

MTAC Convention 2023 “California Dreamin’” - Hyatt Regency, Santa Clara, CA.

Esther Chang, Kristi Lobitz, and Dianne Harmel represented Pasadena Branch at the Convention June 30-July 3, 2023 in Santa Clara and have reported back on their experiences.

Esther Yisi Chang reflected that in her 30 years of attending the MTAC State Convention she always enjoys learning new things to improve her piano teaching, as well as meeting with friends and learning more about the success of MTAC across the state. Esther represented Pasadena Branch in the CalPlan meeting and has provided our Branch board with a detailed report of CalPlan requirements, which have largely remained the same as is recent years.

Esther’s favorite sessions included Dr. Natsuki Fukasawa’s lecture, “Teaching Music as Language: Laying the Foundation for Life-long Music Making.” Dr. Fukasawa’s passion and sincerity were very inspirational. Esther was also very impressed by the Piano Panel Master Class and Artist Recital presented by Dr. Greg Anderson.

Kristi Lobitz reports one of the highlights as being the Steinway *SpirioCast* demonstration. It featured concert pianist Tiffany Poon performing live in New York City with the *Spirio* device while live footage was broadcast to the convention audience in Santa Clara, California. As she played in NYC, the sound came from the Steinway Grand on stage at the Convention center with the action of the keys moving as viewers watched. The *SpirioCast* was also used in the final Artist Recital at the Convention with a globe-spanning duet. Pianist Greg Anderson, performing live at the Convention, played a duet with his duo partner, Liz Rowe who was in Rome, Italy. The new technology which allowed this live collaboration while at a distance was enthralling to the audience. Here is a link introducing the features of Steinway *SpirioCast* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoRsz3mNuQM&t=52s>

Dianne Harmel attended the Presidents’ Breakfast and enjoyed meeting and exchanging ideas with presidents of other branches. It was announced that the State Board plans to start a series of monthly Town Hall meetings via Zoom in Fall 2023 allowing branch Presidents to have a chance to be heard on items of concern. Dianne is hopeful that this will be helpful.

Among the convention sessions Dianne attended, “Neuroscience and Music” presented by Heidi Moss Erickson and the Voice Panel Master Class taught by Dr. Eric Dudley were the most impactful. The Young Artists Guild Recital and VOCE Recital were also very impressive.

Students representing Pasadena Branch who were featured at the Convention :

Young Artists Guild

Enni Harlan, piano Student of Bernadene Blaha

Voice Panel Master Class with Dr. Eric Dudley

Matthew Thayer, baritone Student of Dianne Harmel

Piano Concerto and Solo - Solo Division IV winner

Adrien Ramos, piano Student of Rosa Yoder

Pasadena students whose accomplishments were noted (no performance):

VOCE Senior Voice - First Place Alternate

Ava Espinoza, soprano. Student of Dianne Harmel

VOCE Senior Winds - Honorable Mention

Sabrina Liu, flute Student of Bolin Pan

Smaller convention venues highlighted 34 different Festival Recitals of performances by students with top scores from the CM Program; as well as performances of original compositions by winning students from both the *Composers Today* program and the *Young Composers Guild*.

The 2023 Annual Business Meeting was uneventful. There was no vote taken on any item of business. Roll call was taken with many of the 62 branches having no members present. The outgoing State Board members were thanked and incoming board members were announced. It was reported that the current CM keyboard syllabus will remain in effect for the upcoming 2023-24 year before potentially undergoing revision.

Coming up in 2024: The next MTAC State Convention will take place in Los Angeles at the LAX Hilton June 28-July 1, 2024. Pasadena Branch teachers are encouraged to participate by attending the convention as well as entering students in recitals and competitive programs. It is an exciting opportunity for the students and their parents.