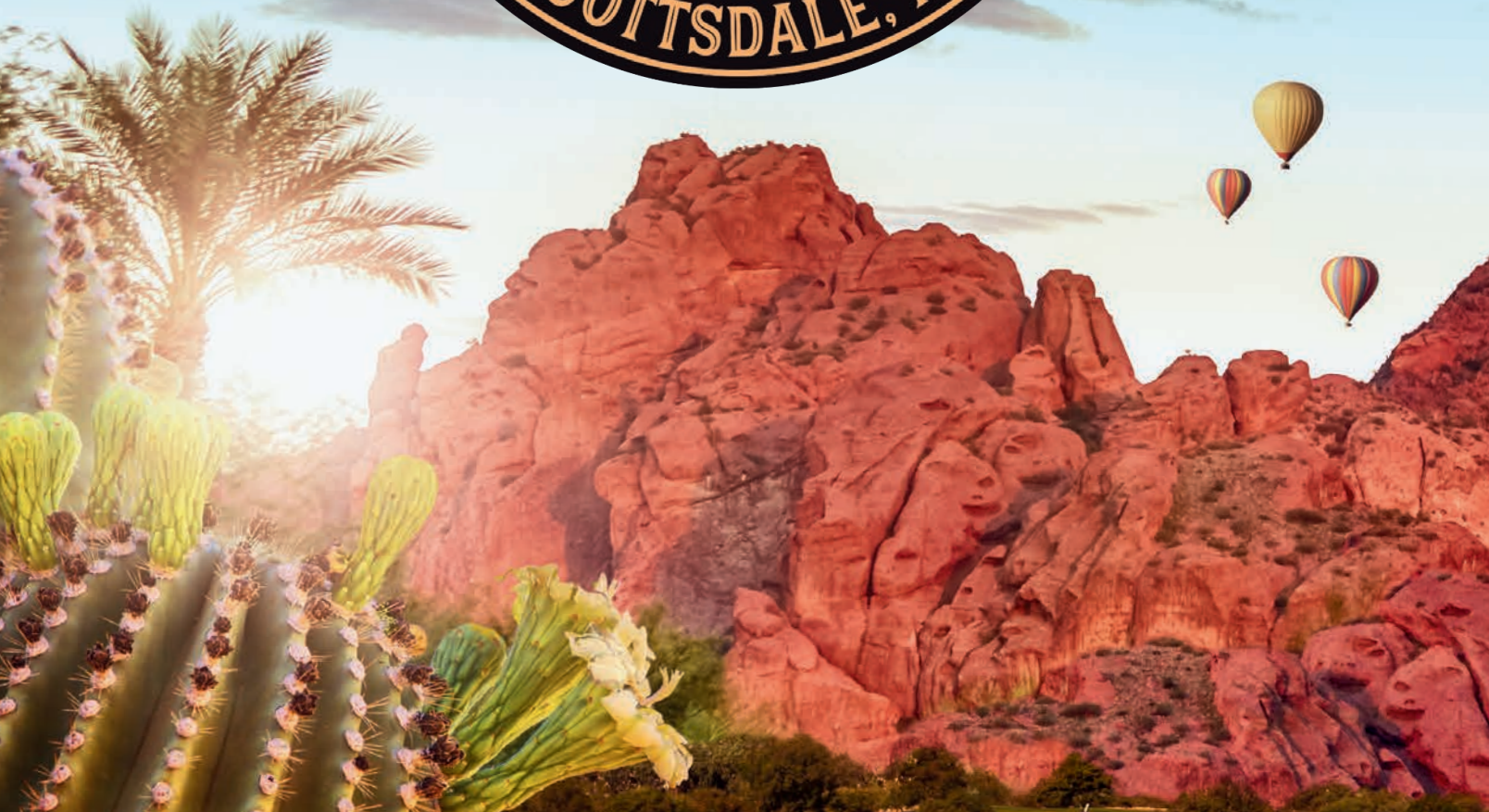




Music Clubs MAGAZINE

WINTER 2026 VOL 104, NO. 2





Message from the President

by Deborah T. Freeman

This magazine deadline is November 1, so I'm currently looking forward to Thanksgiving and just beginning Christmas music with my students – what fun!

I will certainly be asked, "Why am I getting my magazine in January?" Accepting and proofing articles, printing and finally shipping, takes many hours of work for our editors, proofing experts and printing service. We appreciate everyone who works to put together our beautiful magazine – thank you!

January brings Founders Day programs and a wonderful New Year! I always enjoy speaking on our Founders and how our organization grew, but if you want to know more, read Lucile Ward's book, **A musical legacy of 100 years**. Our NFMC historian and committee has digitally

scanned for your pleasure of reading, and they are working on additions to the book. On our website, go to About Us scroll down to Archives and click – you will find a wealth of information.

Enjoy your winter issue of Music Clubs Magazine and remember to send your news for the next issue – due February 1!

Deborah Freeman

Deborah T. Freeman

NFMC President

President's Theme:
"Celebrating our Musical Heritage"



President's Song:
"God Bless America"
 Irving Berlin

Ouida Keck
\$2,000 ANNUAL AWARD
for the Independent Piano Teacher



to be used for
 Professional Development



Ouida Keck
 NFMC President 1999-2003

This award provides financial assistance to an independent piano teacher who demonstrates superior teaching in the private studio and wishes to further enhance teaching skills. This award is endowed by funds given to honor Past National Federation of Music Clubs President, Dr. Ouida Keck.

For more information see the NFMC website at nfmc-music.org. Click on Competitions and Award Division/Sr. Annual Awards. The deadline for entry is May 1.

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*For the latest news,
sign-up for the NFMC
Monthly Newsletter!*

Scan the QR code to sign up.



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Follow us on  

The National Federation of Music Clubs is a tax-exempt, non-profit philanthropic and educational organization dedicated to music education and promotion of the creative and performing arts in America since 1898. The Federation is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), and was chartered by the U.S. Congress on August 9, 1982. The mission of the Federation is to support and develop American music and musicians.

WELCOME LETTER



The Valley of the Sun is preparing a “warm” welcome for our upcoming Conference! The last time Arizona was able to host a conference was. . . well, NEVER! You will be the FIRST group to come to the Grand Canyon State! We have some spectacular events planned with a few more First’s to enjoy!

The Hilton Embassy Suites Hotel in Scottsdale Arizona will be our home away from home during the Conference. Included with your hotel registration will be a complimentary breakfast every morning and an evening reception from 5:00 – 6:30 PM of drinks and hors d’oeuvres.

Tuesday: After morning activities, we will board the bus at 12:00 PM and travel to Organ Stop Pizza in Mesa. Our group will enjoy a private pizza and salad buffet with a complimentary Wurlitzer Organ performance and private demonstration. It is a one-of-a-kind experience you will not want to miss out on! After our return to the hotel Dr. Valerie Harris will give us a unique demonstration of the OrgelKids kit. This kit was recently awarded to Dr. Harris and AZFMC by FAMA to be used as a community resource for pipe organ education and outreach. Witness the power of the King of Musical instruments, done in miniature style! Beginning at 7:00 PM, Arizona and the Western Region are excited to invite you to an evening reception. Come enjoy some tasty food and drinks, and enjoy a live Mariachi Band.

Wednesday: We will officially open the conference. Our theme, Sonoran Summer Sounds will kick off with a performance by local artist Benita Rose. She will delight you with her incredible rise to fame featuring works by Marcos Fernandez Barrero. In the evening, you will be favored with a musical celebration as we welcome Morning Star to the Conference. They will delight you with their Native American Sounds and stories. Before retiring, enjoy a peaceful moment by the pool. Soak in the water, sip on a drink, and visit with friends. The sounds of the Sonoran summer night air will energize and refresh you!

Thursday: Morning workshops will include two dynamic instructors! First up, Charlene Jarvis with TCW will demonstrate the power of using Theory games in group teaching. Be sure to take notes as she will be back in the evening to lead us in some exciting fast-paced games! Next up! You will not want to miss an opportunity to hear Leila Viss as she shares her

creative powers with music composition! All teachers will benefit from her innovative approach to teaching composition. Come experience it for yourself and unleash your creativity! Leila will also be our guest speaker for the Fellows and Friends Luncheon. She recently published a new book, *Found in the Wake*, which will be available for purchase. Local harpist Jocelyn Obermeyer, a certified Therapeutic Harp Practitioner, will share her passion for harp playing during the luncheon and favor us with a solo performance. Later that evening, come enjoy our own Female Vocal Young Artist winner for 2025, Claire McCahan. She will be accompanied by Naomi Sanchez. Afterwards, we invite you to join your friends for a friendly “Game Night!” This is a chance to relax and unwind from a full day of activities!

Friday: The festival chorus will present their amazing concert in the early afternoon. In the evening, we will welcome, Brian Shepherd, CEO for MTNA as a guest speaker for our formal banquet. The final concert will be presented by Connor Chee, a Native American pianist currently living in Arizona. He will share stories of his culture and perform his own original music.

If this is your first time to Arizona, then you must take some time to do a little exploring! I know it is HOT but the cacti are blooming and the desert is teeming with life! Be sure to stop by Old Town Scottsdale, only a mile away from the hotel. There you will find many tourist shops and fun places to eat. For more information, check out their web page oldtownscottsdaleaz.com. The hotel has a shuttle which will take you to Old Town and bring you back. Make arrangements at the hotel desk. The Musical Instruments Museum (MIM) is a favorite among tourists visiting Arizona. Located near the 101 exit, it is easy to find. For ticket prices and events, check their website mim.org. Frank Lloyd Wright’s desert camp, Taliesin West, is located in the foothills of the McDowell Mountains. This historic property showcases Wright’s visionary work, his desert home, and the enduring principles of Organic Architecture. For tickets and tours see franklloydwright.org/taliesin-west-tours.

Well, there you have it! We hope you enjoy your stay in the sun! Thanks for joining us as we have worked hard to create something special! Remember to pack your sunscreen and bring your bathing suit! You’ll be glad you did!

OFFICIAL CALL

NFMC CONFERENCE

June 9-13, 2026 • Scottsdale, Arizona • Hilton Embassy Suites Hotel

For activity and meal reservations, memorial contributions and voting credentials please visit nfmc-music.org after February 1, 2026.
An official name badge is necessary for attendance at every NFMC convention function.



REGISTRATION:

- **Full Registration price: \$150. Late fee \$25 after May 9.** Entitles the registrant to a program book, admittance to all open meetings and programs, evening concerts and receptions
- **Daily Registration is \$50.** Entitles the registrant to Guidebook app and admittance to all open activities for a single day/evening
- **Student and Junior member full registration price is \$25.** No charge for an official name badge for a single meal function

REGISTRATION HOURS:

Tuesday, June 9
7:30 – 9:00 AM, 3:00 – 5:00 PM
Wednesday, June 10
7:30 – 9:00 AM, 3:00 – 5:00 PM
Thursday, June 11
7:30 – 9:00 AM, 3:00 – 5:00 PM
Friday, June 12
7:30 – 9:00 AM

EXHIBIT HALL HOURS

Wednesday, June 10 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM
Thursday, June 11 8:00 PM – 10:00 PM
Friday, June 12 8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

ATTENDANCE

All sessions except for the executive committee meetings are open to all registrants. Each state is encouraged to have at least one representative attend each session. On Tuesday morning, a pre-conference administrative day will support all who wish to attend and participate in NFMC at the National, State and Local levels. The business meeting of a division or committee is for official business and observers may attend but the chair will control participation.

NFMC CONFERENCE LOCATION

Hilton Embassy Suites:
5001 N. Scottsdale Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85250
480-949-1414

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Reservations can be made by visiting the NFMC website, www.nfmc-music.org and going to the Conference web page and clicking the link.

Hotel Reservation cutoff date is **May 9th 2026**. Each person is responsible for making his/her reservation.

Room rate: \$159 per night, includes the resort fee for single or double occupancy, plus state and local taxes. A complimentary breakfast will be provided every morning and a reception of drinks and light refreshments will be available in the AZUL restaurant from 5:00 to 6:30 PM every evening.

Resort Fee includes: WiFi; two bottled waters daily; self-parking; beach cruiser bikes; family games in Courtyard; tennis court use with rackets and tennis balls; 10% off \$50 or more in the Azul Clubhouse; resort shuttle within 3 mile radius (10am-6pm).

HOTEL AMENITIES

The hotel will provide complimentary internet in guest rooms; there is also a fitness center and outdoor pool. All guest rooms have cable television, mini refrigerator, hair dryer, alarm, coffee pot and ironing board. **No airport shuttle provided.**

WEARING APPAREL

June is considered a hot month for Arizona. Temperatures typically climb to over 100 degrees by mid-June. Plan to bring light clothing that is breathable and will protect you from the sun when doing outdoor activities. You will be inside an air-conditioned building for all events at the Conference. Evening activity at the pool will be after the sun goes down. Comfortable business attire is expected and appropriate for all sessions. **All hotel rooms open up to an outdoor courtyard that will not be enclosed. You will be walking outside to get to the Conference Center every day.** Rooms are booked close to the Conference Center and within easy walking distance. American Festival Chorus attire will be concert black.

BOARD ATTENDANCE

(NFMC Bylaws, Article VI, Section 2C): An unexcused absence from more than one Board session shall be considered a resignation. Board members are asked to inform the recording secretary if they must request an excuse for an absence. The excuse must be received before the conference starts.

VOTING CREDENTIALS

Voting credentials can be requested with online registration, in the Spring issue of MCM or on the website. Deadline June 1.

PROPOSED BYLAWS

Proposed bylaw changes are printed in the Spring issue of the MCM and on the NFMC website.

MEMORIAL SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS

Any NFMC member may send a memorial contribution to the National Memorial Chair, Connie Randall, 606 South Jefferson St, Kaufman, TX 75142, using the form that appears in the Spring issue of MCM or on the NFMC website. Deceased Member List – State presidents are to send a list of names of deceased members since the last NFMC meeting to NFMC Chaplain Gloria Lien, gloria.hope.lien@gmail.com Deadline is May 15 2026.

REPORTS

No reports will be read at general meetings. However, all officers and chairs are expected to have written reports prepared for download on the NFMC website. The deadlines are as follows:

May 15 is the deadline for Committee chairs to email or mail one page report to his/her Division chair.

May 25 is the deadline for Division chairs to send compilation of Division committee reports to NFMC Headquarters.

May 25 is the deadline for Officers to email or mail their one page report.

Reports will be compiled for all convention registrants. CDs and hard copies will be available at the registration desk for convention registrants. Division Chairs will be introduced at a general session; they will then introduce their committee chairs in attendance. No reports will be presented but attendees are encouraged to download reports from the website, attend Division meetings and meet with chairs.

Young Musicians in Full Swing for the Fall Season

Young Annasemble Orchestra

The joyful sound of progress fills the rehearsal hall this fall as the Young Annasemble Orchestra musicians prepare for their upcoming holiday concerts. Thanks to the generous support of the National Federation of Music Clubs Fund for the Advancement of Musical Arts, students now rehearse confidently with instruments that sing as clearly as their own enthusiasm.

The grant of \$5,533 awarded earlier this year provided for essential maintenance and repairs of our loaned and shared instruments. Violins, cellos, clarinets, and flutes that once showed signs of wear have been carefully restored, giving young players renewed tools for artistic growth.

This season, those instruments are back in the hands of eager students, helping them reach new levels of expression and ensemble performance. Each rehearsal is a testament to what community investment in the arts can achieve—a harmony of opportunity, dedication, and hope.

As we look ahead to our holiday community concerts, we celebrate not only the music being made, but also the lasting impact of generosity that ensures every young musician has the chance to play, learn, and belong. 🎵



CAROLYN NELSON DOUBLE REED AWARD

1ST PLACE: \$1,500 | 2ND PLACE: \$750

Applicants must be a double reed player between the ages of 19 and 26 (at time of application) as well as a Student/Collegiate member of NFMC.

Audio recordings must be submitted by **March 1**.

More details available at www.nfmc-music.org



Carolyn Nelson

NFMC President 2011-2015



WHAT'S "THE REST OF THE STORY?"

By Patricia L. Walter, Past President
Harmonia Music Association, Lebanon, PA

It was the third repeat of Fascinating Rhythms, the NFMCA Award Winning Program about George and Ira Gershwin. The Harmonia Music Association, Lebanon area, Pennsylvania, decided to repeat the program that received First Place from the NFMCA in the American Music category the year before. We were presenting Gershwin history and many of the beloved songs created almost 100 years ago. Singing presenters were Harmonia members and community friends along with member instrumentalists. It was a popular program.

Just prior to the final rehearsal at the Continuing Care Facility in which I live in the county, I asked our director, Gary Cohen, when he first began his piano lessons. The 88-year-old was accompanist for part of the program and closed the show with the famous *Rhapsody in Blue*. Here's his story.

