



## Editor's [Half] Notes

Dear Teachers and Colleagues,

November is upon us, and the rain has (finally) begun to fall. Winter recitals loom ahead, and students are suddenly asking, with a tremor in their voice, "Do I really have to memorize this?"

It's also the season when students find amazing ways to injure themselves. I have one high-schooler with a torn leg tendon from a swimming accident, another recovering from a torn ACL from football, and a college student with an injured wrist from an arm-wrestling match gone wrong. I thought my only improvising would be at the piano, but these circumstances have required some quick and creative thinking in repertoire and technique, as well as some creative negotiations to keep the checks coming in. I've found the gift of music becomes even more important to them when they can't use it and enjoy it. We'll get over this hurdle somehow, some way. It takes time and patience. Lots of patience. With a few eye rolls thrown in.

Be encouraged. Love your students well. Keep making music together!

Sincerely

*Neil Patton*

Con Brio Editor

## November Meeting

Yet again, this is to remind you that the Eugene OMTA November meeting will take place **a week earlier** on **November 2nd** instead of November 9th. We will meet at the First Congregational Church, 1050 E 23rd Ave. We will meet at 9:00 for refreshment, and our business meeting will be at 9:30, followed by our guest presentation at 10:30.

Peter Gach, Professor Emeritus at Palomar College in San Marcos, CA, is our guest speaker. The subject of his presentation is: *Pedagogy Behind the Iron Curtain: Exploring the Wronski/Ekier Tradition in Poland*. Please see the articles at the end of this newsletter for an explanation of this topic as well as Professor Gach's impressive bio.

See you this next Monday!

### Treasurer's Report

As this issue of the Con Brio needed to be published before the end of October, we were unable to include the October Treasurer's Report. Our Treasurer, Wyatt Burger, will e-mail the Report separately to all of you before the November District Meeting on Monday, November 2. Thank you for your understanding.

### Ensemble Festival

Sunday, November 15

Recitals on the hour, beginning at 6:00pm

University of Oregon, School of Music and Dance, Room 163

Entry Deadline: November 4, 2015 (extended!)

Reminders:

1. When filling out your entries, please list the group's Syllabus level (or equivalence) in the area that asks for the "Grade," as this will help me better organize the program.
2. The week before the recital I will be sending out a copy of the program to all participating teachers. Please take a moment to double check the spelling of your student's name, as well as their placement in the program, in a timely manner. This will help me make necessary changes before printing.
3. Since I usually receive late entries, I have extended the deadline to from October 31st, to November 4th. Entries will not be accepted after deadline. If you need to drop off your entries on the day of the deadline, please get in touch with me to schedule a time.

Send entries and master list to:

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### IMPORTANT UPDATE REGARDING THE ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL:

In some previous email communications, we were informed that the District Ensemble Recital date had to be changed to **Saturday, Nov 14**. We apologize that the correct date had not been listed on the website sooner.

This oversight has raised some scheduling difficulties with several teachers. Therefore, we have contacted the University of Oregon and asked if it would be possible to schedule on **Sunday, Nov 15**, as originally listed on our district website. They have agreed.

**Please note:** The District Ensemble Festival will be **Sunday, Nov 15 at 6:00pm**, as originally listed on the website (as well as in the above announcement).

Thank you,

*David Cragun and Susane Davis*

### Festival of Popular Music

The 2015 Festival of Popular Music was held on Saturday, October 17 at the United Lutheran Church. There were three recitals this year, comprised of 40 students from 8 teachers. Students performed a wide variety of popular styles, from Ragtime, Jazz, and show tunes, to popular classics; and even encouraging audience participation with a Beatles singalong.

I would like to thank the participating teachers for their assistance before, during, and after each recital; and everyone involved for helping to make this event a success.

*Wyatt Burger*

Festival of Popular Music Chair

### Notes regarding our Guest Presenter for the November Meeting.

The title of Monday's presentation by Professor Peter Gach is, "*Pedagogy Behind the Iron Curtain: Exploring the Wronski/Ekier tradition in Poland.*" Here is a brief explanation of the topic: "I was the only North American student of Jan Ekier at the Warsaw Conservatory during his tenure there. He was the Editor of the new National Edition of the Complete Works of Chopin, and Chairman for many years of the Chopin Competition Jury. I studied with him from 1970-1973, during the final years of communism in Poland. Tadeusz Wroński was an outstanding violinist and pedagogue who wrote many books on music, and served as Rector of the Warsaw Conservatory during my time there. After completing my studies I returned frequently to Poland to perform, and also made some small contributions to the National Edition. Their approach to music changed my way of thinking about the piano, and has been an enormous influence ever since, both in my playing and my teaching."

