

# KEY Issue



October 2018

## What's the "Next Big Thing?"

What is the "Next Big Thing?" "What's next?" After the emotional glow of a big musical event, we need to have an answer!

I am convinced that having a goal in front of a student does a great deal to boost motivation. I constantly assess the potential of each student for the "next big thing."

Students who doggedly progress through method books with no concrete goal in mind may not see the need to do more. Given our natures, no one would naturally choose to put themselves under the stress of an exam or recital. It is just easier not to be bothered. I understand that. No one WANTS to take an exam, but we DO want the feeling of accomplishment that comes because of it. Our job is to elevate opportunities in the mind of parents and students so that they value and respect the effort to prepare for these events.

Here are some ideas on how to make your next performance opportunity something memorable that students and parents will want to participate in:

1. Start recruiting for the event months before it is to take place. In the middle of the fall, I may say, "There is a recital coming up in January. Do you think you could have this piece polished by December, so you could play it then?"

2. Explain to the parents clearly about what the exam, recital, or competition involves. Parents need to know the fees, location, time commitment, and most of all, how participation in this would directly benefit their student.

3. Your presence at recitals shows the parents that you view this as an event worthy of your time to attend. Take pictures of your students at these performances and send the photo to other students in your studio with praise about something good that happened in the performance. If this is not possible, ask a parent to take a group picture of your students and send it to you. If you have a FaceBook page, post it there, or send it in a newsletter.

4. Place the certificates, ribbons and awards students have received in your waiting area, so other students can see them. This is a very subtle but effective way to promote gentle competition. Students notice who is advancing in exam levels or doing extra things.

5. I use a computer template to print certificates with a formal typeface for filling in the blanks. This takes a bit of time to set up, but is much easier than trying to do calligraphy on the certificates. I use a fine sharpie marker to date and sign the certificates.

6. I place all certificates in an acetate sheet protector with the judges comments in back, so they automatically have more status as a document.

7. If a parent hesitates in scheduling "one more activity" I remind them that the students who participate regularly in outside events progress more quickly.

8. I encourage young students to participate in the SPPTA recitals as soon as they are able. Often, middle school aged children work through social awareness issues that could make performing an emotional challenge. If they are already in the habit of performing for peers, it may not be as daunting an event.



9. In my studio, students must be prepared to take the exam, perform the piece by memory, or be ready to compete by the deadline date. If they are not, I will not register them. Students deal with the stress of the event weeks before it actually happens. This benefits both me and my students. One of my students registered for an exam, then immediately broke his arm after the deadline. He was easily able to take the exam two weeks after his cast was removed. He was ready. Students will get sick or miss lessons, or just choose other priorities. When students promise they can learn things on their own, I just nod and smile, but never count on it happening!

What you praise, you get more of. Make a big deal about your students' accomplishments and you will find them willing to take on new challenges.

Marilyn Henry, NCTM



**Marilyn Henry**  
Membership Chair

It's not unusual at this time of year to find out that a student is not returning to lessons because of a change in the family's financial situation. It seems that when finances get tight, music lessons are the first thing to go. If this should happen, remember the MusicLink program.

If you're willing to lower your normal fee by at least half, MusicLink can support you in a variety of ways. Discounts on music & materials, reimbursement for non-tuition expenses, assistance with practice instruments and Summer Music Camp scholarship are all available. SPPTA & MMTA also waive all program fees for MusicLink students.

Contact Sue Wege for more information or go to [www.musiclinkfoundation.org](http://www.musiclinkfoundation.org) to register as a MusicLink teacher or have your family register their student. (How to Participate)

Congratulations go to Helen Marie Plourde for being named a MusicLink Teacher of Distinction for 10 years of teaching MusicLink students. Helen Marie has taught 6 MusicLink students over those years. Thank you, Helen Marie!

Mark your calendars for the 2019 MusicLink Play-athon which will be the weekend of Feb. 9-10 in Macys Court at the Mall of America. The Popular Styles Hour will be returning on the evening of Feb. 9th. Plan now to have your students participate in this very popular event!