Gary began piano lessons at age 10 and immediately progressed rapidly. By high school, Gary's parents got him a teacher that could move him to the point of pursuing a professional career, Gary's goal. After a time, that professor said to Gary "you will never become a professional pianist because your hands are too small. You should think about becoming a dentist!" Gary was crushed, frustrated and angry, to the point of giving up the piano altogether. Oddly, he did graduate from Temple University's School of Dentistry and lived his working years as a dentist.

At the point of retirement, Gary and his now late wife moved into a 60-and-above community in Lebanon County. Another resident, who was a life long pianist and piano teacher, heard about Gary's background and invited him to come to her house to play duets. Gary balked on the first

request, refused on the second, and then finally relented. That started it! Gary brought back his piano playing and spends many moments with the grand piano he loves.

The Gershwin program proceeded to the middle of the show. A community friend, a Harmonia scholarship winner in high school and internationally known operatic soprano soloist, Jessica Weidman, brought her rendition of "They Can't Take That Away from Me." It was a show-stopper!

Folks in the audience had no idea why Jessica sang from in front of the stage and not on it. Actually, this soloist is stricken with Multiple Sclerosis and could no longer go the few steps required to get to the stage, without help. I doubt that very many in the audience realized that sitting with her husband in the front row was her service dog, a Golden Retriever, named Carpenter. He was at attention during her singing, watching her every move. He was ready, in the event she needed help with her balance. For most of the show, Carpenter was on his bed, relaxing, but not during Jessica's solo.

Because of her illness, Jessica has become an advocate for folks with Multiple Sclerosis. She presents to anyone who will listen, to groups and organizations, and to the PA and Federal legislatures on several occasions. Her presentations include the problems of just getting around with the disease in a world where only healthy and fit people are recognized. Multiple Sclerosis is a degenerative disease; Jessica quickly quips, "But it hasn't gotten my voice yet!"

From my vantage point as narrator throughout the show, I could see only a very few of the

audience and not much of the stage where the action was. But straight ahead in my view during the presentation, was a couple, Fred and Judy Horowitz. Judy, who suffers from dementia, is a resident of the Health Center at this facility. Fred brought her to this program because he knew that she loved Gershwin and he knew that she would enjoy this program. And enjoy it she did. I watched her as she mouthed (or sang for all I know) every vocal presented. She knew every word; didn't miss one word in every song. Oh yes, she enjoyed the show and, I became her audience!

We all have heard what music means to those suffering with dementia and here was a perfect example of that relationship. **AI Overview** says, "Music is highly effective for people with dementia, especially personal and familiar songs, because it accesses deeply stored procedural memories and emotional connections in unaffected parts of the brain. This engagement can improve mood, reduce agitation and anxiety, stimulate verbal and non-verbal communication, trigger memories, and even encourage physical movement and participation. While music therapy is a powerful tool for improving quality of life and behavioral symptoms, its direct impact on overall cognitive function and memory recall remains an area of ongoing research."

The general audience loved the show, but little did they know ALL off the ramifications. To quote Paul Harvey, famed radio announcer from years back, "Now you have the rest of the story."

Lovingly, Harmonia received a healthy donation for their scholarships. And, oh yes, Gary got a standing ovation for his rendition of the *Rhapsody in Blue*! So did the whole cast!! 🎵



Fred and Judy Horowitz



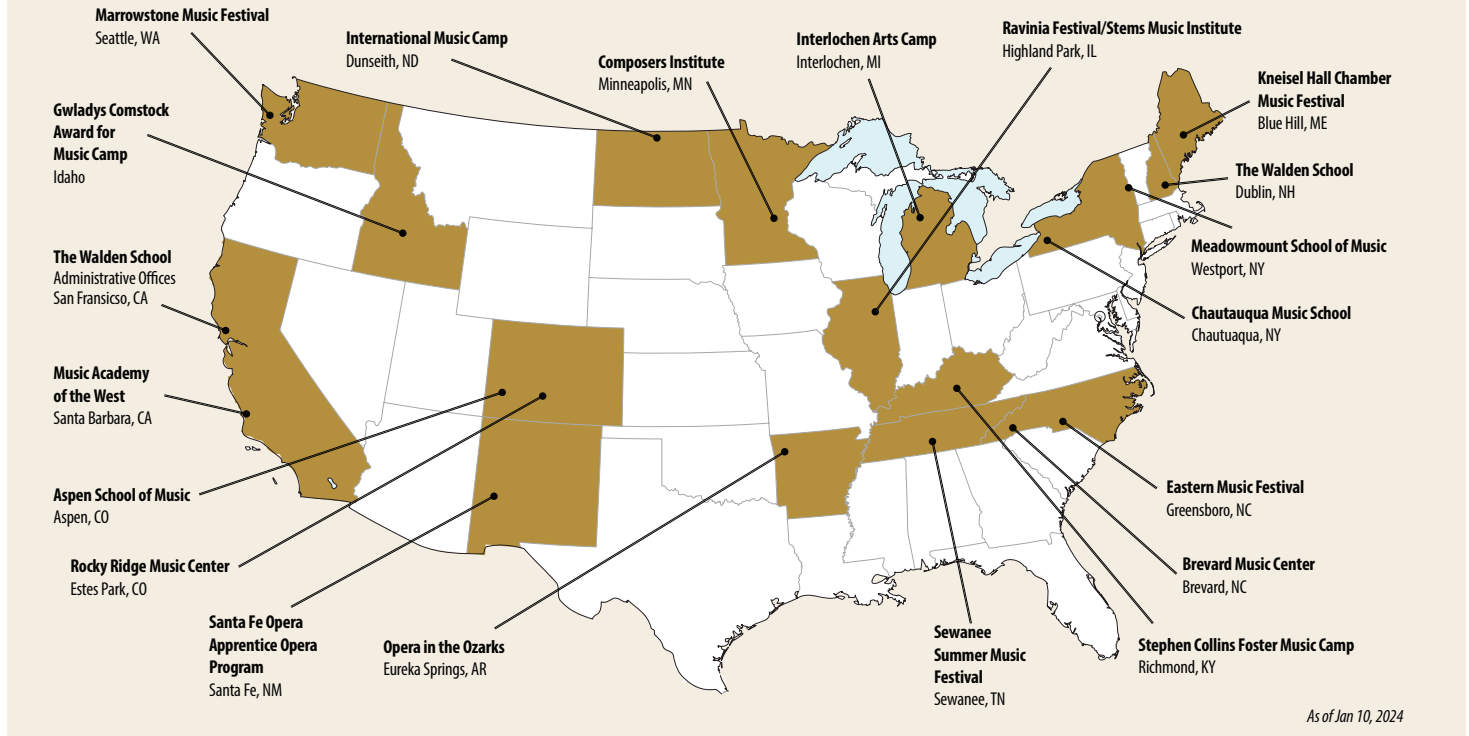
Circled: L. to R. Gary Cohen, Director who performed the *Rhapsody in Blue*; Jessica Weidman, Soloist, and Pat Walter, Narrator.



NFMC SUMMER MUSIC CENTERS (SMC) AWARDS 2025

by Mary Ellen Nolletti, Chair

2025 SUMMER MUSIC CENTER LOCATIONS



Thank you National Federation of Music Club (NFMC) members for supporting the Summer Music Centers (SMC). Because of your dedication, 32 scholarships valued at a total of \$36,800 were awarded through the NFMC SMC Endowed Scholarship Awards Program to 15 SMC.

Specific information about NFMC contacts and SMC admission contacts is available on NFMC and SMC websites. The NFMC website is: <https://www.nfmc-music.org/competition-awards/>; click on Competition and Awards Chart; and, scroll down to NFMC Summer Music Centers Awards to get information about scholarships and requirements. The SMC websites that are identified later in this article are valuable information resources.

Please note that criteria for each SMC scholarship award are stated specifically in the Competition and Awards Chart. In particular, note the U.S. CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT: “Applicants for individual awards must be native-born/naturalized U.S. citizens. (Exception: Lynn Freeman Olson Composition, Lynn Freeman Olson Piano Pedagogy Award, Ruth Morse Wilson Handbell Award and International Music Camp (IMC)—at least 50% of IMC award recipients must be U.S. citizens.)”

Numerous other scholarships are sponsored through the generosity of NFMC Regions, state federations, and individuals. Among these are: the Southeastern Region’s Beth McAuley Scholarship Award at Brevard Music Center, and at Chautauqua Music Center, the Ohio Federation of Music Clubs Award, and the Indiana Leslie Bryan Jr./Peggy Hoover Bryan Award.

Each SMC (not NFMC) selects their scholarship award recipient(s). Selection criteria differ depending on the particular SMC. Scholarship award amounts vary based on costs (tuition and fees) associated with attending the particular SMC and availability of NFMC funds. Applicants must contact the Admissions Director at the SMC of their choice to apply for admission as well as for scholarship awards. Applications should be submitted early in the calendar year as some SMC make decisions about their scholarship awards in early February.

Sponsoring specialized summer music camps was first proposed to the NFMC Board of Directors in the 1930’s. Twenty years later the SMC Scholarship Awards Program was finalized. The first camp scholarship was awarded at the National Music Camp (now called Interlochen

Arts Camp) in northwestern Michigan. Chautauqua Music Camp in southwestern NY received the second scholarship, and Transylvania Music Camp (now called Brevard Music Center) in western NC received the third. This program continues to grow thanks to the contributions of many generous NFMC members and friends.

To administer NFMC Summer Music Centers Awards, each SMC should be served by at least one NFMC Representative who must be approved by the NFMC President. For some SMC, SMC personnel serve as the primary contact for their award from NFMC. The SMC Awards Chair is elected by NFMC and is responsible for administering the program. NFMC Headquarters personnel, Ms. Lucinda Lear (Competitions and Awards Division Chair), NFMC Representatives, numerous SMC personnel, and many talented musicians contribute to the success of this program.

ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL AND SCHOOL

Aspen, Colorado

www.aspenmusicfestival.com

Founded in 1949, the Aspen Music Festival and School offers a premier summer music festival experience with nine programs of study in the beautiful, natural surroundings of Aspen, CO. A wide variety of **kids and family programming** meant to inspire and engage the next generation of classical music enthusiasts is offered. Whether one is enjoying a family picnic at “Music on the Mountain”, being transported by story and song at “Tunes & Tales”, or gathering a multi-generational group to enjoy a “Family or Community Concert”, one is sure to experience the excitement of the Aspen Music Festival and School and create family memories that will last a lifetime. Also, one can explore the **summer long educational programs**—not just for kids! These programs give local and summer residents the opportunity to grow their musical skills with lessons and musical activities throughout the summer.



NFMC Award (strings) - \$1,250
Linda King, NFMC Representative

Margaret Carter (double bass, age 19) lives in Philadelphia, PA. She is pursuing her Bachelor's degrees at the Curtis Institute of Music and studies under Hal Robinson and Edgar Meyer. Maggie was born in New York, NY and raised in Portland, OR. She made her orchestral debut at age 15 and has since made multiple solo appearances with the Oregon Symphony,

as well as with numerous other Pacific Northwest orchestras. This is her second summer at Aspen. She has attended festivals at Tanglewood and Interlochen. Maggie is also a pianist who loves baking, hiking, and translating ancient Latin classics in her spare time.

BREVARD MUSIC CENTER

Brevard, North Carolina

www.brevardmusic.org

The Brevard Music Center (BMC), started by James Christian Pfohl in 1936 as a summer camp for boys, is located on 180 acres in the mountains of North Carolina. The name “Brevard Music Center” was adopted in 1955. Students aged 14 years or older come from all 50 states, as well as international locations, to study from the last week of June through the

first week of August each summer. An elite team of faculty provides their intense instruction.

Studies are given for everything from orchestral instruments and piano to composition, voice, and opera and include private lessons, practice sessions in on-campus studios, and performances in the 1,800-seat Whittington-Pfohl Auditorium. The center hosts more than 80 public concerts attracting audiences totaling some 50,000 persons. Set in its refreshing and tranquil location of Transylvania County, BMC provides a relaxing atmosphere for the training of students who are selected to attend.

The success of the Brevard Music Center has contributed substantially to the economy of western North Carolina, while adding numerous talents to the world of music here in the United States and around the globe. The Southeast Region of the National Federation of Music did not gather at Brevard this summer, but at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee. However, NFMC certificates were sent and presented to the recipients of the Lucile Parrish Award and Rose Thomas Smith summer scholarships.



NMFC Rose Thomas Smith Award (band, orchestral instruments) - \$2,500
Dale Clark, NFMC Representative

Louis Chen (clarinet, age 18) is from State College, PA and enrolled in the BMC's High School Orchestral Institute. He just graduated from Idyllwild Arts Academy (IAA) and will be attending the University of Michigan in the fall 2025.

Louis comes from a musical family. He began taking piano at age 6 and later took up the clarinet at age 13. Awarded a major scholarship, he studied at IAA (high school) with Yehuda Gilad. In 2024, he entered the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance as the top-ranked clarinet applicant and studied under Daniel Gilbert and Chad Burrow. His honors include first prize at the National Music Association Competition and second prize in the 2024 Idyllwild Concert Competition.



NMFC Lucile Parrish Ward Award (piano [1st preference] or band/orchestra instruments) - \$2,000
Dale Clark, NFMC Representative

Anabel Morgan (pianist, age 20) is from Jackson, MS. She was enrolled in BMC's First Session Piano Institute. She is entering her junior year of undergraduate study at the University of Alabama and presently studies with Kevin Chance.

Anabel has won several awards, including winning the 2019 Junior Concerto Division and the 2023 Senior Solo Division of the Brooklyn Music Teacher Guild's Intercontinental Immortal and Living Composers Competition. This accomplishment led her to perform in Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall, where she made her orchestral debut at age 14. She has participated in several summer music festivals, including the 2025 Brevard Music Center where she studied with Yu-lieu, the 2021 and 2022 Sewanee

Continued on page 10

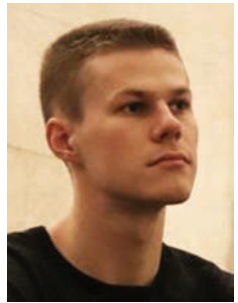
NFMC SUMMER MUSIC CENTERS (SMC) AWARDS 2025 ...continued

Summer Music Festivals where she studied with Steven Beck and Amy I-Lin Cheng, and the 2024 and 2025 New Orleans Piano Institutes where she studied with Hristo Birbochukov and Igor Resnianski. She also participated in masterclasses with Alan Chow and Zhu Wang.

CHAUTAUQUA MUSIC SCHOOL

Chautauqua, New York
www.chq.org

Chautauqua Institution, founded in 1874, brings some of the world's most talented musicians, vocalists, dancers and visual artists to the grounds for educational and performance opportunities amid a world-class culture and arts environment. The School of Music enrolls 128 students each summer. Offerings include the Piano Program, Opera Conservatory, and Instrumental Program (with Conducting Fellow). The Piano Program provides plentiful lessons, classes, and performance opportunities guided by an exceptional internationally-renowned faculty. The Instrumental Program enrolls 81 of the most promising young instrumentalists from the United States and abroad for an exciting summer of music-making. The Music School Festival Orchestra (MSFO) performs in concert as well as with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra in the 5,000-seat Institution amphitheater. In July 2025, Maher's *9th Resurrection Symphony* was performed. The Chautauqua Opera Conservatory is a six-week intensive educational program that seeks to offer the highest caliber of training for the young singer, 18 and older.

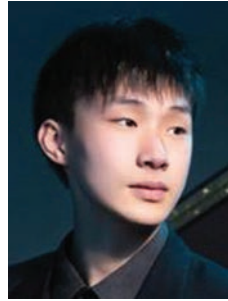


New York Federation of Music Clubs Award (orchestra) - \$500 (Endowed by former NYFMC and supplemented by NFMC Valentin) Ruth Ann McChesney, NFMC Representative

Kirk Morrison (trumpet) is a current Master's student at the Eastman School of Music, studying Trumpet Performance & Literature.

While at Eastman, he has performed with ensembles such as the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the Syracuse Orchestra, the Eastman Wind Ensemble, the Eastman Philharmonia, the Empire Film & Media Ensemble, the Finger Lakes Opera Company, and the Erie Contemporary Ballet. He also has the privilege of being the Principal Trumpet of the Eastman Brass Guild. As of January 2025 Kirk holds the position of Interim Adjunct Professor of Trumpet at Houghton University. Before attending the Eastman School of Music, he was graduated from Mercyhurst University with a Bachelor's Degree in Music Education in the Spring of 2023. Kirk is a student of Andrew McCandless and Wes Nance.

Kirk shared: "I am incredibly grateful to have received the "New York Federation Award" for my studies this summer at the Chautauqua Institution, My summer at Chautauqua has been life changing. This experience has not only made me a better musician, but has given me the opportunity to grow and learn from disciplines outside of my own."



