Tenley Dyck tenley@dyckmusicstudio.ca
Friday – October 30 th 10:00 am	Piano Teaching Tricks I Have Learned Over the Years, Lecture by Dr. John Burge <i>Eva Clare Hall, University of Manitoba 65 Dafoe Rd W, Winnipeg, MB R3T 6B6</i>	Rachel Dueck mrmta.events@gmail.com
Sunday – November 1 st Application Deadline	MRMTA Performance Scholarships Competition (January 25 th -31 st)	Bennet Charter scholarships@mrmta.org
Monday – November 9 th 9:30 am	Executive Meeting (via Zoom)	Bennet Charter president@mrmta.org
Sunday – November 15 th Submission Deadline	<i>Take Note</i> Magazine – Winter Issue	Dina Pollock editor@mrmta.org
Sunday – November 22 nd 2:00 pm	Canada Music Week Recital (Winnipeg) <i>St. Mark's Lutheran Church 600 Cambridge St., Winnipeg</i>	Melissa Gingrich gingrich.melissa@ymail.com
Saturday – November 21 st Masterclass, 3:00 pm Concert, 7:00 pm	Canada Music Week Concert and Workshop Clinician: Daniel Tselyakov <i>Brandon & Westman Branch School of Music, Brandon University</i>	Alla Turbanova tselyakov@hotmail.com
Tuesday – December 8 th 9:30 am RSVP December 1st	Winnipeg Christmas Brunch <i>Original Pancake House 2220 McGillivray Blvd, Winnipeg</i>	Rachel Dueck mrmta.events@gmail.com
Monday – January 11 th 9:30 am	Executive Meeting (via Zoom)	Bennet Charter president@mrmta.org
Date TBA – January	Simultaneous Masterclasses with U of M Faculty Voice/Piano/Flute <i>U of M 136 Dafoe Road, Winnipeg</i>	Bennet Charter president@mrmta.org



IMPORTANT DATES 2026 - 2027

January 25 th – 31 st	MRMTA Performance Scholarships Competition Venue TBA	Bennet Charter scholarships@mrmta.org
Sunday – January 31 st 7:30 pm	MRMTA Performance Scholarships Competition Gala Venue TBA	Bennet Charter scholarships@mrmta.org
Saturday – February 6 th Sunday – February 7 th	38 th Annual Musicthon Fundraiser Venue TBA	Anna Krupenyna mrmtamusicthon@gmail.com
Monday – March 1 st Application Deadline	Paper Scholarships	Linda De Pauw lmdepauw@mts.net
Monday – March 15 th 9:30 am	Executive Meeting (online)	Bennet Charter president@mrmta.org
Thursday – April 1 st Application Deadline	MRMTA Community Service Awards	Bennet Charter president@mrmta.org
Thursday – April 1 st Application Deadline	Student Composer Competition	Melissa Gingrich gingrich.melissa@ymail.com
Thursday – April 15 th Submission Deadline	<i>Take Note</i> Magazine – Spring Issue	Dina Pollock editor@mrmta.org
Friday – May 1 st Application Deadline	Holtby Scholarships	Bennet Charter president@mrmta.org
Saturday – May 1 st Renewal Opens	MRMTA Membership Renewal	John Himes registrar@mrmta.org
Monday – May 10 th 9:30 am	Executive Meeting (via Zoom)	Bennet Charter president@mrmta.org
Monday – June 1 st Renewal Deadline	MRMTA Membership Renewal	John Himes registrar@mrmta.org
Tuesday – June 8 th 9:30 am	Winnipeg Year-End Brunch <i>Original Pancake House</i> 2220 McGillivray Blvd, Winnipeg	Rachel Dueck mrmta.events@gmail.com
Sunday – June 13 th 2:00 pm	108 th Annual General Meeting	Rachel Dueck vicepresident@mrmta.org
Sunday – August 15 th Submission Deadline	<i>Take Note</i> Magazine – Fall Issue	Dina Pollock editor@mrmta.org

Be sure to read your email newsletters and check the website for any changes to this calendar!



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The 107th Annual General Meeting

The annual general meeting (AGM) of the MRMTA was held virtually, via Zoom, on Sunday, June 14, 2026.

The meeting opened with a welcome and address given by MRMTA President Laura Liu, who was hosting the final AGM of her term as President. Past President Maureen Baird then joined in to help recognize the new MRMTA members of the 2025-26 academic year, as well as newly retired members and members who had reached long-term milestones. It was a pleasure to have Lydia Wiebe, who was recognized for an amazing 60 years of membership, in attendance and to have her share a few words in regard to what being a member has meant to her.

Following the member recognitions, the Paper Scholarship recipients were recognized. Two of the scholarship recipients, Emiliya Vasylyeva and Nathaniel Liu, were in attendance and shared some words of gratitude. This was followed by a recognition of this year's recipients of the Holtby Scholarships, Nathaniel Liu and Bella Penner.

After the scholarship recipients had all been recognized, the meeting was called to order.

A lot of standard business was then taken care of, followed by an important bit of new business, the changing of the recommended rate for one half-hour lesson to \$35.

The next order of business was the election of the executive. As of June 30, 2026, Laura Liu would be moving into her new role as Past President, taking over for Maureen Baird who was finishing her term. Bennet Charter, who finished his term as Vice President, would be moving into the position of President. A few people have stepped down from their previous roles: Evangeline Keeley has stepped down as Young Artist Tour Chair, Bernadette Geras has stepped down as Webmaster, to be replaced by Jonathan Hutton, and Rachel Regehr will be stepping down from her role as one of the Southern Manitoba Branch Representatives.

To fill the role of Vice President, Bennet Charter nominated Rachel Dueck from the floor. There were no further nominations, which meant that Rachel Dueck was elected as the new Vice President by acclamation.

The roles of Members' Programming Coordinator, Student Programming Coordinator, and the second of two Members-at-Large, were left vacant after repeated calls for nomination were not answered.

Following all this business, Maureen Baird expressed the MRMTA's gratitude to outgoing President Laura Liu for her work during her term as President. With that, the 2026 MRMTA AGM came to a close. It was a productive meeting that will hopefully help set the tone for a very successful 2026-27 year.

