



NEW ENGLAND

PIANO TEACHERS' Assoc., Inc.

May 2008

Dear Colleagues,

As we near the conclusion of our Spring schedule, we have much to be thankful for. Our programs for teachers have covered a wide variety of topics and styles, and our activities for students have demonstrated the richness of our profession in the yield of our student recitals and competitions. We are indeed fortunate to be musicians, and to have the power of music in our lives every day, to refresh us, and to pass on to our students.

This last month we had both a Teachers' Exchange, with **Vivian Handis** giving us much information about new approaches and equipment, and sharing her love of teaching with us, and a Master Class for students, led by **Joseph Di Piazza**, sharing wise and gracious comments to further these young peoples' understanding of their talent, technique, and repertoire. We thank **Adele Dreyer** for arranging the Teachers' Exchange, and **Janet Ainsworth** for chairing the Master Class. The students and their teachers who performed were: Anna Shneyderman (**Niva Fried**); Carl Lian (**Nilly Shilo**); Jessica Rucinski (**Margaret Bachelder**), and Maxwell Lang (**Julia Bernstein**).

Some of you do not have access to our website, so I am listing the winners of our many awards here. We congratulate these winners, their families, and their teachers! Thanks to all the recital chairs and competition chairs for their hard and successful work!

Alice Hamlet Competition for Seniors

Faina Kofman, Chair

1. Wei-Liang Kung (**Natalia Harlap**)
2. Ariel Borensztein (**Clara Slater**)
3. Simon Xu (**Helena Vesterman**)

Ruth Davidson Competition

Faina Kofman, Chair

1. Juliana Chalsen (**Sylvia Chambless**)
2. Elan Sonnenschein Wong (**Nilly Shilo**)
3. Jessica Rucinski (**Margaret Bachelder**)
4. Honorable Mention Jo Hee An (**Natlia Harlap**)

Angel Ramon Rivera Award

Alice Hamlet Competition Wei-Liang Kung

Ruth Davidson Competition Elan Sonnenschein Wong

Mildred Freiberg Middle School Award **Joan Collins**, Chair

1. Brian Li (**Nilly Shilo**)
2. Yoko Ellie Fukumura (**Helena Vesterman**)
3. Ellen Liu (**Lina Yen**)

Honorable Mention

Eric Chiang (**Ruth Shyu**)

Cameron Stewart (**Lyubov Shlain**)

Alice Proctor Composition Award Ruth Shyu, Chair
Sinai Tabak (Margarita Gurevich)

I have received a nice thank you from **Donald Berman** for his time with us, and a copy of his CD, *Unknown Ives*, which some of you may wish to hear. Thanks to **Lydia Reed-Guertin** for writing up notes on his talk. They are included with this newsletter.

On May 19 we will have a short Annual Meeting, our recital of winners, and a luncheon at Porcini's. I hope you have made plans to attend all these events. At the Business Meeting we will present our slate of officers and new Board members for 2008-2009 for a vote. Here is the slate as it now stands.

Recording Secretary

Linda Vieira

Board Members for 2008-2011

Irina Gelman, Brighton
Elizabeth Landman, Lexington
Janice Paratore Zaganjori, Arlington

Regarding Teachers' Exchanges for the new year, **Barbara Jones** is organizing the December meeting around reporting on recent books about music learning and its correlation to new brain studies, and also other books that might interest us on music research. Read the announcements at the end of this newsletter for information on how to participate.

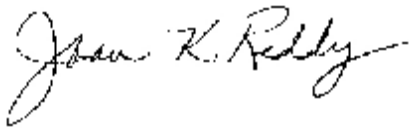
In April we are planning half a program on Motivating Teens. If you think you're good at this endeavor, please be in touch with **Adele Dreyer**. The other half of the program will be presented by **Tanya Shrago** on special duet literature, including a performance of the music.

Please remember to send in your dues, and include a contribution to the Scholarship Fund, if you can. Also, send any changes in your information to **Michelle Kelley** THROUGHOUT THE YEAR at conmoto@comcast.net.

Our condolences to **Janna Bruene** on the loss of her father.

I look forward to seeing you all on the 19th!

