



### From the Desk of Béatrice Ellis, President

Thanksgiving was a quiet and simple affair at our house. It was just the two of us, with minimal cooking shared at leisure on a nicely dressed table. Thanksgiving has become my favorite celebration of the year and maybe I should campaign in France to emulate this great American family tradition. How about “Le Grand Merci” on November 29, the day I am writing this article. Looking back at my first year as MMTA President, I can’t thank enough the MMTA board and their dedication as well the many members from the 16 Michigan chapters who volunteer their time and talent to ensure that all our programs run smoothly.

Every fall, we hold two big events: the conference and the MTNA/MMTA competitions. The success of the 2021 fall conference was born out of an immense time and professional commitment by Vice President Dr. Derek Polischuk and his wife Karin. There were a lot of “firsts” that might become the new template for future conferences: hybrid conference, organized at a university versus a hotel, on a Friday-Saturday schedule, an invitation to the gala extended to all registrants, mini sessions by MMTA members, etc.... And if dealing with fluctuating pandemic restrictions was not nerve-racking enough, Derek offered to take over most of my duties, as I needed to leave the country unexpectedly to deal with a family emergency. From many Facebook posts and communications with my colleagues, I know everyone had a great time. So “merci” Derek and Karin for creating such a worthwhile, nurturing and enjoyable experience! And “merci” to the Ann Arbor Area Piano Teachers Guild’s President Elena Tsai and past President Gaye Thomas for all the support they provided.

On November 21 and 22, I went to the UM School of Music to witness a perfectly run MTNA/MMTA competition. I came to offer my help but there was nothing for me to do, except using the opportunity to catch up and enjoy in-person interactions. The competition has become more and more popular over the years and in fact it took three days to handle all students. This is quite a time commitment for the organizers who have to stay overnight, away from their families. So “merci” Laurie Marshall for your unfailing energy and organization skills, and “merci” Karen Feilla and Lora Kolean for all your support!

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**MICHIGAN MUSIC TEACHER**  
**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE**  
**MICHIGAN MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**  
**AFFILIATED WITH THE**  
**MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION**

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**MARCH 2022**  
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**February 23**

All materials must be received by this date, no exceptions!

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 Membership Chair  
[mmtamembership@gmail.com](mailto:mmtamembership@gmail.com)



## President's message, continued from pg. 1

Finally, here is to a new MMTA initiative: the inauguration of a webinar series in September. I attended two sessions presented respectively by Jeremy Siskind and Paula Dreyer and both were excellent. It is not too late to check the website and listen to the recordings! You might also find it rewarding to be able to put a face on long-time and recent members who were in attendance. It makes us aware that MMTA's membership is an evolving great pool of talents that needs to be explored. "Merci" Joy Morin, Emily Suszko and Stephanie Thompson for carrying this important project through.

I missed the session about the SAT, hosted by members from different chapters: Jacki VanderSlick, Sarah Hamilton, Simona Leszinsky, Stephanie Thompson and Michele Wells. This session's aim was both to offer guidance on how to prepare students and to explain the reason for some changes in the SAT. I know change is never easy to embrace but I really appreciate the spirit of the SAT Advisory Committee. They took time over the summer to debate how SAT could embrace the participation of a wider type of students. "Merci" to the entire SAT Advisory Committee, for their willingness to experiment and sometimes agree to disagree, and "merci" to the five webinar hosts, for their determination to improve and ensure SAT's future.

Now, "merci" to the little things that brightened my life recently:

- Funny striped mittens that keep my fingers warm as I practice;
- A Thanksgiving cactus blossoming just the day of our 29th anniversary;
- The emotion of my siblings after I sent a recording of a short piece chosen for each of them.

Though I wish there would be a French national day for "A grand Merci", there is no need to wait for it. I remember Michelle Steffes—in her April webinar entitled "Avoiding Burnout"—suggesting starting each day with a simple expression of gratitude. It settles one's mind on a positive mood. It is not hard to do and certainly risk free.

See you in Kalamazoo next fall!

