



NYSMTA



SUMMER 2024

NEWSLETTER

NEW • YORK • STATE • MUSIC • TEACHERS • ASSOCIATION • INC •

IMPORTANT DATES

Lecture Forum Proposals

Proposals for NYSMTA Conference 2024
Submission deadline: August 1, 2024

Lightning Talks Proposals

Proposals for NYSMTA Conference 2024
Submission deadline: Friday, September 6, 2024

Citation Nomination

Due by September 1, 2024

Chapin Grant

Proposal deadline: September 15, 2024

MTNA Competitions (virtual)

Application Deadline: Wednesday,
September 11, 2024, by 3:00 PM EST
Video submissions deadline: Friday, October 11,
2024, by 11:59 PM EST
Online applications will be available at mtna.org
in later summer

Heddy Kilian Empire State Competitions (virtual)

Application Deadline: Wednesday,
September 4, 2024, by 3:00 PM EST
Video submissions: Deadline: Friday, October 11,
2024, by 11:59 PM EST
Online application form available at
nysmta.org

NYSMTA Conference 2024

Saturday, October 19, 2024
Ithaca College
Ithaca, New York

NYSMTA Business Meetings

Friday, October 25, 2024.
Virtual meetings

MTNA National Conference

March 5-9, 2025
Minneapolis, Minnesota

NYSMTA CONFERENCE 2024
Saturday, October 19
Ithaca College



President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

I am excited to invite you to our upcoming NYSMTA State Conference, which will be held on Saturday, October 19 at Ithaca College. Our Co-VPs for Conferences, Mary Holzhauer and Deborah Martin, along with our conference planning committee, have been working on an inspiring line-up of events, which will be finalized and shared with the membership very soon!

As is tradition, NYSMTA will provide opportunities for membership participation at the State Conference through the Lightning Talks session and Lecture Forum sessions. Please consider sharing your knowledge and expertise at the conference by submitting a proposal for one (or both) of these sessions.

At our biannual State Conference, we will present the Citation Award to an individual to recognize the highest level of service and contributions to the music teaching profession. Nominations are due by September 1, and further information about this award can be found on page 5 in the Newsletter.

cont. p.2

WWW.NYSMTA.ORG

Webmaster: Bonnie Choi
NYSMTA Home Page,
Newsletters, Informational Topic Briefs,
Directory, Constitution & Bylaws,
Conferences, Certification, Competitions,
Grants Program, Find-a-teacher.
Linked to www.mtna.org

If you have an address change,
new phone number or e-mail
address, please contact the Vice-
President for Membership, for inclusion
of that information in the next
Directory: Stephanie Mercer, VP of
Membership
mercermusicstudio@gmail.com

You would also need to contact
the MTNA National Office
(Toll Free) **1-888-512-5278**

The Executive Committee
requests that all NYSMTA members
pay their annual MTNA dues by
October 1, 2024. It greatly facilitates
the accurate preparation of the State
Membership Directory.

NYSMTA NEWSLETTER

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gfishr@frontiernet.net

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Bonnie Choi
bchoi6@naz.edu

Newsletter Submission

Submission of newsletter articles
and reports by e-mail is strongly
preferred; otherwise allow extra time
for editing. Please be sure to include your
name on all submissions. Thank you.



cont. from p. 1

I would also like to encourage NYSMTA members to apply for the Chapin Fund grant opportunity. This grant supports work on a special research project to benefit member teachers. Please see page 5 in the Newsletter for further details and the application process. This is a wonderful opportunity to receive support and recognition for your scholarship.

The MTNA performance and composition competitions, and Heddy Kilian Empire State Competitions are all exciting opportunities for your students to participate in. Please help us spread the word about these events by encouraging your students and other teachers to get involved. In the competition section below, you will notice that there have been significant changes for the MTNA brass and voice competitions (senior and young artist levels), which no longer require state and divisional competitions.

Lastly, I would like to draw your attention to our tribute to Neva Pilgrim. While I did not have the privilege of knowing Neva personally very well, the heartfelt words and stories from those close to her show an unmatched love and affection toward her and her life's work. Along with a thriving performance career, Neva devoted her energy to supporting other musicians through her tireless arts advocacy. She was a long-time member of NYSMTA and a past-president, in addition to establishing and running the Society for New Music for 52 years. I am always so inspired by individuals like Neva, and what they contribute to the world. Her legacy and impact on musical life in New York State will surely live on.

