



President's Message -- June 2010

Springtime greetings to all members! Many, many thanks to those who contributed time and expertise to the planning and implementation of chapter events this past year. And to the education of your president. It is deeply appreciated.

As I reflect over the past year's activities, I am struck by the efficiency of execution. Programs and activities of the chapter have been conducted effectively and have benefited teachers and students. Your LV Chapter continues to provide opportunities for its members to learn, to network, and to participate. Please keep in mind that member involvement is the only way this organization can continue to survive and to serve you. It has taken many years to develop strategies and plans for events that provide these opportunities for music students and teachers. However, you should know that these events are coordinated by a decreasing cadre of teachers who undertake an increasing number of responsibilities. If you are not currently a committee member, please consider calling (610-366-7079) or emailing me (carolynsas@aol.com) to volunteer for committee work.

We congratulate Martha Schempel and Barbara Thompson who completed their respective programs of study and graduated this spring. Martha was awarded her DMA from Temple University. Her dissertation topic was "Teaching Expressivity". Barbara was awarded her Ed D from Columbia University. Her topic was "A Rage to Master: Case Studies of Early Learning Experiences of Highly Gifted and Prodigious Young Musicians." Students who received scholarships are highlighted on other pages of this newsletter.

Musikfest again is a performance opportunity for students who will be here in the summer. Auditions will take place at Jacob's Music on July 27 beginning at 10:30 am. Performance time at the Plaza

Tropical is 12:00-1:30 on August 9. See the lvpmta.org website for details and application forms.

What a pleasure it is for me to work with dedicated, inspired and inspiring teachers! Thank you all so much for the successes of the past year. I am grateful for your contributions and your friendship.

Carolyn Anderson, President

Dorothy Sutton Performance Festival

Chair: Elizabeth Zemanek

Co-Chair: Darlene Ziegler

This year's local DSPF will be held on October 9 at Moravian College. All forms are to be sent to Darlene Ziegler and will be due to her by September 14. (Please note: this is not the postmark date but the date she must have it in hand). The state festival will be held on November 20 at Penn State University. There will be no local honor's recital this year.

More details will follow in the upcoming newsletter.

MTNA National Conference at Albuquerque, NM

March 20-24, 2010

By Carolyn Anderson

Nothing inspires quite like a national conference, especially when it is held in a part of the country new to attendees. Such was the case for Linda Perron and myself. From the moment of arrival at the airport, which introduces the western colors with artistic flair, through a second-day unexpected snow fall, to the final glorious Chopin salon recital, we were treated to a nirvana of sights, sounds, aromas and tastes.

The 200th anniversary of Chopin's birth was a natural celebratory theme for this year's conference. The opening session featured performances by this year's winners of the Chopin competitions in Canada and in the United States. In this country the competition was first held in 1975, and takes place every five years. The winners are

sent to the International Chopin Competition in Warsaw the same year.

Throughout our days, therefore, many of the workshops, recitals, master classes and teaching demonstrations focused on rediscovering Chopin—his voice, his pedagogy, his *bel canto* for the piano. One session was imaginatively described as “Chopin’s Afterlife.”

We spent much of our flight time planning which sessions to attend, usually different ones so we could later share our experiences. The various tracks included exhibitor showcases highlighting new books and new music, technology, group teaching and recreational music making, collaborative performance, studio entrepreneurship and poster sessions highlighting research. Forum meetings included such fields as arts advocacy, college auditions, certification, and the one of most concern to me—local associations. It seems that most chapters share many of the same concerns regarding membership, programming ideas and fundraising.

Workshops that I particularly enjoyed and learned much from consisted of the following: a nocturne master class; a session titled “Not Only Fur Elise” which introduced lesser-known pieces by famous composers; “The Road to Chopin” which included pre-Chopin repertoire suggestions; and sessions involving collaborative music-making and ensemble playing.

The National Finals Competitions, the Winners Concerts, the concert by Fellows of the American Pianists Association (classical and jazz), and the final 19th-century Salon Recital, wherein the performers were staged at the front of the auditorium (surrounded by period furniture) rather than up on the stage, were memorable beyond words.

Linda and I were fortunate to be hosted for three days by the family of my former student. Thus we had the extraordinary opportunity to travel to Socorro County to view the Very Large Array, one of the radio astronomy telescopes that are a facility of the National Science Foundation. Other tourist highlights of our visit were Old Towne in Albuquerque, a ride to the top of Sandia Mountain in the world’s longest cable car, and a most interesting day spent in Santa Fe. We even had the use of our hostess’s winter coats for the week!

I would like to sincerely thank the chapter for this opportunity to attend the MTNA 2010 National Conference. We returned home with knowledge, memories and music in our ears and in our hearts.

MTNA CONVENTION REPORT 2010

Linda Perron

Thanks to the chapter for the grant to attend what was my first MTNA National Convention. Below are a few ideas gained from some of the sessions. Also, I have ordered a CD of all the sessions. When it arrives, it will be available to any member who is interested in listening.

A most impressive session concerned Intelligent Practice. Here is one of the main points: If we practice the exact same way each time our brains ignore what's going on and no progress is made. Through experimentation, researchers discovered that if each time the tempo, articulation, dynamics, and/or range are modified, the brain stays alert, and we stretch to reach and maintain perfection. Also, when first playing through a new piece, take it slowly and thoughtfully with pauses, so that, rather than noting places mistakes occur, you note places where mistakes could happen, thus avoiding practicing in a mistake from the start. Another point: where you focus your attention makes a difference. Ball players are taught to keep their eyes on the ball trajectory. Pianists should focus mainly on the sound.

