

Minnesota Federation of Music Clubs

HALF NOTES NEWSLETTER — FALL 2024/WINTER 2025

WEB SITE: WWW.MFMC.NET

COMPILED BY CHERYL SCHMIDT

Official Call

Spring State Meeting: Saturday, April 26, 2025 Virtual via Zoom

Summer State Meeting: Wednesday, July 23, 2025

President's Message – Sarah Twedt



Sarah Twedt, MFMC State President

There is a special place my family goes at the end of August each year. Evergreen Lodge on Big Sand Lake, near Park Rapids, has become the link between summer and fall, and the week before Labor Day serves as the transition from summer break to the new teaching year. It is the perfect place to end the summer – listening to the loons singing, the rhythm of the water washing up on the shore. Looking at the stars in the sky. Relaxing. The Minnesota lakes can really give us perspective – we are so blessed in this state. It is a



great way to prepare for what is next. MFMC is also looking forward to what's next. We have a newly minted treasurer, Shirley Erickson, (of Eagan), and a new Festival Chairperson, Grace Kopitske, (of Woodbury). Sue Quist, (of Excelsior) has taken on the role of insurance coordinator, and Sheila Shusterich (of Duluth) volunteered to be the Chair of the SAG committee. The only position missing as of today is the First VP, but we will remain patient and optimistic that this role will be filled soon.

These new positions are *big shoes to fill*. This new team has been working on getting up to speed in July and August. As these chairs adjust to their new roles, we all need to be diligent in reading our e-mails carefully, watching for updates, and responding in a timely manner. We are all a part of this transition team and with everyone doing their part, we can manage these leadership changes with ease.

This is not so different from our transitions in music. With thoughtful voicings, planned articulations, listening for the rise and fall of the phrases, telling the story of our pieces, and at times, with some added grace, we can put together a meaningful piece of music. We all play a vital role in this composition. Let us all help and support each other in our new team to make these transitions easy and seemingly effortless. We can do this, and I thank you in advance for being awesome teammates!

I wish you all a great fall and winter season with your students! Be in touch!
Kindest regards,
Sarah Twedt, MFMC President

Meeting Highlights from MFMC State Meeting – July 24, 2024

Membership: Seniors 2022 - 2023: 301	2023 – 2024: 275
Juniors 2022 – 2023: 2886	2023 – 2024: 2614
2024 Festival: Total entries: 2577	Total events: 23
Number of teachers: 246	Total number of superiors: 2009

Vivace Online Registration System: twenty Minnesota areas entered their student registrations in Vivace. Apple Valley and Burnsville are the remaining areas to onboard. Teachers should refresh their understanding of their responsibilities each fall by reviewing the Teacher and Admin Guides available at the Support Center.

Wednesday, September 11, 10:00. Via Zoom hosted by Sarah Twedt. Information Festival Chair/Recordkeeper meeting – bring your questions regarding anything festival, vivace, bulletin or ? Hosted by Sarah Twedt and Grace Kopitske.



Financials were reviewed and budget approved for 2024 – 2025.

Festival Cups: 1st Cup: 318, 2nd Cup: 152, 3rd Cup: 64, 4th Cup: 10, 5th Cup: 2, 6th Cup: 2

Insurance: MFMC acquires insurance through NFMC for any MFMC or NFMC sponsored events. Forms are on the MFMC website.

Half Notes Newsletter: Deadline to add content for next edition is September 25, 2024.

NFMC 2024 Convention Report: Concerns voiced about distribution of the new Festival Bulletin which will be addressed by the NFMC Festivals Committee. There is considerable funding to be distributed for awards. All Young Artist auditions and final selection will now be via online application, no more live judging. NFMC website has been redesigned. Proposal to create a guide for adjudicating Festivals. 2025 NFMC Convention will be held in Austin, Texas, June 10 – 14, 2025.

North Central Region: Mary Wescott, our representative, is a member of the NFMC Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, listens to colleagues and students to advocate on the national level.

Honors Recital: held in Bloomington in April. Eight teachers sent students to participate. Nineteen students participated and received special awards.

NFMC Student/Collegiate Awards: Most awards are for students ages 19-25 (Applicants must have reached 19th but not the 26th birthday by the application deadline). Multiple Categories and Awards are available. For details: <https://www.nfmc-music.org/competitionscategory/student-collegiate-division/>

Presidents Report Goals: Create some positive movement in membership giving declining numbers. Get vacancies in MFMC leadership filled. MFMC needs a vice-president! Review bylaws and standing rules. Get more acquainted with all the programs NFMC has to offer. Assists with transitions to new leadership.

*Reports in their entirety will be posted on the MFMC website.

National Federation of Music Clubs Convention

The National Federation of Music Clubs convention was held on June 11 to June 15, 2024, in Iowa. Minnesota was well represented with many of our MFMC leadership in attendance.



