

# DUET

newsletter

March 2023

**ROCHESTER PIANO TEACHERS GUILD, INC. &  
GREATER ROCHESTER MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOC.**

## American Composer Series

The American Composer Series with visiting guest composer Valerie Roth Roubos is coming soon. The Nazareth College School of Music has once again supported the ACS. The all day event takes place in Linehan Chapel, Saturday, April 15, 2023.

Valerie Roth Roubos will autograph your students' music, take a picture with each of them as well as a group picture. Meeting a living composer always leaves a lasting memorable impression on the students who participate.

The recitals take place at 10 & 11 AM and at 2:30, 3:30 & 4:30 PM. Valerie

will lead a workshop at 1:00 PM in Linehan Chapel. Please bring a bag lunch and join us in the Community Room at noon. If you do not have a student in the recitals, please join us anyway to give your support to Valerie Roth Roubos.

As many of you know, FJH is in the process of closing and all music will be distributed by Alfred in the future. During this legal process many of you have not received your books ordered in October. For this reason, memory will be optional as we want as many students to participate as possible. It must be

"polished", but not memorized.

We are sorry for the teacher frustration in not receiving music books ordered in October. There are several teachers who have many books and you may call them to come and visit the studio to peruse the music. The FJH "In Recital" series also has at least one of her compositions in each collection.

Please feel free to call either of us for any questions or to see her music. The ACS Application was in the January DUET and March 25 is the deadline.

Teddy Carr/Diane Habeeb  
Co-Chairs



Valerie Roth Roubos

## Valerie Roth Roubos

Valerie Roth Roubos earned degrees in music theory and composition and flute performance from the University of Wyoming. For many years, Ms. Roubos main-

tained a studio in her home in Spokane, Washington, where she taught flute, piano and composition. Currently, Valerie enjoys playing autoharp, flute and pennywhistle in

a bluegrass band.

Valerie's teaching philosophy and compositions reflect her belief that all students, from elementary to advanced, are capable of musical playing that

incorporates sensitivity and expression. Ms. Roubos' choral and piano works represent a variety of musical styles including sacred and secular.

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### Special points of interest:

- ACS: Valerie Roth Roubos on Saturday, April 15 at Linehan Chapel
- RPTG Program with Josh Massicot: "Musicians as Entrepreneurs", 10 AM on Friday, April 21 at the Piano and Organ Center
- Jr. All-Stars Piano Competition, June 3-4 at Nazareth College
- Piano Pedagogy Workshop: Dr. Peter Mack June 26-27 at Nazareth College

## Piano Pedagogy Workshop: Dr. Peter Mack June 26-27, 2023 at Nazareth College



Dr. Peter Mack

Planning is well underway for what promises to be an exciting and entertaining day and a half with Dr. Peter Mack! Dr. Mack hails from Seattle, Washington, is a professor emeritus of piano performance at the Cornish College for the Arts and is the President-elect for Music Teachers National Association. He has performed throughout the United States and Europe, and is known for having an extensive repertoire. He loves working with students and teachers and will be teaching a masterclass on Tuesday afternoon; stay posted for details on student selection! Other topics he will be lecturing on include:

Lower the Rear End of the Elephant Slowly onto the Keys: Our job as teachers is simple: know what to tell them, and try to do it in a way that they will remember. In this talk Peter Mack shares some of his most memorable metaphors that help students technically, artistically, and intellectually. Find out exactly how the hippopotamus helps you count, when the little fishes swim in the Sea of Chopin, and why the roof of the handy hen house had better not collapse!

The Art of the Phrase: It's easy to teach our students to play more musically, once we understand the basic principles of phrasing. In this entertaining and illuminating talk,

Peter Mack teaches us how to recognize the basic phrase types, and how best to interpret them. Everyone can sound better, once they understand the art of the phrase!

Not Only Für Elise: Gorgeous Unknown Compositions by Well-Known Composers: (given in Albuquerque at MTNA) Everyone is familiar with "Für Elise", and rightly so. However, in this lecture we will explore pieces (all by well-known major composers, most of them of mid-level difficulty) that are equally amazing, but far less familiar. Sections from over forty works are performed, and there is an extensive handout in which the difficulty for each piece

*(continued on page 3)*

## RPTG 2023-2024 Slate of Officers

The Nominating Committee is happy to announce that all our current officers have agreed to serve one more year, therefore our slate of officers is as follows:

President  
**Tasha George-Hinnant**

Vice President  
**Teddy Carr**

Recording Secretary  
**Kathie Ross**

Corresponding Secretary  
**Elier Suárez**

Co-Treasurers  
**Stephanie Mercer and  
Brian Preston**

You will receive an official ballot in March via email as well as one being posted on the Website to which you can respond directly.