Bennet Charter, MRMTA President

Member Recognition 2026

Long-Term Members

- 60 Years: Lydia Wiebe
- 40 Years: Allison McNeill-Hordern
- 30 Years: Rita Bergen
- 20 Years: Alexander Tselyakov

Recently Retired Members

- Bernadette Geras
- Annette Hay
- Margot Sim



Meet our New Vice President



Rachel W. R. Dueck, originally from S. Korea, holds a B. Mus. in Piano Performance (U of Manitoba) and M.A. in Music concentrated on Piano Pedagogy (U of Ottawa). Currently, she is pursuing her Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies connecting Music, Kinesiology, and Education (U of Manitoba). Rachel is passionate about embodied learning, which helps students not only to understand but also physically feel music. She is a certified Dalcroze teacher who practices the Dalcroze approach — teaching and learning music through movement. Rachel runs her private piano studio at her home in Winnipeg, where students experience music both on and off-the-piano bench, and also teaches group music and movement classes at home (school-age students) and at a local school (toddlers) through the Winnipeg Leisure Guide program. Besides teaching, Rachel occasionally plays for school choirs, churches, and other instrumentalists. She has been a member of MRMTA since 2016 and volunteered for various events and experienced various positions in MRMTA, such as Young Artist tour coordinator (2019 - 2022), Take Note Editor (2020 - 2024), and Social Event Coordinator (2020 - Present). Rachel is excited about her new role, Vice President of the MRMTA, and hopes to get to know each member more and add positive impacts to the organization.



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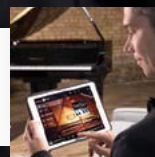
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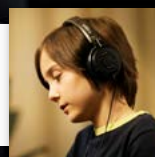
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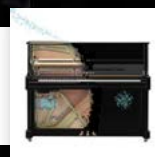
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From the very start of the remote exam, I experienced the presence of the examiner as if in-person. The quality of the call was clear and was maintained without any interruptions throughout the exam. The part I liked best was that I was able to musically enhance my recital pieces with the stress-level being low.

There is nothing better than playing on your own piano for a certifying exam from the comfort zone of your own home!

- RCM Student, Maya Krishnan



Performance Scholarships Competition Report

Holtby Scholarships

Paper Scholarships

I am happy to report that the 2026 edition of the Performance Scholarships Competition was very successful. Our new venue, Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, provided us with a warm welcome. Many thanks are due, in particular, to Leanne Regehr Lee and Leanne Hiebert for helping to ensure everything was running as smoothly as possible in regard to the new venue. Their support allowed us to immediately feel comfortable in our new home. I feel this venue has the potential to be the home of the Performance Scholarships Competition for years to come!

Many thanks, as well, to the many volunteers who stepped up to help throughout the week. It would not have been possible to hold such a successful competition without all their wonderful work. Thanks, as well, to Zig Thiessen who, once again, provided us with a very sharp looking poster for the competition.

A significant change for this year's competition is that we were able to offer prizes to the runners-up in addition to the first place winners. The runners-up were also invited, along with the first place winners, to perform at the Gala Concert at the conclusion of the competition which really enhanced the Gala, which was an evening filled with wonderful performances that were enjoyed by a large, enthusiastic audience.

The one area in which I feel we can strive for significant improvement is in the enrollment in the instrumental categories. We had a very high number of entrants in the piano categories and strong numbers in the vocal categories but it would be a significant boost to the competition if we could encourage more instrumentalists to enter.

For 2027, one change of note is that the CFMTA National Competition will now be a multi-discipline competition. I will be meeting with the Performance Scholarships Competition Committee in the very near future to work out the details of how this will affect our competition. Any changes will only apply to the Advanced (Diploma) level. Please keep an eye on our website and e-News for the latest updates.

Overall, I have a lot of optimism for the future of the competition and I very much look forward to seeing where it will go from here!

Bennet Charter, Chair, Performance Scholarships Competition

Holtby Scholarships

Nathaniel Liu (Teacher: Bennet Charter)

Bella Penner (Teacher: Dianna Neufeld)

Bennet Charter

Chair, Performance Scholarships Competition

Paper Scholarship

As the new term begins in September, keep in mind that there are numerous, generous scholarships available for students of MRMTA teachers in all disciplines. Please see the MRMTA website for information on the Paper Scholarships.

Efforts are ongoing to make sure that the applications for these scholarships are clear and easy to complete. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the applications please contact Linda De Pauw at lmdepauw@gmail.com.

Applications are due March 1st, 2027.

Recipients of MRMTA Paper Scholarships 2026

Harry Rowlin Strings Award

Lexi Barkman (Teacher: Andrea Bell)

Grace Rich-Bastin Memorial Award

Kiersten Harper (Teacher: Tenley Dyck)

Grace Rich-Bastin Instrumental/Keyboard Award

Joshua Han (Teacher: Jane Petroni)

Nathaniel Liu (Teacher: Bennet Charter)

Nita Eamer Scholarship

Yifei Sun (Teacher: Jane Petroni)

Emiliya Vasyliyeva (Teacher: Jane Petroni)

Dorothy Lothar Scholarship

Nathaniel Liu (Teacher: Bennet Charter)

Linda De Pauw

Chair, Paper Scholarships



Holtby Scholarship 2026

Bella Penner - Nathaniel Liu

Bella Penner

My name is Bella Penner and I have been playing piano for 14 years. I have enjoyed participating in Brandon Festival of the Arts, Rolling River Festival, piano camp, recitals, workshops, and playing for a high school choir. Three years ago, I started teaching beginner piano lessons and will continue pursuing that in my education. This scholarship has provided me with the opportunity to continue taking lessons during the school year and help pay for my music courses. It has encouraged me to keep working hard so that I may have other opportunities like this in the future. I plan to continue taking a minor in music and taking lessons so that I can acquire the skills I need to continue teaching. I will also keep learning the art of collaborating with choirs and soloists to continue my enjoyment of playing the piano. ✨



Nathaniel Liu

I am honoured to have been chosen as one of the recipients of the MRMTA's 2026 Holtby Scholarships.

