



TexASTA

**American String Teacher's Association
Texas Chapter • Fall 2019**



President's Column

Greetings!

As we settle into the new school year, I want to congratulate Sixto Elizondo IV and the rest TODA State Board for a wonderful TODA Conference this past July. Great clinics and reading sessions were enjoyed by all. Special thanks to **Creston Herron** (Klein ISD) our 2018 "Marjorie Keller Outstanding Young Teacher" of the Year award recipient. His clinic, *Developing a Culture of Excellence*, at the TODA Convention in July following our brief TexASTA Business Meeting was full of wonderful information and insight for all teachers. I also wish to welcome Dr. Blair Williams, our very first Student Chapter/Early-Career String Teacher Chair and Dr. Jack Unzicker, our new Solo Competition Chair. We are delighted to have them both on the board and enthusiastically support their work for TexASTA and string teaching across the state!

TexASTA Secretary and President-Elect Elections: According to our bylaws we need to hold elections for the positions of TexASTA Secretary and President-Elect this spring. Interested members should submit a brief bio (max. 250-word) along with a brief (max. 250-word) description of your leadership activities and reasons for desiring the position. These should be e-mailed to TexASTA Chapter President, Martha Walvoord by January 1st, 2020. (walvoord@uta.edu). These items will be included as links on our electronic election ballot which will be sent out in January.

TexASTA Chapter Awards: Congratulations to Professor Catherine Forbes, the 2019 Phyllis Young Studio Teacher of the Year. This TexASTA Chapter award is presented to one outstanding studio teacher each year. Catherine will be presented with a certificate at our February meeting and will guide a \$500 award given to the University Texas at Arlington to further the work of her studio. I also want to congratulate Laura Gilbert, winner of the 2019 TexASTA "Marjorie Keller" Outstanding Young Music Educator Award. Laura will receive a certificate at our February meeting and present a clinic for new teachers at next summer's TODA conference.

If you are interested in nominating someone for these awards, please see the nomination forms that appear in this newsletter.

Texas Honor Orchestra: The following orchestras were first place winners at the Texas Honor Orchestra Competition held in July at the Texas Orchestra Directors Conference (TODA); make sure to attend their performances in February at the Texas Music Educators Convention (TMEA):

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Full Honor Orchestra | Seven Lakes HS (Katy ISD)
Desiree Overree,
John Mays, Directors |
| JH/MS String Honor Orchestra | Canyon Vista MS (Round Rock ISD)
Ragen Whatley, Director |
| JH/ MS Full Honor Orchestra | Curtis MS, (Allen ISD)
Amanda Su, Linda Orrantia, Directors |

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Please feel free to make copies of the application and pass on to other potential members.

(President's letter continues)

National Orchestra Festival: The following Texas orchestras have been selected, through preliminary round audition, to compete at the National Orchestra Festival which is held in conjunction with the annual American String Teachers Association National Conference (ASTA) March 4-7, 2020 in Orlando, FL.

Brandeis HS Chamber Orchestra	Northside ISD	Kevin Garcia-Hettinger, director
Cinco Ranch HS Sinfonia	Katy ISD	Brett Nelson, director
Grand Prairie Fine Arts Academy Chamber Orchestra	Grand Prairie ISD	Richard Galvan, director
John Jay HS Chamber Orchestra	Northside ISD	Heather Gonzalez, director
Lee HS Orchestra "StrictLEE Strings"	Midland ISD	Brigido Garza, director
Martin HS Symphony Orchestra	Arlington ISD	Jamie Ovalle, director
Plano SH Symphony Orchestra	Plano ISD	Brian Coatney, director

Midwest Performers: Congratulations to the Texas Orchestra who will be representing our state at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Conference in Chicago this December:

Westwood HS Symphony Orchestra	Round Rock ISD	Joshua Thompson, director
Ronald Reagan HS Chamber Orchestra	North East ISD	Sixto Elizondo IV, director
South MS Symphony Orchestra	Edinburg CISD	Omar Estrella, director
Garcia MS Camerata Orchestra	Fort Bend ISD	Frances Weberpal, director

SAVE the Date(s)

Midwest Intl. Band & Orchestra Conference	(Dec. 18-21, 2019)	Chicago, IL
Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA)	(Feb. 12-15, 2020)	San Antonio, TX
ASTA National Conference	(March 4-7, 2020)	Orlando, FL

This is OUR AMAZING National Conference. I hope to see you there!

Mattha Walvoord, President

TexASTA



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Private Teacher's Corner

-By Dr. Stephanie Meyers, Studio Chair

Good day, fellow string pedagogues! We have happily fallen into the time of year when the summer glow has washed away and our students are getting into the nitty gritty of in-depth practice! This is a good time to talk about some goals for our students when it comes to practicing. I would like to talk about some ideas to help alleviate feelings of boredom, being stuck, or not seeing progress in the practice room.

