

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

South Fraser Branch of BC Registered Music Teachers' Association

**Wednesday, Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Northwood United Church, 10am

Attendees:

Helga Murray	Helen Cheng	Bonnie Leung
Kevin Thompson	Sharon Farenhorst	Paulette Nielsen
Leah Lifton	Esther Neufeld	Carmen Roberts
Leslie Chen	Christy Kuettel	Janet Gonzales
Calla Strain	Colleen Branson	Andrea Mesana
Alison d'Entremont	Dianne Szarapka	Jennifer Condie
Maureen Hollins	Yvette Rowledge	
Sylvia Leigh	Berva Warkentin	

**Minutes** of the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting are posted on our website.

*Moved by Leslie Chen, seconded by Kevin Thompson to adopt the minutes as circulated.*

**Treasurer's Report:** Sylvia Leigh

Total General Account: \$28,765.62

Total Festival Account: \$4,959.57

**Festival Scholarship Fund Proposal**

At the executive meeting, the Strings Festival came to the executive asking for funding for their scholarships. The Strings never have any excess money. Any scholarship money they do get is basically donated from the teachers or from the parents of the students, because they have accompanists and everything else to pay for.

After discussion, we thought perhaps our General Account could do a one-time donation to the festivals towards scholarships.

**Motion:** That the General Account to give a one-time scholarship of \$1250 to the 2020 South Fraser Festival, with \$750 going to the Senior Piano Festival and \$500 going to the Strings Festival. In future years, we can assess whether that's viable again.

*Moved by Sylvia Leigh, seconded by Maureen Hollins.*

Discussion:

- Our general account is healthy. Historically, the General Account has never given any of the festivals any scholarship money. We do have a healthy General Account. Not all of our membership supports the Festival, but all of our membership supports the General Account. This is a way that when you pay your dues every year, some of your dues will be going towards our Festival so we can help our Festival. Our Festival Account is going down. Five or six years ago it was about \$10,000 and it's about half that amount now. This is a good plan. We can do it this year and then see what the General Account is like next year and revisit it.

- Rick Dorfer was not aware that for the Strings Festival, they were to collect \$1 from each entry. (This is what our Piano Festivals do.) Now he is aware of it and he will be doing that. He was very excited at the prospect of receiving this money, pending the approval from you all.

*Motion approved.*

### Membership Renewal

It's that time of year again! Membership renewal begins January 1, 2020, and will be made available until February 29<sup>th</sup>, after which a late fee of \$50 will be charged. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, members who have not renewed their membership will be removed from the website.

There has been an increase to the fees. The breakdown is as follows:

- BCRMTA dues: were \$64 → There is an increase of \$10, which includes the following two increases listed:
- CFMTA dues: were \$37 → There is an increase of \$2
- Liability insurance was \$40 → There is an increase of \$5
- Our branch fees have always been \$50 (comes to our General Account for our operational costs)

At the executive meeting, we discussed lowering the branch fees a little bit to help compensate for the other fees going up. We are proposing going down to \$44 instead of \$50. We think it's enough for our General Account to stay healthy, so we can afford to do that. Our total fees would then be \$185 instead of \$191. Next year we'll have to assess the health of the general fund to determine whether that \$44 should stay the same or if it needs to go back up to \$50.

*Maureen gave more details from the Provincial Council and also handed out a summary of what each teacher receives in the BCRMTA/CFMTA membership. (Please see handout.)*

*Maureen read out for us the provincial council motion:*

The motion is that the fee increase that the BCRMTA portion of the annual fee be increased from \$54 to \$64 (that's \$10) for the fiscal year 2021. The breakdown would be as you see on your chart (on the handout).

What we need to decide as a membership is whether we want to reduce our branch fees by \$6 to help compensate for the increase of the BCRMTA fee?

**Motion:** That the branch fees be reduced from \$50 to \$44 for the year 2020.

*Moved by Sylvia Leigh, seconded by Kevin Thompson.*

Discussion:

-Around the province, branch fees range from \$15 to \$68.