Pennsylvania Federation of Music Clubs Award (piano) - \$500 (Endowed by PFMC and supplemented by NFMC Valentin) Ruth Ann McChesney, NFMC Representative

Ryan Zhang (piano), a San Francisco Bay native, is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, studying with Robert Shannon. Since

middle school, Ryan has received professional training with a focus on percussion, conducting and piano, thus cultivating a well-rounded musical foundation. His extensive experience encompasses performing in orchestras, leading ensembles, and interpreting music as a solo artist. This diverse background provides him with a unique and profound perspective to approach music.

He began his piano education at age five under his father's guidance and made his recital debut at seven. At ten, he moved to Shanghai, China, where he was accepted into the Music Middle School, affiliated with Shanghai Conservatory of Music, with percussion as his major under Hua Gao. Under his father's influence, he discovered conducting and changed his major to study under Conductor Xiao'ou Zhao in high school. Ryan gained valuable experience conducting the Youth Symphony Orchestra of the High School affiliated with Shanghai Conservatory.

Returning to the United States for his undergraduate studies, Ryan focused on piano at Oberlin. He quickly expanded his repertoire through a solid foundation based on his past experiences. In addition to solo repertoire, he had a lot of opportunities to play chamber music. He attended chamber masterclasses with the Kronos Quartet, Christopher Stark and Nick Phontinos. Ryan actively participated in the Contemporary Music Ensemble, led by Tim Weiss, and performed new compositions and world premieres. He continued to engage in festivals and masterclasses for both piano and conducting, attended the Virtuoso & Belcanto Festival in Lucca, Italy and had masterclasses with esteemed pianists Boris Berman, Imogen Cooper, Yejin Gil, Roberto Prosseda, and Wei-Yi Yang. He also took part in Carl Topilow's conducting workshop and conducting masterclasses held by renowned Chinese conductors Renchang Fu and Qiyuan Zhu. In the same year, Ryan was awarded second prize at the Villafranca International Piano competition in Italy in his first major piano competition.

Ryan wrote: "...the generous support of the Pennsylvania Federation Award...helped make it possible for me to attend the Chautauqua Music Festival this summer. Thank you for letting me play in the scholarship recital and share my music. My time at Chautauqua is truly transformative. The inspiration and growth experienced will stay with me for years to come as I continue on my musical path. With heartfelt appreciation."



Eleanor Pascoe/Nancy Hatz Award (voice) - \$500
Ruth Ann McChesney, NFM Representative

Elizabeth Palumbo (voice/soprano, age 18) is known for her talent, positivity, and spirit. She began her musical journey at the age of 10 in the suburbs of New Jersey. By 12 she discovered a deep love for opera after seeing *The Magic Flute*; this sparked her

path to becoming an opera singer. A recent graduate of the prestigious Interlochen Arts Academy, Elizabeth has portrayed a range of notable roles, including Musetta in *La Bohème*, Hexe in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, and Mrs. Keeps in the world premiere of Bill Banfield's *Edmonia*. She has also performed alongside the Traverse City Opera Company and the Detroit Opera Theatre during her time at Interlochen. Elizabeth earned two prestigious awards from Interlochen, the Joseph Summer Maddy Award (the program's highest honor) and the Fine Arts Award. She currently attends Northwestern University where she studies under renowned soprano Nancy Gustafson. Over the past three years, Elizabeth has achieved remarkable success in vocal competitions. She was a finalist in the 2022 Schmidt Vocal Competition in Boston, a two-time regional winner in 2023, and a national finalist in the summer of 2024 at the Sarasota Opera House. Elizabeth's passion for music shows through her performances as she aims to share her gift with the world.

Elizabeth shared, "Thank you so much for the Eleanor Pascoe-Hatz Award for this year's study at Chautauqua Music School. It has truly been a blessing studying here at Chautauqua this summer being one of the youngest students in the music program. This community here has been so welcoming, encouraging and supportive of my talent and I am forever grateful for all of your support!"

Martha Marcks Mack Awards (voice) - 2 @ \$3,000 each
Ruth Ann McChesney, NFM Representative



Alexander Bonner (voice/tenor) is from Boca Raton, FL. He has been studying classical singing since he was fourteen years old and holds degrees from the Boston Conservatory and Binghamton University. He has performed in productions of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* and Verdi's *La Traviata* at The Boston Conservatory. While in his Master's program at Binghamton he sang the roles of Monkey in the university's production of *Monkey and Francine in the City of Tigers* as well as Tamino

in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, La rainett, Le Petit Villard and La Theiere in Ravel's *L'enfant et les Sortilèges* and now Nerone in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. He has been a part of Tri-Cities Opera's productions of *La Cenerentola*, *Stone Soup* and *Mystery on the Docks*. Most recently Mr. Bonner has performed in Palm Beach Opera's 2025 season in *Romeo et Juliette*, *La Traviata* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

Mr. Bonner wrote: "I'm incredibly grateful to the National Federation of Music Clubs for the Martha Marcks Mack Award. This summer at Chautauqua has been one of the most transformative times in my musical

life—of inspiration, challenge, and growth. The support of NFM made it possible for me to be part of this community, to study with incredible mentors, and to connect deeply with music in a way that will stay with me for a long time. Thank you, truly, for believing in young musicians like me and for helping make experiences like this possible."



Sarah Zieba (voice/mezzo-soprano) is a Polish-American who will be joining the Finnish National Opera as a member of their Young Singers' Program this upcoming 25/26 season. She was part of the Boston University Opera Institute studying with Penelope Bitzas where she performed the roles of Sesto in Mozart's *La Clemenza di Tito*, the title role in Massene.

Ms. Zieba shared: "I am honored to be a recipient of the Martha Marcks Mack Award from the National Federation of Music Clubs. Words cannot even begin to describe how meaningful scholarships such as these are to young musicians such as myself. It is people like you who help people like me pursue their dreams one step at a time. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

COMPOSERS INSTITUTE (JUNIOR COMPOSERS SUMMER PROGRAM)

River Falls, Wisconsin
www.composersinstitute.net

Junior Composers Institute for musicians age 14-19 resides at the River Falls Campus, University of Wisconsin. Faculty is composed of professional composers and performers. The Institute is a high-intensity week of composing, learning new skills and creating community. Students choose from six classes a day presented by faculty and compose a piece for presentation at the final salon. First rehearsals began mid-week! Students, Faculty and Staff performed.

Activities included a "reading session" with Copper Street Brass the beginning of the week, masterclasses every afternoon discussing composer life and business, first rehearsals mid-week, a hike to Culver's for dinner, a cook-out, and the final salon performance of students works the last day of the week.



NFM Evelyn Sampson Award (composition) - \$750
(For students whose teacher is a member of NFM)
Pat Grantier, NFM Representative

Kiara Motwani (age 14) lives in Bettendorf, IA and participates in her high school band, jazz band and orchestra. Active in Junior Optimist club in middle school, Kiara plans to establish that club at the high school. She looks forward

to joining the Robotics Club. She will continue dance lessons, piano, cello and trombone studies.

Continued on page 12

NFMC SUMMER MUSIC CENTERS (SMC) AWARDS 2025 ...continued

Selected in 8th grade for the Iowa Bandmasters Association Honors Band as well as the Southeastern Iowa String Teachers Association Honor Orchestra, she has composed several string quintet works. This year, her dedication and creativity were recognized when her composition was chosen winner in Class 3 of the Iowa Federation of Music Clubs contest. She looks forward to attending the Composers Institute to further her composition collaboration skills.

Her teacher says of Kiara: *"Her work is consistently imaginative and thoughtfully constructed. She draws inspiration from the music she plays and listens to, yet brings her own voice to every composition. She also enjoys experimenting with different sounds and textures, always seeking new and interesting ways to express musical ideas."*

EASTERN MUSIC FESTIVAL

Greensboro, NC

For more than six decades, Eastern Music Festival (EMF) provided "transformative summer programs to over 10,000 young musicians from around the world" on the campus of Guilford College, UNCG, and other venues in Greensboro, North Carolina. Effective October, 2025, the board of directors of EMF voted to dissolve the organization, and thus cease operations, due to a labor agreement not being reached. Chris Williams (EMF Executive Director) wrote: *"This decision was heartbreaking and not taken lightly.... While this chapter closes, the passion for nurturing young musicians will live on."*

STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER MUSIC CAMP

Richmond, KY

www.fostercamp.org

This summer celebrated Stephen Foster Camp's 90th year of providing music experiences for middle and high school students. Seven hundred sixty-seven musicians from eight states attended camps for band, piano, strings, voice, and world percussions. During the three weeks of camp eighteen concerts were given as well as many recitals. The last week of camp was extended by one day so that 142 alumni could have an opportunity to return and perform with the campers.

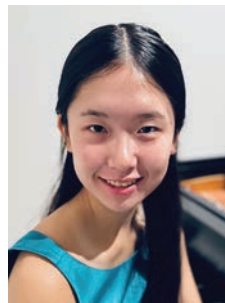
NFMC Southeastern Region Vice President Joel Adams visited with the Kentucky Federation of Music Clubs (KFMC) for the camp closing weekend. He attended the KFMC meeting and heard several scholarship winners at the annual Irene Muir Luncheon where four NFMC scholarships in the amount of \$300 each were awarded. In addition, KFMC gave \$5,000 and the local Cecilian Club of Richmond gave \$17,000. These KY scholarships were partial payments, which allowed many children to attend camp.

The final concert was held the following afternoon at the Arts Center in Richmond, KY on the "campus beautiful" of Eastern Kentucky University. It was an exciting summer celebration of music!

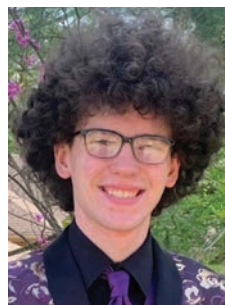
NFMC Irene Muir (PNP) Awards (instrumental, voice, piano, guitar) - 4 @ \$300 Sue Ann Reeves, NFMC Representative



Elisabeth Broady (oboe) is a sophomore at Tates Creek High School who has a true love for music. She started playing the oboe in fifth grade and has enjoyed performing in honor bands and Kentucky Music Educators Association (KMEA) Solo and Ensemble events ever since. For the past five summers, she has looked forward to attending Foster Music Camp, where she continues to learn and grow as a musician. Outside of oboe, Elisabeth plays alto saxophone in the marching band and enjoys helping younger students by tutoring incoming oboists at a local middle school. She hopes to continue developing her musical talents and dreams of inspiring others through her passion for music.



Trina Lee (piano, age 13) is a student at Gray Middle School in Union, Kentucky, with a deep passion for music. She began piano lessons at the age of four and currently studies with Dr. Takako Hayase Frautschi. Trina has earned first-place prizes in competitions including the American Protégé International Piano and Strings Competition, Music International Grand Prix Competition, Nathaniel Patch Piano Competition, Julia Bartles Concerto Competition, and Tri-State Concerto Competition. At just 10 years old, she made her Carnegie Hall debut and has also performed at Merkin Hall in New York City. This past summer, she attended Foster Music Camp for her first time, further expanding her musical experiences. Outside of piano, Trina enjoys singing, practicing taekwondo, participating in Mathcounts, and attending Japanese Language School. She believes music should be shared with everyone and hopes to continue performing to spread the joy it brings.



Carsen Keeling (voice) is a proud 2025 graduate of Nelson County High School in Bardstown, KY. He has spent four summers at Foster Music Camp, an experience that helped ignite and shape a deep love for music. Carsen has also participated in All-State Chorus and the Kentucky American Choral Directors Association (KYACDA) Conservatory. With plans to become a high school choir director, Carsen looks forward to inspiring future generations through music education.



Samantha "Sam" Vittitow (viola) is a 2025 graduate of DuPont Manual High School's Youth Performing Arts School in Louisville, KY. She is pursuing a degree in Viola Performance at Louisiana State University. With over eight years of experience on the viola, Sam has performed with the Louisville Youth Orchestra for six years, earned a spot in the KMEA All-State Symphonic Orchestra all four years of high school, and most recently played with the Magnolia Quartet at the

Louisville Academy of Music. Her passion for music continues to grow as she refines her craft at the collegiate level.



Gwladys Comstock Summer Music Camp Award (instrumental, voice) - \$500 (By the Idaho Federation of Music Clubs, for camp of recipient's choice) NFM Representative: Monica Hughes

Mattie Miller (oboe) is a graduating senior at Christian Academy of Knoxville Homeschool in Knoxville, TN and is dually enrolled at Pellissippi State Community College. Her

awards and honors include: the Tennessee Governor's School of the Arts at Middle Tennessee State University (2023); Tennessee All-State Band and Orchestra (2023/2024); consecutive "Superior" ratings at the NFM Junior Music Festivals (2019-2024); the National Guild auditions and Knoxville MTA auditions (2022/2023); and, the MTNA Senior High Woodwind Competitions (2023/2024).

Since 2020, Mattie has been a dedicated member of the Concord Orchestra at First Baptist Church, Knoxville, TN; John Mack Oboe Camp; Knoxville Symphony Youth Orchestra; and, Oak Ridge Playhouse Orchestra. As the 2025 recipient of the NFM Gwladys Comstock Summer Camp Award, Mattie will attend the prestigious John Mack Oboe Camp at Wildacres Retreat near Little Switzerland, NC (June 2025).

Mattie wrote, "Thank you for the opportunity to audition for the "Gwladys Comstock Summer Music Camp" award. I am honored to have auditioned and been selected for such an award. Your decision has allowed me to pursue the opportunity to learn and grow in my musicianship. I am truly grateful, Thank you and best wishes."

INTERLOCHEN ARTS CAMP

Interlochen, Michigan

www.interlochen.org/camp

During its 98th season, the Interlochen Arts Camp offered an immersive arts experience that fosters a sense of closeness discovered only through a deep, shared appreciation. John Bogley, Vice President of Philanthropy and Engagements, wrote to Ms. Hazel Lawrence, NFM Representative: "As the last notes of Les Preludes fade into the northern Michigan air and 3,344 young artists have returned home, we here at Interlochen take a moment to reflect what it takes to create the transformative Interlochen

Arts Camp experience every summer. Along with outstanding faculty, empathetic and enthusiastic counselors, and the dedicated staff from our cafeterias to our crossing guards, one critical component is YOU.

Because of your generosity, students at Interlochen Arts Camp spent the summer learning the skills and practice habits to take their artistry to new heights. They developed friendships with others who share their passions, creating an artistic community that nurtures and inspires. Because of YOU they had the life-changing experience that transformed their passion and potential into purpose."

Herman & Mary Neumann Award (piano, voice, orchestral instruments) - \$1,000 Hazel Lawrence, NFM Representative

[Comment: SMC's privacy policy does not permit their providing personal info details or photographs.]

[No photo] **Sofia (voice, songwriter)** this year's award recipient wrote: "Thank you for your unbelievable generosity! Because of your help I was able to pursue the Singer Songwriter Program for the 2nd session of camp! Songwriting has always been an integral to who I am. I have been improvising, writing songs, and creating melodies for as long I can remember. It has always been an instinctual and deeply meaningful part of who I am. Attending this program has profoundly increased my fascination with the craft of songwriting. Working with outstanding faculty from Berklee and the professional world of music has helped me discover new tools, colors, poetry, theory and depth which will be essential to writing songs that matter and have a real impact. Interlochen is the only place in the world that allows young artists to have these transformative life changing experiences. Thank you for everything."

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC CAMP

Peace Gardens, ND

www.internationalmusiccamp.com

The International Music Camp (IMC) is located in the Peace Gardens on the border between Canada and the United States of America (USA) in the province of Manitoba and the state of North Dakota (ND) respectively. It was begun in 1956 by Dr. Merton Utgaard who was a Boy Scout present at the dedication of the Peace Gardens. His dream of "music as the universal language" was the incentive for beginning this music camp.

The attendance for camp this year was 1,341 students along with 240 faculty members. Students from eight countries in addition to the USA and Canada attended IMC this summer. Campers' countries included: United States of America (USA), Canada, Slovenia, Barbados, Austria, Luxembourg, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Bahamas and Suriname. Five students were enrolled in the University Prep Program this summer, and 170 were enrolled in the Adult Music Camp. Adult Camp is one of the favorite sessions.

Overall about 75% of the students were from the USA and about 25% were from Canada. Between 50% to 60% of all the students attending IMC had some form of scholarship to help with their finances. The students were inspired by and engaged with their camp experiences. They were all "Happy Campers" at IMC.

Continued on page 14

NFMC SUMMER MUSIC CENTERS (SMC) AWARDS 2025 ...continued

IMC offered over 40 programs with student ages listed between 10-90 years old. The Camp had a Festival of Arts Series that brought in different guest artists each week to perform concerts for the attendees. The featured performers were: The Carlile Family Band, Mitchell Makoons, International Brass Quintet, IMC Faculty Concert Band, Oda Voltersvik, IMC Faculty Jazz Band, and the Raine Hamilton Trio.