As I am writing this, I am heading home from the Valhalla Summer School of Music, which was held in New Denver and Silverton, BC. While I was there, I had the chance to work on and perform the first movement of Mendelssohn's Piano Trio in D minor, Op. 49, with Maria van der Sloot both coaching and playing in my group. Throughout the week, I also had the privilege of working on solo repertoire, as well as my part of the Mendelssohn Trio, with Dr. David Moroz. The MRMTA's support helped make this all possible.

For years now, music has been the most important thing in my life, and I will continue to love it for the rest of my life. Recently, I completed all of the requirements for my RCM level 10 certificate and I am now very excited to be starting work on pieces at the diploma level.

One way that I share my passion for music with others is by teaching. I am currently working with several students, some of whom participated in the 2026 Winnipeg Music Festival. I find that I learn a lot through teaching, which helps me improve as a teacher and as a musician in general.

The MRMTA's support makes me feel more confident and motivated. I dream of being a concert pianist and, particularly, dream of becoming a gold medalist in the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. I feel there is nothing I cannot accomplish if I work hard to achieve my goals. Again, thank you so much for selecting me as a recipient of the Holtby Scholarship. ✨





Holtby Scholarship Progress Report

Claudia Vreeman - Anna-Lucia Mena Shevchenko

Over the past year, the Holtby Scholarship has helped me continue my piano studies and stay involved in music. I have been taking regular piano lessons and working on improving my skills and confidence as a musician.

I have also had the opportunity to work with other musicians as an accompanist, which has been a great learning experience. Playing with others has helped me become more adaptable and has given me valuable experience collaborating in different musical settings.

This year has allowed me to continue growing as a pianist and enjoy new musical experiences. In the coming year, I hope to keep developing my accompaniment skills and begin teaching piano to children. I would love the opportunity to share my passion for music and help young students learn and enjoy playing the piano.

I am very grateful for the support of the Holtby Scholarship and the opportunities it has provided throughout the year. ✨

Submitted by Claudia Vreeman

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the countless opportunities MRMTA have given me throughout my years of piano study. Being part of your festivals, competitions, and musical gatherings since the very beginning of my journey has shaped me profoundly. Each event offered a space to grow, to listen, to learn, and to be inspired by the dedication of teachers and students alike. Your support and commitment to young musicians have been a constant source of encouragement, and I am deeply thankful for the role you have played in my development. This summer, I had the privilege of attending the Orford Music Academy, where I studied for two weeks with the extraordinary pianist and teacher Janina Fialkowska. Working with her was transformative. I performed for her many times during the program of two weeks, and her guidance, insight, and artistry left a lasting impression on me. She expressed genuine enthusiasm for my playing, which was both humbling and inspiring. The experience broadened my musical perspective and strengthened my commitment to my craft. I was also honoured to perform in one of the academy's concerts, an opportunity that allowed me to share what I had learned in a meaningful and memorable way. I am also deeply grateful for the MRMTA scholarship, which made my studies at Orford possible and supported my journey toward being accepted into my dream conservatory. I am also delighted to share that I have been accepted into both McGill University and the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal for their Bachelor of Music programs in piano performance. This next chapter fills me with excitement and determination, and I carry with me the foundation that MRMTA helped build. Your festivals and competitions nurtured my confidence, discipline, and love for music, and I will always be grateful for the experiences you provided. Thank you for your dedication to young musicians and for the inspiration you continue to offer. I look forward to staying connected and sharing future milestones with you. ✨

*Warmest regards,
Anna-Lucia Mena Shevchenko*





MRMTA Student Community Service Award

Musicthon 2027

Events / Social

Community Service Award

Congratulations to Nathaniel Mercer, student of Shoshana Goldenberg, recipient of the 2026 MRMTA Student Community Service Award – Silver Level!

The MRMTA Student Community Service Award recognizes students who give back to their communities through music and volunteer service. We encourage teachers to introduce this meaningful opportunity to their students and inspire them to share their music beyond the studio.

The next application deadline is April 1, 2027.

For award criteria and application information, please visit the MRMTA Community Service Awards page on the MRMTA website.

Congratulations again to Nathaniel and his teacher, Shoshana!

Laura Liu

Looking Ahead to Musicthon 2027

The MRMTA “Kids Helping Kids” Musicthon is an annual community fundraising event that brings together MRMTA teachers and their students for a weekend of performances in support of United Way Winnipeg. Through music, our students help raise funds that provide access to youth music programs across our community.

Planning for the 38th annual MRMTA “Kids Helping Kids” Musicthon is already underway!

We are pleased to announce that Musicthon 2027 is tentatively scheduled for February 6–7, 2027. Building on this year’s success, we look forward to welcoming both returning and new teachers for another inspiring weekend of music-making, community engagement, and fundraising.

To help with planning, a 15-minute performance sign-up schedule is ready for booking [HERE](#).

MRMTA teachers are invited to express their interest early and reserve performance time for their students. Early registration will help us organize the event more efficiently and provide the best possible experience for teachers, students, volunteers, and visitors. If you would like to volunteer at the event, you can express your interest and book your hours and date [HERE](#).

Whether you have participated before or are considering joining Musicthon for the first time, we would love to have your studio take part in this wonderful MRMTA tradition.

Save the dates: February 6–7, 2027!

For any questions, please contact the Musicthon Team at mrmtamusicthon@gmail.com.

*Anna Krupenyina & Christina Hutton
Musicthon Team, MRMTA*

Events / Social

2026/2027 Pancake Brunch

You are all invited!

Our MRMTA brunch gathering will be continuing at Original Pancake house (2220 McGillvray) and the dates are:

Christmas Pancake Gathering

Tuesday, December 8th, 2026

at 9:30 am

(RSVP by December 1st, 2026)

Year-End Pancake Gathering

Tuesday, June 8th, 2027

at 9:30 am

(RSVP by June 1st, 2027)

This is a great opportunity to meet some old and new colleagues. Although the event is happening in Winnipeg, it is open to all MRMTA members. I always loved the valuable discussions about music, teaching, and life in general among the members. Come out and join us!

If you have any questions about the gathering, please feel free to contact me at MRMTA.events@gmail.com.

