

**AKTA Board Members
2009-2010**

**Christine Kastanopolous,
President**
345-5811
ckastan@gci.net

**Freya Wardlaw-Bailey,
Secretary & Newsletter Editor**
245-0522
freyapiano@yahoo.com

**Dean Epperson,
Treasurer**
346-4468
epperson@gci.net

**Nancy Campbell
Membership**
345-9117
nancyc@gci.net

**Connie McFarlane,
Member-at-large**
333-4970
kmcfar747@aol.com

Linda Green
333-7182
leadpipe@gci.net

Gretchen Thomas
563-1463
nrhythms@alaska.com

Margaret Turner
345-3211
met@acsalaska.net

Our email address has changed!
The new address is:
epperson@gci.net

Dean and Cindy Epperson



UPCOMING EVENTS

Deadlines:

October 16th - Applications due for AMTA Fall Adjudications

Special Events:

November 7-8 - MTNA Strings competition

November 14-15 - MTNA Piano competition

November 16-20 - AMTA Fall Adjudications (see page 2)

November 20 - Workshop with Dr. Jody Graves (see below)

December 6 and 20 - Museum Performance (see page 4)

February 27, 2010 - Duet Festival

March 20-24, 2010 - MTNA National Conference, Albuquerque, NM

May 1, 2010 - Alaska Piano Competition

May 3-7, 2010 - AMTA Spring Adjudications

August 13-14, 2010 - AMTA Conference in Sitka with Jennifer Linn

Board Meetings: October 30, December 4, January 29, February 26, March 26, April 30 (special meeting, TBA) at 9:00-11:00 AM at Chris Kastanopolous, 13810 Mainsail Drive. All members are welcome to attend.

**“Over the Barline and Through the Notes”
Workshop with Dr. Jody Graves**

A workshop for music teachers that discusses and demonstrates specific practice techniques and motivational activities for elementary and intermediate students. While this workshop focuses on younger students, the techniques also translates well for more advanced students. Highlights include tips and creative ideas on ways to ensure quality practicing and progress between lessons.

November 20th, 9:30-11:00 a.m.
AKTA general meeting from 9:00-9:30 a.m.
Amazing Grace Lutheran Church, 10830 Elmore Road
\$20 per person, pre-registration not required

Wanted: New Board Members!

The current AKTA Board will turn over their positions to a new board at the end of the 2009-2010 school year. Contact a board member (listed above) or attend a meeting to learn more about how you can help the Anchorage piano community thrive, create opportunities for students, and have fun with your colleagues! Meetings are currently on Fridays from 9:00-11:00 a.m. on the dates listed on this page, and are always open to the general membership.

AMTA Fall Adjudications

Dear Anchorage Area AMTA members:

This correspondence is an announcement of the AMTA Adjudications to be held November 16th – 20st at Amazing Grace Lutheran Church (NEW--Elmore and O'Malley) in Anchorage. Our fall adjudicator is Dr. Jody Graves from Eastern Washington University.

You may either email me at epperson@gci.net (note new email address) or call (346-4565) to request your registration packet. The deadline for submission of forms and checks is Friday, [October 16th](#). Please note the following change: Schedules and other information will be *emailed* Saturday, [October 31st](#), and ribbons will be given to the teachers by the adjudicator at the time of their adjudications. Please contact me if you would prefer these items to be mailed.

This event is for students who play at the Elementary 3 level or higher. Teachers purchase blocks of time (15 minutes/\$15, 25 minutes/\$25, or 35 minutes/\$35) during which their students perform 2 pieces of contrasting

style for an adjudicator to hear and write comments about. One piece should be "recital-ready" and memorized, while the other piece should have all the notes and rhythms learned, but can be "in progress" and needing additional refinement. The adjudicator works with the student at the piano during this mini-lesson and parents and interested parties are welcome to attend. All students receive a ribbon for participation. Adjudicators are chosen for their teaching skills, their musical and pianistic knowledge, and their ability to work with students in a positive and constructive manner.

For teachers who are unfamiliar with the adjudication process, you are welcome to attend and observe free of charge. Please contact me first if you would like to observe. This is a great educational experience for both students and teachers and I hope to see many of you participate.

Cindy Epperson, NCTM
State and Local Adjudication Chair

6901 Round Tree Drive (907) 346-4565
Anchorage, AK 99507 Email: epperson@gci.net

About the Artist

Jody Graves maintains an exciting, diverse and active performing career, and is recognized nationally as a distinguished artist and teacher of piano. Her recital engagements as a soloist and collaborative pianist take her across the United States and abroad. She has performed concerts in Austria, Norway, France, Scotland, Germany, Japan, and in May 2006 toured in the Persian Gulf serving as a Cultural Ambassador for the U.S. State Department. The Middle East Tour, with the Sapphire Trio, included concerts in Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The press reviews have called their performances "exciting...imaginative and compelling."