**Sue Wege**  
MusicLink Chair

# Congratulations to SPPTA Members!



*Left: Sue Wege, MusicLink Chair  
Right: Helen Marie Plourde, MusicLink Teacher*

**Congratulations go to Helen Marie Plourde  
for being named a MusicLink Teacher of  
Distinction for 10 years of teaching  
MusicLink students!**

*If you'd like to become a MusicLink teacher,  
you can find information at:  
<http://musiclinkfoundation.org/>*



*Cynthia Ali, NCTM*

**Congratulations to Cynthia Ali  
for receiving the MTNA Certification!**

*If you are interested in becoming certified, you  
can find information at:  
[www.mtnacertification.org](http://www.mtnacertification.org)*



# Concerto Competition

December 1st will be here in short order, and October 15th will be here even sooner. Are these dates on your calendar? Some very talented students have it on theirs, as well as three very qualified judges. Registrations for this year's SPPTA Concerto Competition are being accepted through October 15th. At that point the teachers with students competing will be notified as to their students' scheduled time to play, and the judges will be notified of the concerti being performed for the preliminary round. The two daytime judges, providing the quality critiques for each competitor and determining the six finalists, are Dr. Herbert Johnson and Dr. Nicholas Susi. Joining them in the judging of the finalists round in the evening is Dr. Lillie Gardner. We are grateful to each of them for sharing their expertise with the musicians participating in this event. Please encourage your students and their families to join you for the finals round at 7:30pm. It never fails to be an amazing evening of music. Now, here is a bit more about the judges.

2015-2017 National Federation of Music Clubs Young Artist, pianist Nicholas Susi enjoys a multifaceted career living out his deep love for music. The 2017-18 season saw engagements across the country as performer, masterclass clinician, competition adjudicator, lecturer, and community outreach speaker. Nicholas's artistry has been recognized through prizes in such piano competitions as the National Federation of Music Clubs Young Artist Award, the Mu Phi Epsilon International Competition, and Klavierfestival Rösrath, while his research has been awarded prestigious grants from such organizations as the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD), Mu Phi Epsilon Foundation, and Legacy Foundation for the Arts. These and other grants enabled him to travel, study, and perform music across Europe; the experiences of researching Beethoven in Bonn, Debussy in Paris, and Mozart in Vienna

have been central to his development as a musician and to his cosmopolitan understanding of musical styles. Other noteworthy appearances include two concerts for the Princess von Hohenzollern at her castle in Namedy, Germany, his semifinalist recital at the TivoliVrendenburg in Utrecht, The Netherlands during the 2014 International Franz Liszt Piano Competition, and concerto solos with such orchestras as the Omaha Symphony, Wiener Residenz Orchester, St. Louis Chamber Orchestra, and Philharmonia of Greater Kansas City. His debut recording, *Scarlatti Now*, was released in late 2016 and has received critical attention and nationwide radio airplay.

A native of St. Louis, Missouri, Nicholas is currently based out of Duluth, Minnesota, where he is an Assistant Professor of Music at The College of St. Scholastica. In addition to teaching private lessons, he also teaches music theory and coordinates the class piano program. Nicholas received his doctorate from the University of Michigan, with previous studies at the University of Kansas and at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln as a two-time DAAD grantee. Primary teachers include Zena Ilyashov, Jack Winerock, Nina Tichman, and Arthur Greene.

Herbert Johnson is Professor of Piano and Director of Keyboard Activities at Bethel University since September 2008. Prior to this position, Herbert taught at King's College in Briarcliff Manor, New York, Evangel College in Springfield, Missouri, and North Central University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Herbert received his doctorate in piano performance from the Manhattan School of Music in New York City.

Herbert participates in numerous musical activities in the metropolitan area including chamber music recitals, worship services, and sacred concerts. Recent performances include the Thursday Musical Morning Artists Series at the MacPhail School of Music, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Minnesota Music Teachers Association State Convention in Plymouth, Minnesota. Herbert has also traveled to Ukraine with the Kairos Chamber

Ensemble and Evangelion, performing in churches, schools and conservatories in Kiev and Cherkassy, two of the country's largest cities.

