



Upcoming Events

“Summer’s lease hath all too short a date.” —Shakespeare
Enjoy your summer!

Note from the editor: This news-
letter goes out as pdf, which can **be**
enlarged for easier viewing.

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From Our President, Dr. Spencer Baker

Congratulations to all on an outstanding Academic year! This has been a wonderful first year for me to serve as NMTA President. I have really enjoyed getting to know more of our members and hear your success stories. Several students have achieved many milestones and we are happy to celebrate and mark them at this time of year.

For our membership, we also celebrated a great milestone in just this past week. Our NCTM certification has risen to 34 certified members. With 163 NMTA members statewide, that is 20.9% of our membership. That places Nevada in the TOP TEN of all states for the first time in our history. Congratulations to newly certified members this year and to our certification chair, Laurie Swain!

The State board met in January and again in May for quarterly board meetings. We have a committee formed for the State conference, financial committee, and state competition committee. I would especially like to welcome new board member, Dr. Ivan Ivanov, State Woodwind chair. With committees working on these larger projects, it saves some meeting time for our State board. NMTA now runs more events, competitions, and professional development and community outreach than ever, so breaking up the tasks has been an important strategy to effectively manage time and resources.

The Minneapolis National Conference in March was very well attended by Nevada. Thank you to all who were able to support our MTNA National Fellow, Cheryl Thornton, session presenters and national competitors.

I was humbled to take over the UNLV Piano forum this Spring for NMTA and UNLV. We had a great event, hosted by our UNLVMTA chapter. Thank you to all the teachers who participated to make this event another success. As mentioned in my last newsletter, we are indebted to Mallie Reicken and Dr. Mykola Suk for beginning this 25 years ago and establishing a longtime partnership with our NMTA teachers. I’m so happy to be able to keep this event a tradition !

Many graduations, vacations, and summer camps and music programs fill this time of year. It goes quickly but is such a needed component from the routine of the programmatic year.

I hope you enjoy a rejuvenating Summer!

Minneapolis Conference Report, March 2025

I was so thrilled to attend this year's National Conference. I was there with several from Las Vegas, UNLV, and from NNMTA. Nevada attendance to the National conference was great to see, share and experience with our members. Thank you to the Nevadans who attended the meetings of the association, presented sessions, and participated in the National MTNA competition as Southwest Division winners.

Thank you to so many who presented, included Marie Lee and Sonnet Johnson. They were regular session presenters as well as featured on Pedagogy Saturday. Our 2025 MTNA Nevada Foundation Fellow was Cheryl Thornton. Unfortunately, Cheryl was ill and I accepted for her in Minneapolis. We have just presented the award to her in-person at the LVMTA Closing social last week. A thank you from Cheryl is included in this newsletter. We are all excited to honor you this year, Cheryl!

The conference artist was African American pianist, Michelle Cann. This recital was a highlight of the conference. Michelle is a newly appointed faculty member at the Manhattan School of Music and Eleanor Sokolof Chair in piano studies at the Curtis School of music. She gave an electrifying recital of Liszt, Mendelssohn, Florence Price and Clara Schumann. The Keynote speaker was Libby Larsen, enjoyed many Collegiate poster presentations, and Nevada also had students competing in the MTNA national competition. It was great to gather and show our support, connect, meet friends and accomplish all the business of the national organization.

MTNA will be celebrating its 150th Anniversary in 2026. This was a big takeaway from this year's conference. We were encouraged to plan to celebrate in our local associations, state associations and possibly plan to attend Chicago MTNA National next year for a big celebration. (March 21-25, 2026) I would love to hear some of your ideas on how you are planning to celebrate here in Nevada !

Dr. Spencer Baker, DMA

NMTA President

Certification Corner May 2025

The MTNA Certification Report stated that Nevada has 34 teachers who are certified, which is 20.9% of our total membership. This ranks us 10th in the nation. Good work Nevada for being in the top ten!

Challenge yourself to become a little better teacher this year than you were last year... through certification!



Certification Corner

May 2025

Congratulations to Nevada Music Teachers Association's newest MTNA certified teachers:

-
Amy Homer Smith

Become a



Nationally Certified Music Teacher

through the Music Teachers National Association

- **NMTA Classes begin June 6, 2025, 10:00AM** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84240645152>
- certification.mtna.org

Let certification develop and grow your teaching!

