

# KEY Issue



April 2019

## Recitals Are they worth the bother?

**Recitals represent a lot of work, time and money:** for the teacher, the parents, and especially the student. Who wants to willingly be put under a bit of stress in front of a group of strangers? What is in it for them? What's in it for you as a teacher?

**For some parents, recitals may feel like nothing more than a rite of passage through childhood that must be endured without question.** Our job is to dispel that mindset so recitals can be enjoyed with fresh enthusiasm and a vision for what they can accomplish

**We, as teachers need to be convinced of their value if we are to “sell” our students on the idea of performing at recitals.** While very few students would chose on their own initiative to play for a recital, we, as teachers must be convinced that the benefits are worth the effort. So, why should a student perform?

**The benefits are as varied as the students who participate.** Most students are motivated by the tangible rewards that SPPTA offers through repeated performances. These ribbons,

medals and trophies give students bragging rights about something that represents real effort. Other students are eager to earn the “Honors” rating which allows them to perform at the end of the year showcase recital.

**Recitals give students deadlines and who among us isn't more motivated with even a self-made deadline?** For a more advanced student, a recital is a great way to officially “complete” a significant piece. I

**t can also be a good opportunity for a more reluctant or timid student to perform with a duet partner, using music and enjoying the emotional support of a co-performer.** Some students may chose to perform each of their pieces for a piano exams or perform to test their contest piece.

**There is a sense of satisfaction in a job well done, that cannot be achieved without a risk taken and a challenge met. Even young children are impacted by the power music has on listeners.** There is something almost magical in the way sounds can affect the emotional energy in a room. For a brief few moments, beauty has been added to a world hungry for it. This is perhaps the crowning reason to desire to perform.

**From the parent's perspective,** if a child is asked to perform in a recital, it is a signal that the teacher is satisfied with the child's progress and willing to showcase it. Parents can also see their child's improvement from one recital to the next. It gives grandparents, friends and other interested parties an event where their presence can express in a powerful way, their support and interest in the child's life. This is the stuff of which Christmas card content is made! Programmers often insert background information about the pieces, interesting things to listen for, or other pertinent information. Monica Allen shared information about our SPPTA and MMTA programs at the March, 2019 recital. Recitals become more interesting for the casual observer with these additions.

**From the teacher's perspective, how does participation help you?** It saves you time. You have access to these events without having to plan the details, contract a hall, or print programs. Now you can even register on-line if you so choose. It gives you exposure. Parents talk among themselves and compare their experiences. Parents want to be part of an active studio where many opportunities are available, even if they chose not to participate in everything offered. I recently heard a parent bemoan the fact that their teacher did nothing extra beyond the end of the year recital. Don't be that teacher! Invariably, recitals will conflict with spontaneously made plans for activities with friends. That conflict becomes an advertising point for your studio as parents share the reason for their prior commitment.

**When students are overwhelmed and something has to give, those who have a deadline looming will be less likely to miss their music lesson.** It is more likely that students will ask for extra lessons if they have an aggressive performance goal.

**There is value in self-examination, but even more in peer evaluation.** As a teacher, we can use the judge's critiques to gain insight into our teaching. The comments can help us see areas where we can improve. The judges do not know who the teachers of the performers are, and comments aim to be kind while helpful.

**Recital participation can result in a winning cycle.** The more students participate, the more often they want to do it, and the greater variety of students want to participate. As a teacher, highlight the students who participate via emails, photos from the recital, or in your recital program at the end of the year. This year my incentive program is "Ten for Ten" which means students who perform for at least ten people on ten different occasions will be invited to a pizza party at my home next summer. SPPTA recitals help meet this goal perfectly.

**Anything worthwhile in life requires work.** Recitals do represent work - but so do birthday parties, holiday gatherings and special events in our lives. Student recitals can fulfill many pedagogical and emotional goals and are designed not only to showcase the aspiring music major but also to reward those who perform frequently simply for the challenge it offers. There is value here for everyone, at any level.



**Marilyn Henry**  
Membership Chair



## MUSIC PLAYATHON SUCCESSFUL

The MusicLink Playathon took place on the weekend of February 9-10 in Macys Court at the Mall of America. Even though Old Man Winter paid us a visit on Sunday, it still was a successful weekend raising over \$9,600 for the MusicLink Foundation. The Popular Styles Hour was held on Saturday evening with 10 students performing to the backup music of Doug Rohde, Sean Roderick & Adam Patterson. Our Sunday afternoon highlights included performances by the Hammann Sisters.

**If you would like to hear more about the MusicLink program and how you can make a difference in the life of a low income student, visit:**

**[www.musiclinkfoundation.org](http://www.musiclinkfoundation.org)**

**Sue Wege [swege71@comcast.net](mailto:swege71@comcast.net)**



**Sue Wege**  
MusicLink Chair



# Things Are Changing

Comparing lessons of your grandmother's generation with now, much of how we teach piano remains the same: We play a beautiful instrument, use classic literature, teach largely private lessons in our homes. That being said, just as much has been revolutionized in the last generation. We can't go back to the way things were, nor would we want to.

