



Con Brio

Oregon Music Teachers'
Association, Inc.
Eugene District

Affiliated with the Music Teachers' National Association, Inc.

Opus 255

November 2014

Page 1

President's Message

Greetings, Fellow Teachers!

I hope you are enjoying every moment you have with your students this fall. Sometimes the simplest things can be rewarding, like when I asked a 14 year old to listen to how I play the phrasing in Schumann's Op. 68 No. 29 "Strange Man." After hearing it, he sat down and played it himself, over and over, until he had it just the way I had played it. That was the kind of moment I wish I had every day!

However, those moments don't happen all the time, nor do they come easily. As we become more immersed in our teaching this season, it is possible we will become discouraged when we don't have those moments as often as we would like. We might begin to feel over worked and under appreciated. This can lead us to feel bitter, and we will be less effective teachers. I have a solution for this feeling.

Today, as I walked through the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University, I realized that the visit was just the break I was needing to rejuvenate my spirits. I had been feeling over worked, and the stress was getting to me. I did not want to leave my work to take a break, because I had so many documents to draft and communications to send. However, my short "vacation" to the museum with the family cleared some of the stress out of my mind and released some of the building tension I was feeling. Although my work time was reduced, I was better able to communicate and create in the remaining time I had. What's more, I felt happy again!

Remember to rest, even when you think you do not have time.

With warm regards,

David Cragun

2014 Festival of Popular Music

On Sunday, October 19, the Festival of Popular Music was held at the United Lutheran Church in Eugene. This year we had 15 teachers and 61 students participate; an increase over the 2013 event of 4 teachers and 9 students. Recitals were held on the hour, at 2:00, 3:00, 4:00 and 5:00 PM. All students performed very well. The United Lutheran Church provided a comfortable and relaxed setting for students performing a wide variety of music, from Ragtime and jazz standards, to selections from musical theater and movie themes.

Many thanks to co-chair Paul Safar, last year's chair Soria Phillips-Meadow, and the participating teachers and students for making this event a success.

Wyatt Burger

Festival of Popular Music Chair

Upcoming Meetings

Monday, November 10

We will meet at First Congregational Church, located at 1050 e. 23rd Ave in Eugene. We will start at 9:00 for refreshments, and then discuss business at 9:30. Following our business meeting, we will enjoy a concert demonstration: **“Contemporary Piano Composition in Eugene: The Music of Neil Patton and Rebecca Oswald.”** This will be a performance (by the composers) of new contemporary solo piano music available for intermediate and advanced students. Sheet music and CD’s will be available for sale, as well. (More information about the performers is elsewhere in this issue of Con Brio.)

* * *

Monday, December 8

We will have our annual holiday Party at the home of Nancy Harris (3317 Southview Dr, Eugene), featuring performances by various members. More information to follow!

Treasurer’s Report

10/01/2014 to 11/01/2014

CHECKING ACCOUNT

DATE	DESCRIPTION	INCOME	EXPENSE	BALANCE
10/01/14	Beginning balance			\$ 4,060.32
10/10/14	PEAK Internet		20.89	
10/10/14	Library		32.99	
10/10/14	First Congregational Church—Nov. meeting		25.00	
10/16/14	Festival of Popular Music - programs		14.49	
10/23/14	Festival of Popular Music - student fees	427.00		
10/23/14	Membership Dues	165.00		
10/24/14	Library		53.97	
11/01/14	TOTALS	\$ 592.00	\$ 147.34	\$ 4,504.98

Respectfully submitted,

Wyatt L. Burger

OMTA Eugene District Treasurer

New Piano Performance Group

If you are interested in getting together with others to try out repertoire and hone your performing skills, there is a group seeking new members at all levels and ages. They are a forgiving audience and would love to have you join.

Please contact Kay or Rush at [541-342-6144](tel:541-342-6144).

Reach the World Right Where You Are...Become a Host Family!

Discover the rewarding world of hosting students
In your own home this winter!

- What: Middle and High School Age Chinese Students
participating in the 18th bi-annual Music/English Camps
at the University of Oregon
- When: February 1-8 (7 nights)
February 3-10 (7 nights)
***Possible Additional Camp February 11-18**
- Note: The host family provides transportation, breakfast and dinner on
weekdays; 3 meals a day on the weekend and occasional sack lunches.
Students may share a room but must have their own bed.
Students spend only evenings and the weekend at home. Host families
are strongly encouraged to take 2 students.
- Stipend*: \$125/person for 7 nights or \$250 for two people
- *Stipend should cover expenses for meals, transportation, laundry
and all activities. The number of days may vary slightly due to
travel arrangements; stipend will be prorated accordingly.
- Website: www.gpyinternational.org/hostfamily_short.html
- Contact: luannlangford@gpyinternational.org or
Phone 541.517.5915 for additional details

*We are Looking forward to having Your Family
Join in the Fun with Us!*



Our Performers for the November Meeting



Rebecca Oswald is a composer and pianist living in Eugene, Oregon. She earned a Bachelor of Music degree *summa cum laude* from Westminster Choir College of Rider University in 1998, and a Master of Music degree in Composition from the University of Oregon School of Music in 2001.