Memorization research has yielded some useful points: When memorizing, the block you are working on goes into short-term memory. Later when you are resting, it is moved into long-term memory. Through experimentation, it has been discovered that memorization is easier if you alternately memorize 30 seconds then rest 30 seconds. You will play the memorized section better after some sleep, when it gets moved to long-term memory. Memorize only one thing at a time, ie: one melody, the bass line, or the harmony alone. The last thing you learn before you sleep, you remember best, therefore, play what you are working on slowly and perfectly at the end of practice.

Here are some notes from a Sight Reading session: Before reading, isolate the rhythm patterns and put them in different contexts, for example, improvise with them. Notice note patterns. Highlight chords. Visualize the essential notes. Circle the tonic, put the dominate in squares, note the scalar movements. Folk songs are good for sight-reading practice. The sight-reader should read chunks, not individual notes.

Again, thank you for the grant. Don't forget to let me know if you want to borrow the CD of the convention sessions.

Summer Camp Scholarship Report

Scholarships have been awarded to six students of LVC/PMTA members for study at summer music camps. The recipients, teachers and camp locations are:

1. Gealyn Comune Clegg, student of Carol Comune (Westminster)
2. Katianne Janney, student of Irmgard Pursell (Westminster)
3. Alethea Khoo, student of Darlene Ziegler (West Chester)
4. Paul Peng, student of Susan Kuntz (Westminster)
5. Jacob Wilkinson, student of Susan Kuntz (Moravian)
6. William Wilkinson, student of Susan Kuntz (Penn State)

We congratulate these students and know they will take advantage of the opportunity they have been given to further their studies.

Carolyn Anderson
Camp Scholarship Committee

2010 Play-a-Thon

This year's annual Play-a-Thon was held on February 27 and 28 at the Palmer Park Mall. Although fewer students participated this year, donations exceeded \$6,000. Six students received prizes for being the top fund-raisers. Darius Johnson, student of Jack Stevenson, was the top prize-winner. He received a \$100 Visa gift card and a \$10 PREIT Mall gift card. Other winners of Visa gift cards and PREIT gift cards were Gabriel and Elijah Ligowski, students of Gloriana Sewell. Three students were awarded gift cards from Young's Music Store as well as PREIT gift cards: Brian Hanton (student of Randi Paul), Fayth Alston (student of Renee Bordner), and Cassandra Witner (student of Gloriana Sewell). Grant Bordner (student of Renee Bordner) won the drawing for the free piano tuning from Zeiner's Pianos. We would like to thank all participating teachers and students for supporting this important event, which is our only means of raising funds for our activities.

Cherie Murray and Randi Paul, Play-a-Thon Co-Chairs

Presentation of Honorary Life Membership to Herb Heffner

Presented by the President, April 21, 2010, Morgan's Restuarant

I now have the distinct pleasure of acknowledging the lifetime accomplishments and contributions of one of the chapter's founding members, Herbert Heffner.

I am indebted to Betty for some information I learned about Herb. But then I had to phone Herb himself to verify some astounding facts.

How many pianists do you know who started piano lessons during college? Herb did just that in his junior year at Lehigh University. He got his start with teacher Jean Clegg, and then studied with Mr. Winkler. It's clear that once he started, he didn't look back. Plus, he walked to his lessons at the Bethlehem Conservatory from his home on South Mountain. And that walk was five miles. On the return trip, he would stop at the church — to practice, of course.

I asked Herb what led him to start piano lessons while studying at the university. He said simply he disliked being there and in his senior year he auditioned at, and was accepted to, the Philadelphia Conservatory (now the University of the Arts).

So Herb is a real native of the Lehigh Valley — born and grew up here, did his first teaching at the Conservatory on Broad Street. Somewhere along the line Mirta came along and stole his heart...

Herb's contributions to the chapter are manifold: he was a founding member, he has chaired multiple committees, some of which may not even exist any more. Herb was on the Executive Board of the chapter serving as Treasurer for many years. He chaired Certification and still holds that position. He adjudicates at auditions and has kept the Ribbon Room organized during the AAA's. (Well, we tried our best without you, Herb.) He is a long-time member of the Allentown Music Club and has performed annually for them, except of course, when he's in the hospital. He has served as a role model and mentor to members new to the chapter.

Members and friends, I give you Herbert Heffner, Honorary Life Member of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of PMTA. Herb, for Dedication, Leadership and Years of Service, please accept this plaque from all of us.

Students in the News

Students of Janice Derstine

Bryn Holdsworth, senior at Phillipsburg High, entered the nationwide Classical Singer Competition for high school students. After several auditions, she made the semi-finals, which took place in New York City last weekend. She was one of 29 singers chosen to compete. Although she didn't make the final eight, she was thrilled to have made it that far and felt she gained a tremendous amount of information and help. Bryn will attend Manhattan School of Music in the fall as a vocal performance major.

Emalyn Witter was awarded the DeSales scholarship, which is announced each year at the Freddys. Emma will be entering DeSales this fall as a theatre major.

Change of e-mail address

Irmgard Pursell has a new email address.
Please note the change to ispursell@gmail.com

Frank Chesebro Scholarship

The open audition for the Frank Chesebro Scholarship was held on Sunday, May 16 in Foy Hall. Sam Martin, piano student of Barbara Thompson, won the \$1500 first prize, performing pieces by Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, plus a solo trumpet selection. Sam is graduating this year from Saucon Valley High School, where he has participated in the concert and jazz bands, the concert and jazz choir, and played in the pit orchestra for musicals. He is also a member of the Young People's Philharmonic. In the fall, Sam will attend Ithaca College, where he plans to major in collaborative piano.