The ways we access information has fundamentally changed. Before, we got our information from books and lectures, now we turn to blogs and podcasts. Tapping into this information is now virtually effortless. So much of it is free, readily available and thus can become overwhelming by the sheer volume of it all.

If you are like me, I am a member of several on-line piano teaching Facebook groups and subscription groups. Some groups have over a thousand members. I may chime in with a comment occasionally, but I don't read all the posts and the different groups blend into one in my mind. The members offer great insights, but at times, the opinions offered are raw and off-putting.

We have seen many courses offered on line that promise to teach you to play the piano with just your computer, a keyboard and a subscription to their service. While these may offer some great tips, we know we will never be replaced. There is so much more to playing an instrument that can be taught on line.

SPPTA as an organization has grown and changed with the times. We no longer have a phone tree. We don't have hard copies of our activities. As we change, in some major ways, we remain constant. Membership in our local organization will never be replaced by on-line podcasts and groups.

The personal connection that is created by physical presence is an essential part of who we are. As teachers get to know each other, we share successes and challenges unique to our location and community culture. We refer students to each other. We share ideas with immediate feedback.

There never will be a virtual recital as emotionally satisfying as a live event where we experience the performance together as a group.

We network with some of the brightest minds in teaching as they present at our meetings. We are given the opportunity to connect with them on a personal level in the casual moments before and after their presentations



**Marilyn Henry**  
Membership Chair

## SPPTA Recitals

SPPTA recitals have had a wide variety of ages, levels, and musical styles of the students who have participated this year! It is always a delight to see the enthusiasm for music that the recitalists bring to their performances! If you have never had a student participate in an SPPTA recital, I highly recommend you to give it a try this year! From personal experience, I have had students walk away from performing in these events with a renewed passion for music after being inspired by hearing performances by other dedicated students from around the St. Paul area.

The recitals are held monthly throughout the school year, so it can be a great way to challenge a student to learn a piece and perfect it to performance standards in a short amount of time. Because these are adjudicated events, the recitals are also a great tool to give students who are preparing for exams or contest an extra opportunity to test drive the pieces they are working so hard on before the big day or could be used as a stepping stone for students who want more performance opportunities than just your personal studio recitals but may still be uncertain about participating in a contest. From the young beginners who are just learning their first songs to highschool students preparing for college auditions to adult students who are fulfilling lifelong dreams, any of your students are welcome to participate in these wonderful events!

To encourage both consistency in regular performances and also artistic musical expression, SPPTA recitals have incentive programs for both participation and quality. After performing in three recitals, the student receives a ribbon; for six performances, a medal; and for the ninth performance, a trophy. The rewards then continue to repeat for successive levels of participation achievements. To recognize exceptionally musical performances of any level the judge nominates a few students to perform in Honors Recital which is held at the end of the year.

Please join us for the remaining recitals for this school year! The April 14th and May 5th recitals will both be held at the Brooklyn Center Schmitt Music. The Honors Recital will be held at St. Pascal Baylon in St. Paul on June 9th and will showcase the best performers in the 2018/2019 recitals. We hope to see you there!



**Elsa Mathews, NCTM**  
Recital Chair

# Recital Performers



*January 2019 Recitalists - Schmitt Music in Brooklyn Center*



*Kaden H. (student of Sue Wege) receives first medal at November Recital - St. Luke Lutheran, Cottage Grove*



*Elisa S. (student of Ramon McCullough) at December 2018 recital - Prospect Park Methodist*

**Music@10,000 Lakes  
PIANO RETREAT  
August 11-14, 2019  
St. John's University  
Collegeville, Minnesota**

Music@10,000 Lakes is a two- day retreat for professional pianists who wish to practice and perform, new, old, unfinished or polished repertoire for and with their colleagues.

Located on the exquisite lakeside campus of St. John's University, the retreat also affords time and opportunity to meditate, walk the nature trails, read, relax and revitalize.

Visit the website for full details, contact information and registration. Now accepting registrations. Space is limited

**[www.musicat10000lakes.wordpress.com](http://www.musicat10000lakes.wordpress.com)**

Join us as we celebrate our 3rd year!

## **Membership Directory Updates**

**WELCOME to these new or reinstating members of SPPTA!**

Dr. Benjamin Downs  
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# In Memory

## Geraldine Leder

Geraldine Leder, one of SPPTA's most musically talented members ever, has died in California at the age of 95. She was a fine performer, accompanist, coach and teacher who loved to entertain with her music. Gerry loved SPPTA and her children have requested that any donations in her memory be directed to SPPTA. She was also active in Schubert Club and Thursday Musical. Gerry was outspoken, opinionated, a wonderful friend and an incredible talent.

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## Joanne Tierney

Longtime SPPTA member Joanne Tierney passed away January 21, 2019 at the age of 79. Joanne taught for many years at St. Catherine University and Century College and maintained a private home studio as well. She was greatly dedicated to helping her students becoming the best musicians they could be and had a particular passion for instructing piano teachers in the art of piano pedagogy. The people of the SPPTA meant a great deal to her and many of the current members studied with her in the past. She loved working with them and believed wholeheartedly in their mission and was dedicated to her own growth and study and sharing what she learned with other teachers.



*"Always remember it is people that you teach and not just music." ~Joanne Tierney*

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