Tim and Christine Baumann continue to develop and enrich the current programs. They are impressed with exceptionally positive camp sessions from both the staff and the campers. When asked about what is new or what changes are going to be made, they respond that very few changes are needed. There will be no new programs in 2026...IMC's 70th season. They both feel that the IMC is a strong and well-grounded organization that has deep roots in quality programs and positive interactions between campers, faculty, staff, and the beautiful setting of the International Peace Gardens. They believe we all work to develop our young people as responsible individuals who are able to work together with people of different backgrounds to achieve a common goal. International Music Camp is not just developing musicians, it is developing people.

Federation Day was Friday July 25, 2025 at the IMC. The reception for the NFMC Agnes Jardine [Past National President (PNP)] Award recipients, friends, and faculty was held at the Alme International Arts Center and hosted by the Devil's Lake Music Club. Each of the six award recipients received \$200 scholarship from NFMC, paid directly to IMC, and was given a \$50 cash award from the North Dakota Federation of Music Clubs (NDFMC). In addition, Deborah Eraas presented a \$1,000 check to IMC as a gift from the NDFMC. A very special "thank you" was received from Tim and Christine Baumann for this financial support as well as the many scholarships that are given to the students attending camp.

The 69th season of the International Music Camp wound down with a Festival of Arts Performance by The Raine Hamilton Trio. The Friday evening concert was enjoyed by a full house of student campers, faculty and Federation guests.

NFMC Agnes Jardine (PNP) Award (band, piano guitar, orchestra) - [6@ \$200]+\$50 Deborah Eraas, NFMC Representative



Aaron Jude Abellera (flute, age 16) is from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. In addition to playing the flute Aaron Jude plays the piccolo, sings in his school choir, and acts in musical theatre productions when possible.

Some of Aaron Jude's favorite parts of IMC are the amazing food at the dining hall, being in nature, and meeting the like-minded musicians from all around the world. He also loves meeting the vibrantly enthusiastic staff

and faculty, especially Laurel Ridd, his private lesson instructor while he's at camp.

Aaron Jude has achieved many musical feats including participating in the Winnipeg Youth Wind Ensemble, Winnipeg Youth Orchestra concert and symphony orchestras, and several honor bands and festivals. After his time in high school, he plans to go on to eventually pursue a

doctorate degree in music education so he can continue to lead others to excellence and inspired musicality.



Katherine Dahmen (oboe, age 18) is from Bismarck, ND and has been playing oboe for seven years, she also plays the English horn and tenor saxophone. Aside from the orchestras, bands, and woodwind quintets at IMC, Katherine has played in school and community bands and jazz bands, the local youth orchestra and community orchestra, along with numerous honor ensembles. She was selected for the North Dakota Music Educators Association (NDMEA) All-State all four years and was honored with the four-year award. She plans to attend Concordia College in Moorhead, MN to study music education.

IMC has been an integral part of Katherine's music journey. The ensembles in the camp have introduced her to playing in woodwind quintets and orchestras, driving her to join the local youth orchestra. It has provided her with a strong musical skill set, giving her education in music theory, experience in multiple ensembles, and the opportunity to work with world-class faculty. IMC has been a launching board for a lifelong passion, and she is excited for the camp to provide this opportunity to young musicians for years to come.



Lev Frykoda (clarinet, age 15) is from Minnedosa, Manitoba, Canada. His musical experience started with piano lessons. He started playing clarinet when he joined band in seventh grade under the direction of IMC faculty member Graydon Cramer. In eighth grade, he learned to play the saxophone and joined the jazz band. Now, Lev plays the alto saxophone in a jazz combo and participates in his community orchestra.

This was Lev's first summer at IMC, and he chose to attend jazz and orchestra weeks. He was encouraged by his friends and teachers to come to camp, and he is very thankful for them doing so.

This past year, Lev studied under Dr. Wood at Brandon University and attended the clarinet festival there as well. In addition, he has played in the Westman Honour Band for the past three years. In the future, he looks forward to attending IMC and playing with many other talented musicians.



Hudson McLain (bassoon, age 18) is from Bottineau, ND. After starting trombone in fifth grade, he played numerous instruments until he found one that stuck...the bassoon. He has attended the North Dakota High School Activities Association regional and state music competitions for three years, Minot (ND) State University's Northwest Festival and the University of North Dakota's Honor Band for two years, and the NDMEA All-State Orchestra for one year. Hudson has been attending IMC since 2019.

In the fall of 2025, Hudson will be a senior singing with the Bottineau High School's Vocalease, before going on the Mystical Horizons Star of North Dakota Tour around Europe. After high school, he plans to study music education and bassoon performance and wishes to teach at a university someday.



Alan Michels (trumpet, age 18) is from Mohall, ND. His main musical instrument and experience are with playing the trumpet beginning at ten years old. He has performed in his local community band, school bands, and at local events, including Mass at his church.

There are several other musical groups that he has been privileged to participate in over the last year. He played with the Minot (ND)

Community band and the Minot (ND) Brass Band, as well as being selected to participate in the Northwest Festival of Music, University of North Dakota Honor Band, and selected for the All-State orchestra this past spring. He plans to continue playing trumpet while at college for electrical technology at North Dakota State School of Science in Wahpeton, ND.

The first time Alan attended IMC was 2019, and he immediately planned to come back. He says, "*Listing everything I like about [International Music Camp] wouldn't fit here.*" In 2023, he was able to return to camp for band and began attending for trumpet in orchestra in 2024 and 2025. His favorite part, though, has been the brass chamber ensembles. His friends from those ensembles, many of which aren't from the U.S., may be the crowning jewel of the entire experience. All of his experiences, combined with the camp's convenient location for him, have had Alan looking forward to summer more than ever for the past few years.



Allison Schmidt (French horn, age 18) is a junior at Saint Mary's Central High School in Bismarck, ND; in addition to playing the French horn, she is a cheerleader. She has played the French horn for six years. She also plays the trumpet, mellophone, piano, and steel drums. She is active in many of her school's music programs, including wind orchestra, jazz band, and steel drum band. Allison has been selected for other musical honors, including NDMEA All-State and

several state stars and superior rankings at several festivals.

Allison stated that camp has been a wonderful experience each of the four times she has attended. Her highlights were the trips to the formal Peace Gardens, working with the gifted professors and fellow musicians, and all the lively activities of a music camp.

Allison is undecided as of now for her future careers, but hopes to go into the science or medical field. She hopes that music, along with all that she has learned from it, will continue to be present and active in her life.

KNEISEL HALL

Blue Hill, ME

www.kneisel.org

Kneisel Hall is a premiere music school and festival in Maine that provides excellence in chamber music education and performance. It was founded over 100 years ago by the violinist Franz Kneisel, founder of the Kneisel String Quartet and concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Known as the "cradle of chamber music teaching in America", Kneisel Hall provides the highest quality chamber music education to 49 exceptional students during its 7-week summer program. All students are selected through a competitive audition process. Our esteemed faculty members are from the top music schools and conservatories. They provide intensive instruction in a supportive and nurturing environment.



NFMC Ada Holding Miller (Past National President) Award (strings) - \$1,250
Meredith Amado, SMC Contact

Ari Peraza-Webb (cello, age 19) is a Venezuelan-American from Cincinnati, OH. Born into a family of musicians, Ari began his violin studies under his mother at the age of three, switching to cello shortly after.

He is the cellist of the FaMa Quartet and a member of Castlemaine Theater (formed at Kneisel Hall in 2024). He plans to continue working with his trio and is interested in presenting collaborative projects with dancers and actors in the fall. Ari returned to Kneisel Hall in the summer of 2025 with his trio, making it his second summer at Blue Hill. Kneisel Hall is a sanctuary of musical discovery, which inherently makes it a sanctuary of self-discovery. To gather and to share music among colleagues and friends in such an idyllic place is reason alone to return, but one must consider the fun trees to climb too!

Ari made his orchestral debut at age 12 with the Blue Ash-Montgomery Symphony Orchestra. Since then, he has made appearances with the Dubrovnik Symphony Orchestra, Savaria Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, and the New Albany Symphony Orchestra. He earned first place in the 2018 and 2020 Cleveland Cello Society Competitions and performed once more as the 2025 Cleveland Cello Society Competition winner. Ari was selected as the winner of the Overture Awards in both 2022 and 2023 and the winner of the Mary Alice Cox Award in 2019 and 2023.

Ari's music took him overseas to the 8th International Antonio Janigro Competition in Zagreb, Croatia, where he earned second prize. He was selected as an active participant for the 2022 and 2024 Biennial Kronberg Academy Masterclasses. There he studied with Gary Hoffman and Wolfgang Emmanuel Schmidt. Ari has spent many of his summers at esteemed music programs such as Kneisel Hall, Verbier Festival, the Heifetz Institute, Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, and Ascent Chamber Music Festival. Ari currently studies at the Julliard School, under mentorship of Nina Lee and Zvi Plessner. His previous teachers include Joel Krosnick, Richard Aaron, Sarah Kim, and Alan Rafferty. Ari performs on a 1786 Jose Contreras cello, generously loaned by the Julliard School.

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NFMC SUMMER MUSIC CENTERS (SMC) AWARDS 2025 ...continued

MARROWSTONE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Seattle, Washington

www.marrowstone.org

Marrowstone Music Festival is returning as a residential program for the first time in many years. The 2026 festival (Wednesday, July 29–Saturday, August 8, 2026) will be hosted at **Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA**. Students will stay on campus for the duration of the intensive summer session. Living and learning together in this vibrant university setting creates a true community experience—one filled with collaboration, creativity, and lasting friendships. Serious young advanced string, winds, brass, and percussion musicians, ages 14–20, will not only sharpen their craft but also expand their horizons and perform with newfound confidence on inspiring stages. Before applying, piano & harp musicians should contact Wendy Devaney (Director of School & Summer Programs) at wendy.devaney@syso.org.

NFMC Award (orchestral, except percussion) - \$1,000
Wendy Devaney, SMC Contact

This award was not given in 2025. The Marrowstone Music Festival was not held due to the Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestra's ten-day tour of Portugal.

MEADOWMOUNT SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Westport, New York

www.meadowmount.com

For more than 80 years, Meadowmount School of Music has been America's most respected and beloved summer home by rising generations of violinists, violists, and cellists. Founded in 1944 by legendary violin teacher Ivan Galamian, Meadowmount is a seven-week summer program in the Adirondack Mountains of northern New York. Musicians ages 10 to 30 from around the world gather at the school's campus to immerse themselves in an environment where they can focus on personal and artistic development through intensive training with leading faculty, individual practice, chamber music, and performance opportunities.

Meadowmount has long been regarded as the premier destination for young musicians and has served as the training ground for some of the greatest musicians of our time. Notable alumni include Itzhak Perlman, Yo-Yo Ma, Pinchas Zukerman, Kyung-Wha Chung, Lynn Harrell, Joshua Bell, Jaime Laredo, James Ehnes, Ani and Ida Kavafian, Marin Alsop, Jessie Montgomery, and Thomas Mesa, among others. Meadowmount alumni are well represented internationally among soloists and chamber musicians, principal players of leading orchestras, and distinguished teachers.

With a capacity enrollment of 180 on the 49-building, 240-acre campus, the school retains an intimacy that provides for personal attention and fosters camaraderie among the students. Many students return year after year. Alumni retain strong connections and return as faculty and guest artists, thus ensuring the continuity of the Meadowmount teaching tradition. The faculty roster, that has over the years included Gregor Piatigorsky, Josef Gingold, Isaac Stern, Leonard Rose, Sally Thomas, and Dorothy DeLay, recently featured: violinists Ann Setzer, Gerardo Ribeiro, I-Hao Lee, Paul Kantor, and Janet Sung; violists Ayane Kozazsa and Caroline Coade; cellists Hans Jørgen Jensen and Thomas Landschoot; and, chamber music faculty Steven Rochen, David Salness and Pattie Sunwoo – a lineage that is unmatched in the field.

In summer 2025, Meadowmount School of Music welcomed 186 students, ages 11 to 28, from 30 states and 15 countries for an inspiring season of music-making in the Adirondacks. It was a vibrant and exciting summer with the Kronos Quartet in residence, along with respected guest artists and speakers Molly Carr, Sheryl Staples, Kim Kashkashian, Colin Carr, Thomas Mesa, Afa Dworkin, and Noa Kageyama. The guest artists performed, coached, and led masterclasses and seminars for students. Meadowmount partnered with organizations across Essex County and the Adirondack region to present over 40 concerts on campus and throughout the community. Six of these concerts were live-streamed in collaboration with **The Violin Channel**, bringing Meadowmount's incredible young artists to a global audience.



NFMC Suzanne Anderson Award
(violin, viola, or cello) - \$1,000
Anna Louise Martin, SMC Contact

Margaux Hicks (cellist, age 15) is studying with Karen Schulz-Harmon in Portland, OR. She has been an active member of Portland's Metropolitan Youth Symphony (MYS) for six years. During the school year, Margaux also participates in a variety of smaller ensembles, including MYSfits, a self-conducted string ensemble, and the Pacific Rose Ensemble, a group founded and run by student musicians in the Portland Metro area. Margaux was the overall runner-up in the 2023 and 2024 MYS concerto competitions. In the summer of 2024, she performed as a cello soloist at the International Festival of Music and Dance (Grenada, Spain). In 2023, she received a merit-based scholarship to attend the Brevard Music Center, where she served as a principal cellist in the Brevard Concert Orchestra. In prior summers, she has participated in the National Cello Institute, the Advanced Suzuki Institute at Stanford University, Portland Summer Ensembles, and the Ascent Music Festival.

Margaux chose Meadowmount this past summer because she wanted to be challenged to raise the bar and work harder as a musician. Her experience was as challenging as she expected, but also deeply rewarding. From both students and faculty she gained valuable insights into effective practice, performance strategies, collaboration, and life as a professional musician. Meadowmount provided an excellent opportunity for her to refine her technique, explore new repertoire, and build connections which will support her throughout her musical journey. Margaux extended many thanks to NFMC for helping make this opportunity possible.

MUSIC ACADEMY OF THE WEST

Santa Barbara, California

www.musicacademy.org

Founded in 1947, the Music Academy of the West (The Academy) offers a transformative full-scholarship Summer Festival & School for 140 exceptional fellows and offers year-round programs that includes "Sing!"; a free choral initiative serving 260+ local children. The Academy inspires global artistry while enriching our community through world-class performances and education.

The Academy's Summer Festival and School provides intensive coaching, instruction in chamber music, orchestra programs, a fully-staged opera,

and competitions. These offerings culminate in over 120 performances over an 8-week span that engage and inspire the Santa Barbara community each summer.



NFMC Award (opera) - \$1,500
Anais Pellegrini, SMC Contact

Makenna “Kenny” Ford (bassoon, age 22) is from Chelsea, MI. She completed her Bachelor’s degree at Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, studying with George Sakakeeny. Kenny was the 2024 Frances Walton Chamber Music Competition Silver Medalist and Principal Bassoon with Eastman Philharmonia in Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*. She has been a member of Mousai Quintet since 2021.

On a personal note, she loves to spend time outdoors, especially when that time is with her friends. She wrote: “I’m from the North - I’m definitely a winter person, so usually that outdoors time is spent skiing or ice skating, but in the summertime, I will never say “no” to a hike! Basketball is her favorite sport of all time, but she also enjoys tennis, soccer, and is always up for learning new things too! She has been learning Spanish for a while, but she shared that she still needs more practice. Her favorite food includes anything made with potatoes, but she likes mashed potatoes the best. She indicated that she is big on social time, when she is not in a practice room with her bassoon, working on reeds in rehearsal, or doing homework. She most of all loves to spend quality time with her friends and the folks around her.

OPERA IN THE OZARKS

Eureka Springs, Arkansas
www.opera.org

Located in the beautiful Ozark Mountains, Opera in the Ozarks (OIO) occupies nearly 50 acres of beautiful wooded land overlooking Beaver Lake. In 2025 OIO opened a new 300-seat opera theater...a gift of the Walton Family Foundation. OIO singers range in age from 18 to 40 years, and the annual class was 37 singers in 2025. Vocal lessons, acting, and movement training is offered. Singers pay tuition but generous scholarships are available. OIO alumni can be found on opera stages all over the world and many have academic position at prestige schools of music.

Opera in the Ozarks offers an 8-week training program for young singers contemplating a career in opera. OIO singers are offered a great deal of stage time and the opportunity to sing with a professional orchestra. All major roles are double cast but every singer gets at a minimum at least three performances in their role. Most singers are cast in multiple shows – OIO does three full-length operas in the original language and a children’s opera in English. In total, there are 21 performances of mainstage opera and 14 of the children’s opera, plus two Broadway cabarets. The 2025 season included *Carmen* by Georges Bizet, *Into the Woods* by Stephen Sondheim, and *The Merry Widow* by Franz Lehár.