-In April 2013, our BCRMTA fees were \$44; in 2019, they went up to \$54 → That's 6 years between increases.

-At the provincial council level, the concerns are the increase in travel and hotel fees, and meal fees in order to accommodate/allow/hold with the idea of 2 Provincial Council meetings yearly. Our representatives cannot lessen the travel fees, because no plane they can come in on flies into Abbotsford; they all fly into the Vancouver Airport. And when you fly into the Vancouver airport (in Richmond) and have no transport, that means the meeting has to be held in Richmond, where prices are higher and fees have gone up. (And then you run into the question: whether that community, which does strengthen and bring together RMT teachers from all over the province, should be supported.)

-For one year, our general account is healthy enough to endure that. We'll re-assess after 1 year.

-We currently have 90+ members in our branch.

-There are many teachers – especially teachers doing a gap professional time span (teaching in between or during university) that are hired by music schools, commercial music schools...etc. that are excellent musicians and they don't need us. We are not attracting that group.

-Two teachers that aren't members in our organization have asked to put in students in our Canada Music Week Recital!

-Esther Neufeld made a suggestion: Maybe non-branch teachers can pay a fee (e.g. \$5) to participate in our Canada music week recital?

-If you don't pay membership fee by such a deadline, your name will be taken off the website. (An effort is made to call the people who have not paid to ask/remind them about membership renewal.)

-Mimi Ho, our BCRMTA Vice-President, spoke to the financial increase:

"The key to managing finances is not cutting services and programs. We need to work at growing and increasing our income rather than cutting our services and programs and thereby compromising our values. We need to recognize that the \$10 increase is not a great amount considering what membership in BCRMTA allows us to offer to our students and ourselves as professionals. Balancing our budget would require an addition of \$12.22 per member (so we're not working anywhere close to a balanced budget)."

*Motion approved.*

### **Business:**

#### **1. Website Report:** Kevin Thompson

From what I have heard from members, the move away from the southfrasermusic domain name has gone smoothly. A few members had trouble logging in, but that was resolved. Please don't wait for Monday night to log in when you try to do your festival entries. It may be too late for me to help you then. Log in now to make sure you can get in.

This will be my last website report as I am handing this position over to the very capable hands of Michelle Bumpus. I have been managing the website since it was built in 2015. Michelle and I will be working together for the next little while until she feels comfortable with how things work. The last branch notice was sent out by Michelle, so she is already on her way. Please be as nice to her as you always were to me!

Notes:

-Use Google Chrome instead of Safari for the festival forms!

-Your username is still the same when you log in to the website.

Discussion:

-Festival Media Release Consent: teachers need to let Christy / Leslie know if the student does *not* want to be in the photo. The student also needs to be responsible for making sure they are not in the group photos being taken by us.

## **2. Teachers Teaching:** Kevin Thompson and Maureen Hollins

Teachers Teaching 1 (Maureen Hollins):

I really appreciate the feedback. It was great to have you all there. I just wish there had been more time for conversation. (We had 16 - 17 teachers.) It was great.

Teachers Teaching 2 (Kevin Thompson):

This was held in Helga Murray's studio on Sunday, October 27. 14 teachers attended with Esther Neufeld and myself giving lessons to one of our students. Esther gave a very compelling and capable lesson on teaching inventions to beginners working with part playing, imitation and voicing followed by discussion with the group on her teaching. I gave a lesson on beginner essentials, moving through sight reading, terms and musical symbols, clapping, intervals, technique and a quick study. Again followed by discussion on teaching these points.

I felt the teachers were all keen to know more and asked many questions. It was a great learning and sharing experience. The feeling at the end was that we want more of these. So let's get some in the works!

These teaching events are great Pro-D events for us to do! I think the Saturday/Sunday (pairs) would be good. This is something the branch could maybe work towards in the spring. One idea would be to have one after spring break on how to prepare a young student or a senior-level student for exams.