She is in great demand as an adjudicator for piano competitions and festivals. Each season takes her across the country as an MTA clinician, and she has an active schedule each year as a workshop presenter for teachers. Ms. Graves was a presenter at the *National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy 2009*, and has been a presenter and performer at numerous *State and National MTNA* conferences. She has also served as a judge for the *International Piano Competition* at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Ms. Graves also served as a faculty member for the *International Workshops* summer festivals from 1998-2004. Recently she was invited to develop a program for the Eastman School of Music Summer Session titled 'Plays Well With Others', featuring sessions on collaborative arts performance. She has also authored articles for *American Music Teacher* and *Clavier* magazine.

Ms. Graves completed her third recording project 'Whispers of Light' in 2007, featuring the music of Edward MacDowell, Rachmaninoff and others. She has performed solo and chamber recitals across the country at university guest artist series and community concert events, and has been a featured performing artist several times on public radio. Ms. Graves is the pianist with the nationally acclaimed *Sapphire Trio*. They were featured guest artists at the *National MTNA* conference in Seattle 2005, and the *International Clarinet Festival* in Tokyo.

Ms. Graves is especially interested in promoting concert art music, creating unique and contemporary ways to foster a collaborative experience between artist and listener, and is dedicated to maintaining the life of music in our schools and culture. Ms. Graves is recognized for her creative ability to engage the audience during her concerts with anecdotes, historical perspectives, and humor.

Jody Graves holds a Doctorate Degree in Piano Performance and Literature from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, and her Masters degree from Catholic University in Washington D.C. Her major performance teachers include, Fernando Lares, Jeffrey Kahane, Bela Nagy, Margaret Saunders Ott, and Marilyn Neeley. Dr. Graves is an Associate Professor of Piano at Eastern Washington University in Cheney, Washington and Director of Keyboard Studies. You can find additional information about her at www.sapphiretrio.com



AMTA Conference in Sitka

August 13 and 14, 2010

Jennifer Linn, Guest Presenter

An accomplished pianist, teacher, and clinician, Jennifer Linn currently holds the title of Manager – Educational Piano for Hal Leonard Corporation. In addition to her contribution as a composer and arranger for the I-a Leonard Student Piano Library, her work includes serving as Editor and recording artist for the C. W. Schirmer Performance Editions Clementi Sonatinas Op. 36, Kuhlau Selected Sonatinas, and Schumann Selections from Album for the Young, Op. 68. Ms. Linn also served as Assistant Editor for the HLSPL Technique Classics Hanon for the Developing Pianist and Czerny: Selections from the Little Pianist, Op. 823.

As a clinician, she has presented recitals, workshops, master classes and Hal Leonard showcases throughout

the United States and Canada, including the World Piano Pedagogy Conference, Music Teachers National Association conventions, Music Teachers Association of California and MTNA state programs throughout the country.

Ms. Linn's teaching career spans more than 25 years and includes independent studio teaching of all ages, as well as group instruction and piano pedagogy at the university level. As an active member of MTNA, she has served as the composition chair for the West Central Division as well as vice president of the St. Louis Area Music Teachers Association. Ms. Linn received her B.M. with distinction and M.M. in piano performance from the University of Missouri–Kansas City Conservatory of Music where she was the winner of the concerto-aria competition. She was also named the outstanding student in the graduate piano division and received the prestigious vice chancellor's award for academic excellence and service.

AMTA Conference Notes, Part 2

Randall Faber gave a fabulous conference on August 14th and 15th. He explained in detail some of his books for very young beginners, and discussed numerous teaching ideas for all ages. Here are some highlights from his presentations, continued from the August newsletter.

Parent-Student-Teacher Discussion

- How long is a good practice session? For a committed student, one hour a day. For beginning students, 20 minutes, and later on 30 minutes.
- Parents can sit in on lessons and practice sessions with young students at first. Later, they can walk out for a few minutes to let the students practice alone.
- Short spurts of practice are a good way to start.
- Parents can create a system of practicing to help their children develop a routine.
- Play off the strengths of students, rather than prop up their weaknesses.
- Encourage a “walk the path” mindset: take the steps to reach the pieces you want to play.
- Early exposure to technique of an instrument is highly valuable. Adding a second instrument early can be good, even on a small scale. One option is to play with a drum or recorder on the side.
- “Amateur” means doing music out of love for it. “Professional” means doing music to make money.

