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Nuances

The Newsletter of MAME

April 2021
Volume 3, Issue 8

President's Message

I hope I'm not the only one who feels refreshed and a touch optimistic by the onset of Spring. I found myself completely inspired by Angela Myles Beeching in the MTNA conference keynote address. She likened the past year to a hero's journey....yes, the journeys that abound in literature. Think about it: we've been forced outside our comfort zone, confronted obstacles, challenged ourselves, maybe even battled a foe. But we have emerged (or will emerge) from this conflict stronger and transformed.

During her speech, I couldn't stop thinking about how much we, as music teachers, give to our students. I'll bet you can find many challenges from the past year. Have you linked those challenges to your power to inspire students? The pandemic has indeed forced us to learn new skills, not to mention patience and resilience. Now, take a moment to imagine what you may have inspired in others. I've been getting feedback from students who find that their piano lessons have provided an oasis of calm and deeply important one-on-one instruction time, even with all of our zoom fatigue.

Sometimes we need to take a time out from these crazy circumstances and reflect on how important we are to so many people. After that, go outside, breathe deeply of spring's fresh air (try not to sneeze with allergies!) and then resume your quest to serve and inspire budding musicians.

Happy Spring everyone!



[Denise Taylor](#)
MAME President

Adult Music Social

**The April Adult Music Social will be our last gathering for adult students this year:
Saturday, April 10th at 4:00 PM**

publication 3 students have registered).

Teachers, please email student name, student email, repertoire title and length (indicate more or less than 5 minutes) and any notes the student wishes to include in the program to Shad Wenzlaff **before 4:00 pm Monday April 5th:** wenzlaffsh@yahoo.com

Shad will email participants and teachers, including details and the link for our virtual-synchronous social. Adult Music Socials normally last less than 40 minutes in duration, but participants are welcome to stay and socialize after (pour yourself a glass of wine, if you feel so inclined!) Students are also welcome to observe if they choose not to play, space permitting.

[Shad Wenzlaff](#)

Performers Supporting Performers

MAME members are all welcome to attend the final meeting of Performers Supporting Performers (PSP) for this school year on **Friday, April 16th at 10 AM** through the Zoom link below. Performers at any level are welcome, as are any of you who are just interested in watching and participating in some good discussion with fellow teachers.

Topic: PSP April meeting

Time: Apr 16, 2021 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/79499809539?pwd=Mmo5NnEvUnNMRXR5Vm1CYitlUm1YZz09>

Meeting ID: 794 9980 9539

Passcode: cAdXd6

[Linda Johnson](#)

Open Board Positions

Board positions are two-year terms and we have several positions opening up beginning May 2021, for a two-year term ending May 2023: **Programs** (to co-chair with Jeff Stanek), **Honors Festival** (two co-chairs needed), and a new position for **Community Outreach Recitals** to replace Young Artist Recitals. I encourage you to consider joining the board – you will invest in your profession and get to know wonderful teachers in our area! Please email Denise Taylor (dtaylorpiano@gmail.com) or Shad Wenzlaff (wenzlaffsh@yahoo.com) if you want further information.

[Denise Taylor](#)

Exploring Music Repertoire - Teaching Composition

Shad Ryan Wenzlaff

For April, I decided to help build some excitement about our Fall 2021 Workshop and Music Composition event. [Also, please scroll to the end to a follow up from the March conversation regarding cultural appropriation.]

Many teachers who enjoy composition as part of the music lesson do so simply “without books” – sort of freely encouraging student creativity. Knowing this, I’d like to encourage every MAME teacher to download this free online resource:

[KJOS Publications: Composing in 10 Easy Steps \(Free Download\)](#) (poster / 2 sided)

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Now is the time, if you haven't already, to start composition with your students. I got started through MAME (then-MAPTA) with the composition festival in 2007. Back then I had no idea it would be so much fun and become a touchstone for my teaching. My preferred approach is "teach theory through composition", and I usually start by encouraging a student to "tear apart" a piece of music – often something they enjoy, but recently I took this approach with a piece that garnered a tear or two.

This past fall, I placed an 11 year old student into Level 2B of [Bastien New Traditions All in One Piano Course](#) (\$9.99). This worked well – for the most part (this was a "zoom" lesson after all). We hit a snag on page 22 with "Waltz of the Winter Wind." In the opening phrase, the right hand descends G, e-flat, D, C, A-flat, G – and it repeats four times throughout the piece. The a-flat garnered tears, so I declared "time to deconstruct and recompose!" For starters, we turned it into a march to add a beat so as to add time for that pesky finger 3 to climb over the thumb to play the A-flat. Then, since our fingers were "living" in this modified F minor 5-finger position, we added a little riff to enjoy the moment before heading back to the "top of the hill". And since we were on a hill, it was time to take a journey on the sled down a two-octave c-minor scale (I know her family likes to downhill ski, so this was truly engaging for her). One octave was natural minor, and the other in harmonic minor. Voila! Instant composition and theory lesson. (To get her to notate it – well, that's another story and perhaps a task, with this student, better suited for in-person lessons).