These are great opportunities for us to bring student teachers in.

## **3. Alexander Technique Workshop:** Jennifer Condie

I'd like to acknowledge Catherine Bundt for all the work she did, since she organized everything (but she's not here today).

Thank you so much for your support. The three of us truly enjoyed the wonderful interactive atmosphere at the workshop. We loved the questions everyone asked, and we were really interested in the feedback we received. It was really great, so thank you for all of that.

For those who weren't there, we did some observations, we did a taste of what kind of Alexander Technique practices apply to piano playing, and we showed a bit of our research, but we ran out of time because it was very interactive and we used the time.

If anyone who wasn't there would like a handout, I can send you a scan of the handout.

In relation to the workshop: our article for the MTNA national magazine (the online journal) has received final approval. It will be published in February. So if you want to

see more detail about the research, the workshop was really only a taste of how things apply and how they work. The paper has more of what the research was about. What we did at the end of the workshop is in great detail in the paper.

It was a great honor to be there and to share with all of you.

We've talked about the possibility of a day-long workshop so there would be more depth because it's really hard to do it in 2 hours (to get more than taste it). We haven't gotten together to talk about it yet, but we'll have a discussion about it and see what might be possible. (Gaby is extremely busy all the time.)

I was so thrilled with everyone's engagement! I was so appreciative of how much people interacted and how willing people were to ask questions. Thank you so much for the opportunity. I look forward to further explorations!

#### **4. Canada Music Week: Maureen Hollins**

We had 18 teachers and 70 kids, so there will be two recitals. It makes it difficult to schedule if we don't choose a day where the Jazz Vespers (a very popular service this church has) is late in the afternoon. After a discussion with Janice, our only window (for the second recital) was between 1pm and 2:30pm, because the Jazz Vespers people come in at 3pm. We can overlap in the lobby area. Their Jazz Vespers service starts at 4pm.

Lorna Paterson has taken a much more active role in the recitals. She's going to have two mini spots to speak (at the beginning and 2/3 of the way through), so it will be more interactive. She will be talking about her compositions. We have sent back and forth several ideas. She also has some new publications to share. As a living, breathing composer, she will be more present.

Many teachers asked to help; that was great!

Discussion:

-See how many teachers had students participate in this Canada Music Week Recital! It seems that teachers love having this kind of opportunity to have kids in a group recital! Many other branches do RMT recitals quarterly throughout the year. If somebody maybe wanted to take that on (to organize this), that would be great!

-We used to have more student recitals throughout the year (e.g. North Surrey, South Surrey...etc.). It was open to all membership. We also had some RMT teachers who didn't put on year-end recitals and this was a good place for their students to perform. But it just kind of petered out. We had organizers, but people stopped doing it.

-Maureen's students raised the Canada Music Week Recital this year and asked if they were in it! (It's taken 5 years.) They see it as a celebration; they like a party, and so they were looking forward to it.

### **5. BC Piano Competition: Maureen Hollins**

With the advent of the BC Provincial Convention in September comes again the BC provincial piano competition. Last time (in 2018), we were wonderfully represented by Emma Hoglund. It's open, if we would like to have a representative.

The playing standard is going up, which is great to hear. If any of you know of or have a senior student playing at diploma level wanting to show their stuff, let us know about it! If there is more than one student, there would have to be a preliminary competition to discern which person goes forward to the provincial competition.

The criteria has changed somewhat, partially due to our branch being so close to it (by hosting it) last time. I asked for these changes (recommendations):

- 1) To increase the semi-final time limit from 15 minutes to 25 minutes. (It was originally 10-20 minutes.) – *Approved*
- 2) To have a classical work in the semi-final round. – *Approved*
- 3) To have 2 adjudicators – *It would cost extra money.*
- 4) To establish May 1<sup>st</sup> as an entry date for everything (applications, repertoire...etc.) so it's not as early. – *Approved*
- 5) To offer a masterclasses for all the people who go to the provincials to compete, so they would get something out of it. (I think the masterclass is the most valuable thing of the whole thing.) – *It would cost extra money.*

Note:

-Maureen is the BC Piano Competition provincial chair!