- Having a passion for music is when the music has to be so much a part of you, you cannot live without it.
- If students have a passion for music, it is worth studying in college, with maybe another field through which they can make money.
- Music majors develop concrete skills, not just learn how to read textbooks.
- Students who have a passion for two instruments will find the time to practice daily on both. It is important to stay with the second instrument for a while; slow years can be moved through.
- It is okay to try out several activities while growing up. Eventually you will find the one that feels special.
- Students need time in their schedule to reflect and play. They need the freedom to play piano for fun.
- Sometimes students decide on a goal that helps them stay focused on practicing music.
- It is not healthy to force someone to practice and have a career in music. Students need time to find what they really want to do.
- Many people in other professions play music for stress relief.
- It takes 10,000 hours to become highly proficient on an instrument. Take the time to discover whether you want to make that kind of commitment. Find out what you most want to focus on, but keep time open for other subjects. Music teachers need to be flexible with this.

(continued on page 4)

Annual Museum Holiday Performance

The Anchorage Museum has invited students of the Anchorage Keyboard Teachers Association to play seasonal and other appropriate music at the museum on two occasions: December 6, 2009 from 2:15 – 3:00 p.m. and December 20 from 1:30 – 2:15 p.m. On each Sunday afternoon in December, the museum opens its doors to varied holiday musical programs provided by Anchorage performers.

Students at the late Elementary II level or above may participate. The museum is looking for a diversity of styles that is not limited to carols but may also include classical, Chanukah, Kwaanza, etc. Solos and duets are allowed; also piano accompanying another instrument. Although pieces do not need to be memorized they need to be thoroughly prepared to meet the museum's expectations of performance. Dress requirements include dress pants and shirt for boys and dress or dressy outfit for girls appropriate for piano performance. Jeans are not appropriate attire.

There will be three 15 minute slots available to teachers on each of the performance days. Teachers will be responsible to fill that time with students performing 1–2 pieces. Slots are available on a first come, first serve basis.

The deadline to enter is **October 10, 2009**. By **November 20**, I will need the names of the performing students and their selections. Please submit to:

Connie McFarlane
5620 E. 98th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99507

You may contact me at Kmcfar747@aol.com or 333-4970 for further information or to reserve a slot.

Teacher Name: _____

Date: _____

Telephone #: _____

E-mail: _____

Preferred Date for Performance: _____

(AMTA Conference Notes, continued from page 3)

ABCs of Artistry:

Articulation, Breathing, Contrast, Direction

Articulation

- Connect melodic steps, detach skips.
- The bass can support the right hand accents.
- Hold onto important bass notes a little longer.
- Play shorter to sound softer; use an “up-touch.”
- Arm weight creates more sparkle.
- Vary the weight of accents for variety.
- Alternate down and up wrist motions.
- Make a circle with the hand to avoid tension in staccato notes. This helps to shape the phrase.
- Attack accents from the shoulder.

Breathing

- Play like you are singing.
- Breathe with the wrist.
- Waltz put a slight pause after beat 2.
- Lift and drop to reinvigorate the phrase.
- Look for individual phrases in the accompaniment.
- Do not be too literal on 2-note slurs.
- Learn the shape of basic melody and harmony.
- Stepwise motion in lines simplifies phrases.

Contrast

- Dynamics can occur one after the other (*f* to *p*) or at the same time between the hands.
- Listen to the decay of a note to determine the dynamic level of the next note.

- Listen to the color and residue of the sound. Enter against the residue, or enter against silence.
- Add pedal for contrast with other sections.
- Find a note in the phrase to peak on. This can be a more metallic sound, but then come down in the following notes.
- Even if the phrase is all the same level of sound, like a harp effect, you can still find notes to bring out.
- Look for non-chord tones, which create a stepwise line within a pattern.
- Vary how much you voice chords. Look at the melodic line to determine the level of voicing.
- Alternate bringing out the bass or treble in an arpeggiated pattern.
- *Sforzandos* do not always have to be loud. You can take time around them instead. *Sf* on a note means to set it apart from the surrounding notes.
- *Mezzo piano* does not mean a flat, consistent level. Vary the important notes, some louder, some softer, adding up to a *mp* average.
- Look for stepwise melodies in groups of eighth notes.
- Watch for “noisemakers” such as broken octaves in the bass. Bring out just the lower notes, or only the strong part of the beat.
- The left hand can help create the illusion of a crescendo in the melody, even on longer held notes in the right hand.
- Do not overdo emphasis of the bass line if it stays on the same chord.

(continued on page 5)

(AMTA Conference Notes, continued from page 4)

Direction

- *Tranquillo* can be more effective with an element of suspense.
- Fiery passages can be anchored in the line.
- Find flow in the music.
- Stepwise motion in the bass can create direction.
- Move forward through the first phrase, then relax in the second phrase.
- The architecture of a piece reveals its direction.