NFMC Award for Opera - \$2,100
Lois Armor, NFMC Representative

Benjamin Somervell (voice/bass-baritone) is 24 years old. Originally from McGehee, AR, he resides in Tuscaloosa, AL. He has been singing since he can remember, beginning in church choir in fourth grade and adding piano lessons the same year. During junior high, Benjamin competed in the all-region choir circuit. In high school, he began his journey

in band...playing trombone. Entering college he hoped to become a band director. Little did he know he would change his focus to vocal education his senior year. He received his BME in Music Education from Mississippi State University in 2023 with a double concentration in bass trombone and voice.

It was during 2023-24 that Benjamin decided to pursue a career in opera after performing with the University of Alabama Opera Theatre and Druid City Opera. He kept his love for piano and choir by accompanying public school choirs in Tuscaloosa. After completing his MM in Vocal Performance at the University of Alabama, Benjamin plans to apply to DMA programs in the hope of continuing his education in vocal performance.

During the 2025 OIO season, Benjamin played Baron Mirko Zete in *The Merry Widow* and Escamillo and Zuniga in *Carmen*. He describes his experience at Opera in the Ozarks as a “demanding, yet enjoyable experience. Being fully enveloped in what I plan on doing for the rest of my life has taught me a lot”. The friendships made at OIO “I will have for years to come”.

Mary Prudie Brown Award for Continuing Education - \$2,000
Jean Moffatt, NFMC Representative

Comment: Jean Moffatt let us know that this year was somewhat unusual: “At the end of her term as NFMC president in 1991, Mary Prudie Brown established the Continuing Education Award in her name. She asked the Artistic Director to select a vocalist returning to or beginning a degree program the semester following the summer at OIO. The award recognizes musical and dramatic excellence, professionalism, collegiality, promise, and the ideals of OIO and NFMC.

This year for the first time, Artistic Director Tom Cockrell has nominated two persons for the award. Both are from Olathe, KS and are working on their Master’s in music performance at the University of Missouri in Kansas City. Both had practically the same role in the same musical, “*Into the Wood*”, by Sondheim. Tom told them, “You have both been exemplary members of our Opera in the Ozarks company this summer,” They will equally divide the \$2,000 award.”

Continued on page 18

NFMC SUMMER MUSIC CENTERS (SMC) AWARDS 2025 ...continued

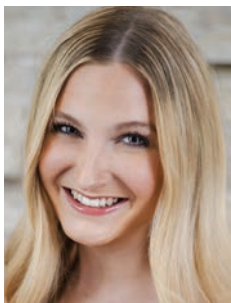


Payton Boldt (soprano, age 25) currently resides in Kansas City KS where she attends the University of Missouri-Kansas City and is working to receive a Doctorate of Music degree studying Vocal Performance. With the University, studying voice with Dr. Maria Kanyova and directed by Linda Brand, she has performed in numerous productions including Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* as Susanna and *Die Zauberflöte* as Erste Dame. Payton is also currently the Soprano Young Artist Apprentice at the Kansas City Lyric Opera where she will

perform in the chorus of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and in the outreach performances of Gregory's *The Haberdasher Prince* as the Querulous String.

Payton has attended several opera training programs including the Trentino Music Festival in Italy where she performed as Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Lawrence Opera Theater where she performed as Zerlina in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Laurette in Bizet's *Doctor Miracle*, and Music on Site where she performed as Adele in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*. In the summer of 2025, she attended Opera in the Ozarks where she performed as Cinderella in Sondheim's *Into the Woods* and Sylviane Bogdanovitch in Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe*. At the end of the summer, she was awarded the Mary Prudie Brown Scholarship. Below she shares some of her personal thoughts on the program:

"Opera in the Ozarks was a truly wonderful experience, and this was an especially great year to be a part of it, because it was the grand opening of the new theater. It was such an honor to be one of the first people to perform in such a beautiful space! OIO was one of the most rewarding programs I have ever been to. This nine-week program is not for the faint of heart. Every day is filled to the brim with rehearsals, dance classes, acting classes, and more. It is a true opera boot camp where the goal is to prepare young singers for a professional career in the arts, and I highly recommend this program to anyone willing to put in the hard work. I am forever grateful for my time in the Ozarks, for all the wonderful people I met there, and for all I learned to help my future career."



Madeline Friesen (Mezzo-soprano, age 23) is originally from Olathe, Kansas. She earned her Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, where she studied with Professor Molly Fillmore. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Vocal Performance under the tutelage of Dr. Aidan Soder and is expected to graduate in the spring of 2026. Madeline is entering her second year as an Apprentice Artist with the Lyric Opera of

Kansas City, where she made her professional opera debut in the chorus of *Turandot* in May. In this role, she regularly participates in community and education outreach performances throughout the Kansas City area. This fall, she will reprise her role of The Clear String in *The Haberdasher Prince* as part of the Lyric's education outreach program. Her involvement in outreach has sparked a growing interest in performing arts management, leading her to add a Certificate in Performing Arts Management to her degree plan, which she will begin this fall.

Madeline's previous opera roles include Le Prince Charmant in Massenet's *Cendrillon* as well as Cherubino in *Le Nozze di Figaro* at both The University of North Texas and The University of Missouri-Kansas City. Her previous musical theatre roles include Marian Paroo in *The Music Man* and Sarah Brown in *Guys and Dolls*. This summer at Opera in the Ozarks, she portrayed The Baker's Wife in *Into the Woods* and Olga in *The Merry Widow*. Reflecting on her experience at the program, she shared the following:

"My summer at Opera in the Ozarks was an incredibly rewarding experience. I was consistently challenged to grow as a performer and gained valuable musical and life skills along the way. Rehearsing and performing in two fully staged productions simultaneously was no easy task, but it taught me how to learn quickly and multitask—skills that are applicable far beyond the stage. I was surrounded by an inspiring group of singers who were not only immensely talented but also supportive and collaborative colleagues. Their high level of artistry pushed me to become a stronger actor, singer, and even dancer. I chose to attend Opera in the Ozarks because of its strong reputation and the opportunity to perform a lead role in a musical—something I hadn't done in a while. With musical theatre becoming more prevalent in opera company seasons, it's increasingly important to be a versatile performer, capable of singing in multiple styles and delivering spoken dialogue effectively. I'm so grateful I chose this program and honored to have received the Mary Prudie Brown Scholarship alongside my friend from UMKC. This summer was truly unforgettable!"

Martha Marcks Mack Awards, opera apprentice artist – 2 @ \$3,000
Carla Johnson, NFMC Representative



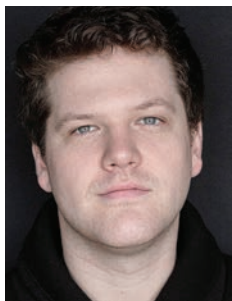
Rachel Mellman (soprano, age 26) born and raised in California's San Francisco Bay Area alongside her older sister, Emily, and parents, Jay and Martha. Rachel's parents are lifelong lovers of the arts and, from a very young age, surrounded her and her sister with music. From family outings to see musicals to her father's playing piano in the evenings, Rachel could not help but grow up with a love of music. At age 10, Rachel took part in her first musical with a local community theatre and

she was hooked. At 14, Rachel began taking her first voice lessons and was introduced to the world of classical singing.

Although opera initially had a hard time competing with her love of musical theatre, when she reached college, she met a teacher who showed her just how wonderful classical music could be. After graduating from the University of Washington with degrees in Drama Performance and Astronomy, Rachel made the switch to a new passion: Opera. In the spring of 2024, Rachel graduated from California State University-Northridge with her Master of Music in Vocal Arts. Since then, she has begun taking the steps towards a career as a professional opera singer. A huge step in that journey has been her role as an Emerging Artist with Opera in the Ozarks during summer 2025.

She cherishes the knowledge she has gained during this program, both in classes and in her roles as Micaela in *Carmen* and Cinderella in *Into*

the Woods, and is excited to take what she has learned into the rest of her career. As the operatic audition season begins again, Rachel will continue to audition for Young Artist Programs as well as productions local to her current home in Los Angeles, California.



Ian Sherwood (tenor) is currently living in Bern, Switzerland, where he recently completed his Master's degree in Opera Performance. He is originally from Grand Forks, ND. Ian began performing in musical theater productions in his community at an early age. He comes from a long line of music educators who also produced and directed musical theater productions. He first started taking voice lessons around the age of 10 and has been studying ever since. Through high

school he performed in many musicals throughout the school year and all summer long as well.

Ian's first significant experience with opera was when he attended North Dakota State University and began singing roles at the Challey School of Music in their opera productions. "I had always been interested in the function of the voice, but during my college years was when I started to become obsessed with the pursuit of perfecting vocal technique."

During his time in college, he had often heard that Opera in the Ozarks was an excellent program for students to study and sing opera and to study and perform with world class conductors, directors, coaches and teachers. His lifetime mentor Mary Dibbern recommended that he audition for Opera in the Ozarks this summer (2025) because she believed that he was ready to sing the demanding role 'Don Jose'. He is very happy to be spending the summer studying and performing at Opera in the Ozarks. He plans to return to Switzerland at the end of the summer continuing to pursue a career in opera. Ian feels that his summer at Opera in the Ozarks is a milestone that will stand out in his memory.

RAVINIA STEANS MUSIC INSTITUTE (RSMI)

Highland Park, Illinois

www.ravina.org/steans.aspx

Ravinia Festival is located on Chicago's North Shore and runs each year from late May through early September. All Ravinia events are open to Ravinia's Steans Music Institute (RSMI) participants. These events include outdoor concerts in the pavilion by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and they are often joined by distinguished soloists. There are solo and chamber recitals in Ravinia's Martin Theatre. RSMI's programming includes jazz concerts and master classes, often with RSMI alumni and world-renowned jazz musicians.

Please note that participation in the Program for Jazz is by invitation only. The Program for Jazz focuses on composition and small ensemble improvisation. Although part of the program focuses on performing a well-rehearsed concert, most of the days are spent rehearsing with a variety of individuals and learning how to perform well with changing personnel. All 15 fellows write original music in the program.

Cami Wallace, Ravinia Manager of Campaigns wrote in a September 23, 2024, e-mail: "For the first time since Steans Institute's inception in the 1980s, we are increasing our fellowship funding levels. A full Jazz fellowship will now be \$7,500.

We recognize that this is a significant adjustment and we want to be transparent about why it's necessary. The world has changed dramatically in the past four decades and the cost of residence, resources and training have all increased substantially. In order to continue attracting and supporting the most promising talent, we must align our support with today's realities and preserve the health of the Institute,

The National Federation of Music Club's support has played a crucial role in building the foundation for everything we do, and we are deeply grateful."

Rose Thomas Smith Award (jazz instrumental) - \$3,000 Terry Tennes, Representative



David Bernot (saxophone), originally from Gilbert, AZ, has been based in Denver, CO since 2012. He earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Denver in 2016 and his Master's from the University of Colorado Boulder in 2021. David is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Jazz Composition

at the University of Northern Colorado. He has received multiple accolades, including two Herb Alpert Young Jazz Composer Awards, four Downbeat Student Jazz Awards, and first place at the 2022 Carinthian International Jazz Saxophone Competition in Austria. Known for his work in jazz composition and performance, David is an emerging talent with a growing reputation in the music world.

ROCKY RIDGE MUSIC CENTER

Estes Park, Colorado

www.rockyridge.org

The Rocky Ridge Music Center (RRMC) was founded in 1942 by pianist Beth Miller Harrod as a "sleep away piano camp". Its campus is located on a rustic 20th century American homestead in the beautiful Rocky Mountains of Colorado at the foot of 14,259 ft. Long's Peak in the heart of Rocky Mountain National Park.

RRMC offers a residential summer music program to college, middle and high school, and adult students. It exists to elevate the musician inside each of us to the highest level through a unique, holistic approach—meeting every student where they are by helping them to learn, create, enjoy, and support music—ultimately making all to be more fulfilled as humans. RRM's focus is on classical solo and chamber repertoire for college; jazz and mariachi round-out programs for younger students.

NFMC Award (orchestral instruments) - \$1,000 Karen Greenhaigh, NFMC Representative

This award was not given in 2025.

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NFMC SUMMER MUSIC CENTERS (SMC) AWARDS 2025 ...continued

SANTA FE OPERA APPRENTICE PROGRAM

Santa Fe, NM
www.santafeopera.org

Santa Fe Opera (SFO) is an American opera company, located seven miles (11 km) north of Santa Fe, New Mexico. After creating the *Opera Association of New Mexico* in 1956, its founding director, John Crosby, oversaw the building of the first opera house on a newly acquired former guest ranch of 199 acres (0.81 km²). The company has presented operas each summer festival season since July 1957, and is internationally known for introducing new operas as well as for its productions of the standard operatic repertoire. Five operas are presented each season during the summer.

NFMC Ruth Freehoff Award (opera) - \$1,000 Linda King, NFMC Representative

This award was not given in 2025.

SEWANEE SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL

Sewanee, Tennessee
www.sewaneemusicfestival.org

Sewanee Summer Music Festival (SSMF) is a nationally recognized program for advanced pre-college and collegiate musicians, held annually on the campus of the University of the South in Sewanee TN. Founded in 1957, SSMF combines rigorous orchestral and chamber music training with world-class faculty mentorship in a supportive and immersive setting. The four-week festival hosts more than 200 students from around the world and features a rich calendar of concerts, masterclasses, and special events that engage both campus and community audiences.

SSMF offers experiences for advanced young musicians, combining rigorous orchestral and chamber music training with personalized instruction and a vibrant campus community. Students participate in large ensemble rehearsals and weekly concerts, receive private lessons and coaching from distinguished faculty and attend masterclasses. Specialized programs, such as OperaFest, the Composition Program, the Chamber Music Intensive, and the Concerto Competition, provide focused opportunities for growth and performance. Beyond music, participants enjoy recreational outings, wellness activities, and community events, all within the supportive and scenic environment of the University of the South.



NFMC Gladys R. Coult Award (orchestra, piano, and chamber music) - \$1,000 Mary Ellen Nolletti, NFMC Representative

Samuel Gaytan (violin, age 21), the 2025 award winner, is from Seguin, TX. Seguin is a small town close to San Antonio in which he attends college at Texas Lutheran University. He has lived in Seguin for five

years and enjoys running, kayaking and being involved with his local church. At this writing, he was a Senior majoring in music performance and music education. He will graduate after he studies

abroad in Vienna. He was accepted into the Vienna music program held in Palais Corbelli, an 18th century palace in which students from around the world study the arts.

He plays with Mid-Texas Symphony, has been concertmaster of his university orchestra for three and a half years, has won the artist of the year award in his town in 2021, and is on the path to graduating *summa cum laude*. In a year's time, he will be applying to graduate schools across the United States and possibly in Austria. He chose violin because of the emotional connection it helped him to experience when playing music. He started playing the violin at the age of six and has decided to pursue a lifetime of performance.

Samuel wants to play in professional orchestras and eventually to start his own chamber group. He does not only want to be a performer, but he also wants to own a private business. He wants to eventually start a music shop in which he repairs, sells, and auctions instruments. This will give him a leverage of financial independence while still pursuing a performance career. He is currently building a portfolio of students to teach privately. Ultimately, he desires to pursue all aspects of music, such as teaching, selling and maintaining instruments, performing and perhaps, composition and arrangement. He does not want to limit himself to any one aspect of the field so he can shift gears when necessary.



Andrew Battaglia (clarinet), the 2024 award recipient whose information was inadvertently omitted from the 2024 SMC article. Andrew is a versatile performer experienced in both symphonic and chamber music repertoire. He is equally passionate about teaching and mentoring young musicians. Andrew has performed as principal clarinetist of the Boston University (BU) Symphony Orchestra, and Chamber Orchestra, and Wind Ensemble. He has also appeared with

the Opera Orchestra on bass clarinet. In April 2024, he performed Eb clarinet on Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe Suite No. 2* with the BU Symphony Orchestra as well as bass clarinet on Arnold Rosner's *Symphony No. 2 Trinity* with the BU Wind Ensemble at Boston's historic Symphony Hall.

Andrew has performed Antonin Dvorak's *Wind Serenade* with BU faculty and members of the Boston Symphony. Within Boston's local music scene Andrew has appeared with the Cape Ann Symphony and the Du Bois Orchestra. His masterclass performances include those led by Yehuda Gilad, Michael Wayne, Boris Allakhverdyan, and Greg Raden. In 2024 Andrew returned to SSMF for his second summer. Past summer experiences also included Aria International Summer Academy and the Killington Music Festival. In addition to orchestral performance he is passionate about chamber music and has presented performances ranging from woodwind, string and vocal works.

His principal teachers include Rob Patterson, Barret Ham, Andrew Sandwick, and Charly Salinger. Originally from the Philadelphia area, Andrew's non-musical passions include cooking, running, reading, and drinking espresso.