To Register: Contact Laurie Swain, Nevada State Certification Chair, [702-296-3563](tel:702-296-3563)



Amy Homer-Smith is grateful to have completed her national certification, which had been a goal of hers for a long time. She just completed her second year serving as an adjunct instructor of piano classes at UNLV, which inspired her to return to college to finish her bachelor's degree. She will finally complete her Bachelor of Arts degree, in Interdisciplinary Studies and she plans to finish it in the Fall of 2025. Last year she became an inducted member of the National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS) and she has been on the Deans List of the Liberal Arts College since returning to school. The journey to this point began over 30 years ago when she decided to start her own piano studio, and she has been blessed to have many students of all ages and abilities study the piano (and eventually, the organ) with her. She has been an active member of LVMTA, serving as Vice President of Programs, and later, President. She then served as Sub-Dean of the Southern Nevada chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and she currently serves as NMTA's Vice President of Local Associations. This Spring, she has enjoyed teaching Music Makers Kids, a class for children with Down Syndrome at Gigi's Playhouse, a Down Syndrome Achievement Center. Her biggest inspiration in her life, is her son, Aaron, who is her greatest teacher.

-----Laurie Swain, Certification Chair

We welcome our new member! —Allison Oleson, Membership Chair



Nikola Scepovic pianist



Phone:
+1 702 5720721

22 Aug 2022 -

Graduate Assistant
Piano teacher, concert pianist, accompanist
University of Nevada-Las Vegas

UNLVMTA Vice-president

Education

1 Oct 2005- 20 Dec 2009

University of Arts in Belgrade
Bachelor of Music degree
Master of music and specialist in music degree
SAE Institute Belgrade
Audio engineering diploma

22 Aug 2022

University of Nevada-Las Vegas
Doctor of Musical Arts degree PENDING

Posters from Cindy Lee



NEVADA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



DISCOVER, CONNECT, EXPLORE

PIANO ENSEMBLE REPERTOIRE WORKSHOP

A COLLABORATIVE SPACE WHERE PIANO TEACHERS EXPLORE ENSEMBLE
REPERTOIRES AND SHARE TEACHING INSIGHTS

DISCOVER INSPIRING PIANO ENSEMBLE REPERTOIRES INCLUDING NFMC
BULLETIN SELECTIONS AND CONNECT WITH FELLOW PIANO TEACHERS.
RECEPTION WILL FOLLOW!

JUNE 26, 2025
10AM-12PM
SOTHERN NEVADA MUSIC



NEVADA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



EXPLORE, CONNECT, INSPIRE

NFMC PIANO BULLETIN PREVIEW WORKSHOP

Join us to explore piano solo repertoire selections
from the 2024–28 NFMC Federation Festival Bulletin,
with a reception to follow!

**AUGUST 23, 2025
10AM-12PM
SOTHERN NEVADA MUSIC**



NEVADA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



Uli Geissendoerfer Masterclass

**ROOTS OF JAZZ:
RHYTHM, MELODY,
HARMONY**

**An inspiring masterclass designed to deepen musical understanding
and prepare students for the Jazz Festival**

**SEPTEMBER 13, 2025
10AM-12PM
SOTHERN NEVADA MUSIC**

THE NEVADA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

SILVER STATE COMPETITION

NOVEMBER 7-9, 2025

CLARK HIGH SCHOOL in Las Vegas

Piano Classical Solo, Piano Social Solo, String Solo, Woodwind Solo, Voice Solo,
Piano Concerto, Composition Entry Fee:

\$45/MEMBERS, \$55/NON-MEMBERS

PER STUDENT, PER CATEGORY

Piano Classical Ensemble, Piano Social Ensemble, Chamber Music Entry Fee:

\$25/MEMBERS, \$35/NON-MEMBERS

PER STUDENT, PER CATEGORY

REGISTRATION DATES: Friday, Oct. 3 - Friday, Oct. 10, 2025

See Competition Rules and Register at nvmta.com

Chairpersons: Suzanne Clayson, Marie Lee, Michelle Lee

Prepare Now for the MTNA State Competition - Registration Opens Soon!



