

CONNECT

CAPMT



JOURNAL



CAPMT CONNECT

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Message from the President

Wendi Kirby-Alexander, NCTM • wkirbya@gmail.com

CAPMT President



Dear CAPMT Members,

Welcome to another, slightly different edition of *CAPMT Connect*. We are proud of this publication and its mission. We hope you enjoy connecting with us as you read and enjoy this edition focused on teaching music in time of COVID-19.

As we live in this unprecedented time in history, my love and support goes out to all of you as we navigate all of the changes that COVID-19 has forced upon us. Many of you have transitioned your teaching studios online. CAPMT meetings, recitals and competitions have also gone virtual. It has been a learning experience for all of us. I am constantly reminded how lucky we are to have this ability to stay connected through technology.

This is an exciting time in the history of CAPMT. CAPMT has been awarded the State Affiliate of the Year Award for 2020. This is a great honor. We were scheduled to receive this award at the Conference Gala at the National Conference in Chicago on March 23, 2020. As you know, we were unable to receive this award in person with the cancellation of the conference. This was disappointing but it definitely doesn't detract from our pride in our organization and pleasure in being selected to receive such profound recognition for our achievements. MTNA rewards characteristics such as strong leadership and community, membership growth and retention, new technology, innovative programs, and state and national visibility. National applauds our reach to the younger demographic and strong membership growth through YPLN, our awareness of the changes in classical music, and our move toward the future through progressive conference programming. They also commend our strong community and leadership achieved through a return to a full volunteer platform, our vision in creating a new website that is beautiful and user-friendly, and our ability to protect our members through liability insurance. These and many other accomplishments have moved us to the forefront of the nation as an example of a leading state affiliate. Thank you to our strong leadership and so many that give their time, energy and passion to our wonderful CAPMT.

I would like to congratulate our fully funded MNTA Foundation Fellow recipient for 2019-2020, Noreen Wenjen. Noreen has been such a vital part of our organization for many years. Noreen was to be honored in Chicago as well, but we now celebrate with her virtually and applaud her fine achievements.

Our CAPMT 2019 State Conference was held at San José State University on October 18 and 19, 2019. Our conference theme "Connecting Classical to Crossover - Beethoven and Beyond"

was a great success. Our featured guest artist, Peter Dugan, premiered the first crossover masterclass including a CAPMT teacher, competition winner, and a remote lesson with an adult student using Yamaha Disklavier technology. Presenters included Grant Kondo, Julie Poklewski, and Gwendolyn Mok as well as presentations by our Collegiate Chapter members. Our Commissioned Composer, Feona Lee Jones' piece *Music Box of Lamentations* was premiered. Our Competition Winners performed in an afternoon recital. A tour of the iconic Beethoven Center was hosted by Center Director, Erica Buurman. CAPMT Programs, Leadership and Adjudicator training and special performances were also included. Our final concert with Peter Dugan included a presentation of our Member of the Year awards and presentation of our Lifetime Achievement Award winner, Gwendolyn Mok. Thank you to VP of Conferences, Stephen Pierce. Thank you to our Conference Committee, Noreen Wenjen, Amy Bhatnagar, Grant Kondo, Mona Wu DeCesare, and Julie Poklewski who worked diligently to deliver a successful conference.

We are currently working on our CAPMT Conference for 2020. Initially, we had a date set at USC but due to the changes to their calendar due to COVID-19, we are unable to hold the conference there in October. Your Conference Chair, Stephen Pierce is hard at work with his committee to discuss what our conference will look like for this year. We will keep you posted.

My message of Connection for my time as your State President continues to guide my actions and vision for CAPMT. Connection looks different right now as we are unable to meet with each other in person. Thanks to technology, we still have a way to stay connected. As we strive to uphold the core values of our organization, we present ourselves to our colleagues, students, and communities as people of integrity, creativity, compassion, gratitude, and intention. Musicians have the ability through music to present an elevated ideal in a very conflicted world. I hope that you will not only lean into the support of your fellow CAPMT members, but also lean out into your communities with compassion and grace to the people around you who need the inspiration of music and people with strong core values. We have the opportunity as an organization to bring light and hope through our fine interaction, teaching, and contributions to our community. It is tempting to say that music is more important now than ever but that is not true. Music has *always* been the lifeline to the world. We just have to find new ways to engage through music and make sure we continue to share it with a needy world.