**RPTG Program  
"Musicians as  
Entrepreneurs"**

**with  
Josh Massicot**

**April 21, 2023  
10:00 AM**

**Piano and Organ  
Center**

## Upcoming Program on April 21, 2023

The next member program is Friday, April 21st at 10 AM at the Piano and Organ Center, 3450 Winston PI, Rochester, NY 14623. Josh Massicot will be presenting a program on "Musicians as Entrepreneurs," helping us navigate this evolving world of social media, email lists and online payments.

Josh Massicot received both the Bachelor of Music Degree in Applied Music (Piano) and the Master of Music Degree in Music Education from the Eastman School of Music, with additional studies in Dalcroze Eurhythmics and Orff-Schulwerk. As a passionate educator, Josh has maintained a private stu-

dio and has served on the faculty of Nazareth College's School of Music for the past fourteen years, where he teaches applied lessons, piano pedagogy, score reading, and class and functional piano.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting in April!

## Gold Cup Festival Report

Thank you to the 38 piano teachers who had their 374 students participate in the 2023 Gold Cup Festival at the Nazareth College School of Music. It was a huge success!

At the three Honors Recitals on February 4 at Nazareth's beautiful Linehan Chapel, 52 students had the wonderful opportunity to perform their selected solos on the impressive Schimmel concert grand piano. Each student re-

ceived a beautifully personalized certificate for their performance.

The festival committee is very appreciative of the teachers who helped on festival day as room monitors, registrars, runners, and for setup and clean-up. The volunteer scorers worked diligently throughout the day as the judges' rating sheets were delivered every hour to the festival office.

We are also extremely grateful to Nazareth College for providing ten rooms and foyer space in the School of Music all day for the festival, and for the all-day use of Linehan Chapel in the Golisano Academic Center for makeups and the Honors Recitals. We extend a special thank-you to Jacob Ertl for coordinating our space usage at Nazareth.

When we have all the

new certificates and Stadt Stars in hand, and individual teacher reports run and printed, teachers will be notified by email when their materials are ready for them to pick up.

From the 2023 Festival Committee:

Jeanne Strong  
Ria Senobroto  
Sarah Rhee-Tirre  
Sigrid Britton  
Beth Fischer

## Valerie Roth Roubos (*continued*)

In 2001, the South Dakota Music Teachers Association selected Ms. Roubos as Composer of the Year. Valerie was chosen to be the 2004-2005 composer-in-residence at Washington State University. In 2006, the Washington State Music Teachers Association named her Composer of the Year. The Wyoming Music Teachers Association selected her as the

Composer of the Year for 2007. Washington State University selected Valerie as the Adopted Composer for 2009-2010.

Ms. Roubos has lectured at the Washington State Music Teachers Conference. She has presented workshops at Holy Names Music Center, Spokane Music Teachers Association, Tri-Cities Music Teachers Associa-

tion, Lake Washington Music Teachers Association, Clark County Music Teachers Association and the North Idaho Music Teachers Association.

In 2011, the Wenatchee Valley Music Teachers Association selected Valerie to compose a piece for the dedication recital of the chapter's new piano. She has served as the chair of the WSMTA

Composer Commissioning Committee and has played an active role in the Spokane Music Teachers Association. For the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012, Holy Names Music Center selected Valerie as the featured composer.

Valerie's piano works are published by The FJH Music Company, Inc.

## Piano Pedagogy Workshop (*continued*)

is assessed, along with its publishing information. It's a fast-moving, fun talk. Nothing in the lecture lasts too long, so if you don't like a work that's being played, don't worry! It will end soon, and there'll be something different coming along right away!

That's not the way it goes! Can performers serve the audience AND the composer? (given in Anaheim at MTNA): Some musicians are purists, completely faithful to the composer/score. Others are entertainers, who feel

that their primary responsibility is to interest the audience. In this talk, Peter Mack asks if it's possible to be both.