[Explorations in Music - Books 1-2](#) by Joanne Haroutounian (George Mason University, VA) is a student centered resource that offers excellent guidance for teaching composition through theory. Designed for any instrument and age, and published by KJOS, includes audio files - \$9.99.

This next resource is not currently in stock – but I love it and have to share that if there is interest, I am happy to contact Alfred publications to secure rights to share with our members (perhaps possible since Melody Bober, our November presenter, is an Alfred composer). [Sue Shannon - Composing Music at the Keys \(Elementary Level\) 5.95 / 1976](#). [As you know from my September article, I love to buy music at used bookstores and antique malls, which is how I scored several copies of this resource).

For the teacher who equates teaching improvisation with composition, this resource by Jeremy Siskin, Hal Leonard, is a great "basic guide for early intermediate pianists." [First Lessons in Piano Improv](#) (\$8.99)

I would be remiss if I didn't highlight our guest clinician - if you haven't explored the brilliance of Melody Bober's expertise, these web resources [Alfred Publications: Melody Bober](#) are superb. She will be in Madison this coming November, and you will want to enter your students into the composition festival event. Students have until October 1 to submit their compositions, but you may want to start early – my experience is that a fascinating composition is one that is refined, reworked, and enjoyed many times over. [Note, please explore our announcement in Nuances regarding our Fall Workshop and Composition Festival – and it will certainly be detailed in the Fall 2021-22 MAME Directory so be sure to renew your membership.]

We're happy to pass along your questions to Melody Bober and see if her responses can populate a May EMR column: Do you teach composition? Why, or why not? What questions do you have about teaching composition? What questions do you have for Melody Bober?

Part II: Cultural Appropriation (follow up).

Thank you to several MAME readers who responded to my thoughts last month.

Emily Schultz reminds us of a June 10, 2020 [news story last year](#) when Merriam-Webster changed their definition of racism to include systemic oppression. Emily adds: "I've never taught Le Petit Negre or Golliwog in my career. Even when I learned it as a youngster, I was like, "Is it really okay for me to be learning this? Are you sure?"

Then there is the issue of cultural appropriation vs. appreciation. I actively avoid any pieces with "Indian" in the title, referring to Indigenous peoples. I had a student express disappointment that a piece that had "Indian" in the title didn't actually refer to India! However, since there is a dearth of Native American pedagogical composers (I don't know of any), I think it is our duty as teachers to use the best-written, least-offensive pieces to teach our students to appreciate and respect the culture. Hopefully without all repeated-LH-fifths throughout. A good argument against that is that since the composers do profit from it, then it is appropriation. If they donated the profits back to a specific tribe or Native causes, then it would be simply appreciation.

MAME members (except Patron level) may access the archive: 1. Log into [AMT / Current Issue](#) 2. Scroll down to Oct/Nov 2017.3. Both essays will appear in full text, with color illustrations.

Both Emily and David Barach fleshed out my discussion of Cathy Kautsky's mention of Debussy's unfortunate and controversial titles in her book [Debussy's Paris](#). A thorough discussion of this history is included in Kiyoshi Tamagawa's essay, including a reference to the term "wog", which I will quote here because of its acute significance and my negligent omission last month:

"A student or teacher who is curious about the "golliwog" of the title will discover that the name originates from a children's book of the late-19th century, *The Adventures of Two Dutch Dolls and a Golliwog*. A "golliwog" is a dark-skinned doll first described as a "horrid sight, the blackest gnome,"¹¹ but who turns out to be friendly and fun-loving. The popularity of this and later titles with the same characters resulted in Golliwog dolls being mass-produced in England, Germany and later America. Somewhere along the way the Golliwog character became associated (researchers blame American children's author Enid Blyton¹²) with thievery and naughty behavior. As scholars have noted, the racial implications of the final piece of *Children's Corner* are made vividly apparent by the original cover illustration, which depicts the black doll head of the golliwog at the end of a balloon string held by an elephant (the "Jimbo" of *Jimbo's Lullaby*, the second piece). The abbreviated term "wog" became a racial slur in Britain around World War II, though the connection of this usage to the Golliwog character is disputed. Nevertheless, the association of an originally innocuous children's book character with racist images and discrimination is very much a part of history. The student who studies and performs this apparently artless and appealing piece by Debussy therefore unwittingly participates in disseminating a discredited image of prejudice.

