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GAE NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2021

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Friday, Feb. 5 Joint ZOOM meeting with PTRT of St. Louis – “Measuring Up,”**

**10:00 a.m. Presented by Kyu Butler, President of SLMTA**

**Feb. 13-28 A.I.M. Exams**

**Friday, Mar. 12 Joint meeting with PTRT of St. Louis – “IMSLP-Its Story and All its**

**10:00 a.m. Uses,” Presented by Carl Simpson**

**FEBRUARY MEETING**

**“MEASURING UP” TO PREVENT INJURY**

**February 5, 2021  -  10 AM-Noon**

**KYU BUTLER**

*Zoom Link: Will be emailed the day before on February 4.*

 Kyu Butler is a St. Louis area piano teacher and a member of PTRT, as well as the current president of SLAMTA. She holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Korean National University, a Master of Music in piano performance from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and a Professional Studies Diploma in Early Historical Keyboards from the Conservatory. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance and Literature and a Master’s degree in Vocal Coaching and Accompanying at the University of Illinois at

Urbana-Champaign. Kyu’s current research focuses on preventing injuries and wellness for pianists.

 In evidence of that interest, Kyu Butler’s presentation will demonstrate for us how measuring students’ hand spans can provide crucial information regarding repertoire choices that consequently guard against playing-related injuries. Practicing octaves and chords can cause significant overuse and repetitive strain injury, and could be prevented by limiting the practice of repertoire that demands a hand span larger than what the student actually possesses.

            The presentation features the proper method of measuring both a student’s hand span and intervals on the keyboard with a chart that illustrates four hand-span “zones” identified by hand-span researchers. This presentation also includes the awareness of alternatively sized piano keyboards, case studies of small-handed pianists, some of the advanced level repertoires in the chart, and the comparison on alternatively-sized piano keyboards. For those teachers and students who do not wish to limit repertoire choices, this presentation highlights the possibilities for expanding those choices and minimizing risks of injury by using alternatively sized piano keyboards.

 Be sure to check out Kyu’s website: www.kyubutler.com

**JANUARY REVIEW**

 We had eight attendees for our RockOutLoud.Live demo presented by Mike Grande. He gave us some valuable information about his platform. Afterwards, the same group met via Zoom to discuss ways to handle A.I.M. testing in February. Because of time limitations and unfamiliarity with RockOutLoud.Live, LeAnn came up with a plan for SWIC Site teachers that suits everyone. Tests will be administered between February 13 through February 28 and each judge will set up their own judging schedule with their assigned students using the platform (Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, etc.) that works best for them. Thanks, LeAnn for your time and expertise in figuring out a workable plan and explaining it step by step. At this time, there are 24 students and 5 teachers participating in the Theory exams that normally test at SWIC. We also thank Huei Li for organizing and managing the testing at SIUE which will be administered in-person. At this time, I do not have the student and teacher figures available for the SIUE Site.

**TIDBITS**

 Our ISMTA Conference Clinician, Peter Mack, is a well-known pianist, performer, clinician, convention artist, adjudicator, and teacher. If you did not take time back in November to view one of his video presentations from our virtual conference (or the 2020 MTNA Conference), take time now. You’ll be glad you did! Here are some inspiring remarks about Peter made by Spring Seals, NCTM, who teaches 60 piano students in the Fort Worth, TX area. She is passionate about helping teachers become more effective in their studios through professional development, new resources, and fresh ideas.

### Inspiration from Peter Mack

* “Masterclasses should as much be a celebration of what goes right as condemnation of what goes wrong.”  Dr. Mack stated that he began writing down things that go well in a performance as well as things that need correction.  Masterclasses can be a positive experience for the student if handled well by the clinician.
* There are two ways to “encourage” student progress, either nurture a love of music or use fear and intimidation.  Unfortunately, both ways will work, at least to a point, but which would you rather use?
* “No composer ever set out to write a boring piece.”  His point is that if the piece is boring, it’s most likely an issue with interpretation, not with the composer.  Make the music exciting!
* Use a criticism sandwich – Start with a positive item, followed by a criticism, and then finish with another positive.  The positive encouragement helps a student open up to be receptive to the criticism.
* The way you lift your hands up to the piano can set the atmosphere for the piece you are about to play.  Dr. Mack demonstrated by acting like he was going to begin a piece without playing anything.  He then had the audience guess what he was about to play.  The guesses were shockingly accurate!

 If you ever have the chance to hear Peter Mack speak or perform, take it!  He’s a great presenter and an overall friendly and generous person**. Look for some excellent presentations:** <https://ismta.org/VConf_Pedagogy>

* “Introduction on Elephant Talks”
* “The Elephant, the Masks, and the Teddy Bear”
* “Attitude on Teaching…and a phrase that gets me out of trouble!”
* “Practice Strategies All Can Use”
* “Think This to Give a Better Performance”
* “Thoughts about Piano Technique”
* “Thoughts on Bach, Chopin, Rachmaninoff, and Ravel”
* “Editions in Competitions”

And, from the 2020 National Conference: <https://ismta.org/VConf> NatlReplays

* “The Art of the Phrase”

 As we are quickly approaching the time of contests, exams, and other events in Music Teacher Association programs, students all over have carefully prepared for these events. Judges also prepare extensively to be great listeners, write encouraging comments, and make wise decisions. Let’s prepare ourselves mentally, physically, and musically for a great judging season!

 I would like to share this article from Marcia Vahl, the Minnesota MTA Judge Education Committee Co-Chair. Several of her other popular posts on judging include: [10 of the Best Judging Comments](https://composecreate.com/10-best-piano-judging-comments/) and[The 4 Elements of a Great Critique](https://composecreate.com/the-4-elements-of-a-great-critique/).