Rachel Dueck



2026 Student Composer Competition Results

Melissa Gingrich - MRMTA SCC/CMW coordinator

PREPARATORY - 8 YEARS AND UNDER

Class 1 Instrumental

MRMTA Winner \$50 prize

1 st place	Malek Abdel Aziz	<i>Falling Through the Clouds</i>
-----------------------	------------------	-----------------------------------

CATEGORY B - 15 AND UNDER

Class 1 Instrumental

MRMTA Winner \$100 prize

1 st place	Emiliya Vasylyeva	<i>New Beginnings</i>
2 nd place	Elena Ardron	<i>Drifting Daydreams</i>
3 rd place	Octave Brault	<i>L'histoire du soir</i>



Adjudicator: Dianna Neufeld

CATEGORY B - 15 AND UNDER

Class 2 Vocal

MRMTA Winner \$100 prize

1 st place	Nathaniel Mercer	<i>Drunken Dancer</i>
2 nd place	Nathaniel Mercer	<i>Stuck in a Whirlpool</i>

CATEGORY C - 19 AND UNDER

Winner \$150 prize

1 st place	Nick Oliver	<i>Winter Symphony</i>
2 nd place	Gaoyuan (Thomas) Cheng	<i>Prärie-Nachthimmel für Violine und Cello</i>

Adjudicator - Dianna Neufeld



Preparatory - 8 years and under

CLASS 1 - Instrument 1st Place Malek Abdel Aziz *Falling Through the Clouds*



Malek Abdel Aziz is an emerging young musician and composer who has been studying piano since the age of six. At just eight years old, he has already developed a deep appreciation for music across genres, from classical piano repertoire to original electronic compositions.

In addition to his piano studies, Malek creates and releases electronic music under the artistic name Super Shadow Glitch, with his work available on major streaming platforms. Much of his music draws inspiration from video games, creativity, and his interest in new technology.

Recently, Malek has been especially captivated by Beethoven’s *Moonlight Sonata*, 3rd Movement, reflecting both his curiosity and his growing range as a musician. When asked how he can love both electronic music and Beethoven, he simply replied: “Because I can.” 🌟

Falling Through The Clouds
Malek Abdel Aziz

Sheet music for 'Falling Through The Clouds' by Malek Abdel Aziz. The score is for Grand Piano and includes tempo markings such as '♩ = 100', 'No pedal', '♩ = 70', and '♩ = 50'. It also features dynamic markings like 'p', 'f', 'mp', and 'ff'.

Category B - 15 years and under

CLASS 1 - Instrument 1st Place Emiliya Vasylyeva *New Beginnings*



My name is **Emiliya Vasylyeva**. I am 15 years old and a grade 9 student at St. John’s-Ravenscourt School. My family immigrated to Canada from Ukraine when I was one year old, settling in a small rural community north of Winnipeg.

I started taking piano lessons when I was eight years old and quickly discovered how much I loved music and composing. Two years ago, my family moved to the city, where I had the opportunity to learn from amazing theory, piano, and voice teachers who helped me grow both musically and personally.

Composing has always been especially meaningful to me. It allows me to express my emotions and work through the experiences and challenges in my life. 🌟



New Beginnings
Score created with the free version of Flat - <https://flat.io>
Emiliya Vasylyeva

Sheet music for 'New Beginnings' by Emiliya Vasylyeva. The score is for Grand Piano and includes tempo markings such as '♩ = 70' and 'Alto Harp'. It also features dynamic markings like 'p', 'mp', and 'ff'.

Category B - 15 years and under

CLASS 2 - Voice

1st Place

Nathaniel Mercer *Drunken Dancer*

CFMTA

1st Place

\$225

Drunken Dancer

Nathaniel Mercer

Category C - 19 years and under

1st Place

Nick Oliver

Winter Symphony

CFMTA

2nd Place

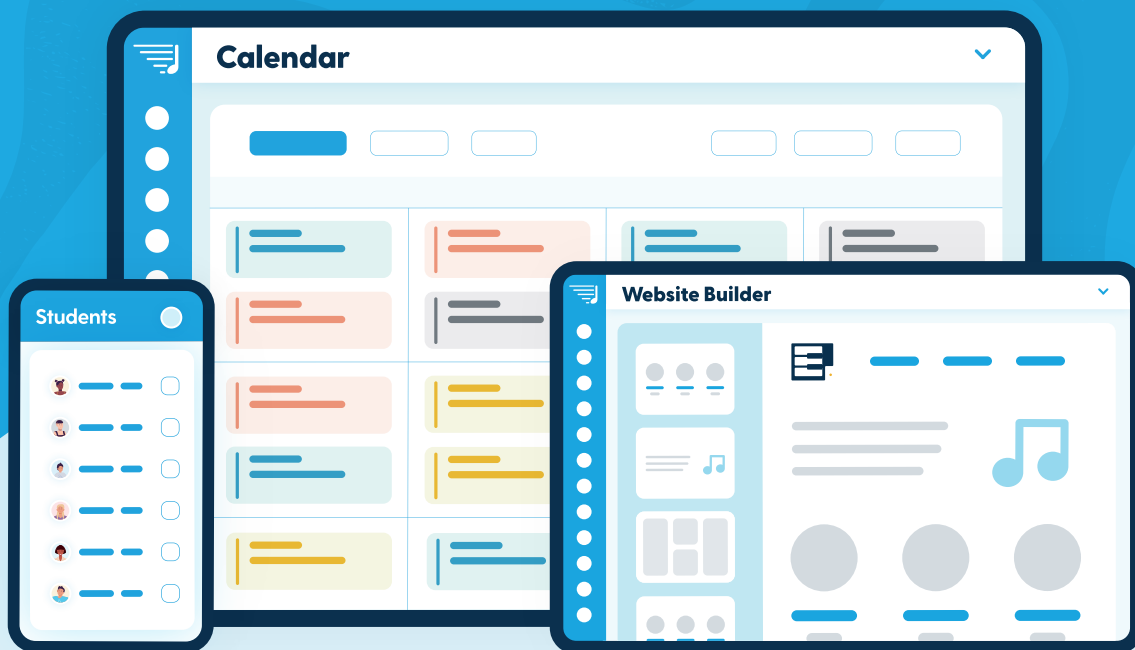
Nick Oliver

Nick Oliver is a Manitoban Singer, Composer, and Cellist who is currently completing grade twelve at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Winnipeg. He performs as a Cellist in the Winnipeg Youth Symphony Orchestra, and as a Trombone player in the University of Manitoba Youth Jazz Collective.

