

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

South Fraser Branch of BC Registered Music Teachers' Association

Wednesday, Sept. 18th, 2019

Northwood United Church, 10am

Attendees:

Helga Murray	Calla Strain	Paulette Nielsen
Kevin Thompson	Alison d'Entremont	Jennifer Silva
Leah Lifton	Dianne Szarapka	Maureen Hollins
Leslie Chen	Eva Law	Sharon Farenhorst
Jennifer Condie	Susan Senkow	Léa Tsui
Marlene Bartsch	Esther Neufeld	Carmen Roberts
Sylvia Leigh	Catherine Bundt	Wendy Chan
Christy Kuettel	Berva Warkentin	Colleen Branson

Welcome: New member: Elizabeth McKee, piano, Langley (absent)

Minutes of the June 19th meeting are posted on our website.

Moved by Leslie Chen, seconded by Catherine Bundt to adopt the minutes as circulated.

Treasurer's Report:

Total General Account: \$27,515.25

Total Festival Account: \$6,259.52

Business:

1. Website Report: Kevin Thompson

Question: Who is getting a lot or some spam from the Southfraser.com address?

Our Web Server has disabled the email forwarder on our website.

Forwarders do not discriminate between spam and legitimate email, so by having your forwarders enabled, your account is essentially using our server to send spam to another email provider.

Even if this is unintentional, it frequently results in our servers getting blacklisted and will cause trouble in the form of bounced emails for you. To avoid any further abuse, we have disabled the entire membership's forwarders.

(Bots can take our forward E-mail addresses (_____@southfrasermusic.com) and send spam!)

Here are the two options from Jerry:

1) To abandon domain email address: (\$475)

Re-code the teacher's list page and hide the email address. We can use an online contact form function to replace the email address. Instead of displaying the email address, we can display an email icon -- clicking the icon will pop up an online contact form and the form can send out contact email to the specific teacher. Throughout this process, the email address is hidden.

Or,

2) To keep domain email address: (\$350)

If the branch wants to keep using the @southfrasermusic.com email address for all members, we may have to find a paid service for this. This process inevitably involves finding a new hosting server that offers reasonable paid email service.

(The \$350 does not include any troubleshooting for future E-mail address issues.)

This matter needs to be dealt with very soon and as I can't send out emails now, I feel that it will be up to this group here to make this decision.

Kevin Thompson made the motion for the membership to go with Option #1: abandoning the domain E-mail address system, recoding the teachers' list page, and hiding the E-mail addresses.

Sylvia Leigh seconded the motion, and the membership voted in favour of it.

Recently, one of our new members got scammed! The scammer E-mailed to set up piano lessons, sent a cheque, then asked for a refund. The teacher refunded the scammer, only to have her account (\$2000) emptied! So please, beware! If you receive any E-mails about someone coming to you for piano lessons and wanting to prepay by cheque, wait for their cheque to clear after you deposit it *before* you return any money!

2. Fee Survey Results: Leslie Chen

Here are the results from our fee survey in June: 26 teachers filled out this survey. The range was \$44/hr to \$100/hr. The average was \$62/hr. (The biggest group was at \$60/hr – five teachers had this as their rate.)

3. Provincial Council Report: Maureen Hollins

Twice a year, provincial delegates gather from all over the province to have the opportunity to meet face-to-face, and to share and voice our concerns at a provincial level. There were 30 provincial delegates at this last meeting.

There is more information coming down from that particular meeting. One of the rubrics is that you're not allowed to discuss motions until the minutes are out, so I am waiting for that. At the next (branch) meeting, we will have a bit more time to discuss that.