Worst of all, because its original title incorporates a word that even now generates controversy and inflames passions every bit as much as the sight of the Confederate battle flag in America, is an even simpler piece than those of *Children's Corner*. In 1909 Debussy contributed a short piece in a jazzy, syncopated style very similar to *Golliwog's Cakewalk* to Théodore Lack's *Méthode de piano*.¹³ This composition's original title, bestowed by Debussy himself (or perhaps his publisher) in imperfect English, was..." I've truncated the quotation because I trust you can imagine how that sentence may end (or simply, please look up the full article - I couldn't bear to type the word).

To end this month, I'd like to rethink my assertion published last month. I suggested: "If the title inspires a student to practice, we might think of this in terms of celebrating the idea of "dressing up" as a means of playing to learn. Yet truly, as the educator, it is our responsibility to do the research and reading, to contextualize a title or a folk song quoted, indexed, referenced -- "dressed up" -- by a composer." I see the need to go a step further and assert it is our responsibility to avoid cultural appropriation in all of our music selection, except when there is a clear assertion on behalf of the composer or artist that this is a case of "appreciation" in its truest sense.

Thank you David and Emily for your contributions this month. As always, I encourage our members to submit thoughts and further discussion. I reserve the right to edit in the interest of cultural sensitivity and community respect.

[Shad Ryan Wenzlaff](#) - EMR Chair

MAME Fall Workshop

Melody Bober will present MAME's Fall Workshop on **Friday, November 5th, 2021** at Heid Music.

In the morning Melody will talk about the importance of teaching composition and how to teach it. She will discuss developing musical ideas and polishing and editing compositions. Lastly, Melody will describe her journey into the composition world and how she publishes her music.

At 1:30 p.m., the winners of the composition festival will perform their pieces. The contest is open to Wisconsin composers ages 5 through adult. Compositions must be handwritten or computer generated by the composer.

Recordings of the compositions will be required. Compositions will be due October 1, 2021. Age categories for the festival will be:

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Level III	Ages 9-10	Level VII	Ages Adult Amateurs over 18	
Level IV	Ages 11-12	Level VIII	Music Teachers	

More details about the Fall Workshop will be in future Nuances.

Any questions? Please email: elizabeth.agard@icloud.com

[Elizabeth Agard](#)

NEW INFORMATION REGARDING COVID-19 VACCINE

Maybe you've been following COVID-19 vaccinations in the news. If so, you know it is a rapidly changing situation. Sure enough, I was just informed that Dane County Public Health (PHMDC) is now ceding control of vaccinations to the state. And at the same time I understand that within a matter of weeks (months?) the US should have enough vaccinations for every interested adult, and there may be alternate opportunities for receiving vaccinations for educators. Be prepared that this information may be out of date in a fortnight! Regardless, here are the new protocols for MAME members to sign up for vaccination. This requires action on your part, as outlined below:

From PHMDC:

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has created a statewide registration system and PHMDC will be fully transitioning to that system next week for vaccine appointments. **PLEASE RE-REGISTER at:** <https://vaccinate.wi.gov>. If you have not already, promptly register at this site to remain on our vaccination list. If you have already registered at this site, no action is required.

There is no "back of the line" for vaccines. Vaccine appointments are randomized within priority groups. Once you sign up at <https://vaccinate.wi.gov>, you will be at the same prioritization as the previous list. To see which groups are prioritized in Wisconsin, [please see the DHS website](#).

Registration tips:

- Please take your time to enter information accurately as it is difficult to edit your information after it is submitted.
- You no longer need to enter your organization code if you received an organization code from your employer. Please answer "no" to the question "do you have a registration code?"
- If you have questions about registering on the DHS website, or are not able to register via computer, please call DHS toll-free at (844) 684-1064 for assistance.

Using the state registration system will speed up our vaccine process and reduce errors. Thank you for your patience with the vaccine process.

Public Health Madison & Dane County

Board Meeting Minutes

Are you curious about what happens at our board and/or general meetings? Please click [here](#) and [here](#) to check out our most recent board and general meeting minutes.

[Linda Johnson](#)

Additional MAME Resources

[Mickey Lytle](#)



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Email mame@madisonmusiceducators.org for more information.

Submissions:

Complete submissions of articles, events and other music-themed features are welcome. All submissions are due by the 21st of each month to be considered for publication.

Nuances Editor: Yana Avedyan (nuances@madisonmusiceducators.org)

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