As a singer Nick has performed with a number of choirs including All The Kings Men, with whom he toured to the UK in the summer of 2025. Nick's compositions explore a range of orchestral textures. He intends to develop his compositional voice as he moves to the University of Manitoba in the coming year. ✨

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Canada Music Week 2026

Branch Reports

Canada Music Week 2026

Winnipeg

Canada Music Week celebrations will once again entrust our local Winnipeg music students to showcase the depth and variety that Canadian composition boasts. The student recital will be held on Sunday November 22nd at 2:00pm at St. Mark's Lutheran Church (600 Cambridge Street). We look forward to a blended program of varying disciplines, ensembles, and abilities showcasing selections by Canadian composers of the past and present, with insightful comments by the students regarding the larger contributions of the composer to the music scene. As ever, our 2025 Student Composer Competition winners have been invited to premiere their winning compositions and we look forward to hearing them speak about their inspiration and learning process. There will not be a sheet music sale, but we look forward to a cupcake reception following the recital.

Watch our website as details take shape. The registration deadline is November 7th and online forms can be found at mrmta.org/canada-music-week. Space is limited.

Melissa Gingrich

Brandon & Westman

Another highlight of the coming season will be Canada Music Week on Saturday, November 21st, 2026, at the School of Music, Brandon University.

Canada Music Week is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our country's musical heritage and to introduce students to the richness and diversity of Canadian composition. This year, we are pleased to welcome Dr. Daniel Tselyakov, pianist, as guest adjudicator and master-class clinician.

The Masterclass will take place at 3:00 p.m. in Room 1-57, followed by a 7:00 p.m. concert.

We warmly invite teachers of all disciplines and instruments to encourage their students to take part. If repertoire has not yet been selected, this is an excellent time to begin choosing a Canadian work and preparing it for November. We hope many teachers will take advantage of this opportunity to have their students perform and share Canadian music with the community.

Alla Turbanova

Branch Reports

Brandon & Westman Branch

A Year of Music, Achievement and Community

Prepared by Alla Turbanova

The Brandon & Westman Branch of the Registered Music Teachers' Association of Manitoba held its Annual General Meeting on August 12, 2026, at Cora's on 18th Street in Brandon. It was a warm and productive gathering, giving members an opportunity to reconnect, share ideas, celebrate recent accomplishments, and look ahead to an exciting year of musical activities.

A Remarkable International Achievement

We are especially proud to begin this new season by celebrating the outstanding achievement of **Jason Jiang, a student of Dr. Daniel Tselyakov**.

On August 7, 2026, in Mexico, Jason won First Place at the Petrof International Festival, competing at a high international level alongside talented young musicians from around the world.

This remarkable result reflects Jason's dedication, musical preparation, and artistic development. Success in such a highly competitive international setting is an exceptional accomplishment and a wonderful source of pride for Jason, his teacher, his family, and our entire Brandon & Westman musical community.





Branch Reports - cont.

Young Artist Tour 2026

Looking ahead, the 2026 Young Artist Tour will bring talented young musicians to communities throughout Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

This year's featured young artist is **Paulina Salisbury**, with Claire Seibold serving as Young Artist Coordinator.

The tour will visit:

- **Saskatoon Branch** - September 26
2:30 p.m. — venue to be confirmed
- **Regina Branch** - September 27
Venue and time to be confirmed
- **Brandon & Westman Branch** - October 2
6:30 p.m. Whitewater Mennonite Church,
Boissevain, Manitoba
- **Yorkton Branch** - October 3
7:00 p.m. St. Andrew's United Church, 29 Smith St. E.
- **West Central Branch** - Date to be confirmed
7:00 p.m. St. Andrew's Anglican/Trinity Lutheran Church

We are particularly pleased to welcome the Young Artist Tour to Boissevain on October 2. Opportunities such as this give young artists valuable performance experience while bringing high-quality live music to communities throughout our region.

Composers & Kids

We also look forward to CNCM's Composers & Kids in Boissevain on October 16 and 17, 2026, featuring Canadian composer Lynette Sawatsky.

This wonderful program gives students a special opportunity to meet and learn directly from Canadian composers and musicians, making the connection between composer, performer, and young musician both personal and inspiring.

Celebrating Our Members

Our branch is fortunate to have members who have contributed to music education and to our professional community over many years. This year, two members will be honoured for their longstanding membership with MRMTA:

- 40 years – Allison McNeill-Hordern
- 20 years – Alexander Tselyakov

We warmly congratulate Allison and Alexander on these significant milestones and thank them for their many years of dedication to music teaching and to the musical life of Manitoba.

Looking Ahead

The strength of a music teachers' association is found not only in its concerts and events, but in the connections created among teachers, students, composers, performers, and the wider community.

The Brandon & Westman Branch looks forward to another season filled with opportunities to learn, perform, listen, encourage, and celebrate music together. With the Young Artist Tour, Canada Music Week, Composers & Kids, and many other activities ahead, there is much to anticipate.

It promises to be another inspiring year for our students, our teachers, and our musical community. ✨

Submitted by Prof. Alla Turbanova



When Progress Pauses: Helping Students Move Beyond Plateaus

By Dr. Merlin B. Thompson

Have you ever had a week of teaching that made you stop and wonder, *What’s going on here? Why isn’t anything moving forward?* Most teachers have. Recently, I found myself in exactly that situation, noticing that several of my students had been sitting on a plateau for longer than expected.

We know that students don’t develop like items on a factory assembly line. Their learning unfolds in cycles. There’s an ebb and flow in learning wherein plateaus follow periods of progress. Plateaus are not only normal; they are often necessary. But when those periods stretch on with no end in sight, they invite reflection. Here’s what I noticed in a couple of my students -

Eight-year-old Robert had been working on a new piece for several weeks but never got further than the opening lines. When I asked why he hadn’t moved forward, he explained that the next section made him feel frustrated. And rather than letting his frustration increase, he had developed the strategy of simply walking away.