What I'm about to share with you is the concerns, shared observations, and interests of the 30 people from around the province:

- Check the **Provincial** website:
 1. Photo Release Forms– this would affect our provincial magazine (being able to feature our performers in it)
 - a) single
 - b) group
 2. Membership page
 3. Reminder of funds available to Branches
 - a) Heritage Fund
 - b) Continuing Education Fund

- Check the **CFMTA** website
 1. Master Class from **National Convention** July 3 to 6, 2019 in Winnipeg
 2. Workshops

3. E-Competition for Canadian music; one other accepting eras of composition projected for the spring.
- Concern about membership numbers decreasing
 1. Executive Council is aware that “younger members” are not volunteering
 2. Lack of teachers willing to invest time in governance
 3. Barbara Siemens has presented a workshop at Long & McQuade to promote membership benefits
 4. Mimi Ho prepared a Powerpoint/TedTalk for presentation at the Richmond Library
 - Provincial Convention 2020 **“Sound Vision”** Parksville: Sept. 18 to 19, 2020
 1. Early Bird registration is March 15th \$275.00
First 50 registrations eligible for a draw.
Prize: Free night at the Hotel **Tigh-Na-Mara**
 2. Provincial Piano Competition attention to Provincial website for information
We can have a Young Artist represent our branch again.
The deadline to submit a representative for South Fraser is May 1st, 2020.

If you have any concerns and you want them taken back to the Provincial Council, I'd be happy to do that.

4. Junior Festival: Christy Kuettel

Our adjudicators are Dr. Greg Caisley and Murray Nichol. One big component that is new this year is we will have a composition class! I will be meeting with Katya Pine today. She also did the composition class at the Kwantlen festival this year. Our composition class will be open to all levels and all instruments! (This means students in the Senior Festival can also participate.)

The Junior Festival syllabus will be online soon. Please read through it carefully.

5. Senior Festival: Leslie Chen

The new entry fees and the Senior Festival syllabus are now up on the website. Please do read through the syllabus carefully; the parts that are new have been highlighted.

Our adjudicators are Anne Unger and Edwin Gmandt. We are also planning on having Edwin do a couple presentations the morning of Thursday, March 5th – the two topics are intermediate technique and understanding Chopin style. These will be open to students and teachers.

5. Professional Development:

1) Teachers Teaching: Kevin Thompson

a) A free Pro-D opportunity at Maureen Hollins' Studio

“It’s all about the thumbs – mostly!”

Saturday, September 28th, 2019, 2:00 - 4:30 PM

15034 Robin Crescent

There is limited seating so please RSVP to hollins@shaw.ca

b) A free Pro-D opportunity at Helga Murray's Studio

Kevin Thompson will give a lesson on **“Beginner Essentials – it’s not about the pieces!”** The skills we teach our beginners will make learning pieces a snap and help prepare them for the senior levels.

Esther Neufeld will give a lesson on **“Independence of the hands – its all about preparation”** The lesson will focus on learning RCM level 1 & 2 Inventions which are so essential to build the skills required moving forward, all the way to Bach Inventions.

Sunday, October 27th, 2019, 2:00 - 4:30 PM

12539 19 Avenue, Surrey

There is limited seating so please RSVP to helgamurray@shaw.ca

2) Alexander Technique Workshop: Jennifer Condie

I’m going to tell you a story, to give you some context about the work that my colleague and I are doing on Alexander Technique and where it came from.

A number of years ago, I started taking Alexander Technique myself at a time when I couldn't practice because I was too busy, but I had some physical issues I knew I was dealing with and I knew that Alexander Technique taught you how to move differently in your everyday life. So I went and started Alexander Technique lessons myself and so I just carried on with that for a while.

Sometime later, I taught a student who as a nephew of one of my most beloved ARCT graduates. He was a darling – he was intelligent, he was musical, he could sing on pitch...etc. but even the moment he came to me, I could tell he was a really tight human being. So I would get him to stand at the piano and I'd ask him to think about playing the piano, and he would [immediately tighten up and become stiff]. Using all my very best techniques that I had and all the most creative solutions I could find, I got him to Grade 3. But because his physical limitations and his natural tendencies were so stiff, I really couldn't get him past Grade 3. So he stopped after Grade 3.