I encourage you to reach out and support one another as we inspire others to join us as members of CAPMT. I encourage you to feel the power of connection through CAPMT membership and experience the support of being part of the Music Teachers National Association. We want to support you in any way that we can. My wish is for health and many silver linings for all of you.

Warm regards,

Wendi Kirby-Alexander, NCTM
CAPMT President

Editorial

Dr. Stephen Pierce • pierces@usc.edu

CAPMT Connect Editor



Dear CAPMT colleagues,

It is certain that 2020 will be remembered as a turbulent, difficult, and unforgettable year. I am not a technologically gifted person or “techie” so-to-speak and much of my teaching philosophy and principles are rooted in more traditional pedagogical tools and formats. As such, it has been a busy and challenging few months moving to online teaching; the learning curve has been uncomfortably swift and steep for music teachers like me. That said,

I am exceedingly appreciative of technology in a way that I could not have previously imagined.

Moreover, I am immensely grateful to be able to continue working safely online when so many others are unemployed, unable to work, or forced to work in a job that puts their health at risk. Teaching is my first love, so I am continually buoyed by the fact that I still get to see my students each week in online lessons and group classes, and even virtual studio classes. I am also inspired by so many magnificent (and free!) resources that have been made available to music teachers. I would encourage you to take advantage of the following amazing offerings:

1. [The MTNA Virtual Conference](#) (featuring presentations by numerous CAPMT members)
2. [The Frances Clark Center: Resources for Online Instruction](#)
3. [RCM Resources for Teaching Music Online](#)
4. [Peabody Institute Summer Lunch and Learn Series](#)

It is in this moment that I must apologize for the delay in getting out an issue of *Connect*. We have received very few article submissions this year which is unsurprising considering the state of the world. Going online has also proven overwhelming at times for many including myself. It sometimes feels as though there is more to do at present than ever before while things that used to take minutes, now seemingly take hours to complete. I am also cognizant of the fact that many colleagues and others are experiencing the exact opposite of what I am encountering and have been forced by circumstance to find new things to do to fill their now worryingly empty schedules. Many musicians and artists are struggling and at the forefront of those affected financially by this crisis. Many of us might also be wrestling with a mixture of different emotions: anguish, worry, apathy, hopelessness, fear, despair and more, all of which can be draining and lead to a loss in productivity and motivation. My heart goes out to everyone: we have all been affected by this pandemic in various ways and are in this together.

All of this said, music continues to be essential and I am convinced that the work we do as music teachers is more vital than ever. The majority of my students have requested that their lessons continue throughout the entire summer. Students' parents have told me they are so grateful for music lessons right now, and I am grateful for my students, especially in this moment! This speaks not only to the transformative and healing effects of music but also to the importance of music lessons and how they provide needed connection, normalcy, structure, and continuity for teachers and students in these unprecedented times. I am happy to keep teaching my students and also heartened to see headlines such as "[Musical instrument sales and software downloads surge during coronavirus lockdown](#)," "[Coronavirus sees ARIA-winning musicians turn online teachers as students flock to lessons](#)" and "[We need to bring beauty to their lives': Why experts say music education is more important than ever](#)" among others. Articles like these address the significance of music in people's lives, and also the fact that many people are currently eager for online music instruction when there is so little else available for them to do. There are therefore opportunities for teachers to recruit students in this moment.

With all of this in mind, CAPMT is sharing this unique and abbreviated version of our state journal with you. *CAPMT Connect* has been reimagined here as a digital digest focused on online teaching in the time of COVID-19. When we went into self-isolation during Spring Break, like all teachers, I was forced to reimagine what my classes and lessons might look like online very quickly. As a result, lesson plans were rapidly changed, and activities were altered, while some fun assignments were conceived. The latter has included having my students create music videos to accompany their recorded performances (for which my students have astonished me with their creativity and hidden animation, photography and other skills), compile and share YouTube and Spotify playlists of various kinds, and more! I got in on the action and started creating playlists for my students, recording my students' pieces for their learning benefit, and challenging my students and myself to practice (and exercise) more often and more effectively. I now check in with students daily by text message when I have met my practice (and wellness goals) and they do the same. These activities have offered some inspiration during a very uncertain time. And so, it was in this spirit that I reached out to a number of CAPMT members and asked them to write about some of the music related activities they have been doing in lockdown. Their responses are shared here with you.