I hope you all have a restful and musical summer ahead, and I look forward to seeing many of you at our State Conference in October.

Sincerely,

Jacob Ertl
President, NYSMTA

NYSMTA CONFERENCE 2024

Saturday, October 19

Ithaca College, Ithaca

The New York State Music Teachers Association is pleased to announce this year's State Conference, occurring on Saturday, October 19, 2024 at Ithaca College in Ithaca, New York. Plans are being formulated for this one-day event which will feature lectures and performances, Lecture Forum member presentations, and more. The very popular five-minute Lightning Talks will take place once again, along with the Commissioned Composer premiere (details elsewhere in this newsletter). Opportunities for members to reconnect with friends and colleagues from across our large state are perhaps one of the most attractive reasons for attending this Conference! Details regarding all of the conference events will become available over the summer and sent along to all members.

We very much hope that many of us will gather once again at this valuable event.

Call for Lecture Forum Presentations at the NYSMTA State Conference

Submission Deadline: August 1, 2024

Lecture Forum offers members of NYSMTA a professional opportunity to present a topic of interest or specialization at its Conferences. This year's Conference will be held Saturday, October 19, 2024 at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY. The presentation format is flexible: one can read a paper, present a lecture, perform a lecture recital, or demonstrate a technique. Possible topics could include -- but are by no means limited to -- music literature, teaching techniques, the psychology of teaching, performance stress, improvisation, the business side of the music profession, or a historical account of performance style.

The topic proposal should be a detailed, written document describing the presentation exactly as it is to be done. Maximum 250 words. Be sure to make mention of any equipment necessary for the presentation. Suggested presentation time is 25 minutes with an additional 5 minutes for questions and discussion.

Please submit your proposal by August 1 to Janice Nimetz, jnnimetz15@gmail.com. The Lecture Forum Committee will review proposals and notify applicants by the end of August.

Call for Lightning Talks Submission Deadline: 11:59pm EST on Friday, September 6, 2024

All musicians and teachers (MTNA members/non-members) are encouraged to participate: collegiate chapters, college students, newly graduated young professionals, K-12 music teachers, private music teachers, and collegiate faculty.

As the name suggests, these are fast! Lightning Talks are 5-minute presentations on a music-related topic of choice. Visual aids such as PowerPoint slides are encouraged. The topics should be practical, applicable to a wide audience of musicians and teachers, and focused on a single idea.

The 5-minute limit for Lightning Talks is strictly enforced. Make sure your proposed talk will fit the time limit. The most effective lightning talks are usually specific and focused on a single topic/idea, rather than trying to provide summaries of many ideas.

- [Click here](#) to submit your Lightning Talks proposal
- [Click here](#) for sample lightning talks from the 2023 NYSMTA Virtual Symposium

SOLOMON MIKOWSKY (1936-2024)



It is with a profound sadness that the New York State Music Teachers Association notes the passing on March 16 of Solomon Mikowsky, distinguished member of the piano faculty at the Manhattan School of Music. His pedagogical legacy of significant performers and teachers is legendary. Mr. Mikowsky was a longtime member of our organization. The following ([link 1](#), [link 2](#)) provide eloquent testament to the impact of this truly unique and cherished artist. He will be deeply missed by so very many within our music community.

MTNA Certification

All New York state certifications through NYSMTA are now in permanent or emeritus status. Those who are interested in applying for national certification may direct any questions to

Laura Amoriello
NYSMTA Chair for Certification
lamoriell@gmail.com.

Heddy Kilian Empire State and MTNA Competitions

The New York State Music Teachers Association sponsors two annual state-wide competitions: the state-level MTNA Competitions and the Empire State Heddy Kilian Competitions. These are valuable educational opportunities for students to be recognized for their musical growth and excellence. They will take place once again virtually by means of video submissions.

The Heddy Kilian Empire State Competitions offer events at the junior high, high school and collegiate levels in the categories of piano, voice and instrumental. Please click on this [link](#) for more information and application links.

The Music Teachers National Association offers competitions at the Elementary (composition only), Junior, Senior and Young Artist levels in composition, piano, string, woodwind, piano duet and chamber music (see link for specific category/age level details along with important new information regarding voice and brass). Available at [MTNA](#). For further information regarding either of these competitions, please refer to [nysmta.org](#).