**Peter Gach** is a pianist of wide-ranging musical interests. His repertoire extends from the complete Well-Tempered Clavier, Vol. II of JS Bach, to contemporary works written especially for him.

He holds degrees from the University of Arizona and Indiana University, as well as post-graduate studies at the Warsaw Conservatory in Poland. Fluent in both Polish and French, he has made a lifetime study of the music of Fryderyk Chopin, studying with the editor of the Urtext Edition of the Complete Works of Chopin, the late Jan Ekier. He was the only American student to do so. He has also done extensive research into and performance of the works of XXth century composer Karol Szymanowski, performing at his home in Poland, now a national historical site. He played the first Southern California performance of the composer's 'Sinfonia Concertante' for piano and orchestra with the La Jolla Symphony.

Gach has collaborated with the singer Ann Chase in cabaret evenings featuring the music of Steven Sondheim and Kurt Weill. Composers Madelyn Byrne, Norm Weston, Sherman Storr, Roman Ryterband and Rafal Stradomski, among others, have written works premiered by him. Many of these compositions have been recorded on the CD "Fresh Piano" issued by Nova Recordings. He has also issued CDs of the music of Chopin and Scott Joplin.

He is Professor Emeritus at Palomar College, near San Diego, California. Prior to his retirement in 2012, he was Chairperson of the Performing Arts Department at the College (Music, Theater and Dance). He was also designated Artist in Residence in Piano, performing numerous recitals and concerti for the campus. In 2010, the College awarded him its Comet Award for Outstanding Leadership. He has also been awarded First Prize in the "Chopin in the XXIst Century" Competition at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual International Catholic Festival of Multi-media and Film in Poland for his video recording of a lecture recital on the Four Ballades of Chopin.

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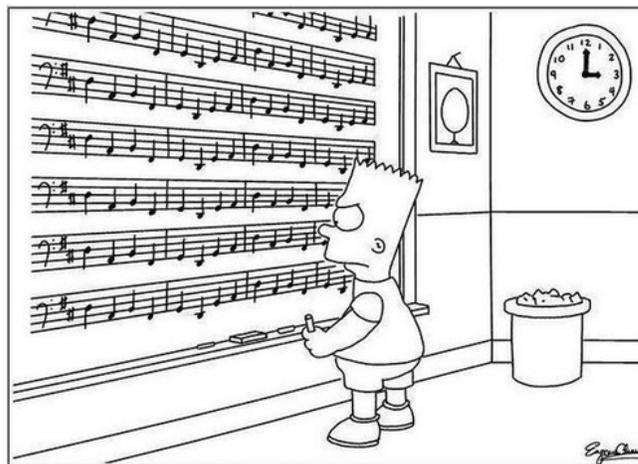
Following his retirement from Palomar College, he embarked on a two-year campaign to raise funds through a series of concerts for the “Peter Gach Steinway” at the College’s new Performing Arts Complex. His sold-out dedicatory recital included a world premiere by composer William C. Bradbury, and works by Chopin.

Gach has returned numerous times to Poland to perform. He has also appeared in Hong Kong and the Philippines. In the US, he has performed throughout California, as well as Arizona, Indiana, Illinois, New Mexico, Georgia, Hawaii and Texas. He has recently collaborated with the rock band “Dolan Brotherhood” on a new CD. In February of this year, he performed a sold-out concert at the Museum of Making Music in Carlsbad, California, raising over \$5,000 for their Educational Fund, enabling underprivileged children to experience live music at the Museum.

Recent performances include music for piano and computer at the Athenaeum in La Jolla, a recording with the EDM (Electronic Dance Music) group 23 Degrees, and the premiere of Three Pieces for Piano by Benjamin Krause, which he commissioned. He recently concluded a three-part lecture-recital series at the Museum of Making Music titled “Musical Insights,” drawing on his extensive repertoire to illustrate various aspects of the art of music.

**The deadline for submitting articles and announcements for the December 2015 issue of Con Brio is Sunday, December 1, 2015.**

**Send your news and announcements to district members between regular issues of Con Brio!** Simply submit the news item or announcement as usual, indicating you would like it sent immediately. It will be formatted and sent via email to all members.



## **Con Brio**

**November 2015**

Con Brio is the newsletter of the Eugene Chapter of OMTA, published and distributed monthly, except July and August.

President: David Cragun, Vice-President: Genevieve Mason, Treasurer: Wyatt Burger,  
Corresponding Sec: Fern McArthur, Recording Sec: Neil Patton, Past President: Delores Tiktin  
Con Brio founder and first publisher: Lea Mirabella

All materials for publication are due on the last Sunday of each month.

Con Brio is posted on the Eugene District website on the Wednesday prior to the monthly meeting.

**Neil Patton, editor**