THE WALDEN SCHOOL

Dublin, New Hampshire
www.waldenschool.org

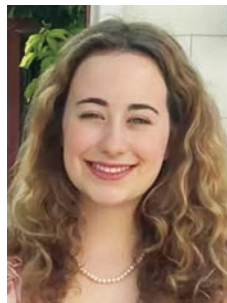
Founded in 1972, The Walden School has enjoyed 43 seasons in residence on the beautiful campus of the Dublin School in Dublin, New Hampshire. Young Musicians Program (YMP) students are immersed in an idyllic, retreat-like environment as they develop their artistic voices and forge a close-knit creative community. Students and faculty are housed in campus dormitories, with a minimum of two-three staff or faculty members per building with the students. This summer, YMP students composed and premiered new works, sang in chorus, performed on open mics, attended high-caliber musical performances by inspiring visiting artists and dedicated faculty members, enjoyed Halloween-in-July, and 4th of July games and a treasure hunt, hiked nearby mountains, swam in lakes, and much more.

The Walden School Young Musicians Program (YMP) emphasizes creativity and community through the study of composition, musicianship, improvisation, choral singing, and specialty topics ranging from renaissance music to computer musicianship and from choral conducting to jazz improvisation. Students, ages 9 to 18, from the United States of America and across the world participate in five weeks of stimulating activities while in residence at Walden's summer home on the beautiful Dublin School campus in the Monadnock region of New Hampshire.

During weekly Composers Forums, student improvisations and compositions are performed by faculty, students, and visiting artists. A composer-moderator leads discussion about the students' pieces, offering insights, suggestions, and encouragement for future works. The program culminates in Festival Week, when students' family and friends travel to New Hampshire (or join our high-quality livestreams) to attend three Composers Forums, a choral concert, and a demonstration of the skills they have developed in their classes. Walden's resident professional performing septet (The Walden School Players) workshops, rehearses, and premieres these student works.

Walden welcomes students with a variety of personal and musical backgrounds. We prioritize broad socio-economic representation in our student body. In 2025, Walden awarded \$176,700 in need-based financial aid to 28 of our 55 YMP students, with just over 50% of the students receiving some financial aid. Eight of those students received full-tuition awards through the Lance Reddick Scholarship, an initiative begun in 2024 at Walden's YMP that benefits students from Baltimore, as well as throughout the United States of America.

Walden's financial aid program grows from our deepest values as an organization, and the National Federation of Music Clubs has been and continues to be one of our most important partners in our scholarship program. The Walden School is honored to recognize NFMC among our supporters in our summer festival program book and on The Walden School website.



NFMC Award (composition and theory) - \$1,000
Noah Mlotek, SMC Contact

Nayeli Monahan (composition) was honored to receive the NFMC scholarship for her summer at Walden in 2025. Nayeli fell in love with music at a young age and has sought every musical opportunity since. Nayeli plays flute in her high school symphonic band and is studying classical voice, tap, and ballet. She recently starred as Dorothy in Acadia Community Theatre's production of *The Wizard of Oz*. *The Mount Desert Islander* described Nayeli's voice as "so mature and powerful it brings to mind another girl who first starred in this role as a teenager and made it the classic it is." Nayeli won a 2025 Maine State Musicianship Award at the Maine State Jazz Festival for her role as Sarah in David Bowie's *Labyrinth*. A freshman at Mount Desert Island High School, Nayeli is a current understudy for the title role in Roger and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*. Last year, she made it to the district-level for her speech about the Magdalene Laundries in Ireland, bringing attention to the prejudice and inequalities that women have faced.

Nayeli spent the past two summers attending The Walden School Young Musician' Program in Dublin, NH. She took composition, musicianship, and vocal jazz classes; she even learned how to dance the minuet! She made friends with musicians from all over the world with whom she still stays connected with. She created music with an incredibly supportive music community. Nayeli has many fond memories of Walden—singing in the choir, laughing with friends, dancing at the dances—that she will hold dear to her heart for years to come. She would like to thank the Walden staff and the NFMC for making the Walden experience possible. 🎵

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MUSIC CLUBS

SPECIAL AWARDS

\$2,500 JOYCE WALSH JUNIOR AWARDS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

\$1,000 MUSIC FOR THE BLIND COMPOSITION AWARD

\$1,000 BENZINGER/VALENTIN BLIND PERFORMANCE AWARD

DEADLINE MARCH 1



FUND FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF MUSICAL ARTS

by Dr. Ouida Keck, Chair

Little did NFMC dream in 1944, during the Presidency of Anne Gannett, that a gift of one twenty-five dollar War Savings Bond establishing the “FOUNDATION for the Advancement of Musical Arts” would evolve over the years to the point where the fund now provides as much as \$21,000 in support annually for projects to promote music and musicians. The original intent of the project was to establish a fund where special projects might be initiated without being a drain on the operational expenses of the Federation. In 1993 the name of the project was changed to “FUND for the Advancement of Musical Arts” in order to comply with IRS requirements. Today the Fund of approximately \$255,500 carries the stipulation that at least \$100,000 must remain in the fund to prevent depletion and insure continued funding of grant applications. The amount of funding varies from year to year and is dependent on the number of applications and the quality of the proposed projects. A committee of six determines the recipients and also determines if projects are fully or partially funded. Recipients from previous years are considered but receive lower priority

than new applicants. FAMA grants are not available for tuition, travel and/or living expenses or payment for musicians or others involved in a project as a stipend/salary. The application fee is \$20 and the deadline for 2026 is May 1. For application forms and more information about grant requirements, membership requirements, etc. see nfmc-music.org. Click on Competitions at the top of the Home page and then Grants.

Recipients of the \$21,110.62 given this year are:

Jamie Reimer, Coordinator of the Robert Owens Centenary Festival-\$4,377.62 to fund production expenses, hospitality and media materials

Don Dagenais for Opera in the Ozarks, Inc.- \$5,000 to Fund marketing expenses for the opening of the new opera house in 2025 and to celebrate the 75th anniversary of this summer center

Kathy Rambo for Young Annasemble Orchestra-\$5,533 to fund the purchase and repair of instruments

Sam Ecoff for Violins of Hope-\$3,500 to partially fund the Wisconsin Residency of this education project

Joyce Jordan, Crescendo Choir Music Purchase-\$1,500 to fund the purchase of new choral music

Madelyn Stewart, Composers Hub Professional Development Program-\$1,200 to partially fund audio and video recording and instrument rentals

With this many grants now being funded, one might wonder what sources provide income for the fund. Shockingly the only source set up to fund FAMA are Memorial and Recognition donations which are all invested in the FAMA account unless a different award is specified. As you can guess, this is not a huge amount of money annually but by honoring or memorializing special people in your lives, your gifts will also be making a positive difference in the lives of many performing musicians and music audiences. 🎵

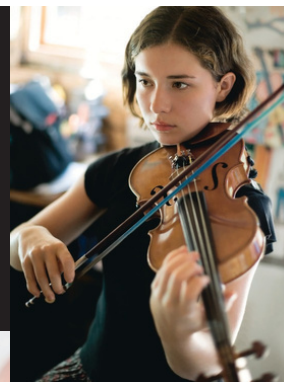
FAMA

FUND FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF MUSICAL ARTS

(FAMA) grants are designed to support a specific music education/outreach project. They are non-renewable and are not intended to support ongoing projects. New grant applicants will receive priority over previous grant recipients, and preference will be given to community projects that strengthen music education/music appreciation in the United States. All decisions of the committee are final.

Dr. Ouida Keck, Chair
keckouida@gmail.com

Deadline: May 1



For more detailed grant information visit The National Federation of Music Clubs at www.nfmc-music.org



A New Name: A New Vision

Dr. Tom Bolton, President
Hot Springs Music Connection

At the Arkansas Federation of Music Clubs convention last May, discussion centered around ways to revitalize our local clubs. I was beginning my third two-year term as president of the Hot Springs Music Club and felt the need for a new perspective and enthusiasm for our club. I did not want us to fall into the rut of “rinse and repeat” each year. I believe in striving for excellence and avoiding what I call the rut of “perpetual mediocrity.” After all, a rut is nothing more than a grave with the ends knocked out.

Entering our 75th year we were not a dying club per se, but I felt we needed an update to create a sense of relevance and vitality. Because of attrition, three deaths, and two members moving away this past year, going into the season our membership had potentially diminished to thirty-seven. And there was the added problem of too few of the membership attending our programs.

So rather than just doing things as usual, I decided to take a fresh look at everything from the name of the club to its mission, with the understanding that there are certain non-negotiables due to our affiliation with NFMC.

I began by looking at our name and decided the word “Club” sounded a bit archaic with the connotation of a closed inward-looking, exclusive circle like you find in a country club. I thought “Hot Springs Music Connection” would project that we are still a fellowship circle, but one that is facing outward with the intent of reaching out to the community in which we exist.



Our 75th anniversary logo.

After discussing this with our wonderful Leadership Team (10 members plus myself), we decided to propose the name change that communicates this expanded vision. To do so, we had to change the Constitution and By-Laws and notify the membership in advance of an official vote, so we were not official until our September meeting.

Below are other measures we implemented last summer:

- In late June, we sent an email blast to around eighty educators, church musicians, and members of musical groups. In this email we tried to communicate a change of vision that included connection to a wider spectrum of people and organizations.
- We created the position of ‘cultural liaison’ who collects information about performances in public schools, colleges, and other music-related organizations in our area, including the Arkansas Symphony in Little Rock. Each month, we distribute a list of events to our members, encouraging them to take part in as many activities as possible. Several members of our group began attending events such as the monthly Friday evening art gallery walks, concerts showcasing local school and church musicians, and theatrical performances.
- We emailed current members to explain what we were proposing and to encourage them to submit names of, but more importantly, to personally talk to their musical colleagues about joining us. This direct engagement is essential and has contributed to the recruitment of several new members.
- We placed articles in local newspapers that emphasized our upcoming 75th anniversary season as well as the new name change and the rationale behind it.
- I created, with the help of AI, a new logo for the Hot Springs Music Connection that I used in the articles, correspondence, and on the cover of our Yearbook. The creation of the logo took just five minutes, yet the result appears highly professional. We also decided to spend a little more on color graphics for our Yearbook cover, celebrating our new vision and this special anniversary.
- For monthly programming ideas, we looked at the various forms we submit to NFMC each year. Consequently, each of our programs has a different emphasis and content, including chamber music, music by American women composers, sacred music, and dance. In these programs we also spotlight young musicians whenever possible.
- We are planning a major event for our 75th anniversary. The January Founders Day program will feature performances from members and guests active in the 1960s–1990s. I am reviewing 75 years of minutes, programs, and pictures for a PowerPoint presentation, and I will interview a member of 59 years who has twice served as president—in different centuries.

There are initial signs that our club is experiencing revitalization.

- At our first meeting in September, we had sixty people in attendance, including twelve new members. Two guests filled out membership forms at that meeting, including one local resident who has sung with the Metropolitan Opera and other venues all over the world. She even sang for us at our next meeting.
- In the spirit of “put your money where your mouth is,” a couple of the leadership team sponsored and paid the dues for musicians suffering personal and financial hardships. They were most grateful for the membership.
- Our October chamber music program drew ninety-one attendees, with three joining as new members, including two professional musicians holding doctorates in French horn and viola. Later a professional bassoonist joined as well.
- As of November 1, we have fifty-nine members in the HSMC with hopes of other additions soon.

From the positive reactions I have received from both old and new members, I sense that people are understanding and catching the vision of ‘connection.’ We have not *changed* our vision so much as we have *expanded* it. As a result, I feel our overall organizational health has improved along with my personal motivation as I begin my third term as president. 🎵



Spreading the Good News: Being an Exhibitor at a Conference

by Lori Jessen

How many times has someone said to you, “What’s NFMC? I’ve never heard of it.” There are a staggering amount of people unfamiliar with us... so what can we do to change that?

One way is to be an exhibitor at a music conference. I’m penning this article on the final day of representing NFMC at the South Dakota Music Educators Association annual conference. This conference coincides with the All State Choir, All State Orchestra, and Elementary Honor Choir festivals. Many, if not most, of the music educators in the state attend this conference. Band, orchestra, and choir directors, plus elementary music teachers are all here, looking for any way to benefit their students and their programs. Several colleges and universities are also present. We decided that this would be a good place to connect with a target audience for Junior and Student-Collegiate awards. While we are no means experts at this, it was a very positive experience, and we’d like to share what we did and what we learned.

STEP 1: DECIDE TO GO. You won’t get anywhere if you never choose to bite the bullet and commit to taking action. You’ll never know how successful it could be if you don’t give it a try.

STEP 2: RESEARCH THE CONFERENCE. Who will be there? What is the cost? When are the dates? Where is it being held? Why is the conference held? NFMC offers many programs and not all of them are applicable for every audience. The SDMEA conference attendees are public and private school music educators along with a smattering of college professors and students. Also potentially passing through would be the students in the choir and orchestra. We narrowed our focus to junior awards for singers and string players as to not overwhelm with too many options. We also had information available for student-collegiate awards. Plus, we had information about Composers Institute camp and the Junior Composers Contest.

STEP 3: COUNT THE COST. What expenses will be incurred? There will be a charge for the exhibitor table, but that’s just the beginning. What physical items are you utilizing—postcards, business cards, paper handouts, “swag,” candy or other goodies, etc.? Is the conference local or will there be travel expenditures (gas, food, lodging)? Who’s going to pay for all of this? Find the funding or donations that you need, whether it’s through the club or individuals. Someone is always willing to help. One person can buy a bag of candy, another can print stickers, someone else can design the handouts; there’s a task for everyone to be able to get involved.

STEP 4: MAKE A PLAN. Write down what needs to be done, who’s responsible for it, and when it needs to be finished. We were really pretty good at brainstorming what needed to be done and who would do it. Not as good at setting the deadlines. Hence why I was printing the morning of the day we left...

STEP 4: PREPARE. Since we were spotlighting the string and vocal junior awards, I reviewed the requirements for each. It was especially helpful to tell the high school singers what the repertoire requirements are. I then reminded them that by learning these 5 songs, they would become much better singers and that’s the ultimate goal. If they win the contest, that’s just a bonus. It’s a win-win for them! We also had a printed packet of student-collegiate award rules prepared for all the college representatives. FYI: most of the colleges said they had never heard of us, even though we have a state federation scholarship and they get emails from us every year. For some reason, we have been forgettable or the information is not being passed on. Hopefully, we have become more memorable now that they’ve had a positive in-person contact with us.

STEP 5: TAKE A FRIEND, if possible. We represented the South Dakota Federation of Music Clubs, but we teamed up with Pat Steege from Composers Institute. Conference days can be long, and it’s nice to always have someone at the table. While a single person could do it, it’s much easier with 2-3. Each person can specialize in some aspect. I talked to all the high school students, then passed them over to Pat, or vice versa. Daryl focused on the college professors. We all connected with the educators.

Things that worked:

- **Displaying big posters with pictures on foam board.** People were very drawn to the Composers Institute poster with all the photos from camp; it’s what caught their attention first.
- **Giving out candy & fruit snacks.** (Reeses, Cookies n’ Cream, & KitKats, were the most popular.) People stop for food, and then you can ask questions as to what they might be interested in. You can’t fish without any bait.
- **Initiating the conversation** with people who are passing by the table “in the zone.” People at conferences walk in certain patterns. Those who walk in the very center of the aisle between the displays, are generally not interested in pursuing a conversation at that time. They are outside of the zone. People who walk closer to the table are indicating that they are in browse mode and will stop and talk. Be bold and greet them, draw them in, ask about who they are and what they do, then present what you have to offer.
- **Networking** with other exhibitors. We stopped at almost every other table, introduced ourselves, asked about their booth (if we didn’t already know them), and told them a little bit about us.
- **Having a signup list.** We didn’t ask everyone to sign up, but some people needed additional information that we just couldn’t give to them at the moment. Having a legal pad for them to leave their information worked well. And no one walked off with my pen, even though it was a really nice one.

- **Handing out my business card.** People appreciate knowing they have a “go-to” person if they get stuck or have additional questions. Providing the personal touch and another means of contact is so important.
- **Having someone who was once on the other side of the table.** Daryl was a South Dakota band director for 23 years. He knew a lot of the people at the conference already. They all asked what he’s been doing since he retired and that provided an instant opening for presenting the Federation. While this circumstance probably isn’t a possibility for every exhibitor, if you have a person who’s connected, it certainly helps.

What we wished we’d done:

- **Label items on the table.** While we all knew what everything was, those passing by didn’t. An eye-catching label would have helped, especially for the governor’s proclamation for National Music Week that we had laying out. Anything to pique their interest—to draw attention to what you have, to start the conversation—is a bonus.
- **Had a handout for the college students.** We did have a QR code for them to scan, but they were looking for something physical.
- **Be better with setting deadlines...** It’s a work in progress...