When the Foundation Has Already Been Laid: The Transfer Student (given at the virtual MTNA Atlanta 2021 conference): Some teachers won't accept transfer students—"It's fixing other people's mistakes!" But many excellent students begin with someone else. In this session, Peter Mack shares how to teach transfer students so that everybody wins.

In addition to Dr. Mack, we will have a secondary presenter (TBD) to help break up the day! Please join us for what promises to be an entertaining and educational workshop!

Tasha George-Hinnant  
Jacob Ertl  
Pedagogy Co-Chairs

**Piano Pedagogy  
Workshop**

**with  
Dr. Peter Mack**

**June 26-27, 2023**

**Nazareth College  
School of Music**

## Teachers' Column: "Spotlight on Mary Reiff" Interviewed by Beverly Smoker

### What do you remember as your first musical experiences?

I remember being four years old and conducting along with Handel's *Water Music* Suite that my parents would play on the Victrola in our living room.

### What do you remember as your first experiences on the piano?

When I was seven, my mother gave me a few lessons. Soon thereafter she learned that a gifted young student of an exceptional teacher in Sturgis, Michigan would be playing a public recital. Mom and I made the 50-mile drive from Kalamazoo to hear this recital. The student was Martha Braden and the teacher was Frances Clark. We were so impressed that when we learned Frances Clark would be coming to teach at Kalamazoo College the following year, Mom decided that I should study with her. Thus, I began my piano studies with Frances at age 8, and I continued with her until I graduated from high school.

### What in particular do you remember about your work with Frances Clark?

Frances was a dynamic, energetic teacher who could pull music out of anybody. We spent a lot of time on technique as well as phrase shape, tone quality as in singing tone, and capturing the mood of the piece we were working on. We often met for group sessions. One high school semester, those in my group each worked on a different Beethoven sonata, which we played and discussed. It was a great way to become familiar with more standard literature than we had time to prepare ourselves.

### What were some of the highlights of your work with Frances Clark, and what materials did she use in your lessons?

When I worked with Frances Clark, pedagogical materials were limited. Frances continually lamented the lack of suitable quality repertoire for young children. However, I was fortunate to work with her during the time she and Louise Goss were developing *The Music Tree* series and the accompanying literature books. Alexander Tcherepnin was among the many prominent composers they commissioned for the contemporary piano literature volumes. His first commission was written for level one; Frances and Louise put this piece in level nine. His second work, also written for level one, was included in level eight. He commented that it was terribly difficult to write interesting music at that level.

### Did you meet any of the commissioned composers?

Yes, at the weeklong summer teacher workshops.

### What did you learn from Frances Clark that has influenced how you teach the piano?

Many things, but the intervallic approach to reading, first introduced in the "Music Tree", has been helpful in developing solid reading skills.

### When did you know you were going to pursue music for your career path?

In Junior high school I had a wonderful general music teacher who had also studied with Frances Clark. Because of her influence, I decided to become a public school music teacher. I studied music education at DePauw University, along with my piano studies, and then taught elementary music in public schools for five years. When Don and I began a family, I began private piano teaching—with just one student. I have now maintained an independent piano studio for 52 years, and loved it!

### Would you tell us about your involvement with the Rochester Piano Teachers Guild and NYSMTA District 12?

My involvement in both organizations has been related to pedagogy.

I served on the RPTG Board as community liaison for the Piano Pedagogy workshop for about 45 yrs.

I joined the RPTG when the Hochstein School contacted me regarding bringing in Frances Clark for a teacher workshop. Jane Faust and I spent many hours organizing this workshop, which was enthusiastically received as the beginning of an annual piano pedagogy workshop for our community. We brought in Lynn Olson the next year, followed by Robert Hobstetter. The workshop then moved to Eastman, and finally to Nazareth. I joined NYSMTA District 12 shortly after joining RPTG. Along with Nancy Stelter, I served as District 12 Co-Chair and later as NYSMTA Conference Co-Chair. We focused our efforts on pedagogy. I also served as NYSMTA State Certification Chair.

### Do you have any thoughts to share with those beginning their careers as independent piano teachers?

I recently received a thank you letter from a mother who had moved with her boys to a number of different communities. I was teacher number five. She said, "no one else has ever asked my child how their day went." My suggestion for new teachers or all teachers is to talk to your students, listen to your students and be aware that sometimes they are very stressed. It takes thirty seconds to find out if this was a good or tough day or week. My goal as a teacher is to foster musical literacy while creating thoughtful human beings and lifelong musicians.