There was something important to affirm here. Learning to step back from frustration is a valuable skill. So I acknowledged that first. But I also needed to expand Robert’s thinking. I explained that while walking away a few times can be helpful, doing so repeatedly can create a different problem. Each time he avoided that challenging spot, it was as if he added another brick to a wall. Over time, that wall became harder to face.

The goal, then, was not to eliminate frustration, but to re-engage with it differently. I encouraged Robert to experiment with getting past that barrier—whether by approaching it in a new way, breaking it into smaller parts, or even just pushing through imperfectly. The shift was subtle but important: from avoidance to action.

Twelve-year-old Angie presented a different kind of plateau. She arrived at every lesson enthusiastic and engaged—qualities that can easily mask a lack of progress. Because of this, I’ve learned to rely on careful note-taking and reflection over time to see the bigger picture.

Years ago, Angie told me that her favourite part of piano study was learning new pieces. Refining them, however, held much less appeal. The breakthrough came when we connected her musical work to something she deeply cared about: her dream of playing professional soccer.

In that context, she understood immediately that improvement doesn’t come from simply showing up to games—or even from logging practice time. It comes from intentionally working to get better. From “upping your game.”

That shared language became a powerful tool. I stepped into the role of the teacher who could deliver honest, sometimes uncomfortable feedback—much like a coach would. The message was always grounded in belief: you can do more, and here’s how.

Action and Awareness. These experiences have reinforced for me that helping students move beyond plateaus involves two essential layers: action and awareness.

Action means inviting students to try something new. It might involve introducing a different practice strategy, raising expectations, or setting more specific goals. It’s about disrupting the status quo just enough to spark movement.

Awareness, on the other hand, is about helping students understand their own learning. When students can articulate why they feel stuck, what strategies they are using, and how they respond to challenges, they take ownership of their progress. This reflective process builds resilience and deepens the teacher-student relationship, creating a learning environment grounded in trust and understanding.

Today's Music Teachers - This action/awareness approach stands in contrast to previous models of teaching that may have relied primarily on controlling students to drive improvement. My impression is that today's music teachers have different goals in mind. We want students to feel empowered—to take risks, to engage with challenges, and to see themselves as active participants in their own musical journey.

What I appreciate is how small, intentional shifts can lead to meaningful change. Plateaus need not become permanent detours. With thoughtful guidance, they can become turning points—moments where students learn more than just how to play. They also learn what it's like to be in charge of their own growth. And we music teachers can guide our students through both the highs and lows that contribute so beautifully to meaningful lifelong musical journeys.

Do your students have language to describe frustration, avoidance, and progress? How can you help them develop that awareness?

When needed, how comfortable are you with delivering honest, "uncomfortable" feedback in a way that still supports and motivates the student?

How do you help students connect their musical work to something meaningful in their lives beyond the lesson itself?



Award-winning music educator, workshop clinician, piano teacher, and keynote speaker, Dr. Merlin B. Thompson is a leading authority on music studio teaching with

nearly 50 years experience throughout Canada, USA, China, New Zealand, Australia, and Finland. He is author of "More than Music Lessons: A Studio Teacher's Guide to Parents, Practicing, Projects, and Character". Most recently as founder and creator of Teach Music 21C, Merlin helps music teachers expand and enhance their teaching approach with tools and strategies deeply rooted in students' lived personal musical experience. For more information on how Merlin is inspiring music teachers to rethink what successful music lessons look like, please visit www.TeachMusic21C.com.



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Book Reviews



DUETTINI – Book 3

Tom Gerou

Intermediate/Late Intermediate

TOMGEROUMUSIC.COM® – TGM00016

This little volume contains four piano duets (1 piano / 4 hands) and is

graded for intermediate/late intermediate players. The composer indicates they are ‘equal-level duets’ and as such would be great for two students working at approximately the same level.

There is a summary of each selection at the front of the book noting such things as basic techniques used, meter or meters in the song, and mood or style he wishes to be conveyed when playing. He adds warnings such as, in *Kontrapunkt* the players should pay ‘careful attention to fingering’ to ‘ensure control and fluidity in performance.’ In *A Pastel Pastoral* he notes that ‘careful counting and awareness of silence are essential to the success of the piece.’

Gerou has written both Primo and Secondo parts within the staff then has written instructions rather than 8^{va} or 8^{vb}. Playing duets teaches pianists how to work together, feeling the other pianist move on the keys, breathe in for upbeats, etc.

At first glance, these duets looked easier than they turned out to be! Don’t underestimate the rhythmic and harmonic challenges. Each part is simple enough on its own, but playing both parts together demands careful counting, listening, and concentration to manage the interaction and harmonic surprises between them. Isn’t that one of the things we want students to learn in duet playing? As the composer notes in his foreword, “The majority of a pianist’s playing experience is a solitary endeavour.” This book gives students an opportunity to build a new skill set.

Evangeline Keeley



SOLOS CELEBRATIONS

10 ALL-NEW PIANO SOLOS - Book 6

Late Intermediate

Alfred Publishing 00-52082

The final book of this 6-book collection offers a variety of challenging pieces for the late

intermediate player. Ranging from exciting show-stoppers - *Crossing the Canyon*, *Minute ‘Til Midnight* or *Victory on the High Seas* to the thought-provoking programmatic selection *Daybreak*, by Canadian composer Christine Donkin; this collection offers something for every student. Students and teachers will find *Lyrique*, by Daryl Smith and the modal piece *Echoes of Lydian*, by Wynn-Anne Rossi to be excellent teaching tools for developing expressive interpretation. For those students who thrive on fast-moving fingers, the rhythmic dance composition *Spanish Rose* by W. T. Skye Garcia will be most satisfying.

Jazz lovers will enjoy the syncopated rhythmic drive of *Feels by Andy Villemez*. The challenge comes from the alternating pulse, moving between the two-beat feel of cut time and the driving three-eighth-note feel of the $\frac{6}{8}$ pulse. These changes are continually highlighted by quick dynamic and articulation contrasts.

