

MTAC Convention Friday, June 28 - Monday, July 1, 2024

“Imagination, Inspiration, Innovation”

President’s Breakfast Report by Naomi Lee

- Attended by Naomi Lee.
- Naomi reports that there were about 25-30 presidents present and sat at a table of 7 other southern CA presidents and Mario Mercado, Director of Operations. Joanne Scholl from North San Diego, Kevin (don’t remember last name) from Sacramento, president of Orange county, and Kate (don’t remember last name) from Bakersfield to name a few.
- The topic of discussion was member engagement. We discussed annual meetings and challenges of engagement post covid.
- A common issue we all had was that many venues are no longer willing to rent out facilities and even if they do, they have become very expensive. A smaller branch of only 16 members said because they are small, they are able to use places like Barnes and Nobles, Retirement homes, and libraries.
- Other branches have more than 1 meeting a year, for example, September, January, and May.
- Other Presidents liked our tradition of having a “members appreciation”

Business Meeting Report by Naomi Lee

- Attended by Naomi Lee, Cheryl Lopez, Bee Tan, and Suzanne Clason
- Naomi reports that the state feels the town hall meetings have been very successful and informative and they have been making changes based on our feedback, such as expanding the “Find a Teacher” portal to include special accommodations.
- **State reports that the new CM curriculum to be released in 2026 will be free online for enrolled teachers and students.**
- I found out that the MTAC Foundation is a separate non profit that funds only the awards and scholarships to the MTAC programs. Meets 1x/mo virtually to plan. Currently Grand total of this fund has \$29,435.75. Presented by Bill Becker.

2023-2024 CM stats reported by Michelle Rumley:

- 20,006 students enrolled
- 88.3% passed (consistent with prior years)
- 10,749 received state honors
- 540 Senior Award Medallions
- 2,726 CM teachers enrolled
- 343 Panel applications
- 289 completed panel
- 42 Panels awards

3 phases of syllabus updates starting in January
Final digital copy of new syllabus will be available spring of 2025 for use in 2026 CM

Keith Snell Adult Beginner Course Report by Naomi Lee

- Attended by Naomi Lee, Cheryl Lopez, and Bee Tan
- We got the Book 1 and Book 2 for free!
- Seems like a great adult beginners course. Would love to try it out for my next piano teenage or adult student.
- Has online recordings, play-alongs, and videos that are free.
- Got to take a picture with Keith Snell!

Student recitals Report by Naomi Lee

- I attended a piano recital and a winds recital.
- Very lovely to see my students and other students play so well!
- In the winds recital, participation was all flutes except for 1 clarinet and 1 trumpet (my student).

Flute Masterclass Report by Cheryl Lopez

Attended by Cheryl, Naomi, & Bee.

Flutist Sara Andon led a panel masterclass with two students performing Danse de la Chèvre by Honnegger and Reineke's Flute Concerto. She focused on diving deep into the history of the composer's life and the importance of finding out when the piece was written. Using this information can help how a performer interprets the piece.

"The Jitters, Shakes, and Fear of Mistakes. Oh No! I Got Stage Fright!" By Dr. Jon Skidmore, Psy.D., Report by Cheryl Lopez

Attended by Cheryl, Naomi, & Bee.

Discussed neurological activity when one gets nervous before a performance. "Stagefright" is more accurately categorized as "activation"

Stage fright is not our enemy or a disease, it's a skill deficit.

Discussed Tools to manage "activation" which included structured breathing and visualization activities.

Town Hall report by Cheryl Lopez

Marcelino Lee, Moderator

Run with exact same agenda as virtual Town Hall.

Discussed the results of the Bylaws votes. Main discussion being the financials of CM within the last few years and reasons behind keeping CM online based on projections for the future.

Bills such as AB5 and mandatory background screenings make in-person CM more logistics difficult and more expensive. Support staff and evaluators need to be paid as well, increasing costs.

2023-2024 In-Person stats are as follows:

198 Students participated
4 locations
6-8 support staff for each location
13 evaluators total

Costs of CM: In-person reflects -7% profit; Online reflects -44% profit.
Total cost/student for In-person: \$531.00; Online \$89.00

3 types of CM are available :

- online
- in-person via regional centers
- branch-run CM (State rules to be shared with members by approximately August 2024 for implementation 2025-2026 CM)

Alexander technique for piano, string, voice, and winds reports by Bee Tan

Eileen Troberman offered 2 sessions of Alexander Technique. The first session was for piano and strings and the second one was for voice and winds. Both sessions were similar with focusing on different parts of the body based on the instrument.

She had attendants try the “Finding ease” exercise during the workshop. The aim was to relax, release tension and pain. At that time, I was experiencing pain on my biceps and arms. Part of it was from practicing and daily life movements. After the workshop, I was able to release some tension from my body. The pain was significantly subsidized. It was an amazing experience how mine can control our body.

Chopin’s Improvisation : The Secret Sauce reports by Bee Tan

Dr.Arthur Joseph Houle points out that Chopin often improvises his music, especially in Nocturnes, Mazurka, and Waltzes. Chopin also frequently fixes his music to help students who experience technical challenges to be able to play and enjoy it. This is the reason why Chopin’s music has so many different copies. He stated that Chopin never played his piece as written and constantly revised his music. For this reason, he encourages us to be more flexible on the note and embellishment when teaching Chopin to students.

Convention Report by Suzanne Clason

Tom Skidmore, performance coach/licensed psychologist, presented a workshop on The Imposter Syndrome. It included our inner voices as we prepare to perform, creating a positive mindset, and finally the conclusion that the preparation is complete. These preparations and perspectives will add to a confident, creative, and bold performance. His last step was processing the performance and analyzing what worked and what the performer may want to add the next time they perform.

After taking part in two presentations, I needed to hear some music. I made my way to a **Piano Panel Honors Performance.** As I settled in, a young pianist played a musically elegant Bach Prelude and Fugue BWV 870. The program included music from various periods. I left the Recital musically refreshed and grateful for the superb teachers and students in our state-wide organization.

The Composer's Today State Contest winners performed and presented their new compositions. Student compositions displayed their knowledge of many compositional techniques and included varied instrumentation. Performances ranged from a single instrument, ensembles, and videos with background photos and a scrolling score. The subject of the compositions ranged from experiences from their lives such as "My NYC Adventure" to more abstract themes as in "Longing for Hope Unseen."

The exhibits included presentations from music publishers Kjos and tomgerou.com. Kieth Snell and Tom Gerou were there to host their displays and meet teachers. Steinway was represented in the exhibits, and they brought 29 pianos to the Convention for use in performances. Other presenters included Chamber Music of America and online theory companies 1ON1, Theorybot, and ESTA Education. I had the pleasure of meeting Tom Gerou and sharing with him how much a student of mine had so loved playing one of his newer pieces last year.

On a personal note it was a joy to meet and reconnect with a number of teachers that I'd known in the past but had not seen in recent years. Ours is truly an organization demonstrating the theme of the Convention: Imagination, Innovation, Inspiration!