Mary Reiff



## Performance Preparation

Dear RPTG & GRMTA members,

As spring approaches, performance opportunities abound for our students. Preparing students adequately for performing can be a challenge! While Beth Fischer and I gave a presentation on the topic in October that can be viewed on YouTube, I thought it may be helpful to include a summary in the Duet.

### Be clear on the difference between Polished Performance vs. Play- ing Through

Polished performances include:

- Memorization at some level (while the score may be used, the music has been practiced to so much it is memorized to some extent)
- Accuracy of rhythms, notes, and dynamics, and all other markings
- Consistently repeatable in a variety of contexts

A Playthrough of the piece might include:

- Ability to get from beginning to end of piece
- Not all markings may be observed
- The score is necessary and "practiced sight-reading" may be happening
- Inconsistent results, may be dependent on context and environment

*Performance standards must be communicated to parents!*

### Achieving Standards

Practice with your students how they should practice at home.

*Practice strategies must be communicated to parents!*

### The Elephant in the Room: Performance Anxiety

Be sure to address performance anxiety with your students. It won't go away if you don't mention it.

There are many different strategies for managing (and even harnessing) anxiety. These strategies include visualization,

body work, meditation, and more. Address these issues and help your students learn to use these strategies regularly well before (at least several weeks) a performance.

### Conclusion

Remember to communicate with your students and their parents about the benefits of performing. Remember also that there are different levels of knowing one's music:

- Sight-reading level (able to play notes and rhythms at first sight or within 1-3 playthroughs, not all markings may be observed.)
- Lesson book level (able to play correctly, observing markings, within 1-2 weeks. May not be a musical interpretation, but markings on the page are observed. May be of variable consistency depending on the environment the student is playing in.)
- Performance level (has been studied for at least a month. All markings are observed, musicality is present. Has been played in a variety

of settings so that it may be consistent in a performance setting.)

While we might include more levels of "knowing" than this, this short list gives a general outline. Remind students that in order to perform successfully, they have to be able to play a piece successfully at home, at their lesson, and in front of a casual audience before they will be able to perform it successfully in a more formal performance setting. When a student says, "But it went great at home!" validate them: "This is a first success! Now, this piece needs to have more levels of success for it to be ready for (Gold Cup, Recital, American Composers Series, competition, etc.) Additionally, performing takes practice! Encourage students to take advantage of performance opportunities. The more performing one does, the better one gets at it. Performing, in and of itself, is a skill! I hope to hear your students at the next event!

Tasha George-Hinnant  
RPTG President  
GRMTA Chair

## RPTG Student Recital Information for Spring 2023

Hello, everyone!

What a busy, successful January/February it's been - I'm delighted to report that we had twelve students scheduled to play at our Winter recital on January 15th at Piano and Organ Center, and seven seniors at Asbury First United Methodist Church on February 11th.

Many thanks to Tasha George-Hinnant who stepped in at the last minute to fill in for me on the 11th, and to all of the teachers who prepared their students to play at these two events. Barbara Noval and Teddy Carr provided a beautiful reception after the senior recital - thank you to both!

Our remaining two recital events fall on the same date (May 7th) and the application deadline is the same - April 24th. Please consider performing at the TEACHERS RECITAL! All performances, ensembles, genres and ability levels are welcome. We would love to have a good-sized audience and performer roster this year.

Sunday, May 7th @ Third Presbyterian Church - End of Year Student Recitals (1:00, 2:00, 3:00) Application Deadline - Monday, April 24th There is a 50 minute time limit per recital - I reserve the right to close applications early if we are approaching the limit.

*(continued on page 8)*

**GRMTA presents  
The Junior All-Stars Competition for Piano  
June 3rd & 4th, 2023**

**About the competition...**

This event will provide a forum to represent the very highest level of achievement of Rochester Area piano students. The auditions will be Saturday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> in Nazareth College's Wilmot Hall. The young musicians will receive brief written comments from the judges. A Winners Recital will be held on Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at 3 PM in Nazareth College's Wilmot Hall. Previous Level IV "First Prize" winners who have not yet entered their senior year of high school are invited to perform a work of no more than 8 minutes.