For the Star Wars/Star Trek fans, *Clash of the Starships* with accompanying narrative by composer Brian Chung will create much excitement as students proceed into space battle and then return to Earth victoriously at warp speed. The many moods of this adventure are accomplished through quickly changing dynamics, articulations, and expressive tempo changes. Lots of fun!

Another selection I particularly enjoyed is *Sky Fantasia* by Jennifer Lin. This piece encompasses Romantic passion with contemporary melodies moving from the right to the left hand while gliding through major and minor mood changes. Rhythmic challenges of 2 against 3, pedaling changes under varied articulations and time changes all help to create exciting technical and expressive hurdles for the student.

This series of all-new pieces strives to “explore a wide variety of styles” while “balancing creativity with solid pedagogy.” Mission accomplished!

Maureen Baird



Book Reviews



**THE EUGÉNIE ROCHEROLLE COLLECTION:
19 Memorable Piano Solos Selected by the
Composer**
Hal Leonard [HL01860782](#)

I was first introduced to the work of Eugénie Rocherolle as a college student accompanying a ladies' trio. That beautiful piece has floated through my mind over the years and I treasure a handwritten note from her that she included when I purchased additional copies of that work. Fast forward to the present and I was very pleased to receive this collection of her piano solos to review.

The compositions are divided into two sections: Reminiscence and Delight. I would say generally the songs in the first section are evocative in a thoughtful, perhaps even a melancholy way with titles like *Small Town Blues*, *Les Avenues de Paris*, and *Memories*. The latter lived up to its name for sure, as some of the harmonic changes really reminded me of the trio accompaniment I mentioned above.

The second section contains songs which are also evocative, but I would characterize them as being more playful and up tempo. Titles such as *Fiesta!*, *Carnival Caper*, and *Jambalaya: A Portrait of Old New Orleans* give you an idea of what to expect. It was fun to realize partway through *Jambalaya* that I was playing a mildly camouflaged version of *When the Saints Go Marching In!*

Two things I especially appreciate about these solo piano works are the rich harmonies Rocherolle uses, and the fact that when a melody returns she often modifies it slightly, holding one's interest the second time around. Many different styles and rhythms in these nineteen songs make this a great collection that I feel would have a broad appeal in anyone's studio.

Evangeline Keeley



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SUITE FOR CREATIVE PIANISTS

(in Four Movements)

Ayumi Okada

Late-Intermediate Piano Solos

Red Leaf Pianoworks

Composer Ayumi Okada is a New York-based Japanese composer, pianist, and educator who serves as a board member for the Festival for Creative Pianists. Her work *Suite for Creative Pianists* was commissioned for the Festival for Creative Pianists and is a late-intermediate collection that prompts players to build their own improvisational choices directly into the movements. This process allows students to gain “insights into the compositional process.” The creative elements include articulations, dynamics, registers, harmony, melody, and feel.

Each of the four movements presents a different atmosphere associated with a season. Pianists can play the entire suite or perform each piece separately.

This collection is published by the composer and as a ‘creative version’ Ms. Okada has inserted suggested creative instructions at specific measures, allowing individualized interpretative elements to be chosen by each presenter. The publication includes the composer’s bio as well as an explanation of the titles and ideas she used to bring these musical pictures to life.

MVT. 1: *Welcoming the Sun* is a playful piece which uses varying articulations and changes of range to enhance the dance-like character of the melody. Individual choice of articulations and, in certain spots, choice of octave, allow a unique interpretation with each presentation.

MVT. 2: *In Forget Me Not*, Ms. Okada asks the performer to read the included poem to help with interpretation. The sentimental melody in $\frac{9}{8}$ time begins gently with much room for expressive phrasing as it unfolds to a more animated intensity. At this

point there is a choice of two possible melodies or a completely improvised melody. I found this to be a delightful piece to listen to and interpret.

MVT. 3: *Snowy Mountains*. In this movement, harmonic choices come into play, with left hand cadential chord choices left up to the student at certain phrase endings. The melody flows easily with simple rhythms and a chordal accompaniment, either broken or arpeggiated. This selection also provides good practice for balance and pedal clarity.

MVT. 4: *The Star Festival* incorporates all the interpretative elements previously highlighted in other movements: articulation, dynamics, melody and chords. Each of these elements can be varied to create an individualized performance. With a tranquillo entrance, the piece quickly moves into a lively $\frac{6}{8}$ pulse through several key changes and builds to an exciting finish. A good final piece for any student recital.

All the pieces in this suite are manageable for a level 6/7 student. Rhythms are straightforward, allowing students to focus on developing their own ideas. The improvisational suggestions are not overwhelming and would be a great jumping-off point for discussion of compositional elements or for freeing up a student who is afraid to take those interpretative risks.

Maureen Baird



Annual General Meeting



The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations (CFMTA) was held virtually, via Zoom, on July 2, 2026, and was followed shortly thereafter by a CFMTA Board of Directors meeting, also held via Zoom, which took place over two days, July 2 and 3. This was my first CFMTA meeting as a delegate and I was proud to represent the MRMTA along with our Past President, Laura Liu.

The AGM proceeded very efficiently, with standard business taken care of in short order. Special recognition was given to outgoing Treasurer Lois Kerr, who is retiring from her position. Ashley Fanourgiakis was then introduced as incoming Treasurer. Though there were no presentations to be made, President Marlaire Osgood did speak to the dedication of the Officers, Delegates, Administrative Program Assistant, and Committee Chairs as well as bringing attention to the three competitions the CFMTA holds: the Essay Competition, Student Composer Competition, and the upcoming inaugural iteration of the National Multidiscipline Competition, which will take place at the 2027 conference in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

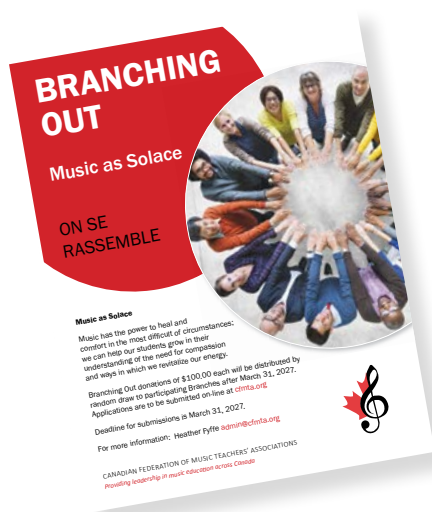
The Board of Directors meeting provided an extended opportunity for the delegates of the various Teachers' Associations from across Canada to become more familiar

with each other, while also taking care of a lot of necessary business. There were a couple of significant executive elections, as Barbara Siemens, who had served as 1st Vice President was elected as the new CFMTA President and Laura Liu, who had served as 2nd Vice President, was elected as the new 1st Vice President.

