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Nuances

The Newsletter of MAME

October 2020
Volume 3, Issue 2

From the President

Resilience. That is my word of the month as I become my students' cheerleader during their understandable frustrations. While I hear them groan about zooming and we talk through it, I realize that not only are we becoming resilient, we have grown through zoom instruction. It doesn't hurt that many of my students are getting *more* practice time in during the pandemic – that's a win for music teachers!

My students certainly give me energy and hope (and maybe I do in reverse?), but do you know what else? Attending MAME's first program of the year, with Benjamin Steinhardt presenting on Flow and Music, completely energized me and helped me feel more connected to all of us. It was exciting to see many MAME faces and even some teachers outside of Wisconsin who logged in with us! This has got to be a silver lining to zooming – we are accessible to even more people and *our presence supports all of us*. Thank you to Jeff Stanek and David Barach for organizing such a great start to our year.

Read below for other ways you can be connected to MAME. I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events.



[Denise Taylor](#)
MAME President

Performers Supporting Performers

Performers Supporting Performers (PSP) will be meeting again on **Friday, October 23rd at 10 AM** via Zoom. Any MAME members interested in playing in an informal setting are encouraged to attend. Listeners are welcome, too!

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/74054241338?pwd=RUZ1Y3VLTWF5T0xVcmVrUEdvY3BrZz09>

Meeting ID: 740 5424 1338

Passcode: 0iahEG

Board Meeting Reminder

The next board meeting will be held **Friday, October 30 from 10:00-11:30 AM**. It will be held online via Zoom. Watch for an email prior to the meeting with login details.

[Morgan Hansen](#)

Upcoming Masterclass Opportunity for Beginner and Intermediate Students

MAME is excited to present a masterclass with [Anna Reiser](#) on **Saturday, November 14 at 4:00 PM** over Zoom. Participants are asked to arrive 20 minutes early to get tech and camera setup with MAME Programs Co-Chair David Barach. Masterclasses are a great opportunity to learn by watching someone teach. We are seeking students for the class spanning all the way from age 4 to adult. The presenter has expressed interest not only in students with a finished work, but also students who are midway through their process with a work. Memorization is not a requirement. Pieces can be very short—for example, 16 bars—or they can be longer. Since short pieces will be involved, as well as young students who can handle limited time on stage, some students might be scheduled for less than a half hour.

When you're thinking of which students to ask, it's not a question of who plays the best, so much as who is socially ready to benefit from and thrive during a public lesson. If the student will be asked to play a partially-completed work, they should particularly be able to have a mindset that it's okay to make mistakes in this situation.

Please send name, age, repertoire choice, and roughly estimated music length for interested students to programs@madisonmusiceducators.org before **Friday, October 23**. Feel free as well to send any questions regarding technology concerns, since we know this is MAME's first digital masterclass, and don't want that to be a barrier to participation. We hope to get back to you promptly regarding whether your students were selected for this event. All MAME teachers are encouraged to attend regardless of whether their students are playing in the class, and the event is also open to the public.

[David Barach](#) on behalf of the Programming and Masterclass Committee

20th Annual Sonatina Festival

Saturday, November 14, 2020

A Virtual Festival in 2020. The 20th Annual Sonatina Festival aims to raise awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the Sonata and Sonatina musical forms. As many music auditions and competitions are held in the spring, this festival encourages musical preparation during the fall semester by providing a performance goal for pianists of all ages and levels. We hope you'll participate online (the usual in-person event is modified this year for everyone's health and safety) for this exciting music-making event! Please visit our [website](#) for more information.

[Mickey Lytle](#)

Exploring Music Repertoire

by Shad Ryan Wenzlaff

Happy Autumn fellow pianists.

I'll start with a question for you: What is a "pupil saver"?

Pupil Saver: It must be pattern based, lots of use of sequences; relatively uncomplicated left hand; arrangements of familiar tunes or styles; uses “impressive” registers on the piano (really high or really low); sounds harder than it really is.