-March 1<sup>st</sup> is our deadline for South Fraser.

-Maybe we should send out a notice to everybody so they know about this. If anyone has students interested in this, let Maureen know by January 1<sup>st</sup> so she knows.

### **6. SoundVision 2020 Conference: Helga Murray**

It sounds like it will be a real blast. The Winnipeg convention this past summer was great! I'm sure the SoundVision 2020 Conference will be equally uplifting. It will be held at the Tigh-Na-Mara resort in Parksville. The presenters are fantastic – Rena Sharon

from UBC, Edwin Gmandt...etc. The dates are September 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> of 2020. Registration is now open. The early bird registration lasts until March 31. It's \$275; all the food is included (e.g. the lunches). The first 50 people to register are entered in a draw to win a free night at the Tigh-Na-Mara resort. They do have a special rate for the RMT members. (Usually you would arrive on the Friday (18<sup>th</sup>). The semi-finals are Friday afternoon.) It's a fun time; you get to meet people you wouldn't otherwise necessarily meet.

### **7. Junior Festival:** Christy Kuettel

For those of you that don't know, we have two great adjudicators: Greg Caisley, and Murray Nichol.

The deadline is November 25<sup>th</sup>!

*(Christy gave out a hand-out on the Composition Festival syllabus.)*

I have been meeting with Katya Pine. We have been working with what the Kwantlen composition festival has built up, and we've created this syllabus. This is pretty straightforward in terms of what the parameters are.

This is not actually part of the Junior Festival. It includes all ages – the age limit is 19 and under. The deadline to register is January 27<sup>th</sup>. There is still a lot of time.

The way this will work is: your student will compose something – it can be handwritten (but it must be legible) or it can be done with software (which Katya prefers). So you have to create a score. In the form of a PDF, you will E-mail that directly to Katya, along with either a video or sound file, whichever is easiest. (Your student probably knows how to do that.) That has to be received by Katya by the 27<sup>th</sup>. She will spend the month reviewing and adjudicating those.

There will be a registration form for students to fill out. They'll be sending that to me; the money will be received by Dianne.

This one-day composition festival will be happening in this fireside room on the Friday (February 28<sup>th</sup>) while the ensembles are taking place in the sanctuary. All the pieces will be performed on the Friday. The applicants and Katya will all be here. We have some awards and a trophy.

Once Katya gives out the awards, we were thinking those people would perform at the Celebration Recital. They aren't all required to perform on the Friday. They can play pre-recorded music too. Memory is not compulsory for performance.



Discussion:

-Lorna Paterson mentioned that for their composition festival, the winner would be commissioned the following year to write a piece. → Katya can choose the winner, who will then be commissioned to compose and will be featured in the Canada Music Week Recital the following year. → This needs to be written down for the composition festival.

-Jazz is okay.

-They can bring in other performers; the composer does not necessarily need to be the performer.

-There are no duties for this.

Michelle Bumpus will be putting this event up on the website, along with the syllabus.

Katya has no problem with students submitting their entry directly to her.

### **8. Senior Festival:** Leslie Chen

On the Thursday morning (March 5<sup>th</sup>) of the Senior Festival week, we will be having Edwin Gndt do 2 presentations: one on intermediate-level technique and the other on Chopin. He has done extensive research on Chopin and he recently did a workshop in Richmond. This workshop will end around noon.

Discussion:

-Yvette Rowledge attended the Richmond workshop (the non-Richmond-branch fee was \$20) and enjoyed the presentation.

-Edwin Gndt has a new book out (on Chopin).

-Edwin's presentations at our festival will be open to teachers, and there will be a fee.

-We should open it up to other branches.