It is our plan to offer a rich and robust issue of *CAPMT Connect* again this fall. In the meantime, we hope that you will enjoy the messages and ideas shared in this digest. May you continue to offer hope to your students and loved ones through the healing and transformative power of music and online lessons.

In solidarity,

Stephen Pierce

CAPMT Connect Presents

Staying Connected During COVID-19: A Digital Digest

Since April, I have reached out to a variety of CAPMT colleagues to find out how they are coping with online teaching. I also wanted to learn more about the kinds of things they have been doing since going into lockdown and self-isolation, especially any new projects they have been exploring. Some wrote back to me about starting exciting new endeavors, while others have been focused on learning to navigate the transition to the new normal of online teaching. All were eager to write about their ideas and share their stories and we are delighted to present them here. Thank you to each of these teachers for sharing their ideas, and also to Heidi Saario, our State Chair of the Independent Music Teacher's Forum, for creating an excellent list of 19 Teaching Tips for Online Teaching! Our hope is that these will all be helpful, inspiring, and encouraging to our CAPMT members during these unprecedented times.

– Editor

Navigating the New Normal



[Debbie Lagomarsino](#) is a seasoned music and education teacher with global experience. Known for her mastery of both playing and teaching the piano for over 35 years, she is actively sought after to direct musical productions for theatrical organizations and provide piano lessons to students of all ages. Her 25+ years of academic teaching experience is deeply rooted in transformational learning for disadvantaged children and those wanting to learn English. Highly collaborative and engaging, she strives to bring out the best in individuals and organizations. Debbie is CAPMT District 6 Director.

When we all began sheltering in home, I wondered if all the hard work my students had been putting in for our upcoming Evaluations would be postponed until a much later time. I had recently been on a Zoom call with the Board of Governors of the *Up With People International Alumni Association*, and it dawned on me that I might be able to teach virtually with Zoom. I wrote all the students in my studio—from the beginners to my senior adults who are retired. Overwhelmingly they said, “We want to continue with our lessons”, and so that’s what we have been doing!!

This is the first time I have ever taught this way, but fortunately Zoom is easy-to-use. I found it almost a necessity to have a copy of all the books and repertoire my students are playing, which involved a quick music order. All of my students who are involved with Evaluations also have Composer sheets to work on as well as theory. Fortunately, all of this had been started in

January. When my students have finished their theory assignments, I drive to their homes where they leave the materials I need to correct, either in their mailboxes or by their front door. I sit in my car, correct everything, leave them notes, and return the materials to their delivery spot. Every now and then I do an extra theory 'Zoom' lesson to teach new skills and to check for understanding. I have been able to deliver new books to students who have finished a level, too, and they are thrilled!

From time to time, I ask my students to record certain pieces during the week, and they send them as files attached to an email. Sometimes I record a duet part and send it to them the same way. Everyone is making progress—and they all seem to be excited to interact with me each week.

Much of the credit goes to the parents of my students who are so grateful and supportive about their child's music education continuing! And the most exciting feature of teaching virtually: we were all ready for Evaluations in May!!



Dr. [Sonya Schumann](#) is an engaging and imaginative performer and pedagogue. Active in the artistic community, she has toured through the US, Canada, Europe, and Australia. In addition to performing, she volunteers for several non-profit arts initiatives, spanning both coasts of North America. Her publications as an editor, compiler, and producer can be found under Hal Leonard, Schirmer, and Schott Music. Dr. Schumann currently serves as a lecturer at San Diego State University.