Most recently she was named a 2014 finalist in choral and chamber music for The American Prize in Composition, and a semifinalist in orchestral music. She has composed for all types and sizes of choral ensembles, chamber ensembles, full and string orchestra, a clarinet concerto, and chorus with orchestra, plus music for film and CD-ROM games; and she has two CDs of original solo piano music.

Neil Patton has been working in the Eugene/Springfield music community for over twenty years. A student of Karen Gookin, Dorothy Munz and Victor Steinhardt, he attended the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance, where he graduated with honors in 1994. Since then, he has worked full time in music as a private piano instructor for all ages, Adjunct Faculty at New Hope Christian College, a composer and performer, and as a worship arts pastor at Emerald Bible Fellowship in Eugene.



He has released three CDs of original music, two of which have gained international attention in the contemporary solo piano genre. His third collection of original solo piano music is to be released in early 2015. He has been married to his bride, Cathy since 1996, with whom he has performed as a piano/flute duo for many years. Together, they have composed two wonderful children.

Additions to the new musician's dictionary:

Adagio Frommiagio - To play in a slow and cheesy manner.

Angus Dei - To play with a divine, beefy tone.

A Patella - Unaccompanied knee-slapping.

Frugalhorn - A sensible, inexpensive brass instrument.

Dill Piccolino - A wind instrument that plays only sour notes.

Approximonto - A musical entrance that is somewhere in the vicinity of the correct pitch.

(Contributed by Wyatt Burger)

The deadline for submitting articles and announcements for the December 2014 issue of Con Brio is Sunday, December 1, 2014.

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.

Performance Anxiety

Some thoughts on "the jitters"



I'm sure every teacher has had to deal with students who were reluctant to perform in a recital due to nervousness. Performing can be truly unnerving for some students. Performance anxiety has prevented many exceptional musicians from pursuing a performing career. I tell my students that performing is like riding a horse: if you fall off, you must get right back on. If you have an unpleasant experience with a recital performance, learn what you can do to make the next performance a success.

Telling someone not to be nervous is useless and, in fact, can make the condition worse. If we had an on-off switch for the jitters, we would have used it already. Some people find meditation, yoga, and various exercises helpful before a performance. (The violinist Yehudi Menuhin used to stand on his head for several minutes before walking out on stage.) What about prescription drugs such as metoprol, that helps control the physiological symptoms of anxiety? I choose not to rely on drugs, and I certainly would not want students to do so either. Besides, a little nervousness properly controlled, can enhance a performance, adding excitement and energy to the music.

Performance anxiety may have many causes, such as a fear of getting lost, a fear of not knowing how to begin, or how to reach the end. Many students fear making a error that brings their performance to a halt. More often, the exact cause cannot be identified. I have found that students are usually just as nervous performing with the score as they are performing from memory. The best way to help a student overcome performance anxiety is to address potential causes, and have them rehearse possible solutions.

1. **Be prepared.** The better you know your music, the more confident you will be, and the less likely to experience anxiety during a performance.
2. **Use "starting points."** Whether playing from memory or not, students should be able to start at specific points throughout the music. If anything goes wrong, the student can go to the nearest starting point and continue. This is an excellent "insurance policy" against getting lost. The better the student is at using this technique, the more skilled they will become at recovering, and less likely to ever need to use their insurance policy.
3. **Perform as much as possible.** Play for family, friends, or a recording device. One person can be an audience. Play on different and unfamiliar pianos at every opportunity.
4. **Rehearse good performance practices.** Adjust the bench. Use good posture. Survey the piano keyboard and locate your starting position. Take time to think through the first bars of the music to establish a steady tempo. (Beginning at a faster-than-usual tempo is a common source of anxiety.) And don't forget to breathe!
5. **Stay focused.** I find it useful to mentally "sing" along with the music. It helps maintain concentration and gives the performer's consciousness or "inner voice" something to do. (Otherwise, that annoying inner voice may whisper things to us that will make us even more nervous.)
6. **Relax on the day of the performance.** Avoid an over-scheduled, stressful day with too many other activities. Don't over-practice your recital piece; do some sight-reading instead. Oh, and no caffeine!

Recitals and other performance opportunities should be a wonderful experience for students. When they tell me they are nervous before a performance, I remind them that it is not all about them. The music is no more than printed symbols on paper, until someone learns, interprets, and performs it. As performers, they have a profound responsibility to the composer to keep the music alive by sharing it with an audience.

Wyatt Burger

Con Brio

November 2014

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