Back row:

Sheila Shusterich, Past MFMC State President
Pat Steege, Past MFMC State President
Nancy Fisher, Past MFMC State President

Front row:

Mary Wescott, Past MFMC State President
Sarah Twedt, Current MFMC State President
Gloria Lien, Past MFMC State President

Junior Composers Chair – Sharon Kaplan

Minnesota Junior Composers National Competition winners announced!

Class 1: 1st Place:

Arthur Scott, Composition: The Great Locomotive Chase

Class 3: Incentive Award

Kevin Chen, Composition: Dreams of Flight

Class 4: Outstanding Strings Award

Timothy Guillaume, Composition: Leaf Fragments

Class 4: Honorable Mention

Stephen Elsinger, Composition: Into the Storm

State judge: Kyle Vanderburg NCR judge: Paul Cravens National judge: Dr. Kevin Olson

Thank you! From outgoing Festival Chair, Nadine Berg

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for the honor of serving as your MFMC Festival Chair for the past several years. It has been a wonderful learning experience and a very rewarding way of being of service to the greater musical community. I have been very impressed by the professionalism, dedication and joy that each of you bring to your students and your profession.

I also wish to thank the many volunteers that made my job easier, from MFMC Officers to Festival Report Auditors, to local Festival Site Managers & Record Keepers. And special thanks goes to Grace Kopitske for guiding us all through the transition to using Finale! It really does take a whole army of people to keep this organization running. Please keep up the good work as Grace Kopitske and Sarah Twedt take over to keep the Festival machine running smoothly. You will find their contact information on the updated Festival directives. Blessings to all!!

Nadine Berg

Congratulations to MFMC Festival Grand Cup Recipients



Melody Ma, Grand Cup in Violin, is currently a sophomore at Woodbury High School and has studied violin for over ten years under Dr. Jackie Lo since the age of five. She has exhibited proficiency and mastery in the piano and violin MMTA comprehensive exams, contests, and Young Artist competitions programs since 2015, as well as NFMC festivals since 2013.

At school, she's a part of the WHS Concert Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, and Quartet. She is also in the Minnesota Youth Symphony's Symphony Orchestra, was concertmaster for Repertory Orchestra in the 22-23 season, and was in the MMEA 23-24 All State Orchestra.

Outside of music, she partakes and holds leadership positions in WHS Track and Field, several clubs such as National Honor Society, Key Club, Tri-M, and she volunteers for an ESL/ELL non-profit and a STEM non-profit. She also enjoys going to the gym, the outdoors, and hanging out with friends!



Fiana Han, Grand Cup Piano, will be an upcoming senior at East Ridge High school in 2024-2025. While in kindergarten, she began her private piano lessons with Jackie Lo. She has earned 11 consecutive piano solo superior ratings and got Grand Cups with 78 points of the year. She will continue playing piano solos in the NFMC annual festivals. By next year, in 2025, she is looking forward to gaining 90 points in hopes of achieving the 6th President's Cup.

Fiana also participated in the Minnesota Music Teacher Association piano contests every year and performed in the MMTA Honors Concert several times. Apart from piano, she enjoys playing the violin; she has participated in the NFMC for 10 years and strives to achieve the Grand Cup for violin next year.

What she has achieved today is the result of hard work and persistence over the years. Fiana would also like to give a special thanks to her piano and violin private teacher, Jackie Lo, for 12 years of careful guidance, and her family's constant encouragement and support.



Annie Nguyen, Grand Cup Piano, is a senior at Visitation School in Mendota Heights, Minnesota. She's been studying piano since the age of four with Diane Anderson and began participating in Festival as a kindergartener. In addition to piano her interests include school theatre, sports, and robotic competitions as a member of the school team.

Congratulations to MFMC President Cup Recipients



Soumya Raman, Presidents Cup Piano, began piano lessons with Grace Kopitske at the young age of four. Over the course of fourteen years, she has earned thirteen superior ratings in the Piano Solo event and three superior ratings in the Piano Concerto event within the East Suburban Federation Music Club. Soumya has participated in various Minnesota Music Teachers Association theory exams and comprehensive piano examinations, passing with high marks. She has also performed in the MMTA's State contest and MMTA Honors Concert several times.

Outside of the musical world, Soumya is an active member of her community, currently serving as a Woodbury Ambassador. Graduating this past June from Mounds Park Academy, Soumya spent her time in high school as captain of her school's Girl's Varsity Tennis Team, working with her school's BIPOC affinity group to encourage diversity, involving herself with the speech team, and obtaining a Global Graduate Certificate of

Distinction. In her free time, she enjoys listening to music, hanging out with her friends, and exploring new places. Next fall, Soumya will be a freshman at Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, California, and intends to pursue a major in International Relations and Global Policy.