Join us for the 2025-26 MTNA Competition! Registration Deadlines are approaching, so now is the time to finalize repertoire and plan ahead:

Piano, Strings and Woodwind Performance Categories:

Registration opens in August and closes on September 10th

2025 State Competition Dates:

Friday, October 31st: Dress Rehearsals in Performance Rooms

Saturday, November 1st: Competition Day at UNLV

Our state organization supports not only a live and in-person competition, but every performance category will have a panel of 3 judges offering written feedback, and **winners will be selected to work with one of the judges in a masterclass setting**. We are very grateful to NMTA for supporting this event above the minimum MTNA requirements, to offer ALL entrants an enhanced experience!

- State Winners will advance to the Southwest Division Finals, which will require submitting a recording by December 3, 2025.
- Southwest Division Winners will advance to the MTNA National Finals, held in Chicago, IL, March 20-24, 2026.

Composition Categories:

Registration opens in August and closes on September 10th

- Composition is an online format exclusively, and all composition materials must be uploaded at the time of registration. Competitors will receive written feedback.
- State winners automatically advancing to the Southwest Division finals.

Chamber Music and Brass Performance Categories:

Registration opens November 1st and closes on December 3rd

- Chamber and Brass are no longer divided by state or division.
- These categories are online for the preliminary round, with finalists chosen to compete live at the National Convention in Chicago, IL, March 20-24, 2026.

For more information regarding age division classification, repertoire requirements, fees and more, visit the Competitions page at www.mtna.org

-Bonnie Buhler -Tanouye

2025 NMTA Calendar of Events by Association

January

MTNA Collegiate Symposium Jan. 18, Jan. 19

LVFMC Organ festival: Rehearsals: 1/2,1/4,1/11 and Festival: January 24th

February

LVMTA Sonatina Festival (flute and piano)

NMTA Professional Development

NNMTA student recital

March

MTNA National Conference (Professional Development)

NNMTA NFMC Festivals

LVFMC Piano Solo + Theory + Pop + Sight Reading + Voice + Sacred Festival

LVFMC String Festival

April

NMTA Open Bench Night (organ, Amy Homer-Smith)

NNMTA student recital

NNMTA Upper Festival

UNLV Piano Forum Friday, April 11th 3-5pm *with UNLVMTA

MTNA National Conference: "TEMPO" online April 25th and 26th

LVMTA Bushell/Legacy competition * Bushell 2025 April 26th and 27th

May

LVMTA Musicianship Exams

LVMTA Teacher Recital

NNMTA student recital

NNMTA Young Artist Medal

NNMTA Lower Festival

June

NMTA/LVFMC/NNMTA collaborative Summer Skills Challenge (lead sheets, improvisation, scales/chords, sight reading, practice skills)?

July

NMTA/LVFMC/NNMTA collaborative Summer Skills Challenge (lead sheets, improvisation, scales/chords, sight reading, practice skills)?

August

NMTA State Conference? (Professional Development)

NMTA collaborative accompanying event?

September

LVFMC Ensemble Festival

NNMTA Teacher Appreciation Brunch

NNMTA Student and Teacher Recitals

October

LVMTA Jazz Festival

MTNA competition + Masterclasses (Professional Development)

NMTA Halloween recital/Open Bench Night (organ, Amy Homer-Smith)

NNMTA Halloween Recital

UNLV Piano Forum

November

NMTA/NNMTA Silver State Competition

LVFMC Woodwind Festival

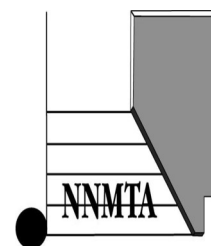
December

LVMTA Playathon

NNMTA Playathon



Local Chapter Updates



Welcome Letter from LVMTA President, Julian Lam

Dear LVMTA members,

It was absolutely an incredible journey I had this year as being President for LVMTA the first time in my life. This year, I experienced a great deal of growth as a music teacher, a leader and learning all about event planning. I thank LVMTA for giving me this opportunity to learn and achieve. I hope one day, many of you will take the opportunity to serve the our board as VP or help out with any of our great events.

Thanks to Cindy Lee who held a wonderful success for our Roger Bushell Competition. Thank you to Lisa Fiorenza for our Musicianship Theory exam and Vicky Lee for our Musicianship Practical Exam.

At last, also, thank you to all the teachers who enrolled students in the events LVMTA sponsors. I hope our LVMTA events will benefitted your students musical growth and achievement. Thanks additionally for all your time and volunteering at all of our events in this whole year!

