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Newsletter

Castro Valley, Fremont, Hayward, Newark,
San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Union City

Calendar of Events

Current

MAR 7 - MON - BOARD MEETING AT MARINA'S 9:30AM
38799 JONQUIL DRIVE, NEWARK, CA 94560

Upcoming

APR 2 & 3 - SAT/SUN - HONORS RECITALS AT CASTRO VALLEY CENTER
FOR THE ARTS
19501 REDWOOD ROAD, CASTRO VALLEY, CA 94546

APR 20 - WED - GENERAL MEETING AT FIRST CHINESE UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH AT 9:30AM
LECTURE AND PERFORMANCE ON "THE PIANO
MUSIC OF DEBUSSY AND RAVEL INTER.-ADV.
LEVEL" BY DR. GWENDOLYN MOKAT 10AM
2856 WASHINGTON BLVD., FREMONT, CA 94539

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- ▶ FEB 19-20, 26-27 CM EXAM NORTH
- ▶ MAR 5-6, 12-13 CM EXAM SOUTH



Branch Officers and Chairs

President	Loan Nguyen	683-8712
Vice President	Millie Chiem	783-2123
Treasurer	Frances Martin	708-3279
Corresponding Secretary	Queenie Yiu	505-4088
Recording Secretary	Jeanne Fisher	889-6062
Membership Secretary	Margaret Yong	676-0395
Directors	Leefen Chen, Grace Cheng, Marina Grudskaya, Glen Stark, Frances Wu	
Certificate of Merit	Gloria Ho (Chair)	471-8061
	Gloria Ho (North Region)	
	Grace Cheng (South Region)	
	Ji An, Ling Lee (Honor Recitals)	
	Jeanne Fisher, Susie Kim (Theory Site Coordinators)	
	Patricia Meissner-Kast (Woodwinds)	
Student Recitals	Marina Grudskaya	793-6826
Composers Today	Glen Stark	623-1314
Directory	Margaret Yong	
Historian - Scrapbook	Sr. Andre Marie Fujier	
Parliamentary	Jeanne Fisher	
Sunshine	Carmencita Aspiras	
VOCE (voice, strings & woodwinds)	Dr. Jiang Wu	

February 19-20	North Region Piano Evaluations
February 26-27	North Region Piano Evaluations
March 5	Violin Evaluations at Claire Burke's studio
March 5-6	Panel Evaluations
	South Region Piano Evaluations
March 12-13	South Region Piano Evaluations
	Piano and String Theory Exams at Chabot College
March 15	Deadline for Panel students to get in results of theory exams
March 20	Woodwind Evaluations at Dominican Convent
April 2-3	Final Panel Auditions
April 2	North Region Branch Honors
	Senior Award Recital
April 3	South Region Branch Honors
April 4	Theory Exams may be released to the teachers

Due to inaccuracies in the branch directory, my numbers for students in CM and the number of evaluators needed for each region were skewed. It made the north region evaluators have very short days, and the south region cramming all the students to fit and leaving long days for the evaluators. If you move before the next CM year, please inform me, so that I can keep more accurate records.

Please be patient in the south region regarding getting your schedules. We always promise you 2 weeks before the evaluation dates. It is a lot of work and time consuming. Grace is getting it ready now and you will have it by next week, which is 2 weeks before the evaluations.

Gloria Ho gloho@att.net

Jeanne Fisher jeannelfisher@gmail.com

Queenie Yiu queenie_yiu@hotmail.com

Upcoming Events and other Items of Interest

page 3

Need to Get a Nice Piano?



Pianos Plus is one of the best choices for piano shoppers. Contact either Bob or Dave for great deals! Tell your students to let Pianos Plus know that their teacher is from the MTAC Southern Alameda County Branch so that they can get extra discounts.

Pianos Plus
1558 A Street
Castro Valley, California
(510) 581-1660
<http://www.pianosplus.net>

Melody Bober Event

Deadline Reminder

Dear Colleagues,

It is the busiest time of the year for us, teachers, as we are preparing the students for CM testing. That is why I wanted to remind you that the Melody Bober Multifaceted Event application deadline is approaching on March 1st.

The seminar is designed for the learning purposes, for the teachers of any branch of MTAC to attend the whole day or any session they choose. Students of Sacramento branch will be playing in the Master Class and Recital, but both events are open for all the teachers to attend. Melody Bober will be presenting on a very important topic to all of us "Energize Your Studio".

Hope to see you in Sacramento on May 14, 2011 !

Olga Ulibarri

Event Chair

916-317-4771

25TH ANNUAL BEETHOVEN COMPETITION

The Ira Brilliant Center for Beethoven Studies and the American Beethoven Society is pleased to announce the 25th annual Young Pianists Beethoven Competition to be held on May 1st, 2011 at San Jose State University. We are very happy to have Mr. Kirill Gerstein as our artist-master teacher. Some of his outstanding achievements include--First Prize at the 2001 Arthur Rubinstein Piano Competition, Carnegie Hall's "Rising Star" for the 2005-06 season and the 2010 Gilmore Artist Award. In addition to presenting the masterclass Mr. Gerstein will present a recital performing works by Liszt and Beethoven on Friday, April 29th (2011) at San Jose State University.

Please note that the competition brochure will be mailed out in September.

For more information contact John David Thomsen at (408) 258-8703 or Celia Mendez at (408)-978-2212.

Dear Presidents, Voce Chairs, and Teachers,

Santa Clara Branch is holding VOCE competition on 2/19(Sat).