Teaching Habits: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Examples of negative teaching habits:

- One role model: As teachers, we easily follow the dominant example from our training.
- Skewed mission: We may have one goal for all students, for example only turn out competition winners.
- We may find ourselves being a “teacher of habit.”

Solution: Be a Reflective Practitioner.

- Be aware of your non-verbal statements.
- Communicate your respect and belief in the student.
- Build a healthy ego in the student and set your own ego aside.
- Be very present with the student.
- Do not show if you are bored.
- Show high energy, which will carry over to the student.
- Keep rhythmic pacing in your speech without spaces.

The “Bad”

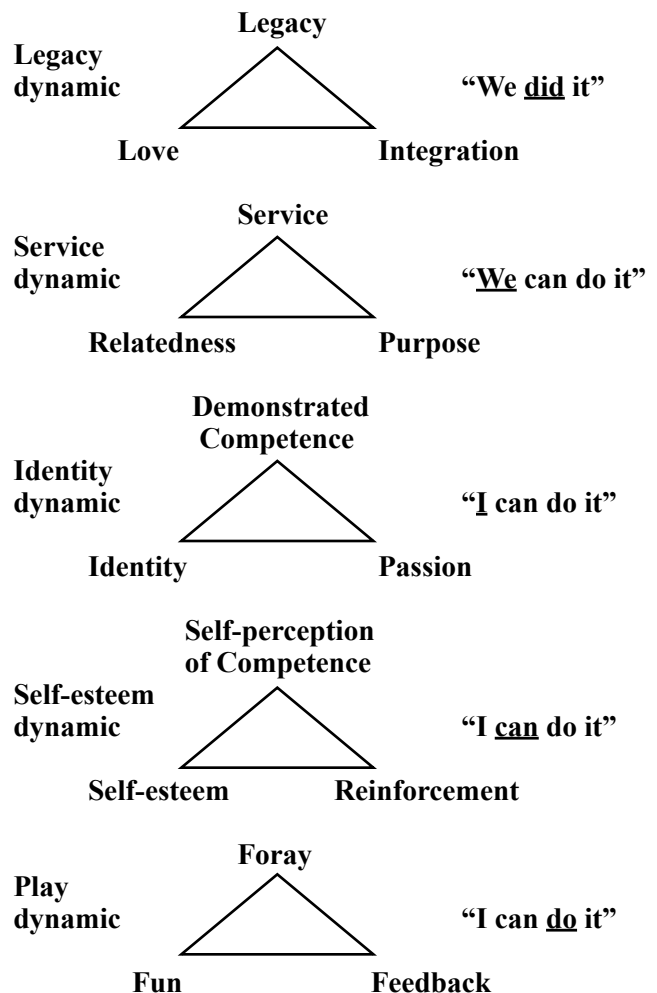
- Boredom
- Withdrawal of self
- Attention on self
- Blaming
- Critical attitude
- Withholding energy
 - We as teachers affect our own boredom.
 - Create energy for the lesson, even if a student comes in bored or tired. Do not respond too much to the state of the student.
 - Give yourself time to re-energize: drink water, eat, or take a walk. Always take care of your own needs.
- We are responsible as a teacher to be present at the lesson.
- Stand and move around.
- Schedule students carefully based on the kind of focus each one needs.
- Good posture helps your energy.
- Find ways to heighten emotional energy.
- Drink water, and give your students water.
- Coach actively, rather than just describing what you want the student to practice.
 - Give lots of attention to detail.
 - Model for the student.
 - Alter your pace to the student’s learning speed.
 - Show the student how to practice efficiently.

- Let the student play through the whole piece before starting to comment, then go back and work on details. This shows respect for the student.
- Remind students of the importance of continuity. Have them start at different places in their pieces.

The “Good”

- Joy
- Being fully present
- Attention on student
- Responsibility
- Cooperative attitude
- Giving of energy
- When teaching technique adjustment, prevent the problem without making a big deal out of it.
- Find how to let energy flow between teacher and student.
- Get into character and stay engaged.
- Authentic Self:
 - Be yourself and teach from yourself.
 - Be on the student’s level; talk with him, not at him.
- Identify solutions and do not dwell on problems.
- Let students laugh at humorous solutions.

Hypothetical Extrapolations for Life Stages



Mountain View Boys & Girls Club Piano Classes

AKTA begins its second 6-week session of group piano classes at the Mountain View Boys and Girls Club on October 5th. The classes are offered at no cost to students ages 8 and up who attend the Club and cannot afford private lessons. This Fall's session is partially funded by Students Helping Students, a project to raise money through student piano performances. Look for announcements soon on how your piano studio can help raise money for future classes.

**Anchorage Keyboard
Teachers Association**
Freya Wardlaw-Bailey
3314 Woodland Park Drive
Anchorage, AK 99517