The year that he quit, someone arrives in my studio: Valentina, a beautiful little girl. She'd come from group lessons. Not only was she physically stiff, but her wrists were tight, and there was no support in her hand. So at her first lesson, I was trying to get her to release her arm. [She had trouble with that.] In desperation, I asked my Alexander Technique teacher for an idea on how to help this student release. The idea she gave me worked really well.

Then, I started the process of doing some direct applications of Alexander Technique to teach piano. I'd always felt that it was kind of weird – if you go to Julliard, there's an Alexander Technique teacher; there's Alexander Technique teachers at McGill...etc. but they're mostly available to people who are university students who have an injury! There's really just more potential, I think, for Alexander Technique helping us be more aware, and to teach more effectively.

I started doing some stuff in my studio. I was telling my Alexander Technique teacher about it, using ideas she had given me, when she asked me if I'd like to do a "mini project" with her. We did a project where we taped 6 of my students for about 15 minutes for 6 weeks. We planned how I was going to use the tools that we had been developing, taped the students, and then collected data. We started studying the data – it was my Alexander Technique teacher, another graduate of the Alexander Technique program who is also a musician with a university degree in music, myself, and Leslie did some observations for us as a person who wasn't studying Alexander Technique. Last January, we presented our findings at an Alexander Technique conference in New York.

Since that time, Aleah, Gaby, and I have continued studying our findings and we wrote a paper (around 10,000 words). We have submitted it to the MTNA online national publication. It's basically on a case study we did on this one student. It's been accepted conditionally with revisions, and we are almost finished the revisions. (They liked the

content but they found that there were some things that confused them – we had things that were hard to articulate.)

What we will do for you is not actually talk about all those things; that's not what our workshop is about. What it will contain is basically three components:

- 1) Understanding how Alexander Technique principles actually apply to playing piano. (Because most of the time when I've gone to Alexander Technique workshops, I never came away really understanding that. It was hard to see how it had to do with anything.)
- 2) Giving the people who come to the workshop an experience of change in their own physical way of being that might help them understand what this means to themselves or a student.
- 3) Creating a bridge with some tools that are helpful for our personal use and for the use of our students.

A lot of what we are doing is working on finding ways *away* from the piano, to create a new experience with the student that allows them to change. One of the main tenets of Alexander Technique, which everyone here will have experienced with their students, is that when they sit at the piano and start to play, even though they want to change something, the minute they start to play, immediately they are in their habit. So Alexander Technique is about not just teaching ways to move, but learning to create a wedge of time, thought, and space between your intention and your habit so you can change.

I am very excited about what Alexander Technique has given me, and I would be honoured to have the opportunity to share some of these learnings with other people in the hope that it makes their teaching more rewarding, more fulfilling, and is able to help their students.

The workshop is on October 24th, from 10am to 12 noon, in the sanctuary. To sign up for this workshop, please E-mail Catherine Bundt (at Catherine.anne.b@hotmail.com). The cost is \$20 per person.

6. Canada Music Week: Maureen Hollins

Canada Music Week is on November 24th. Lorna Paterson is our composer representative. I'd love to get a sense of how many people are gearing for that, if you could please E-mail or even phone me. My E-mail is hollins@shaw.ca

The problem is that Jazz Vespers is here at the church on that day, and so I can't get into the church until 6pm. But theoretically, I could do *two* recitals (a 45-minute one and the other a little longer). I would do anything to try and include all the performers. We've limited it to five entries per teacher. The due date is November 11th (Remembrance Day). I hope some people send in Lorna Paterson's music, since she is going to be there! (You can bring her books for her to sign.) Remember you can E-mail her; she just loves to hear from students who are learning her pieces.

Jennifer Condie moved to adjourn the meeting.

Adjournment, followed by coffee and discussion on "Issues with Transfer Students."