MTNA/NYSMTA Commissioned Composer

[David Mallamud](#) of Katonah, New York has been selected to be the 2024 MTNA/NYSMTA Commissioned Composer. His new composition will be scored for acoustic guitar and voice. Its premiere will take place at the NYSMTA Conference at Ithaca College on October 19. David Mallamud is the recipient of many awards and is an Emmy nominee; his works have been heard on major stages throughout the United States.

MusicLink

NYSMTA SUPPORTS MUSIC LESSONS FOR EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF FINANCIAL STATUS. PLEASE CONSIDER ACCEPTING A MUSICLINK STUDENT IN YOUR STUDIO

NYSMTA has been a long-term partner of the MusicLink Foundation. MusicLink connects students experiencing financial need with professional music teachers who volunteer to teach on partial or full scholarships for as long as these students continue to be motivated to learn.

While MusicLink does not provide financial compensation to teachers for their tuition donation, it does reimburse them for other student-related expenditures. In addition, it provides assistance in the purchase and repair of instruments, moving costs of donated pianos, free or discounted music from major publishers, and summer music camp scholarships. MusicLink is the recipient of the 2017 MTNA Achievement Award, for making a significant and lasting contribution to music and music-making.

Our wish is that members of NYSMTA might consider volunteering to teach one MusicLink student. Those of us who work with these students and their families are rewarded by providing the same high quality long-term music training that we offer to families who are financially able to afford full fees. It is our belief that no child should be denied the joy of music study due to a lack of financial resources. We invite you to join us!

For complete information, please visit <https://www.musiclinkfoundation.org>. Please contact Julie Wegener, NYSMTA MusicLink chair, with any questions—or to volunteer—at jweg360@gmail.com.

Chapin Fund

The Elfriede Chapin Fund has been established to award a monetary grant annually to one NYSMTA member. The recipient will use the grant to work on a special project that will benefit member teachers. The project must be used to establish new research developed during the grant. When the study is complete, the recipient must present the findings, either through a published article in an issue of the NYSMTA Newsletter or the American Music Teacher magazine, or through a presentation at a bi-annual NYSMTA State Conference or an MTNA annual national conference. Anyone interested in applying for the Chapin Grant should contact, by September 15, 2024:

By Mail:

Michael Merolla, Chapin Fund Chair
PO Box 428
Miller Place, NY 11764

By E-Mail:

mmerolla54@gmail.com

Citation Award

Submission Deadline: September 1, 2024

The NYSMTA awards a CITATION at our bi-annual State Conference to an individual deserving of the highest recognition for their service/contribution to the music teaching profession. Service can be recognized through leadership roles at the State, Division, or National levels of MTNA, and/or outstanding contributions to music and the arts through community, cultural and artistic activities. Any member of NYSMTA may offer a nomination of an individual to be recognized. Nominations are submitted to a state committee that reviews the submissions, makes a selection, and prepares the award for presentation. The 2024 Citation will be awarded at the October 19 NYSMTA Conference at Ithaca College. Nominations should be submitted in writing or by email with detailed reasons for the recommendation by September 1, 2024. Please send these nominations to:

By Mail:

Michael Merolla
PO Box 428
Miller Place, NY 11764

By E-Mail:

mmerolla54@gmail.com

MTNA Composition Competition

Students of MTNA/NYSMTA members have an opportunity to submit their original compositions into a state-wide contest, the first of three levels of the MTNA Composition Competition. All submissions are reviewed and judged with insightful written comments. Winners at the State level go on to compete at the Eastern Division level; winners there would then go on to the National level.

The MTNA Composition Competition provides an excellent goal for young composers. Many young students come to us wanting to learn how to write down the pieces they have already been devising on their own, and to learn how to do it better, along with wanting to learn to play an instrument. Even if we ourselves are not trained composers, just think of how much we can help our students, how much we can motivate them and steer them in stimulating directions. We already do this by the way we guide them through the wonderful literature of great composers, and in doing so lead them to “inhabit” these best models for themselves. And if it is more of a popular style they are striving for, we can still help them to shape their ideas by means of our own strong sense of musical shape and worth and experience. Too few of us – and far too few of our students – explore this path of creativity and unique self-expression. Here is a chance to motivate and challenge our students, and for them to gain acknowledgment, encouragement and, perhaps, reward.