I personally think a “pupil saver” can be less or more – but for the sake of argument, I’m playing with these criteria and have applied them to two resources for this month’s EMR essay.

1. Tracy Craig McKibben’s “Halloween Screams” published by KJOS 2018. ISBN: 978-0849798443, \$6.95

- There is a piece entitled “Trick or Treat Tic Tac Toe”. I think this qualifies as “almost” a pupil saver – but this book is definitely Late Elementary if not Early Intermediate and this piece, if performed in full duration with the DC al Fine approaches 1 ½ minutes in duration.
- “A Chiller Rondo” is a great supplemental study in teaching a student ABACA Rondo. For fun, consider programming it next to one of your more advanced students performing the rondo of Beethoven’s Pathétique – clearly based upon – but ever so loosely – this familiar masterwork. (Other pieces are “ghosts” to other masterworks). This book is well worth your time at \$7.

2. I downloaded “A Pirates Escapade” by Christopher Fisher and Katherine Fisher from PianoSafari.com

“A Pirates Escapade” is both beautifully written and perfectly edited for the student in need of some inspiration. As a solo sheet, teachers can purchase an unlimited digital download, a one time digital download – both allow you to download an MP3. Or, you can order a print copy. I would call this an “almost” pupil saver (according to the definition above). It is truly a late elementary solo – written almost entirely in a single hand position and complemented by a simple a minor arpeggio, an easy grace note, a LH cross over (in d minor), and an impressive sounding teacher duet. This solo piece is perfect for Halloween, ideal for that elementary aged student who is “slipping” in their interest, and truly needs something with some – as the Fisher’s note – “swagger”.

New Repertoire for Early Levels: This one isn’t exactly “new”, it’s a Kjos publication from 2017. Lisa, Lori and Jane Bastien created an “All in One Piano Course”. It is a “desktop – mobile Interactive Practice Studio” and is listed under “Bastien New Traditions”.

I’m currently spending time with this entire method as a project – I hope to share more notes in future EMR essays.

So far, I’ve acquired levels 2A and 4B for students of mine who needed some brushing up. Here are some notes on Level 4B

1. Lesson, Theory, Technique, and Performance are nicely bundled in one book. This is all supplemented by an easy to use interactive online supplement. The supplement includes recordings. The nice feature here is you can use a “slower speed” or a “normal speed” and students can place it on a “loop” for practicing. *I asked my student to video record 3 repetitions the day before lesson, then upload that video to our unlisted YouTube channel so we could talk through that performance at the lesson. Also worth noting, this feature has a “personal studio” option which I have not tried.*
2. Online learn about composers. Some of the “stories behind the songs” are worth your time.
3. Level 4B repertoire. Some of this repertoire is recycled from other Bastien publications. There are some gems in the repertoire array ranging from Haydn Scherzo (Hob XVI:9), Czerny Allegro Grazioso (Op. 599, No. 50) and the Rondo from Gurlitt Sonatina in a minor (Op. 76 No 5). Teachers who are reluctant to use methods with intermediate level students will enjoy the variety of repertoire. I highly recommend. Truly, it’s well-edited (but more on that below).
4. A sample of “new” pieces include:
 - a. “Home” by Lisa Bastien. This piece is atmospheric, and offers an easy opportunity to learn rolled chords. I will note that it’s a missed opportunity to more fully explore various rolled chord techniques.
 - b. “Simple Pleasures” by Lisa Bastien is presented as a lead sheet. This is an excellent lesson in seventh chords, reading a lead sheet, notated with DS al Fine / effective pedagogically sound piece.
 - c. This is the best presentation of teaching a G-flat major scale and primary chord progression that I have seen in any method book. It is followed up by a lovely solo piece, “Pagoda Lanterns” [note: I’ll offer it low marks for being perhaps overly cliché and presenting cultural appropriation in a 21st-century method – but that’s a gigantic mountain that truly needs serious attention in the piano pedagogy industry.]