Our charge for this journal entry was to outline new musical projects we've engaged in; instead, however, I write these words to be a friend to you in the dark times, and to encourage you as you do your best for your community to remember, you are enough. Whatever you have created or sustained, take pride in it. As a faculty member at San Diego State University, I have the privilege of teaching an amazing, kind, strong, diverse population of students, both pre-college and college. Intellectually, I was aware of this before our online endeavors began, but now in the midst of virtual instruction, it rings truer every day. College students Zoom in before or after work, from their living rooms, their backyards, and their one-room apartments. My younger private students Facetime (with assistance) from their garages, their bedrooms, and their family rooms. I have met countless pets, roommates, parents, grandparents, and stuffed animals -- characters who I had merely heard of before, come to life on my screen! We have shared moments of frustration, elation, defeat, hilarity, boredom, and many emotions in between; I have no doubt you have as well.

Things have not been “business as usual.” I have redesigned many of my assignments’ core objectives, and I accept that I may again. A sight-reading assignment may be switched out for a rhythmic recreation of Queen’s “We Will Rock You,” costumes encouraged. Flash Card Challenges have been swapped with Key Signature Jeopardy, with family members as contestants. I remind myself regularly to be flexible, both with my students and with myself. My husband, a choral conductor, used to end each of his rehearsals with a simple message to his students: “Be kind to one another.” I will add “be kind to yourself.” We are all going through our own transitions, and this moment has all the markers and implications of grief and loss. How can we expect our society to have compassion for those in the arts if we cannot show it toward ourselves and one another? No matter how you are serving your community, trust your judgement that you have, and are doing, your best. And if you falter and it does not feel like enough, let me offer my ear and my shoulder through the virtual void. Friend me on Facebook or email my school email (sschumann@sdsu.edu). We are community, after all, and we will get through this together.



Luba Kravchenko teaches piano in the Pre-College of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music as well as in her private studio. She is Director of Liturgical Music at Seventh Avenue Presbyterian Church, and serves CAPMT as a member of the State Executive Board and co-president of the San Francisco Chapter. She is also involved with the Royal Conservatory of Music as a member of the College of Examiners and the Center Representative for San Francisco.

As I write this, in mid-April, it is one month to the day since I made a rapid switch to online teaching. The month has been an exhausting one for sure – full of frustrations with poor sound quality, iffy internet connections, tricky camera angles, and all manner of other challenges that none of us considered a month ago. And yet, in the midst of all that, I am deeply grateful for the ability to stay connected to my students. One surprising highlight so far has been the eagerness with which many have embraced my request to send recordings of their pieces during the week between lessons. I receive recordings with charmingly self-aware titles like “a pretty bad version of Spindler”, or ones featuring narrative interjections like “well, the Development sure needs some work, but, there you have it!” And then there are the emails with many exclamation marks proclaiming accomplishments: “I feel enlightened!!!!!! I understand the hemiola in 21-24 and 54-57!”

Perhaps it is the new reality of seeing each other in our home spaces, at strange hours of day, outside the formality of the studio, that is encouraging a new level of connection in the midst of distancing. My formerly over-scheduled students are finding time to practice and taking new ownership of their progress. The request for recordings was originally my way to have a shot at

hearing dynamics and tone quality, but it has yielded the sweet surprise of my students' greater engagement in their own learning, not to mention all the much needed smiles those titles, interjections, and exclamation marks are bringing me!

Inspiring Projects



[Jeremy Siskind](#) is a highly-respected educator and has written [13 publications](#) with Hal Leonard, including the landmark instructional books *Jazz Band Pianist* and *First Lessons in Piano Improv*. His new concert work is called "[10 Perpetual Motion Etudes for Solo Piano](#)." He currently teaches at California's Fullerton College, chairs the National Conference for Keyboard Pedagogy's "Creativity Track," and spreads peace through music in places like Lebanon, Tunisia, and Thailand with the non-profit organization, Jazz Education Abroad. Jeremy Siskind is a Yamaha artist.

During lockdown, I have been doing some research about solo jazz piano albums. I realized that there is no good source for finding solo jazz piano recordings online, so I decided to create one. I have been able to create a database of (at this moment) 542 solo piano recordings by going through my own recording library, crowdsourcing through social media, and cross-referencing against existing lists. I recruited a team of "interns" to help me add label and date information as well as links to where the albums can be streamed and purchased. I hope to go "live" with the list on my website by the end of the month.



[Anthony Cardella](#) is a Wisconsin native who is now living in Los Angeles and pursuing a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance at the USC Thornton School of Music. He is a member of the MTNA USC Collegiate Chapter and studies with Dr. Stephen Pierce. You can find a link to his YouTube channel that contains all of his videos [here](#).