### **9. Tom Lee's Offer:** Helga Murray

I recently had a meeting with Shelley Gimbel and Jerry Chang (her business partner) from Tom Lee Music Surrey. They have offered to pay for everything that is piano-related in our festival. (We don't ever pay for the rental – that's something Tom Lee does for us – but we pay for the tuning, moving, and insurance.) We will still be paying our insurance (Westland insurance was \$135 last year), but the total amount of what Tom Lee would be covering for us would be upwards of \$2500. We have 3 instruments that are tuned twice. That's their offer to us. There is one stipulation: in order for them

to give us that, they need to have exclusivity in the programs – only Tom Lee ads in the programs.

**Motion:** That the South Fraser branch accept Tom Lee’s one-time, one-year offer for them to pay for our 2020 festival piano tuning and moving costs in exchange for advertising exclusivity in our 2020 festival programs.

*Moved by Leslie Chen, seconded by Sharon Farenhorst.*

Discussion:

- Ads that would no longer in our program: Tapestry, Long & McQuade, VSO, or any music-related ads.
- When we had Tapestry and Long & McQuade, they paid \$75 to have their logos on our website but did not pay extra to be in our program (though we did have them in our program last year).
- Tapestry does not have any pianos to sell. We wouldn’t be shutting them out by doing this.
- In the past, we had to approach them (Tapestry, Long & McQuade, Tom Lee) and solicit them scholarship money, but we don’t do the soliciting anymore.
- Shelley and Jerry’s attitude is that they want to give back to the community. Yes, the bottom line for a business like that is they want to sell pianos. But they don’t want any of us to have the pressure to send them leads; they do a lot for the festival. This is simply goodwill and wanting to support the music community.
- Shelley will still be doing the door prizes for all the Celebration Recitals, and she will still do the both big dinners for the teachers who are here to help in between the Celebration Recitals. There’s a lot of monetary support there.
- They are not doing Tom Lee banners and no posters in the windows.
- When Kevin was organizing the BC Piano Competition, Tom Lee approached him with the same offer. They offered to pay all these things for us (which would have been around \$4000 - \$5000) in exchange for advertising exclusivity. But we couldn’t because we were locked in to the Fazioli pianos that were already at the church because of the White Rock concert series the night before. So the deal was off. They put pressure on me to cancel the Fazioli, but everything had already been advertised and we were already committed to the Fazioli. So they do it as a matter of business. They will approach festivals and events and offer to pay the bill for exclusivity.
- 1 teacher at this branch meeting today expressed concern and was “not completely without reservations because it feels like being held hostage. Because it’s OUR festival.”
- Tapestry, Long & McQuade...etc. will still be advertised on our website, and they probably wouldn’t even notice if they weren’t in our festival programs this year.
- This offer is a one-year one-time thing, to be re-negotiated next year.

-Helga: How this all came up is... I am having my two studio recitals at the little concert hall at the prep centre in Richmond. Anybody can ask for that as teachers; they give it to you free of charge. I arranged it through them and through my tuner. Apparently it's the consultants' job (Shelly and Jerry) to go down and open the facility for you. So we spoke and they said they were willing to do that for us this year, and asked if I could bring it to the membership. I brought it to the executive, and we said we would present it to the membership at this branch meeting.

-Is there concern with the public perception of the South Fraser festival becoming a Tom Lee festival?

-1 teacher expressed concern with somebody using their money to exclude smaller players with less power (e.g. Tapestry and Long & McQuade) – but she explained this is her personal issue of social justice.

-If we were eliminating them from our website, more teachers might share that concern, but they will still be on our website.

-We have had to chase the advertising.

-Years ago, when Sharon Farenhorst did the soliciting for scholarship funds, a certain amount of donation would get a certain size of ad.

-The Strings Festival are totally separate, so this does not have anything to do with them.

-Teachers who have donated to the festival will still have their names in the programs; that does not count as advertising, and so is separate.

*Motion approved, with four abstentions.*

*Helga Murray moved to adjourn the meeting.*