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### Open Board Positions:

If you are interested in getting more involved with MMTA, or if you think of a colleague who might be, don't hesitate to contact us. We are looking to fill three positions:

- MTNA Junior Coordinator – contact Laurie Marshall: [laurie@thechildrensacademy.us](mailto:laurie@thechildrensacademy.us)
- SAT Voice Chair – contact Michelle Mitchum: [michellemitchum@gmail.com](mailto:michellemitchum@gmail.com)
- Communication Coordinator – contact Yelena Wells: [support@michiganmusicteachers.com](mailto:support@michiganmusicteachers.com)



**2021 MTNA Michigan Competitions**  
University of Michigan, School of Music, Theatre & Dance  
November 19-21, 2021

**RESULTS**

**Junior Division**

**Piano:**

Winner, Aaron Wang	Teacher, Catherine Rollin
Alternate, Brenda Mao	Teacher, Faye Mao
Honorable Mention, Brian Zhang	Teacher, Christopher Harding
Honorable Mention, Sunny Rong	Teacher, Mary Siciliano
Honorable Mention, Victor Zhong	Teacher, Mary Siciliano

**Judges: David Keep, Solungga Liu, Eric van der Vort**

**String:**

Winner, Bhargava Kulkami, cello	Teacher, Amir Eldan
Alternate, Anna Lee, violin	Teacher, Kim Kennedy
Honorable Mention, Yohei Kuroda, violin	Teacher, Mallory Tabb

**Judge: Andrew Koehler**

**Senior Division**

**Composition:**

Winner, Jonah Cohen	Teacher, Mary Siciliano
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**Judge: Catherine McMichael**

**Brass:**

Representative, Roel Arazo, euphonium	Teacher, David Zerkel
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**Piano:**

Winner, Davis Morgensten	Teacher, Michael Coonrod
Alternate, Roger Wang	Teacher, Arthur Greene
Honorable Mention, Khoa Ho	Teacher, Thomas Lymanstull
Honorable Mention, Ariya Laothitipong	Teacher, Christopher Harding
Honorable Mention, Luis Villa	Teacher, Michael Coonrod

**Judges: Laura Melton, Hamilton Tescarollo, Yu-Lien The**

**String:**

Winner, Nikolas Simon, violin	Teacher, Kim Kennedy
Alternate, Kaivalya Kulkami, cello	Teacher, Amir Eldan
Honorable Mention, Henry Jackson, violin	Teacher, Adrienne Ronmark

**Judge: Andrew Koehler**

**Young Artist Division**

**Composition:**

Representative, Michael Eaton	Teacher, David Biedenbender
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**Brass:**

Winner, Joseph Bickel, euphonium	Teacher, David Zerkel
Alternate, Brian Wilk, tuba	Teacher, James Long

**Judge: Adam Graham**



**2021 MTNA Michigan Competitions**  
University of Michigan, School of Music, Theatre & Dance  
November 19-21, 2021

**RESULTS CONTINUED**

**Piano:**

Winner, Zhengyi Huang	Teacher, Logan Skelton
Alternate, Zhisheng Wang	Teacher, Logan Skelton
Honorable Mention, Helen Bryant	Teacher, Christopher Harding
Honorable Mention, Theron Masters	Teacher, Arthur Greene

**Judges: Laura Melton, Yu-Lien The, Eric van der Vort**

**String:**

Winner, Benjamin Deighton, cello	Teacher, Amir Eldan
Alternate, Jacob Resendez, cello	Teacher, Bruce Uchimura
Honorable Mention, Zachary Earle	Teacher, Bruce Uchimura

**Judge: Andrew Koehler**

**Woodwind:**

Winner, Roberto Campa, saxophone	Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Alternate, Jacob Nance, saxophone	Teacher, Joseph Lulloff
Honorable Mention, Nathan Jasper, saxophone	Teacher, John Nichol
Honorable Mention, Jason Frazier, saxophone	Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Honorable Mention, Philip Kleutgens, saxophone	Teacher, Timothy McAllister
Honorable Mention, Samuel Dishon, saxophone	Teacher, Timothy McAllister

**Judges: James Fusik, John Sampen, Kevin Schempf**

**MTNA Michigan Competitions**

Composition Coordinator, Mary Ann Anschutz  
Senior Division Coordinator, Karen Feilla  
Young Artist Division Coordinator, Lora Kolean  
Competition Chair, Laurie M. Marshall



## What's New for SAT 2022?

I'm excited to share with you news of some changes to the Student Achievement Testing program! In October, the Board approved 3 updates that will change how the tests are given next spring.

### 1

The biggest change is in the memorization requirement, students and teachers will have the choice to memorize 1, 2, or all 3 of their pieces. All the other repertoire requirements will remain the same. Also, anyone who wishes to go to Semi Finals **MUST** memorize all 3 pieces.

By opening up the possibility of non-memorized performances, we felt it was necessary to revisit the copyright guidelines. After much research and discussion, we decided it was safest to require 2 legal scores (no photocopies) in the room. We also updated language to include the option of reading from an electronic device.