Investing the time and money into attending this conference was well worth it. What happened? We have made South Dakota music educators aware of NFMFC and what we do, especially at the collegiate level. We have connected with a South Dakota arts advocacy agency for a possible future program collaboration. We connected with a national arts advocacy organization about their helping to spread the word about NFMFC programs and awards. We connected with the SDMEA magazine about how we could write articles for their magazine with information useful to their readers and promote NFMFC as well. We have a possibility of starting another Festival site. We have potential entrants for the Junior Composers contest. We have secured at least one applicant for a national student-collegiate award. We have given information to the US Marine Corps representative to publicize the veteran’s awards for the entire central portion of the US. There are also several hot prospects for Composers Institute. And at the very least, we provided chocolate to a whole lotta folks who needed it, with a smile and a good word.

Would we do it again? We can’t quite make that decision yet. Initially, the answer is “yes,” but we need to give it a bit of time to see some of the results. It will take several months because award portals close on March 1 and Composers Institute isn’t until July. But we have planted good seed in fertile soil. Now we wait, in expectation, for the crop to grow. Here’s hoping for a bumper crop! 🎵

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Where Are They Now?

KWAN YI NFMC 2011 YOUNG ARTIST, PIANO



Pianist Kwan Yi has performed throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia in such venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kimmel Center, Kennedy Center, Chicago Symphony Center, Mann Performing Arts Center, Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts, Library of Congress, Metropolitan and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museums, hr-Sendesaal, Auditorium du Louvre, Teatro Gayarre, Suntory Hall, and Seoul Arts Center.

Yi has appeared as a soloist with the Russian National Orchestra, Houston Symphony Orchestra, Brevard Festival Orchestra and the North Carolina Symphony under the batons of Hans Graf, Julian Kuerti, and Mikhail Tartanikov. As a recitalist and masterclass instructor, he has completed residencies at University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Bowling Green State University, University of Georgia, Michigan State University, and University of South Carolina. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with Itzhak Perlman, Miriam Fried, and Roberto Diaz on national tours and was invited to perform at the Kronberg, Ravinia, Trondheim, and the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern festivals and Carnegie Hall Presents, Curtis Presents, CIM Mixon Hall Masters, and Peoples' Symphony Concert series. He has recorded for FHR and Hänssler labels with violinist Itamar Zorman.

A recipient of many honors and prizes, Yi's awards include Mieczyslaw Munz Prize, **National Federation of Music Clubs Young Artist Award**, and prizes at the Fourth Sendai International Piano Competition.

Yi is a graduate of the Curtis Institute, Juilliard School and the Peabody Institute where he worked with Leon Fleisher and Robert McDonald. He currently serves as associate professor of piano at the East Carolina University School of Music. 🎵



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ARTS DIVISION NEWS

By Ellen Leapaldt, Arts Division Chair

I hope you've all heard about the new or increased awards available for participating in programs of the Arts Division. There are increased awards for *Ethnic Performance* (formerly International Music Relations); these awards are for either Senior or Junior Clubs. There are also new Regional Awards for *Music in Poetry* and *National Music Week!* Check out the updated Competitions and Awards chart for all the possibilities to support your clubs by participating and reporting! There is also a new name for Music in Education (formerly Music in Schools and Colleges). We need to support music education in every situation! We have some new chairmen, so please update your club contact information to make sure the proper forms are sent to the current chairs by the required reporting dates! We love to hear about and see pictures of the great programs being presented by our Senior Clubs (and sometimes including our Collegiates and Juniors). Please send scans or pictures, not originals, when you do your reports. We do not return any items unless you include an envelope and postage.

Have a great club year with Celebrate Strings, Chamber Music, Ethnic Performance, Music in Education, Music Outreach, Music in Song, Music in Poetry, Sacred Music, Choral Music, National Music Week and Opera. We hope you purchased the new edition of *Music in Poetry and Song* for September 2025 to August 2027, edited by Debra Hughes and Barbara Murray with music by Kristin Ivers for only \$5.00 (it's available from NFMC headquarters). National Music Week (the 103rd celebration) is May 3-10, 2026, with the theme of: "Music...is our constant companion". 🎵




Join us for the next MTNA National Conference in Chicago, March 21–25, 2026—a landmark occasion as we celebrate 150 years of excellence in music teaching!

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#MTNA2026



2026 NMW theme works for all ages, experience

by Jean Moffatt, MCM Editor

The announced theme of the 2026 National Music Club week is “Music...is our constant companion.” A recent article in the USA TODAY NETWORK insert of our local newspaper suggests that the enjoyment of music, especially in producing it, knows no boundaries of age or experience.

Written by Anna Reguero, the article uses statistics to back up her claim that retired senior citizens can begin or return to musical skills when their children leave the nest, or when they retire from their jobs and suddenly find themselves with hours to fill. Beginning or returning to musical studies, practice, collaboration with others, and public performance can fill a void that satisfies and enriches one’s life.

Reguero introduces her readers to Steven Swanger, 76, from Sudbury, Massachusetts. As he approached retirement, he worried that his life would become empty. He lived for work, and his children would soon move out of the house. How would he fill his time?

At age 60, he picked up the clarinet, an instrument he had never played before, and joined the Sudbury Valley New Horizons Music Band. It provides music-making opportunities for all adults, targeted at the 50 and older population.

It was a return to the music-making he enjoyed as a child, but it became more than a fun diversion. Music has become a central part of Swanger’s life in retirement, providing social opportunities, mental stimulation and a space to escape the world’s woes. He currently plays in several ensembles, from bands to chamber music, in the region where he lives.

We who belong to a music club have ample opportunities to perform at our monthly meetings. We can perform solos, duets, trios, and in choirs. We can perform vocally or instrumentally. We can dance, listen, and learn more about music and musicians of the past and present.



Sometimes we take our music to public events and nearby nursing homes, where we can always find a receptive and eager audience.

Swanger recently learned the extent to which music has enhanced his life after an eye surgery left him blind in one eye and unable to play clarinet. “I realize now that my life has been terribly empty since I haven’t been able to play,” he says. “I found in retirement that if you have one thing that you’ve scheduled in a day, you

can build a whole day around that and feel constructive. If your day has nothing at all, life can become very depressing.”

Fortunately, Swanger’s eye is slowly healing, and he resumed playing several months ago. “My life has improved by 2,000 percent,” he exclaimed.

HOW DOES MUSIC HELP?

Older adults are increasingly susceptible to mental health challenges due to factors such as physical decline, cognitive changes, social isolation, and grief. According to recent research studies, however, music may be preventative. Music not only promotes well-being but also enhances brain health, according to Suzanne Hanser, former president of the International Association of Music and Medicine and a professor in Berklee College of Music’s music therapy program.

“That means,” Hanser says, “when we create music, when we play music, when we learn music, when we’re actively engaged with music, we’re establishing new pathways and exercising the brain in a really positive way.”

These assertions are supported by a report released in 2024 by the University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging that found nearly all older adults derive some mental health-related benefit from music, from stress relief to improvements in mood, attitude, motivation and energy. These findings build upon an earlier report from the Global Council on Brain Health, which included music in its recommendations for promoting brain health in aging adults.

HOW TO BEGIN WITH MUSIC ACTIVITY IN RETIREMENT

For adults with new-found time after retirement, such programs as New Horizons offer an opportunity to engage in a creative activity that can support their cognitive function and overall mental well-being as they age. Founded in 1991 with a group of 30 members, New Horizons is now an international organization supporting nearly 200 bands, orchestras and choirs, with 120 programs across the nation.

“In so many cases, people come to us as total beginners, saying, ‘I always wanted to play,’ or ‘I saw how much fun my kid had in band or orchestra,’ or ‘I played a million years ago and I’d like to get back to it, but I don’t know if I can,’” said Diane Muffitt, found of Sudbury Valley New Horizons Music.

Designed to accommodate beginners or those starting over on an instrument, some New Horizon programs offer multiple ensembles that cater to varied interests, including band and orchestra concert music, choral music, and jazz and folk music. Importantly, it provides an antidote to the isolation that is so common among aging adults.

“I would dare say that there’s probably a large portion of us, if we did not participate in New Horizons, would probably be sitting at home, not enjoying it, stuck watching TV,” said Paula Sousa, secretary of the New Horizons International Music Association and a New Horizons flutist in Rochester, New York. “Especially for older single people who don’t have a partner, it is a huge asset.”

IT’S HER ‘ANTI-ALZHEIMER’S’ EXERCISE

For Judith Blaustein, 81, music has kept her going through several medical procedures, including a knee replacement and a bowel blockage. Playing music, said the New Horizon’s flutist from Pittsford, New York, “really brings me out of any disappointment in how my health is going. It just removes me from focusing on the pain or the discomfort.”

French horn player Joanne Berry, 77, a Sudbury Valley New Horizons member, calls it her anti-Alzheimer’s exercise. We could say the same about membership in a federated music club. It gives us something to look forward to and the chance to play, sing, and listen to great music every month.

Use this story to entice older adults who live alone to join your music club. You don’t have to be a concert musician. Playing, singing, and enjoying the company of others while you perform will do wonders for your feelings. And it may just keep the Alzheimer’s specter away. 🎵



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Regional News

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

Submitted by Regional Vice President Mary Wescott

The region tries to meet twice a year. Usually, it is once at the NFMC Conference/Convention and then sometime in the fall. Our region is made up of seven states, with the primary interest in NFMC's Festivals. Each state has small music clubs that participate in their area Festivals starting in November and continuing until May 1. Our region has been impacted by the changes in the Bulletin. The new online Bulletin, the Guidelines for Judges and the increase of the price of trophies have been addressed. We feel we are ready for a productive year.

We have 4 New Presidents this year:

- Dr. Charles Schmidt, Iowa
- Debra Heald, Nebraska
- Alice Pekarski, North Dakota
- Lisa Mihas, Wisconsin

In addition, the Vice President of Illinois (Michelle Struck) is helping Mike Barnard with his duties as president.

We continue to support the summer camps in our region

- Ravinia** - Highland Park, Illinois
- International Music Camp Peace Garden** - Dunseith, North Dakota
- Junior Composer's Institute** - River Falls, Wisconsin

With the help of Lucinda and the late Roger Lear, we will have a new web page for our Region.

SOUTHEASTERN REGION

Submitted by Regional V. P. Joel Adams

A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

A few weeks ago, a memo from Eastern Music Festival, an NFMC- affiliated Summer Music Camp in Greensboro NC, stated that the Board of Directors had dissolved the camp effective immediately. The reason given was an irreconcilable dispute between the Board of Directors and the Musicians' Union. The Festival had been shut down for the recent summer for this reason. Members of the Southeastern Region were aghast at the news, as the camp had operated for the past 64 years and was to be our meeting place in the summer of 2026, with Virginia as the host state. While pondering the unthinkable situation, the officers moved quickly to find a resolution, which was to return to Brevard. The SE Region's Annual Meeting for 2025 was held at the Sewanee Summer Music Festival, on the campus of the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee.

Now, move forward a few weeks, and we receive a surprise announcement that a group of concerned citizens and donors of Greensboro had raised over one million dollars to reopen Eastern Music Festival. This was music of the sweetest order to our perked-up ears!

Therefore, the Southeastern Region is currently in a holding pattern, waiting with bated breath on further announcements, before making a final decision in November about next summer's meeting. Always looking ahead, the group has already voted

to meet for the first time ever at the Stephen Foster Music Camp in Richmond Kentucky in 2027. Stay tuned!!



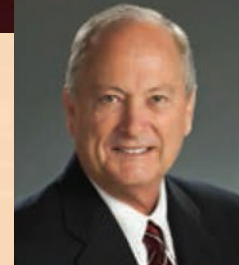
Pictured at the SER Annual Meeting, held at the Eastern Music Festival (Guilford College, Greensboro NC) in 2022 are: NFMC President Deborah Freeman, Marcia Chaplin, Karen Herndon and Regional V. P. Joel Adams

MICHAEL R. EDWARDS

NFMC President 2015-2019

Graduating Senior Performance Award

This award will be given to a graduating high school senior pursuing a music performance degree on any instrument or voice who will be attending an accredited music school. Graduating seniors must have earned at least one NFMC Federation cup. For rules (JR-22-1) and more information please visit nfmc-music.org.



Deadline: May 1st
Award Amount: \$5,000
Chair: Michael R. Edwards
Email: micedwards@aol.com

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Pictured at the July meeting of the South Central Region at Eureka Springs, Arkansas, are Life Members of Opera in the Ozarks. Seated from left are Carla Johnson, Lynn McNew, Nancy Dobbs, Janet Parsch, Jean Moffatt and Carolyn Copeland; middle row: Terry Blair, Lora Lynn Christensen, Janis Saket, Alice Conway, Laresa Yick, Alice Martinson, Judy Rownak, Don Dagenais and Lois Armor; back row: Richard Drapeau, Phil Johnson, Gary Ardes, Ed Henson, Brenda Ford, Bill Yick, Jim Swiggart, Steve Shogren, Gloria Grilk and Betty Pierce. Opera in the Ozarks is in the middle of its Annual Campaign to raise money for the next opera season. Federation Days will be July 15-17, and works to be performed are *Candide* by Leonard Bernstein, *The Marriage of Figaro* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and a double bill of *Suor Angelica and Gianni Schicchi* by Giacomo Puccini. Performances will run from June 26 to July 24, and more information will be provided at www.opera.org.




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State News

ARKANSAS

Submitted by State President, Kathie White

Young Artist Tour

Arkansas has been privileged to have a Young Artist Tour every September since 1965! In 2026, we will celebrate 60 years of having a NFMC Young Artist tour our state. Five clubs hosted Misha Galant in concert during the week of September 8-14, 2025. His last concert was in the upper northwest region in Bella Vista, Arkansas. Misha was not only exceptional as a concert pianist, but he also made a great impression on his hosts as an exceptional young man. The Presbyterian Church of Bella Vista hosted the final concert on September 14. Other concerts took place in Texarkana, Arkadelphia, Little Rock, and Monticello.



Pictured: Suzanne Evans, Andante Secretary; Betty Pierce, South Central Chair of the Servant Leadership Award; Gloria Grilk, NFMC Chair of Music in Education; Misha Galant, NFMC Young Artist Winner in Piano; Joretta Evans, Andante membership chair; and Arlene Biebesheimer, Andante Music Club of Bella Vista President and Co-program chair.



Terry Blair, NFMC Young Artists Presentation; Misha Galant, 2025-27 Young Artist; Starla Blair, NFMC Council of State Presidents; and Arlene Biebesheimer, Andante Music Club President.

The Arkansas Woman Composer Award

The Arkansas Woman Composer Award, founded by Gloria Grilk in 2023, has provided a \$500 award and recognition for women composers in the state. The 2025 winner was Linda Ridener Dickson, who was presented with the award at the AFMC Conference on September 13, 2025.

Vocalist, instrumentalist, composer and conductor, Linda Ridener Dickson lives in Fort Smith, Arkansas. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Vocal Music Performance with major emphasis on opera and a minor in music theory from the University of the Ozarks in Clarksville, Arkansas, and post-graduate courses from Emporia State University Teachers College in Kansas.

Mrs. Dickson has studied and performed under many well-known musicians—among them Vaclav Nelhybel, John Barnes Chance, Cab Calloway, Alice Parker, Hal Hopson, Sir George Guest, Sir David Wilcox, Glenn Burleigh, Rosephanye Powell and Barbara Tucker. She also worked closely with Sir Paul Ledington-Wright, as the transcriptionist/engraver for his Coventry Litany, published by Oxford Press.

Mrs. Dickson plays acoustic guitar, autoharp, hand bells, and a variety of other instruments. She played oboe for several seasons with the Northwest Arkansas Wind Symphony and has presented multiple vocal solo benefit concerts for local children and youth charities.



Pictured: Gloria Grilk, AFMC President Kathie White and Linda Ridener Dickson

KANSAS

Submitted by John Bechen, KFMC president

Hello everyone and welcome from the prairie state of Kansas. As I write, it is almost the middle of October and the days are definitely shorter with cool nights and warm afternoons. The trees are beginning to show us their color and the flowers are at their peak of beauty. It is indeed a time of change.

Change is also evident in our Senior music clubs. After the long warm days of summer, our clubs are beginning the season of meeting and enjoying each other's company. The start date for our clubs vary, having their first meeting in the months of August, September and October and concluding in May and June of the next year. It is common with our clubs to host a luncheon for all in attendance at their first meeting of the year. It is reported that it is one of the best attended of the year. Perhaps there is some truth to the saying that "when there is food, people will come."

Change also occurred with our clubs membership. Last year we lost three clubs due to age and declining membership. We now have six clubs remaining. There is hope, though, in that we are experiencing a seven percent increase in membership across the state, something that I'm sure every President likes to report.