Our last event of this year is our Closing Social and Teacher Recital on May 22nd at Southern Nevada Music at 11am and 12:15pm. At this event, we will have food, award ceremonies and live music. Looking forward to seeing you there and wishing you all have a best summer in 2025. See you in the Fall school year for another fantastic season of event!

Best regards,

Julian Lam
LVMTA president



Dear Colleagues,

I wanted to commend everyone for their hard work in all the recent festivals throughout the state. Thanks to all who volunteer their scarce and valuable time, and always remember that it takes a dedicated team to make these events work. Kudos to all the students for their preparation and poise, and keep reminding them that these experiences will be valuable in their future endeavors. I hope these festivals will be a tradition that continues to last for generations to come.

I wanted to make a special recognition to Drs. Stephen Pierce, Elizabeth Hegde and Amanda Gessler, who judged Upper Festival and Young Artist Medal recently here in Reno. I have to reveal some favoritism because Elizabeth and Mandy are friends and colleagues of mine, but I recommended them for judging because of their expertise and warm demeanor. They are rare artists who can perform at the highest level, yet will make sure to support students of any age and ability.

I hope you have found their advice valuable, and know that we all have the ability to give unique insights to students.

Best,

Bryan Chuan



Letter from Cheryl Thornton

Dear Nevada Music Teachers Association,

I am incredibly grateful for the honor of receiving the 2025 MTNA Foundation Fellow Award. It is truly humbling. In addition, I would like to express my deepest thanks to everyone involved. I want to extend my most heartfelt gratitude for recognizing my hard work and dedication with this award. It means a great deal to me, and I am truly honored. Thank you for your diligence in serving us, the teachers and our students in Nevada. For you and your tremendous service,

Warm Regards, Cheryl Thornton



Cheryl Thornton received her BM in Piano Performance from Colorado State University. She has continued her education with notable teachers such as N. Jane Tan, Joan Brown, Paul Pollei and Seymour Bernstein. Cheryl held positions as Treasurer of both the Loveland, Colorado Music Teachers Association, Bellevue, Washington Music Teachers Association, and Vice President of Membership-Las Vegas Music Teachers Association, President of Nevada Music Teachers Association twice: 2010-2012 & 2020-2022.

In 2012, she received the NMTA Outstanding Service Award. In 2022, she received the NMTA Excellence in Teaching Award. Cheryl received the 2021 Steinway Hall of Fame Teacher Award.

Nevada Notes is circulated on a regular basis to all current NMTA members.

Subscription is included in NMTA membership.



NMTA
NEVADA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

NMTA Officers and Board

President:

Dr. Spencer Baker, Las Vegas

Spencerbaker.piano@gmail.com

President-Elect

Damaris Morales

Damaris@damarismorales.com

Immediate Past President

Marie Lee, Henderson

Marielee.42ml@gmail.com

1st VP/Membership & MTNA Foundation:

Allison Olson, Las Vegas

olsonfamily5k@cox.net

Secretary

Emma Pease-Byron, Las Vegas

emma.peasebyron@gmail.com

Treasurer:

David Skouson, Las Vegas

skouson@cox.net

Silver State Chair

Michelle Lee, Las Vegas

michellelee1@hotmail.com

String Chair

Gregory Maldonado, Las Vegas

maldogm@nv.ccsd.net

Piano Chair

Cindy Lee, Las Vegas

klavierjh@gmail.com

Competition Chair

Bonnie Buhler-Tanouye, Henderson

bonnietanouye@gmail.com

Competition Co-chair

Cindy Lee, Las Vegas

klavierjh@gmail.com

Certification Chair:

Laurie Swain, Las Vegas

lspliano@cox.net

LVMTA President:

Julian.Lam

UNRMTA President

Adea Badavuku, Reno

adeabadivuku95@gmail.com

UNLVMTA President

Zhenyu Yang, Las Vegas

zhenyuyang94@gmail.com

NNMTA President:

Dr. Bryan Chuan

bchuan@unr.edu

NNMTA Representative

Amy Jahn, Reno

amyjahn@charter.net

Newsletter Editor:

Karen Sampson Hudson, Reno

karena.hudson@gmail.com

Hospitality Chair

Cheryl Thornton, Las Vegas

cherylthorntonstudio@gmail.com