He is a member of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association and Music Teachers National Association. He is in demand as an adjudicator for state competitions and festivals. Johnson has taught masterclasses for the Wirth Center of the Performing Arts, the Young Artists Piano World Festival in St. Paul, and the Rochester Area Keyboard Club in Rochester, Minnesota.

Lillie Gardner is active as a solo pianist, chamber musician, and music educator throughout the United States. She has performed in the "Chopin 200" Festival at the World Financial Center and the "Tutte le Corde: Piano Music After 1950" concert series in Greenwich Village, as well as in venues such as Steinway Hall, Saklad Auditorium, Bellevue Hospital, Teatro de Casa Italiana, Southampton Cultural Center, and in chamber music concerts at Provincetown Playhouse and the Tenri Cultural Institute of New York. Particularly passionate about American music at the turn of the twentieth century, Gardner recently completed a pioneer sketch study of Aaron Copland's Piano Variations (1930) and devoted the 2017-2018 concert season to the music of Amy Beach, whose 150th birth anniversary was in September of 2017. Gardner received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from New York University, and she holds a Doctorate of Musical Arts in piano performance from the University of Connecticut. Originally from Saint Paul, she began her piano studies with Dr. Joseph Zins of Crocus Hill Studios. An avid writer, Gardner is fascinated by the relationship between words and music, and she recently curated "American Literature in Recital," a concert of solo and collaborative works by American composers inspired by the words of American writers. She is on the piano faculty of St. Joseph's School of Music and

maintains her private teaching studio, Gardner Piano Studio, in St. Paul.

Anticipating a fantastic event, and hoping to see you there,

Beverly Olson

SPPTA Concerto Competition Chair



**Beverly Olson**  
**Concerto Competition Chair**

# SPPTA Recitals

“That was so fun! When can I do that again?” is a response I often hear from students after they have given a performance at one of SPPTA’s monthly recitals. These recitals are events for everyone and are great opportunities for brand new students who are just beginning to play to advanced high school students who are preparing for college auditions to adult students who are fulfilling a life long dream of making music. I love seeing students walk away inspired by hearing the many levels of playing and eager to try new repertoire. In my own students, I have witnessed metamorphoses where students has been reluctant to practice and even considering ending lessons to having their dedication renewed and passion rekindled after performing in an SPPTA recital. For SPPTA members who may be unfamiliar with our recitals, they are monthly events that are held in various locations in and around the St. Paul area. Each event is adjudicated by a judge who gives thoughtful critiques to the students. Recitalists of any level who give a musically convincing performance may be nominated by the judge to perform in the end of the year Honors Recital. To encourage students to develop their performing experience, SPPTA recitals have an award program. When a student has played in three of the SPPTA recitals, they will receive a ribbon; after six, a medal, and for nine performances, a trophy. The process is repeated with different awards for subsequent performances. There is exciting news for the SPPTA recital program this year! We have become modern and now have online registration available! Teachers may register their students at <https://sppta.org/recital-registration>. For teachers taking advantage of this convenience, there will be an additional \$1 processing fee. Teachers will be continued to be given the traditional option of sending their registration through the mail with a self addressed stamped envelope. Another change to the recital program is that the role of programmer has been divided into two volunteer

opportunities. The programmer will receive registrations, creates program, and manage other recital preparations while the host will emcee the event. This will be great for our members who may want to contribute to our local association but whose schedules are too busy to have the entire responsibility of coordinating a recital. If you are interested in volunteering in either of these ways, please contact me at [elsahosch@icoud.com](mailto:elsahosch@icoud.com)! I’m excited to be preparing my own students for SPPTA recitals this year and am eager to hear your students, too!

Respectfully submitted,

Elsa Hosch, NCTM  
Recital Chair



**Elsa Hosch, NCTM**  
Recital Chair

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