**Eligibility...**

Open to all young pianists who have not yet entered their senior year in high school. Contestants and their teachers must reside in Monroe, Wayne, Livingston, Cayuga, Seneca, Yates, and Ontario Counties. Previous "First Prize" winners may not compete until eligible for the next level.

**Repertoire requirements...**

Each contestant will perform three memorized pieces of contrasting styles. Concertos are not permitted. There is no time limit on a contestant's program, but the length of each audition will be strictly limited. Students playing longer pieces must expect to be stopped partway through.

**Please remember that Photocopied Music not in the public domain is illegal!**

**Levels..... Time Allowed**

I.....born 2013 and after.....	5 minutes	
II.....born 2011-2012.....	7 minutes	
III.....born 2009-2010.....	8 minutes	
IV.....born before 2009*.....	10 minutes	*(but not yet a high school senior)

**Prizes...**

1<sup>st</sup> Prize.....\$60

2<sup>nd</sup> Prize.....\$45

3<sup>rd</sup> Prize.....\$30

Classical Prize for Levels II & III.....\$25   Sonatina/Sonata movement or shorter work by: Beethoven, Clementi, Diabelli, Dussek, Haydn, Kuhlau, Lichner, Mozart, Reinecke or Spindler

**Prizes are awarded at the discretion of the judges who do sometimes withhold prizes.**

**Prizewinners and Honorable Mentions must perform at the Winners Recital or forfeit their prize and certificate.**

**Judging...**

Two distinguished judges will evaluate each level based on polished performances regardless of the pieces' difficulty.

**Fee:** \$28.00 per student – make check payable to NYSMTA (fee is non-refundable except in the event of COVID-19 cancellation)

**Postmark Deadline:** April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 late and/or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

**Each** application **MUST** include: 2 self-addressed, **stamped**, white, business size envelopes, your signed check and completed application form.

**Mail to:** Sheri Neilsen—JASC Chair, 481 Nadine Drive, Webster, NY 14580

**Contact info:** [sheri.neilsen@gmail.com](mailto:sheri.neilsen@gmail.com) 585-747-9885

**GRMTA presents the Junior All-Star Competition for Piano  
June 3rd & 4th, 2023**

**APPLICATION**

**STUDENT INFORMATION:**

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Level Number and Date of Birth

---

Name

---

How to pronounce it

---

Telephone

*I acknowledge receipt and review of all rules and regulations of the competition. I certify that the information provided is correct and will accept the decision of the judges as final. I understand prizes might not be awarded and that refusal to accept the judges' decision will exclude me from further participation.*

---

Student's Signature and Date

**TEACHER INFORMATION:**

Name

---

Telephone/Email

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Teacher's Signature and Date

Mail to: Sheri Neilsen—JASC Chair, 481 Nadine Drive, Webster, NY 14580

Include: 2 self-addressed, stamped, white, business size envelopes, signed check payable to NYSMTA and completed application form

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**DUET is also on the Web at:  
[rochesterpianoteachers.org](http://rochesterpianoteachers.org)**

**RPTG Student Recital Information (*continued*)**

Sunday, May 7th @ Third Presbyterian Church - RPTG Teachers' Recital (4:00) Duets and Solos encouraged - all are welcome! Start planning your repertoire! Application Deadline - Monday, April 24th

Remember, you have two options to complete recital applications - 1) Traditional snail mail - print an application (NEW, UPDATED application available on our RPTG website) and send a paper check. Recital fees are \$5 per student, checks made out to RPTG, Inc. Mail paper applications to:

Beth Fischer  
333 Ayrault Road  
Fairport, NY 14450  
Attn: RPTG Recitals

**Mailed applications/ payments that are received after the deadline will NOT be accepted.**

2) Online applications will be available on our website by April 1st. Please complete one application per student. Recital fees are paid using our PayPal account - @rptguild - you must include a processing fee, and use the "Goods and Services" option. Total amount per student is \$5.65.

There is a limit of 4 students per studio for each recital (other than the senior recital). If the number of applicants is low, I may accept additional students. If we are reaching recital capacity, I reserve the

right to cap the number of students participating.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me! It is a pleasure working with all of you and our wonderful students on behalf of the Guild.

Beth Fischer  
(585) 203-6030 (phone/text)  
[beth@bethfischerpiano.com](mailto:beth@bethfischerpiano.com)