We had reserved Santa Clara University's Center of Performing Arts from 8:45A.M.~1:00p.m.

We would like to ask you whether you will be able to join us and hold your branch's competition. If you could let me know, I would really appreciate it. Have a nice weekend.

Haruna Shiokawa-Mo
VOCE Chair, Santa Clara Branch
haruna12345@sbcglobal.net

Upcoming Events and other Items of Interest

Make-up Music Lesson from an Economist's Point of View

I'm a parent of children enrolled in Suzuki music lessons. I'd like to explain to other parents why I feel - quite strongly, actually - that it is unreasonable of we parents to expect our teachers to make up lessons we miss, even if I know as well as they do just how expensive lessons are, and, equally importantly, how important that weekly contact is with the teacher to keeping practicing ticking along smoothly. I think that it is natural for we parents to share the point of view that students should have their missed lessons rescheduled, but if we were to 'walk a mile' in our teachers' shoes, we might change our minds about what it is reasonable for us to expect of our teachers.

Like many parents, I pay in advance for lessons each term. In my mind, what this means is that I have reserved a regular spot in the busy schedules of my sons' teachers. I understand - fully - that if I can't make it to the lesson one week (perhaps my son is sick, or we are away on holiday, or there is some other major event at school) then we will pay for the lesson, but that my teacher is under no obligation to find another spot for me that week, or to refund me for the untaught lesson. And this is the way it should be.

In my 'other life' I am an economist and teach at our local university. Students pay good money to attend classes at the university; but if they don't come to my lecture on a Monday morning, then I am not going to turn around and deliver them a private tutorial on Tuesday afternoon. When I go to the store and buy groceries, I may purchase something that doesn't get used. Days or months later, I end up throwing it out. I don't get a refund from the grocery store for the unused merchandise. If I sign my child up for swimming lessons at the local pool, and s/he refuses to return after the first lesson, I can't get my money back. So there are lots of situations in our everyday lives where we regularly pay in advance for goods or some service, and if we end up not using what we have purchased, we have to just 'swallow our losses'. On the other hand, if I purchase an item of clothing, and get home and change my mind, I can take it back and expect either a refund or a store credit.

So why do I believe that music lessons fall into the first category of 'non-returnable merchandise', rather than into the second case of 'exchange privileges unlimited' (which I think is one of the advertising slogans of an established women's clothing store!)? Speaking now as an economist, I would claim that the reason is that items like clothing are "durable goods" - meaning, they can be returned and then resold at the original price - whereas music lessons are non-durable goods - meaning, once my Monday slot at 3:30 is gone, my son's teacher can't turn around and sell it again. The only way she would be able to give him a lesson later in the week would be if she were to give up time that she had scheduled for her own private life; and that seems pretty unreasonable - I can't think of many employees who would be thrilled if their

Upcoming Events and other Items of Interest

bosses were to announce that they couldn't work from 3:30 to 4:30 this afternoon, but would they please stay until 6:30 on Thursday, because there will be work for them then!

Many teachers hesitate to refuse our request to shift lesson times (because our busy schedules *do* change), because unless they keep us parents happy, we will decide to take our child somewhere else for lessons (or to drop musical study), and they will lose part of their income. This is particularly true in areas with lower average income, where it can be particularly difficult to find students. So rather than telling us that 'well, actually, the only time when I'm not teaching and that you can bring your son for lesson is during the time I set aside each week to go for a long soul-cleansing walk, and I *can't* do that on Monday at 3:30 when you should have turned up', they agree to teach us at a time that really doesn't suit their schedule. Teachers who are 'nice' in this way often, in the long run, end up exhausted, and feeling exploited; they try to draw a line in the sand. However, too few parents ask to switch only when absolutely necessary, and too many parents want lesson times when it suits them this week, which is not the same time that suited last week. The only time that I would feel entitled to discuss shifting a lesson time is if the reason I can't make the lesson is because (i) I have to do something for the Suzuki school and the only time at which that other event can happen is during my lesson time; (ii) my teacher were to ask us to participate in some other activity (e.g., orchestra, etc.) and that other activity were to create the conflict. If the conflict arises because my child is in the School play, and they have their dress-rehearsal during his lesson time, then I feel that I must choose between the two activities, and if he attends the dress rehearsal my private lesson teacher doesn't owe me anything.

During May, my eldest son will be missing three lessons because he is going to accompany me on a trip to New Zealand to visit his great-grandparents. I do not expect my son's teacher to refund me for those missed lessons, or to reschedule them by 'doubling up' lessons in the weeks before or after our departure. Since there will be lots of advanced notice, I might ask her to consider preparing a special 'practice tape' for that period, or to answer my questions via e-mail, but if she doesn't have the time (the second half of April is going to be really busy for her, and she wouldn't be able to do the tape until more or less the week we left) and so has to refuse, then that's fine. I certainly don't expect her to credit me with three make-up lessons; there is no way for her to find a student to fill a three-week hole in her schedule during our absence. Instead, I hope that she will enjoy the extra hour of rest during those three weeks, and that we will all feel renewed enthusiasm when we return to lessons at the end of the trip.

About the Author: Vicky Barham, Ph. D., is the mother of two children who are enrolled in Suzuki music lessons in Canada. She also teaches Economics at the University of Ottawa.

Welcome to New Member(s)

Ming-Shiu Yo, Violin
Active member
viyolino@gmail.com

Amy Christine Belles
Cal plan member
a.belles@comcast.net

Katherine Lee
Active member
katherine.lee@alumni.usc.edu

MTAC NEWS

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February 2011