**What Makes a Good Piano Judge?**

**Great judges are on time or early** (at least 30 minutes before the start of judging) **and keep to the schedule they are given.** Parents have schedules to keep through the day, and part of our public relations with them is keeping to the schedule, so they can make it to other events they have scheduled. Being on time and on schedule throughout the day is the best way to see that the event runs smoothly.

**Great judges take care to make the student comfortable as they enter the judging room**. Your smile and a word of welcome and encouragement make a student feel more at ease.

**Great judges follow all procedures outlined in the judging policies for that event.** The organization who has chosen you has done because they greatly respect the background, education, and expertise each judge brings to music events. Be equally respectful of the organization by being well acquainted with the particulars of event policies and how to grade or score each different type of event successfully.

*“Above all, great judges listen for the musicianship and artistry of the whole performance and are not nit-picky when it comes to the score.”*

Marica A. Vahl, NCTM

**A great piano judge is organized at the end of the day** with alternates, winners, and non-winners and are sure to leave all critiques with the Site Administrator. Site Administrators will greatly benefit when your folder and evaluations are organized per the event instructions.

**A great piano judges’ critiques are legible and contain comments consistent with all markings on the critique.** In the case of piano contest, for example, the + and – section on the top half of the critique is required to be completely filled out, and the encouraging comments on the other half of the critique should reflect the + and – you marked.

**Great judges’ comments are always stated in a positive way, sincere, friendly and helpful for the stage of the musician.**

**Great piano judges see The Big Picture First.** There is a strong tendency for many of us to address issues and details over commenting on the communication of the performance as a whole. One judge said it this way: “In my earlier experiences of

judging competitions, I would spend too much time critiquing the details and missed out on opportunities to mention the more important issues that might have contributed to the success (or failure) of the performance. Seeing ‘the big picture first’ is a practice worth developing.”

For example, ask yourself:
Q: What is the general music concept I would like to address?
A: Technique
Q: What specifically about the performer’s technique need I comment on?

A: Fluidity of scales, brilliance in tone – commendable; unintended accentuation – needs work.
 Remember: your first responsibility as adjudicator is to critique a performance and provide a score/rating deserving of the performance. Be careful not to step into your “teacher shoes” and focus too much on pedantic comments. Above all, great judges listen for the musicianship and artistry of the whole performance and are not nit-picky when it comes to the score. We desire artistic performances, with allowance for individual interpretation.

 What are you doing right now to make sure you’re ready for events you’ve been invited to be a piano judge?

 Last, but not least, this video is worthy of watching: It is from the Virtual 2020 MTNA Conference and is titled **“What the Judges Hear,”** a panel presentation by **Peter Mack** as he interviews 3 other teachers: <https://ismta.org/VConf_NatlReplays>

**AIM THEORY SYLLABUS – LEVEL 11**

 A.I.M. Chair, Gill Cerbin, recently received notice that there is an error in the Level 11 Theory Workbook. Here is the e-mail from State A.I.M. Director, Nancy Liley:

**Subject:** **level 11 workbook**

As your members prepare their students for the performance exam, I want to alert you to an error which has been discovered in the level 11 workbook.  In the technique requirements listed on page 63, item #3, Octave Scale, the workbook says "Two octaves, blocked, hands together."  The correct statement is "Two octaves, broken, hands together" and the example on page 68 is correctly written as a broken octave scale.

The syllabus correctly states that the octave scale should be played two octaves, broken, hands together.  When in doubt, always refer to the syllabus as the official guide.

If you purchased your own set of workbooks between the first publishing in 2014 through 2017, yours is probably correct. Somehow this item became changed in books dated 2018 forward, so your students' books are probably incorrect.

**MUSICLINK**

**Make a Difference through MusicLink!**

 Do you believe that every child should have the chance to take music lessons? Are you currently reducing your normal fee by at least half for a student in financial need? Are you interested in reaching out to a promising student in need through music lessons? If you have thought about teaching a deserving student in need, but don’t know how to link up with one, contact Debbie, the Illinois State Coordinator for assistance.

1. Log onto the website at [www.musiclinkfoundation.org](http://www.musiclinkfoundation.org).

2. At the top of the Home Page, click on “How to Participate.”

3. If you want to volunteer – complete the “Teacher Volunteer Form.”

4. If you are already teaching a student at half or less of your normal fee, complete the “MusicLink Registration Form.”

 Due to COVID and these tough economic times, it’s not uncommon for teachers to reduce their fee to keep a valued student whose family is struggling financially. They see that lessons are often the first thing to go when a family is making tough decisions about finances. MusicLink supports these teachers in a variety of ways, e.g. offering discounts on music and materials, assistance with instruments when possible, Summer Music Camp Scholarships and teacher reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses.

 If you have a student in this situation, know that MusicLink can help. Your student may qualify as a MusicLink student during these strange times. To help include more families in our program, the MusicLink Foundation will temporarily eliminate the process of checking financial need for students applying for MusicLink who have been recommended by their teacher. Teachers will realize those they want to help temporarily, and, when the crisis ends and lessons are “back to normal” they can simply let ML know through email. Parents or teachers filling out the MusicLink registration form should put “coronavirus” in the section concerning financial need.”

**MEMBERSHIP NEWS AND NOTES**

**From Catherine Burge**: We’re moving! After Feb. 7th, our new address will be:

 318 West Oak Street

 Mascoutah IL 62258

 Also, new home phone is 618-448-0881; same cell phone.

Please feel free to share any news or highlights with Debbie for the March newsletter.