During this period of social distancing I decided to create a video series where I post a video of myself performing each day to all of my social media accounts. The pieces that I perform are either pieces I have been working on, pieces that have been on my mind that I want to play and share, or pieces that were requested by friends and family on social media. They include Classical works, popular music, musical theatre, movie soundtrack music, etc. I play whatever people want to hear!

This project has done so many wonderful things for my musical life. It has given me many short-term deadlines for learning new repertoire and bringing it up to performance level, which is something that I really love as a deadline driven person. It has also given me a platform to perform daily, which is just incredible since performing is my passion! Never in my life have I had an opportunity to share my music with thousands of people every single day, and I have found it to be rewarding on so many levels. Additionally, this has opened up a door to be able to connect with thousands of people who are scattered across the country, and even the world. Friends who I haven't connected with in years are requesting songs or pieces, and in a way it is almost as if I am creating this music with them as I bring their song request to life through these videos. The recipients are so excited and grateful, and the music has been so meaningful to many who have heard it. I have even received messages thanking me for sharing and describing how meaningful the piece was to them while they were going through a very difficult circumstance that day.

As musicians, we are needed now more than ever to bring peace, love, and joy to the world, and I am so grateful that I have found an outlet to be able to do this. Through this series, I have had the opportunity to learn and explore much more music than I normally would, and also share that music with the people who need it the most. This has given more meaning and value to the work that I do as a musician, and I wake up excited each day to learn, play, and share my music.



[Grant Kondo](#), is Vice President of Membership on CAPMT's State Executive Board and Treasurer and Webmaster for the Santa Clara Valley Chapter. He is also the Certificate of Merit Chair for Santa Clara Branch, Piano Section 6, an RCM Certified Advanced Teacher, and an evaluator for MTNA's e-Festival. He specializes in teaching crossover artists – musicians who are equally adept at Classical repertoire as well as playing contemporary styles and with lead sheets.

Spotify Collaborative Playlist

As music teachers, we often focus on the aspect of making music. However, music making is only one aspect of how music is experienced in people's lives. What if we considered the kinds of music our students listen to as well?

As a mini-project, I asked some of my students to contribute 10-12 pieces or songs to a Spotify Collaborative Playlist (Spotify is a streaming service that has over 50 million songs and allows you to listen to virtually anything on demand and "Collaborative" means it is a public playlist

that can be accessed by other students). I asked them to contribute songs that create a good representation of what they enjoy listening to. Out of the hundreds of songs collected, the music represented ranged widely from musicals to foreign-language music, and included hip hop, music with explicit lyrics, pop, Disney songs, and much more. Although present, Classical music was notably underrepresented.

While private music studies often focus on Western Classical music, this project made it clear to me that this is not the genre of music that many students, even those who study Classical music, listen to on a regular basis. So, how can we begin to close this gap? In the multicultural world of today, perhaps we need to think about how we can still pay homage to Western Classical while also being inclusive of other kinds of music in our teaching. In this way, all kinds of music will receive equal status, attention, and recognition and our students will be inspired to learn and perform the music they love most.

Virtual Studio Recital

Just a few months ago, teachers would not have dreamed of uttering the words "Virtual Recital." Yet with all that has happened, online recitals have become a new norm for us as music teachers. In April, I held my first Virtual Studio Recital and it consisted of a combination of a YouTube Recital Playlist and a Zoom Watch Party. There were advantages to both forums as follows:

YouTube Recital Playlist:

- Students were able to record their videos and use video editing software to make their performances even more fun and creative
- Students did not feel nervous as they did not have to "perform" on the day of the recital
- The YouTube videos all demonstrated improved audio quality versus playing live over Zoom. Zoom can have variable quality due to a number of factors including the student's microphone, internet speed, etc.

Zoom Watch Party:

- Students and families were able to see each other and even invite people from far away! This helped create a large sense of community
- We were able to applaud for each performance in real time
- Students were able to use the "chat" function. This actually allowed for more engagement and interaction among students versus during a typical recital where quiet is expected during performances



[Noreen Wenjen](#), NCTM, is author of *Two Year Waitlist: An Entrepreneurial Guide for Music Teachers* and *Zoom, Text, Tweet: Technology for Music Teachers* (2020). She is immediate past president of CAPMT and MTNA Southwest Division Director-Elect.