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repertoire. [I'll give the book a "B" for exploring theory through repertoire – but to be fair, there isn't a method around that I'd give higher than a B+.]

- Overall, there are some examples of sloppy editing (I have made 11 notes of inconsistent editing details, and some annoying slippages in book 4B alone). But if you are looking for something new and useful, this is solid pedagogy and an affordable "all in one" book – it's well worth your \$10. KJOS. ISBN: 978-0849798672

Advanced Repertoire

Florence Price: Piano Sonata in e minor.

Published by G Schirmer in 1997. In this edition by the late musicologist Rae Linda Brown (1953-2017), we learn that Chicago native Florence Beatrice Smith Price (1887-1953), the first African-American woman composer, won the Rodman Wanamaker music contest for her Symphony in e minor in 1932. (It's worth noting that Dr. Brown wrote her dissertation on Price.) In the same contest, she won first prize for this sonata. In my opinion, it was quite well deserved. This is not at all an "easy" piece. The current Federation list includes it among their most advanced repertoire currently. The second movement is accessible for many competent and experienced pianists. Dr. Brown writes "The second movement (Andante), a rondo, begins with a lyrical tune reminiscent of a spiritual. It is treated with characteristic syncopated rhythms and simple harmony. The two secondary themes, more classical in orientation, are reminiscent of Chopin and Schumann, respectively."

Past Wisconsin WMTA President Dr. Nicholas Phillips, UW-Eau Claire recorded it earlier this past year (December 2019). You may access videos of all 3 movements from his website: <https://www.nicholasphillips.net/audio-video/>

Notes on learning it: The scalar passages in the first movement are accessible to the diligent pianist. Some of the textures are relatively straightforward, and I enjoy the way in which the rhythmic and melodic variety allow the performer to explore some basic technique at a virtuosic level. Truly, it is in many ways quite a robust and substantive piece that has challenged me in a very rewarding way. I love playing with the second movement – much of which requires careful attention to some complex multi-voice voicings – and I can't wait to bring it up to tempo (yikes – that will be a project!) There is true artistry at play in this piece. Next month, I'll add some comments on the Scherzo (I haven't sat down with that movement yet).

This online tribute to Florence Price is worth your time <https://www.pricifest.org/home>

And this recording belongs in your collection - by pianist Samantha Ege – whose ongoing project was a lot of fun to explore:

www.wavetheoryrecords.com/album/four-women/ It's also worth exploring Dr. Ege's website:

<https://www.samanthaege.com/biography>

As I continue to explore my own musicological appreciation for Black Lives Matter, I am exploring many new-to-me composers. If anyone has scores by one of these three composers in their collection I would appreciate the opportunity to borrow and explore any scores by Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915-1940), Margaret Bonds (1913-1972) [note/student of F Price, also a Chicagoan], or Ethel 'Billie' Bilsland (1892-1982). Perhaps I'll have the pleasure of writing about one of them for a future EMR.

Finally – if you have any ideas or would like to collaborate on an EMR essay – please email me!

[Shad Wenzlaff](#) - EMR Chairperson (2020-21)

Typo in membership Directory for WMTA District Auditions

WMTA District Auditions are listed as being on March 24, 2021 on p.16 of the Directory. The correct date is **March 14, 2021**. Please mark your calendars!

[John Scoville](#)

Piano Ensemble Books and Sheets

playing will return someday! Contact ruthheinecke@gmail.com if you'd like to schedule a time to look through the music. A no-contact visit can be arranged if you'd like to look through the music outside on her deck some sunny day!

[Ruth Heinecke](#)

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.

[Morgan Hansen](#)

Additional MAME Resources

Make sure to like and follow us on our [Facebook page](#), and check out our [website](#) and [Google calendar](#).

[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.

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