Sincerely yours,



Joan Reddy

Announcements

Lorraine Sharon sent us news of two instruments for sale, a piano and an organ, earlier this year. She has reduced the price of the organ to \$8,000 or best offer, if you are interested. These instruments were her mother's, who passed away recently. Sharon's email is lsharon@cisco.com.

Betty Reed is selling her 1984 Kawai GS-30 6'1" grand piano. It is high-gloss ebony and includes a Damp-Chaser system and duet bench. The price is \$7995. If you are interested, please contact her at pianoears@verizon.net.

There is a piano teaching position opening in Lexington at Keys for Kids. Please send resume and references to **Inga Magid** at inga@keys-for-kids.com.

December 8, 2008 Teacher's Exchange

Much has been written recently reflecting new research into the way the brain processes music. The December 8, 2008 Teacher Exchange will feature reviews and discussions of some of this new material, specifically as it relates to the teaching of piano. Some titles that immediately come to mind include Oliver Sacks' "Musicophilia," "This is the Brain on Music", Frank Wilson's "The Hand" or "Tone Deaf and All Thumbs," Lawrence Kramer's "Why Classical Music Still Matters," Barbara Schneiderman's writings about confident music performance and preparation....the field is wide open!

Are there some titles/authors you would like to explore? We would like to create a panel of reader/reviewers by the end May with the list of books we will be discussing, so that the membership can read them over the summer and participate in the Teacher's Exchange in December. Please send your suggestions for consideration to **Barbara Jones** at barbjonz@comcast.net by May 15. Also, let me know if you are willing to be a reader/reviewer.

NEPTA Program Notes for Donald Berman
Monday, March 24, 2008
First Parish Church
35 Church Street, Watertown, MA

Donald Berman began the morning's program by performing Faure's Barcarolle #1 for the piano. He relayed to the audience, that when he first heard a recording of Faure performing this particular work, his first thought was to immediately get a copy and learn it. These initial impulses should guide teachers with their students, reinforcing that instinct as well as fostering flexibility and interpretation. The learning process is similar to using building blocks, without using too thick a material such as concrete. As Leonard Shure once said, "you must remember the impulses that led you to that piece in the first place."

In working with students, Donald has observed that too much praise can interfere with how well the job gets done. Praise often times creates pressure to keep up the good work and the more talented students are generally the most sensitive. Thus, the main goal of the student becomes receiving praise for their work and not taking risks in interpretation. Mr. Berman then played 2 musical selections from a CD he recorded entitled "Song of Innocents" by Aaron Jay Kernis with singer Susan Narucki, illustrating the musical connection with poetry. The first one was entitled "A Good Boy" by Robert Louis Stevenson and the second, an anonymous poem "Table Rules for Little Folks." Donald reiterated that a well-behaved performance, is not compelling art.

Mr. Berman talked about his recital career path, linking classical with modern repertoires on the same program. His love of Schubert led to the idea of themed concerts and he was asked to organize an annual First Night program leading up to the millennium celebration, called "Firstworks". Each year he paired a commissioned chamber work with a traditional piece, culminating with Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time" in the millennium concert. In a different recital series, "Pioneers and Premieres", Mr. Berman paired studies of Charles Ives with commissioned works. These experiences can create intergenerational connections with the audience and spur imagination in students, thus achieving unity through specialization. Although some composers are reluctant to participate in a concert knowing they are not the only composers being showcased, Donald looks to break those barriers and encourage a larger sense of community. He then performed Scott Wheeler's Piano Trio and Study #23 by Charles Ives.

The important areas to stress in a student's musical upbringing include, daily technique, participation in a long-term ensemble group, collaboration with singers or instrumentalists and attendance at a music camp. In addition, listening to modern pieces will help students be more receptive to learning modern repertoire. Donald's experience has been that when he performs modern works for grade school children, they are easily engaged and excited about the music and sounds. Teachers should also guide the student to do what they love, and the career will follow.

During the question and answer period, Mr. Berman was asked about his first teacher, Mildred Victor, who was a student of Arthur Schnabel as a young girl and became a wonderful pianist. She developed a unique approach to technic, one that involved greater use of the extensor muscles. During the course of her research, she analyzed hand anatomy and watched a lot of boxing matches to develop this way of playing. It is a piano technique that Donald still uses today, and incorporates with his own students.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lydia Reed-Guertin