Social Media Savvy

Earlier this spring, I started an Instagram and IGTV performance series #Wenjenpianoperforms for my students to encourage them to keep practicing and memorizing pieces for upcoming auditions that have been postponed. My students record a video of themselves performing a memorized piece and post it to their own Instagram accounts with hashtag #wenjenpianoperforms, or I post it for them on my own Instagram account. I use IGTV to record or import videos with pieces over a minute in length. I like to highlight student performances in Instagram on *Your Story* by clicking on the *share* icon that looks like an airplane and sharing it to my story. Since most of my students are on Instagram and their parents are on Facebook, I set up my Instagram posts to automatically share on my Facebook account as well. Try it with your own students and keep your students in the spotlight performing in this way!

Independent Music Teachers Forum (IMTF)



[Heidi Saario](#) is a pianist, teacher, RCM Examiner, and the CAPMT State Chair of the Independent Music Teacher's Forum. She maintains a private studio in Cupertino, CA.

19 Tips for Teaching Online in the Time of COVID-19

1. Reconsider your learning expectations during this pandemic. Become accepting of slower progress and adjust lesson plans for each student as needed. Do not try to be a "perfect" teacher – give yourself grace during these unprecedented times.
2. As always, plan activities for lessons in advance and have some extra ideas in mind.
3. Keep it simple with technology in the beginning and consider implementing one new concept in your teaching every 1-2 weeks. For example, try to incorporate screen sharing, notating a score on a shared screen, adding an extra camera view with the help of a second device, using a shared whiteboard etc. one week at a time.
4. Test out your camera and audio setup with a friend or colleague in advance of lessons to get an idea of how your audio and video are received on the other end.
5. Try to face the camera and to look at it as much as possible. Eye contact is especially important with younger students. In addition, remember to keep smiling, and to give students a thumbs up, and virtual high fives for encouragement!
6. If the platform you are using has the ability to screen share, use this opportunity to share your comments and markings in the sheet music. Scan your own copies of your students' pieces with your markings during lessons to help explain your ideas. Students can then copy your notes into their own scores.
7. If you want to share a YouTube or another web link during the lesson, share the link through the chat function.
8. Endeavor to get students' parents more involved in helping younger students during lessons: have them point in the score, help find the right pages, and make markings in the music. Remember to thank parents for their help and support during this time!
9. Make sure to check in with each student every week and ask how they are feeling and how their families are coping during this time.
10. Strive to demonstrate at your instrument whenever possible.

11. Aim for clear, and concise language. Give instructions in short bursts to avoid confusing or overwhelming students.
12. Ask lots of specific and pointed questions: "Which measure has the...?", "Which hand....?", "Where can you find...?" Show me where....?" This ensures student engagement.
13. Create a folder on Google Drive for each student in which you can both share practice assignment notes, videos, scans of finished theory homework etc. In this way, everything is stored and well organized in a one central place, and easily accessible for everyone.
14. Consider recording short instructional videos to ensure concepts are clarified. To save time, you can use your phone or another extra device to make the recording during the lesson as you demonstrate, and then share the video with the student following the lesson.
15. Include some stretching in between lessons; we tend to keep sitting for even longer periods of time during online lessons. Remember that it is ok to step away from the camera for a short moment to stretch your back. Additionally, consider standing for periods of time during lessons.
16. Consider using an office chair instead of a piano bench in order to be able to move more freely between your device and the keyboard, when teaching at the piano. This will also provide physical relief to your back.
17. Make certain to keep hydrated to protect your vocal cords. We tend to raise the volume of our voices when teaching online, especially when using headphones.
18. If you are used to playing music games on the floor in your studio, consider using a big magnet board instead. The game board can be attached to the magnet board using larger magnets, while small magnets can be used as game tokens, for both teacher and student. Be sure to hold the magnet board on your lap in front of the camera so that the students can see it.
19. Keep thinking creatively and strive to find ways to continue doing the same fun activities you are used to doing in face-to-face lessons in your online lessons.

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