Similar to the MTNA performance competitions, age categories determine the appropriate level for the MTNA Composition Competition: Elementary, Junior High, High School and Collegiate. The deadline for submission in this year’s event has not yet been set by MTNA. Watch for it, along with all relevant information at the [MTNA site](#).

Christine Johannsen, Coordinator, MTNA Composition Competition

chrisj.rage@gmail.com 845-422-0006

Remembering Neva Pilgrim

November 21, 1938 – January 22, 2024

The New York State Music Teachers Association pays tribute to a very dear member who we lost several months ago. Those of us truly fortunate to have known Neva will readily recognize the loving reminiscences offered here by a few of her colleagues. Neva left a significant mark on our organization, helping to shape what it is today. She will be remembered with gratitude and fondness.

From Neva's Obituary (Schepp Family Funeral Homes, Syracuse, NY)

Neva left us behind very early on Monday, January 22, 2024 in Syracuse NY. She was 85 years of age, and she had lived that whole life to the hilt! Born on November 21, 1938 in her family's farm-home near Bingham Lake, Minnesota, she was named Neva Lorraine Stevens -- the sixth of ten children of Walter and Myrtle Stevens. Even from those earliest times she sparkled with energy and intelligence, showed special skills in music (flute, piano and voice), and won awards for both school work and music performances.

Neva graduated with honors from Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1960, having majored in Music and English. It was there, then, that she met her future husband, Richard Pilgrim, who, like her, loved making music in the University's choir. Married in 1959, they finished college together and went on to a life together of 65 wonderful years!

In that life Neva was always moving ahead creatively and confidently. A professional singing career began to blossom while completing a Masters degree at Yale Music School in 1963, where she was awarded the Ditson Fellowship for outstanding graduates. She studied and sang professionally in Vienna and elsewhere in Europe. Upon her return Neva pursued the same activities in Chicago while her husband was pursuing his M.A./Ph.D. degrees at the University of Chicago. And still more of the same while Richard was in Japan researching his dissertation. Thus were laid the foundations for all the incredible things she was to do after that during the Syracuse years, from 1970 to 2024.



These Syracuse years started with the births of their two children, Jonathan in 1970 and Jason in 1975. And from there growing into a life full of joy and accomplishment: of being a wonderful wife, mother, and friend; of teaching voice both privately and at Syracuse University, Kirkland/Hamilton Colleges and Colgate University; singing professionally, in many styles of the classical repertoire; but especially featuring new music; and helping to found and run the Society for New Music, now in its 53rd year of presenting concerts of new music, and especially supporting professional composers and performers in the Central New York region.

Neva's work with the Society for New Music used all her skills and energies, and was a central part of her creative life for all those years. For over 52 years, and "with the help of others" (as she would always remind us), she was the glue holding it together and the primary energy contributing to its health and well-being. Key elements of that effort have been: running a summer festival in Cazenovia, commissioning composers to write music, finding financial support in every nook and cranny, supporting young performers with a "rising stars" program, putting together season after season of concerts and gathering together the professional musicians to perform them, producing and hosting a radio program ("Fresh Ink" on WCNY-FM), taking live music and compositional energies into the public schools with the "Music in the Schools" program, and -- last but surely not least -- living to see these efforts rewarded time and again with everything from kudos to national awards for the Society. This was indeed a life worth celebrating and emulating and a legacy worth honoring and aspiring to.

Neva is survived by her husband, Richard Pilgrim of Syracuse, their sons Jonathan (Hilde) and Jason, grandchildren Amelie and Jonas, and seven of her nine siblings: Maxine Berge, Gerald Stevens, Darrell Stevens, Ronald Stevens, Larry Stevens, Carol Stevens, and Roger Stevens.

A Memorial Service was held at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Syracuse on Sunday, February 25. Contributions in Neva's memory may be directed to St. Paul's Church, the Society for New Music, and/or WCNY-FM.