Students playing from the score (not by memory) will need to have 2 legal scores in the testing room, one for the judge and one for themselves. Teachers will need to plan ahead; can you send your own score with the student as the 2nd one? Or borrow another score from another student or teacher? There are several ways we can make this work without making the student buy a 2nd score, it just needs to be thought about before the testing day.

### 2

The second change is to the sight-reading guidelines. We wanted to better reflect how we sight read in real life. So instead of allowing the student to play just the scale and chords of the example and then ghost it, we are allowing them to prepare "in any way they wish." They may still play the scale or the cadence, but they may also practice the example hands separate, hands together, tap the rhythm, go straight through, figure out a difficult looking part.....They may quickly practice it in whatever way works for them.



The third change is to the melody playback guidelines. Instead of having the judge play the melody 2 times and then a 3rd “if requested”, all judges will automatically play it 3 times with a one measure pause between repetitions. This makes the testing experience the same for all students and eliminates the awkward pause between the 2nd and 3rd playings.

Of these 3 changes, the melody playback change is a permanent change to the handbook. The memory and sight-reading changes will be run as a pilot program in 2022. After this testing season, we will ask for feedback from all of you before making the decision to move forward as permanent changes. There are full details of the 3 changes and the copyright guidelines on the MMTA website.

Much thanks to the committee of teachers who are passionate about the future of SAT and worked together to improve the process! If you know any of these people, tell them thank-you! Janice Derian, Sarah Hamilton, James Hohmeyer, Maria Lisowsky, Michelle Mitchum, and Gaye Thomas.

If you have any questions about any of this, contact me:  
Jacki VanderSlik, SAT Advisory committee chair  
jacki.vanderslik@gmail.com

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### **From Vice-President, Derek Kealii Polischuk**

It was a joy sharing in the MMTA Conference in Ann Arbor on October 8 and 9 at the University of Michigan. I hope it was a worthwhile and inspiring experience for those who were able to attend either in-person or online. It was wonderful to engage students in a robust way, with over 40 in attendance. These students represent the future of MMTA, and in my interactions with these students, it's clear that our future is bright. My thanks to our sponsors, including Faber Piano Institute, Ann Arbor Piano Teachers Guild and the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance. Also thank you to the planning committee including Elena Tsai and Gaye Thomas from the AAPTG, Karin Polischuk, and MSU graduate students Yushi Hu and JIaying Wei.

Planning for the Fall 2022 Conference in Kalamazoo is in its beginning stages. We hope to have dates set soon.

**Don't forget to tune into the fifth webinar of the 2021-2022 MMTA Webinar Series!**

## **Taming the Jungle: Digital Management Strategies for the Independent Music Teacher**

Presented by Amy Chaplin

Friday, January 7, 2021

11:30 AM to 1PM



Even though the digital age has placed a plethora of content, programs, and digital management tools at our fingertips it can very quickly become overwhelming and feel harder and harder to stay organized. In this session, we will look at six major areas of digital management independent music teachers deal with daily including file storage, communication, influencer content, media, basic lists, and office/business management. We'll discuss everything from taking online payments and giving online assignments to following your favorite online creators, email management, and more. Attendees will gain invaluable time-saving strategies for dealing with information and communication as music teacher professionals and will walk away feeling equipped and supported to better manage not only their business but their daily lives.

Amy Chaplin, M.M., is a pianist, educator, entrepreneur, writer, and active presenter at the local, state, and national levels. She enjoys talking about all things piano teaching, studio business, organization, and good-food related, combining all these passions at PianoPantry.com. Chaplin runs a successful independent piano studio in Northeast Indiana. She holds a Master's in Piano Pedagogy and Performance from Ball State University, a Bachelor of Music in Choral Education K-12 from Huntington University, and a certification in Music Learning Theory (MLT) and its practical application for piano from the Gordon Institute for Music Learning (GIML). Amy has been on the Indiana Music Teachers Association board for over ten years in various leadership roles, including state President. She has been a guest writer/speaker for several professional piano teacher outlets, including Piano Bench Magazine, Alfred Music Blog, Top Music Co., Vibrant Music Teachers, and Key Ideas podcast with Leila Viss. Her "Happy Birthday by Ear" product was featured on episode 28 of the Beyond Measure Podcast with Christina Whitlock.

Registering is just a click away: <https://michiganmusicteachers.org/webinars/>

A few days prior, all members will receive an email reminder from MMTA sent by Education Chair, Joy Morin. If you cannot attend, the session is recorded and you can catch up at your own pace later on.

Enjoy learning new skills and meeting with your peers from all parts of Michigan!