The programing for the year includes all styles of music, including but not limited to folk, world, patriotic, holiday, comedic, jazz and blues, a National Music Week theme, Latin, music of the decades, classical, vocal and instrumental, from single soloists to large ensembles. As you can see, our Senior Clubs program a large variety of music to experience and enjoy. Something our clubs help support is scholarships for young musicians attending area music schools. We believe in supporting our youth to help secure a place in our future musical world. Ushering as a club at the local Performing Arts Center and hosting a yearly piano festival is also found.

Change has also occurred with our Federation Music Festival. We have gone from a single date to two dates to accommodate all those interested in being a part of the Federation Music Festival. We are most pleased in seeing the increase in participation in the Festival.

I am happy to report that the Lawrence Music Club will be hosting the Kansas State Convention on May 8th and 9th of 2026. The location will be at the Lawrence Public Library in the accommodating and acoustically-fine auditorium. Planning is underway and a meeting of volunteers was held in November.

As the new State President, I find that Kansas is a state always experiencing something new, but something that doesn't change is our willingness to share and experience music.



Continued on page 34

State News *continued*

MICHIGAN

The Birmingham Musicale of Michigan

Submitted by Bonnie L. Brooks, President

The Birmingham Musicale of Michigan is turning 100 this season! We have been recognized for making a significant impact on the Birmingham and Bloomfield community. We were given the 2025 Birmingham/Bloomfield Cultural Arts Award with a special commendation by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners. We have also received a certificate of Special Senatorial Recognition from the U.S. Senate. We are thrilled to receive these awards. We are having fun celebrating with balloons, birthday cake, fancy hats and estate jewelry to honor our founders of 1926.

Our goals are to continue to offer excellent classical music in choral, orchestral, solo, and ensembles to our members and guests. We hope to raise our membership numbers and raise additional funds to sustain our awards.

We have reinstated our Junior club which we are calling The Birmingham Musicale Junior Arts Members (JAM). A dedicated committee is actively seeking student members by visiting schools, talking with private teachers and sending fliers out to the community.

The Birmingham Musicale is a dedicated club who loves to perform and share classical music. We are a close-knit group of friends and colleagues. Guests are welcome anytime to attend our second-Thursday-of-the-month concert/meeting at The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Birmingham. Please attend and bring a guest to hear outstanding music, and enjoy cookies, coffee and tea.

The St. Cecilia Society of Flint

Submitted by Laurence MacDonald, Newsletter Editor

The St. Cecilia Society of Flint December program was planned for Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025, 2 p.m., at MacArthur Recital Hall at the Flint Institute of Music. Performers included Cynthia Butcher, soprano; Richard Kerry Thompson, tenor; and Michael Abbass-pour, guitar. A reception followed the performance.

The William C. Byrd Young Artist Competition will be held on Saturday, March 7, 2026, all day at the Flint Institute of Music. Final round is at 7 p.m. with reception to follow. All SCS programs are free and open to the public.



**For the latest news, sign-up for the
NFMC Monthly Newsletter!**



Scan the QR code to sign up.

Lana M. Bailey Piano Concerto Award

Are you a high school senior who will be majoring in music next year at a college, university or conservatory? Check out the Lana M. Bailey Piano Concerto Awards form JR 20-2 for rules regarding this \$1,500 annual award (\$500 2nd Place). The competition has a deadline date of **May 1** so polish your performance and upload your video recording!

First or last movement from one of the Senior Class Piano Concertos in the 2020-24 Federation Festivals Bulletin.



Lana Bailey

PENNSYLVANIA

Submitted by Kristin Ivers, PFMC President

Pennsylvania is starting the new season out strong! There is so much music news to share...

Allentown Music Club is celebrating 120 years of their club this year! They are off to a fabulous start by presenting an International Music Recital in September, they hosted our Philadelphia District Annual Conference in October and showcased their *Young Musicians* junior performers, as well.

The **Harmonia Music Association** is preparing for their 2nd Messiah Sing – which is set for November, and meanwhile they will enjoy an open mic event in October to benefit their scholarships.

Lakeview and Mercer Music Clubs enjoyed a reciprocity program of a dinner, followed by music provided by a local family. Lakeview looks forward to hosting a community event which will highlight the musical talents of two local HS girls. One of these girls performed in the All-American D-Day Band in Normandy & Washington, DC. The other young girl won the Barrow Talent Competition and has performed at local community venues this past year.

Williamsport Music Club kicked off the new season with a catered dinner and welcomed the *WAHS Millionaire Strolling Strings*. “A Celtic Music celebration” is planned for late October, featuring Celtic harp, flutes, piano, and lively tunes presented by the local Celtic Wood and Wires, a 5-member acoustic band. They will be performing some favorites from Ireland & Scotland, talking about the band, why they do what they do and more! WMC members have been active each month with outreach events at local senior facilities, sharing uplifting music with the residents.

Our Wilkes-Barre **Mozart Music Club** hosted the NE District Conference with President Rosa Khalife-McCracken highlighting her teacher members and their talented students in recital.

Dushore Music Club held their annual ‘start the year’ dinner with a complete turkey entree! They shared the song and poem of the month using their new “Music in Poetry and Song” books! Their October meeting was presented by President Barb Murray, entitled “Music, Food, & Poetry- a Great Combo”.

Opus I Music Society enjoyed a program in September presented by Linda Maurhoff on the life and music of Red Skelton! They hosted the NW District Conference and everyone enjoyed the jazz stylings of Dr. Glenn Utsch!

The **Pittsburgh Tuesday Musical Club** presented an outstanding concert on October 21 entitled “*Italia con Amore!*” Works by Italian composers. On the program were a flute and piano sonata by Donizetti, two Scarlatti sonatas, a string trio by Boccherini, arias by Handel, Puccini, and Verdi, a movement of a bassoon concerto by Nina Rota, and a wind quartet by Rossini. Bravo tutti!



JEROD EGGLESTON, BARITONE
DR. AMBER SHAY NICHOLSON, PIANO

If Ever I Would Leave You, Camelot
 This Nearly Was Mine, South Pacific
 Vier Ernste Gesänge, Brahms
 Ich Bin der Welt Abhanden
 Gekommen, Mahler
 Per Me Guinto, Verdi
 Songs of Travel, R.V. Williams



Continued on page 36

State News *continued*

PENNSYLVANIA *continued*

The **Pittsburgh Piano Teachers Association** hosted Katie Palumbo in September. She presented a workshop on the *Alexander Technique: Your Body is Your First Instrument!* Also, in Pittsburgh, our Pittsburgh Music Professionals have been busy composing, performing, teaching, helping their music school expand to a second location, and impacting hundreds of young musicians! Their President, Kate Griffin, co-owner of Pittsburgh School of the Arts, is super woman! <https://www.pittsburghschoolofthearts.com/>

Up in Oil City, the **Schubert Musical and Literary Club** began their season with a travel themed dinner and musical program. Club President, Eva Palmer, encouraged members to keep notes throughout the year of their musical adventures in the Passports each received.

As State President, I delight in the creativity of our clubs across the state and I encourage our clubs to share their ideas and successes with one another. This represents just a handful of our clubs and Junior studios that are bringing music to the inner life of our nation.



Refresh and Reconnect!

EXPERIENCE

Organ Stop Pizza

An unforgettable experience awaits as the world's largest Wurlitzer theater organ dazzles its audience. With 6,000 pipes, stunning light shows, and whimsical surprises, it's a feast for the senses! Admission and lunch included with registration.

Mariachi Pasion

Refresh and reconnect as you enjoy the exciting sounds and beauty of the DESERT SOUTHWEST!

Embassy Suites Scottsdale Resort

A relaxing resort near the Camelback Mountains, only minutes from vibrant downtown Scottsdale.

Morning Star Native American Ensemble

Register at [NFMC-Music.org](https://www.nfmc-music.org)

SOUTH DAKOTA

Submitted by SDFMC Representative to NFMC Board, Lori Jessen

The South Dakota Federation of Music Clubs selected Maggie Knippling as the 2025 scholarship winner.

Maggie goes to school at Northern States University in Aberdeen. She's working toward a BME with an instrumental emphasis and is part of the Honors Program. She will be defending her Honors Thesis on Injury Prevention in Musicians, after experiencing severe tendonitis preparing for an audition last spring. After learning how to listen to her body and re-learn technique, she continues to achieve.

She is involved in everything! She plays clarinet, violin, and sings. A member in all the large ensembles plus many smaller ones, she was co-principal clarinet in the NSU Symphonic Band and Aberdeen University Civic Symphony's concertmaster. In addition to her major instrumental and vocal studies, in order to be as proficient in as many instruments as possible, she has also taken up trombone, tenor saxophone, and percussion. Plus, she has a 4.0 GPA.

Her long-term goal is to teach at the collegiate level by pursuing a Masters Degree in Clarinet Performance and "inspiring musicians and future music educators to make a difference in this world."



TENNESSEE

Submitted by State President Bobette Spear

The Tennessee Federation of Music Clubs has welcomed several new Junior and Senior members with the start of our year. Eight of the new Senior members have established Junior Clubs in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Murfreesboro and Nashville.

Tennessee has always been the musical home of clubs for teachers, clubs for those who simply love and appreciate the gift of music, and clubs that are a combination of both. So, the fall has been a busy time, with various programs, activities and preparations for Festivals across the state.

Various topics were discussed at our Annual Board Meeting in October. Mary Ellen Nolletti, the NFMC Summer Music Centers Chair, reported the latest news regarding the Eastern Music Festival and the probability of the 2026 SER Meeting's being held in Brevard. Dr. Janie Gilliam graciously accepted the appointment to be the Interim Vice-President, since Tawana Teague moved out of state. Barbara Hildebrand is serving as Chairman of the Nominating Committee for new state officers for the term beginning in 2027.

Continued on page 38

State News *continued*

TEXAS

Submitted by Lora Lynn Christensen, President

Music is alive and well in Texas. Three new clubs have been added: the Bluebonnet Music Club of North Texas, Golden Music Club in The Woodlands and Mi Sento Stanco Senior Club in Austin. We are excited to be experiencing growth. We chose the theme “We are all Advocates of Music, everywhere, all the time” for the upcoming two-year term.

Texas FMC was thrilled to see how many attended the NFMFC Convention in Austin in June. Having music in common makes for instant friendship when we meet music lovers from all over the country. We do have a sad thing to mention: Pam Price, who directed the ladies ensemble at the Memorial Breakfast, died very unexpectedly a few weeks after convention.

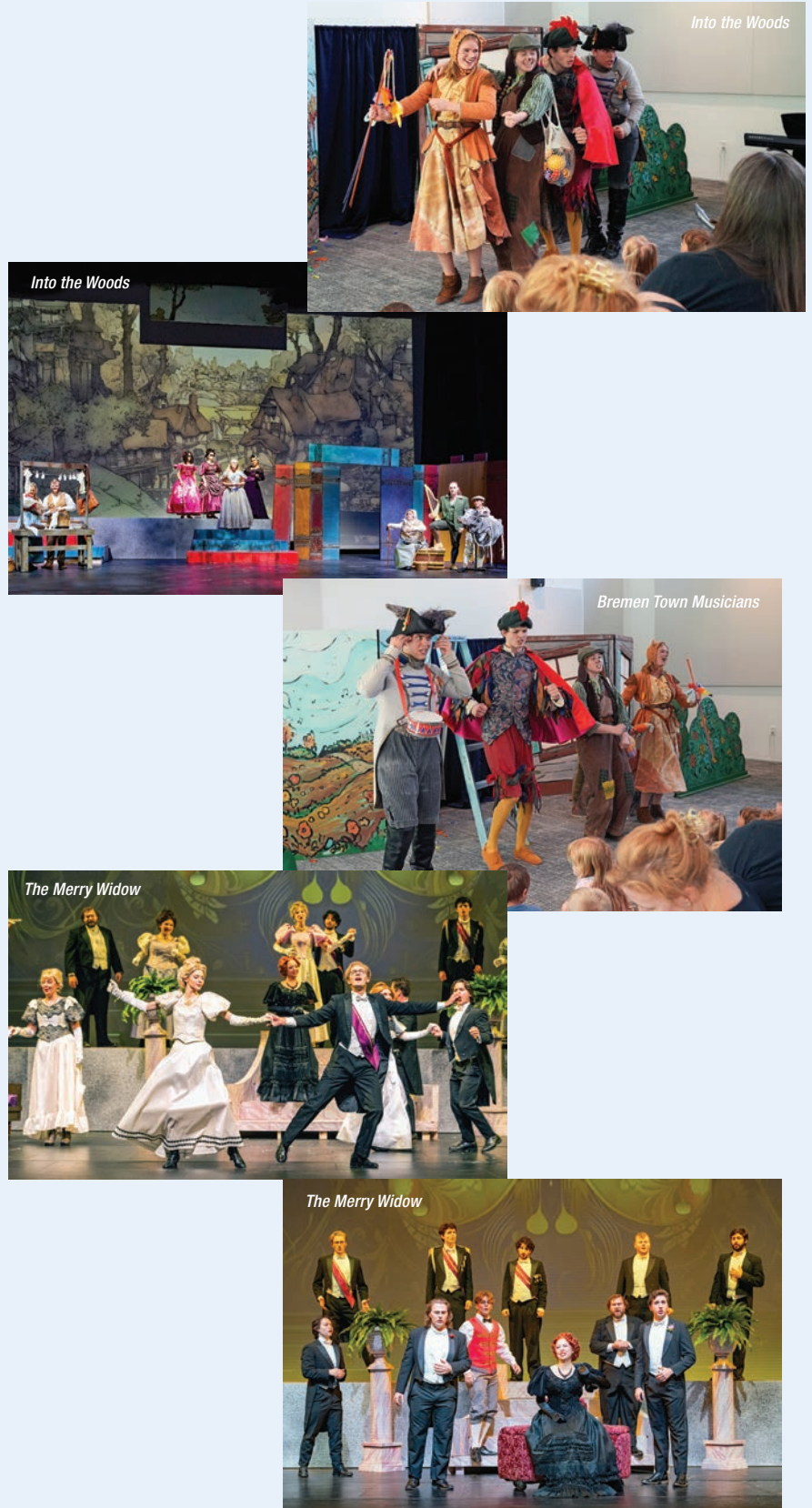
The website has been redesigned (nothing like having to rebuild after a big loss). Visit www.texasfederationmusic.org. The Lone Star Musical Messenger, the state-wide newsletter, will be published quarterly online again this year.

About 30 Texans were so proud to be in attendance at Opera in the Ozarks’ grand opening of the new theater. We do love supporting the opera center as part of our duties in the South Central Region. 🎵



Visit nfmc-music.org
for all the latest NFMFC news,
events and awards.

Scenes from Into the Woods, The Merry Widow and Bremen Town Musicians performed at Opera in the Ozarks in 2025.



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MUSIC CLUBS



SENIOR CLUB AWARDS

AMOUNT	AWARD	DEADLINE
1 st Place: \$300 2 nd Place: \$200 3 rd Place: 2@\$100 each	Professor Rudolf R.A. Schramm November Parade of American Music	March 1
1 st Place: \$300 2 nd Place: \$200 H.M.: 5@\$100 each	NFMC/ASCAP American Music Award (Yearlong celebration)	May 1
1 st Place: \$300 2 nd Place: \$200 H.M. 5@\$100 each	NFMC Sacred Music Awards	May 1
\$150	NFMC Music Outreach	April 1
1 st Place: \$150 2 nd Place \$100 3 rd Place: \$ 50	Ethnic Performance	April 1
10 @ \$100	NFMC Celebrate Strings Awards	April 1
10 @ \$100	NFMC Choral Music Awards	April 1
10 @ \$100	Just Jazz! Awards	May 1
10 @ \$100	American Women Composers Awards	May 1
\$50 in each Region	Music in Poetry Awards	April 1
10 @ \$100	Folk Music Awards	May 1

For award requirements and to apply, visit the NFMC website: www.nfmc-music.org

NFMC Headquarters

www.nfmc-music.org / info@nfmc-music.org / Phone: 317-882-4003



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Coming Dates to Highlight:

May 3-10, 2026

National Music Week

Theme: "Music...is our constant companion"

June 9-13, 2026

NFMC Biennial Conference

*Embassy Suites by Hilton
Scottsdale, Arizona*

Competitions and Awards

Inside back cover and www.nfmc-music.org

Music Clubs Magazine is published three times annually by the National Federation of Music Clubs. It is sent free of charge to all active Federation senior club members. Others may subscribe by contacting NFMCA headquarters at the address on page 3. An annual subscription is \$7 in the U.S. and \$22 to a foreign address.

Publishing deadlines are August 1 for autumn, November 1 for winter, and February 1 for spring/summer. Send state news to Editorial Chair Janie Gilliam one month in advance. Advertising information is available on the NFMCA website.