The most substantial discussion of the meeting was had in regard to the issue of Vulnerable Sector Checks. Though the vast majority of those in attendance felt the checks are a good idea, the issue is complicated by the fact that, in many jurisdictions, they must be requested by an employer or volunteer organization. In the end, it was decided that it would not be feasible for the CFMTA to introduce a national requirement for Vulnerable Sector Checks at this time but that the CFMTA could make an effort to lobby for changes to regulations that could allow individual, self-employed teachers to acquire Vulnerable Sector Checks in the future.

In the end, these two days of Zoom meetings were very productive and I look forward to what will surely be a wonderful conference in Wolfville, NS next summer!

Bennet Charter, MRMTA President and CFMTA delegate



Branching Out 2026 - 2027 Music as Solace

The Branching Out theme, Music as Solace, highlights the comforting and healing power of music. Teachers are encouraged to help students bring music into the community through performances in seniors' residences, libraries, parks, city halls, palliative care settings, and other public spaces.

Participating branches will be entered into a random draw for \$100 donations. All submissions will be featured in *The Canadian Music Teacher Year in Review*. Submit your event write-up, photo, and completed photo release form online by March 31, 2027, at www.cfmata.org.

For more information, contact Heather Fyffe admin@cfmta.org.



CFMTA Corner



Stay connected and take advantage of the many enriching opportunities the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations (CFMTA/FCAPM) offers. Please visit www.cfmta.org or consult the CFMTA/FCAPM App for comprehensive information, including recent and archived updates. Let us continue to celebrate and promote excellence in music education across Canada!

Explore These Resources and Opportunities:

1. Monthly "Of Note" Email and Canada Music Teacher Magazine:
 - Receive monthly newsletters and the Canada Music Teacher magazine three times a year.
2. CFMTA and MRMTA Facebook Groups:
 - Connect with fellow music teachers through these Facebook groups
3. "Connecting Canada" Online Professional Development Chats:
 - Participate in monthly online professional development sessions.

Details are emailed on the first of each month.
4. CFMTA Video Resource Library:
 - Access instructional videos. Request the password from Dina Pollock at webmaster@cfmta.org.
5. A member of CFMTA Logo for Your Webpage and Correspondence:
 - Enhance your professional look with a member of the CFMTA logo.

Get the logo from Heather Fyffe at admin@cfmta.org.
6. National Essay Competition:
 - Enter the CFMTA National Essay Competition. For more info, email essaycompetition@cfmta.org.
7. Canada Music Week Poster Competition
 - Participate in the Canada Music Week Poster Competition. This year's theme is "My Music Hero."

Entries must be submitted online through the CFMTA website by November 15, 2026.

For more information, email canadamusicweek@cfmta.org.
8. Call for Compositions for Canada Music Week
 - Submit your compositions for Canada Music Week 2027. The theme is "Time Zones of Canada."

The submission deadline is March 1, 2027. For more information, contact canadamusicweek@cfmta.org.

Take advantage of these exceptional resources and opportunities to grow professionally and engage with our dynamic music teaching community! Check out www.cfmta.org.

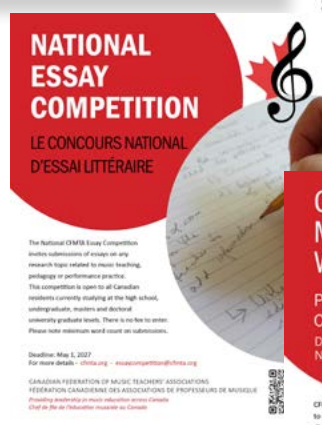


CFMTA Corner



Mark Your Calendar!

- Connecting Canada Year-Round
Every month – *details on the Members Only page*
- Canada Music Week Poster Competition
Deadline: November 15, 2026
- Canada Music Week – November 22–28, 2026
- Call for Compositions
Deadline: March 1, 2027
- Branching Out
Deadline for hosting event: March 15, 2027
Deadline for online submission: March 31, 2027
- National Essay Competition
Deadline: May 1, 2027
- Memorial Pedagogy Award
Deadline: May 1, 2027
- Hugheen Ferguson Distinguished Teacher Award
Deadline: May 1, 2027
- CFMTA Student Composer Competition
Deadline: June 1, 2027
- CFMTA Annual General Meeting - July 2027
- CFMTA Board of Directors Meeting – July 2027
- CFMTA/FCAPM 2027 Conference
Wolfville, Nova Scotia – July 2027



From the Editor

Hello Everyone,
I hope you enjoy this Fall issue of Take Note.

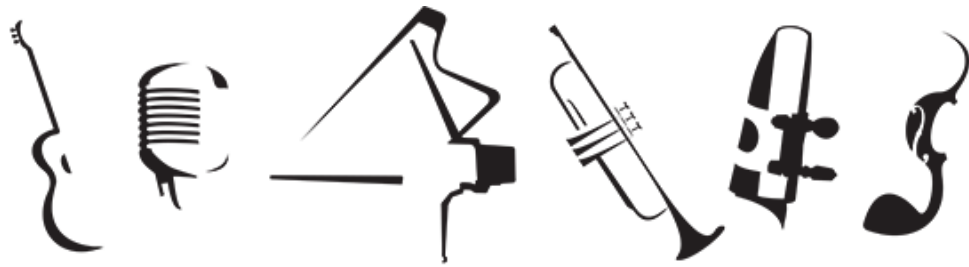
So to work:

Thank you to all the committee chairs for your reports - you make my job so much easier. Thank you Evangeline and Maureen for your book reviews, they are amazing.

Thanks

Dina





MRMTA Provincial Executive 2026 - 2027

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