Sahana Bhatia, Presidents Cup Piano, has been studying piano under the guidance of Grace Kopitske since she was 6 years old. Sahana has been competing in NFMC solo piano events for the past 12 years and concerto piano events for the past 5 earning 5 consecutive superiors. Sahana has participated in several Minnesota Music Teachers Association (MMTA) theory and comprehensive piano exams, earning a high distinction for each one. She has competed in the MMTA's State contest and has performed at the state Honors Concert for contest winners.

In addition to her piano studies, Sahana has taken part in many non-school and school extracurriculars. She has always been fascinated with the arts and has been practicing the Indian classical dance, Bharatanatyam, since the age of 6 and completed her milestone Arangeetram performance in 2021. She also volunteered at Regions Hospital every Saturday and worked with doctors and patients in physical therapy. Back in high school, she was in Math League and contributed to her school for winning 2nd place for 3 years. She also founded her school's first ever diversity club, Discussions on Diversity, with the hopes of bringing awareness to the community and change to her school. In her spare time, Sahana indulges in even more of the arts such as painting and pottery. She enjoys being around her friends and family, loves adventures, and is always willing to try new things!

Currently, she is a Biology major planning on pursuing a career in the Biotechnology field and will finish her undergrad at Boston University.

Biennial Student Auditions

Liz Raihala, Chair

Attention all teachers! If you have advanced students that are in their Junior or Senior year of high school, there is a wonderful opportunity of three \$600.00 awards given in March of 2025. The Minnesota Federation of Music Clubs Biennial State Student Auditions is a competition for piano, organ, strings, voice, brass, woodwinds and percussion. They are not live auditions but submitted preferably via MP4 video recordings. The student must be a student of a MN Federation teacher and a resident of Minnesota. The entry fee is \$25.00—more information, including the fillable application form is on the MFMC website. The application and entry fee is due January 15, 2025. The recordings are due on or before January 31, 2025.

If you have any questions, please contact Biennial State Student Auditions chair, Liz Raihala at Liz@Raihala.net.

Pleyel Double Grand Piano – Sheila Shusterich

The 2024 NFMC Conference in Bettendorf, Iowa was wonderful! I am so happy that as the NFMC Student/Collegiate Division Chair, I was able to attend. In addition to having a chance to catch-up with Federation friends and get caught-up with NFMC business, it was a time for marvelous music! One of the highlights of the five-day event for me was the pre-concert presentation at Asbury United Methodist Church by Marilyn Mitchem about the rare, historic **Pleyel** double grand piano. Following this was the terrific performance by the *Happy Dog Duo* (current NFMC Young Artists) on this unique instrument! NFMC President Sarah Tweedt and I took the opportunity to get a photo seated at this amazing double piano! The sound was incredible, and words cannot adequately describe it.

If any clubs are interested in the history of this instrument, Marilyn's presentation is very interesting! She explained that the piano we heard is one of only seven **Pleyel** double grands left in the world and the only one in playable condition in the Western Hemisphere. This unique instrument—with two separate keyboards and two complete sets of strings—has a shared soundboard. The **Pleyel** was built in Paris in 1904. Chopin was one composer who preferred **Pleyel** pianos above all others during his concertizing career. For those wishing to contact Marilyn about a presentation (including slides and a video of the **Pleyel**), she can be reached at maridmitch@gmail.com.



MFMC Officers and Chairs

*Thank you to everyone in leadership roles for their dedicated work for MFMC!
Members, please acknowledge their hard work that benefits you and your students!*

CONTACT INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE MFMC WEB SITE: WWW.MFMC.NET



Nancy Fisher • National
Board Representative, Social Media



Sarah Twedt • President
Co-Festival Chair, Certificates



Shirley Erickson • Treasurer



Mary Kaye Rabaey • Secretary



Karen Erickson • Historian
International Music Camp Scholarships



Julie Gutzmer • Membership Chair



Mary Wescott • North Central
Region President



Cheryl Schmidt • Web Site,
Half Notes Newsletter, Special Needs Awards



Sue Quist • Insurance Coordinator



Grace Kopitske • Festival Online
Registration Administrator
Co-Festival Chair, Certificates



Liz Raihala
Biennial Student Auditions



Sheila Shusterich
NFMC Student/Collegiate Auditions
MFMC Scholarships, Awards & Grants



Cara Caravetta
Product Line/Logo Wear



Peggy Karsten
Parliamentarian/Advisor

Not Pictured:

Rebecca Heerdt • Parade of American Music

Sharon Kaplan • Junior Composers Contest and Composer Camp Scholarships

Louise Lundin • MFMC Web Site — Content Manager/Advisor