Michael Merolla. Miller Place, NY

Neva Pilgrim, a Past-President of NYSMTA, passed away on January 22, 2024. Her legacy will be well marked by the many lives she touched in her work as an accomplished professional vocalist, an outstanding teacher, a dedicated and valued leader, and a promoter of new music. Neva served as President of NYSMTA from 1999-2001, presiding over conventions held at Vassar and SUNY Binghamton respectively. She was an active member and past chairperson of



District 9 (Greater Syracuse Area) and was a participant on many state committees, including Certification, the MTNA Commissioning Project, Long Range Planning, State and Local Grants, Citations and the Chapin Grant Committee. Among Neva's greatest contributions were her efforts in the Commissioning Project in the selection of New York State Composers who composed works for premiere performances at State Conventions following guidelines for submission to MTNA's National Award for newly commissioned works. Her judicious selections brought many new composers into public light and promoted interest in the work of these fellow New York State musicians. Neva was very dedicated to this effort of promoting new music. Perhaps she will be best remembered for both her very willingness to be of assistance to NYSMTA for anything needed as well as her wonderful, gracious manner of conducting business and building relationships with others.

NYSMTA mourns the loss of this wonderful and beloved teacher whose dedication throughout the entirety of her membership gave so much for the benefit of the Association.

Heather Buchman. Society for New Music. Syracuse, NY

For over six decades Neva Pilgrim served as a guiding light in the music community, her influence extending far beyond Central New York. A highly respected singer specializing in new music, she worked with many of the foremost composers of the late 20th century and had a national profile with many recording credits. She advocated tirelessly for new music, composers, and musicians throughout her life, founding the Society for New Music in 1971 with the mission of presenting and promoting new music and the vitality of the broader music community.

For over 52 years Neva ran SNM from her home, growing the Society and its programs to include a year-round season of over 30 concerts, including the month-long summer arts festival Cazenovia Counterpoint. Under her guidance SNM has commissioned new works every year by Central New York-based composers; staged several chamber operas, including several celebrating the history and cultural figures of New York State; and produced the annual Vision of Sound programs. SNM has released recordings of works from over 36 composers commissioned by the ensemble. A recently released recording won a SAMMY and was nominated for a Grammy. SNM is the oldest year-round new music ensemble in the state outside of New York City. Under Neva's leadership SNM has received awards and recognitions from ASCAP, Chamber Music America, the American Music Center, and the American Composers Alliance, and has received numerous grants from NYSCA, the National Endowment for the Arts, and other foundations and funds supporting the arts.

For 20 years Neva produced and hosted the weekly new music radio show Fresh Ink on WCNY Classic FM, which reached audiences nationally and even internationally. Her knowledge of new music and composers was encyclopedic, and her programming prowess and radio presence made new music accessible across the radio station's local and streaming audiences, reaching around the globe.

Neva was also a sought-after and greatly respected teacher, known for her deep technical understanding of the voice; she served on the voice faculty at both Syracuse University and Colgate University, as well as teaching in her own studio. She personally coached and rehearsed the singers in the many vocal works and chamber operas that SNM produced. Another cause especially important to her was supporting young and emerging musicians and composers; her initiatives in this area included the Rising Stars program and Young Composers Corner (both part of Cazenovia Counterpoint), and Composers in Schools.

Finally, Neva was regarded as one of the true pillars of the music and artistic community in Upstate New York. Her work brought together multiple generations of musicians from around the region, gave them encouragement and artistic

opportunities, forged collaborations with artists across disciplines, and helped demystify new music and bring it to new audiences. She was one of those individuals who continually elevated and transformed her community and the countless individuals whose lives she touched. The composer Robert Morris aptly described Neva as a “bodhisattva of new music” – a being who works tirelessly for the benefit of others. As we work to carry on her vision, we are inspired daily by her boundless energy, by her selflessness in service to new music, musicians, and the arts, and by the grace and beauty she brought into the world.

Sylvie Beaudette. Rochester, NY



Neva Pilgrim was a force of nature with a pioneer spirit. She performed and supported emerging composers throughout her career as a soprano and recording artist as well as founder / coordinator of the Society for New Music. She was a mentor to so many: students, colleagues, young composers and performers, and members of the New York State Music Teachers Association for which she served as president. Neva was an inspiration, radiating her positive energy all around her. She was generous, thoughtful, and could convince people to do anything! I learned a lot from her about leadership. Dear Neva: You will be missed but your rich legacy will live on.

Founding members of the Society of New Music gathered to have their picture taken at the organization's 30th anniversary in 2001. L-R, Barbara Rabin, Neva Pilgrim, John Oberbrunner, Rosalie Spitzer, Jim Krehbiel, and Ralph D'Mello.