It is important that we teach our students how to imbue their daily practice sessions with a sense of direction and purpose. This should encompass taking the time each evening to "map out" and write down in a notebook practice goals for the following day. Doing so will help give the practice session direction and forward motion, which will translate to a sense of accomplishment. If a student knows that they are accountable to practice all of the items mapped out the night before, they are less likely to get bogged down with one passage or task and will instead spread their work over the entire assignment. This will eventually help them gain better time management skills. It is very wise to check in with our students regarding the way that they divide up time while practicing. If we presume they already know how to do this yet every week one part of the assignment is neglected, it is our job to help our students gain a better understanding of how to manage time effectively in the practice room.

Practicing a weekly assignment to "get it done" misses the point and can leave our students feeling burned out or uninspired. As educators, it is important that we spend part of each lesson thinking outside the box with our students. We can do this by encouraging our students to explore musical ideas in conjunction with their focus on important items such as good intonation and proper bow strokes. For example, if a student is assigned a Bach gigue and focusing on the way he/she wishes to play the articulations, it is important to step in and show the student some ideas that may be incorporated in the next practice sessions. This may include emphasizing different notes or trying a passage three or four different ways in order to decide what is the best option. If your student is very focused on intonation, you can lead the lesson into another direction (after working through some passages carefully) by discussing the dynamic plan or the ideas behind certain important harmonic and/or musical lines present in the piece. By going into a different direction, we can show our students that there is more to practicing than always focusing on the same item and becoming bogged down or feeling stuck. It is valuable to plan out some practice time simply to consider how to approach a piece in terms of its musical framework. We can direct the student to expand on their present level of preparation by looking into how they would like to connect with the piece on a musical level. It is wonderful to remind students that we are all story tellers. Our students should be encouraged to create a wonderful and interesting story for the audience from the very beginning, even the first time they start working on a new piece of music!

When students observe to us that they do not see progress in the practice room, it is important to hear their concern and focus on a couple things you have seen progress on in the past lessons. They may be so concerned about one aspect of their playing that they are not able to clearly recognize improvement in other areas! It is also good to remind students that since we spend so much time practicing, what may not be obvious progress to them is in fact noticeable at their lessons. I like to tell my students, when they feel this way, that they should try to aim for very short-range goals and build from the sense of pride accomplished by learning a couple measures or playing one bow stroke correctly. It is crucial our students understand that our art is a craft that often does not allow for instant gratification. Many times, we need to see the results after working through a "building block" process where we put one block on top of the next, until we have created the final product and are ready for performance.

I wish you all the best for a wonderful Fall semester. Please print out the ASTA CAP Handbook, available for all members on the National ASTA website. Make a goal of adding one new item – a new discovery! – to your teaching library each semester in order to update your approach. The handbook has many great ideas for repertoire pertaining to each level. The great news is you can also use it as a guide to prepare your students for ASTA CAP! We are excited that there will be exam sites in El Paso, San Antonio, and Houston this year – hopefully with more to come!

Why Join ASTA?

-By Rebecca Tast

When you live in a well-supported music making state like Texas, and have thriving organizations dedicated to music teaching and learning such as TMEA and TODA, you might wonder why it would be beneficial to also join national organizations such as the American String Teachers Association. The American String Teachers Association. ASTA is the only national organization dedicated to ALL teachers and performers of string instruments. The national ASTA organization and the Texas Chapter of the American String Teachers Association are committed to providing professional development, career services, and encouraging a sense of community through a wealth resources, programs, and initiatives aimed at the betterment of string teaching and playing. Here are a few reasons why ASTA is the place for you:

1. Joining ASTA automatically makes you a part of the Texas Chapter of the American String Teachers Association, meaning that you can take advantage of opportunities at both the state and national levels.
2. The Texas Chapter of the American String Teachers Association sponsors a solo competition, provides ASTACAP guidance, recognizes outstanding private studio teachers, and is currently working on developing new programs to encourage and assist our young school string and orchestra teachers. By joining, you have the opportunity to communicate and network with fellow Texas teachers and teachers from across the nation through the online member directory.
3. As an ASTA member you receive a subscription to American String Teacher (AST) and access to the String Research Journal. Published quarterly, the American String Teacher provides instrument specific forums, feature articles, and news and developments related to all aspects of string playing and teaching. The String Research Journal is the only scholarly journal committed specifically to publishing peer-reviewed research related to string teaching, learning, and performance. You will also receive newsletter updates on the happenings of our TexASTA chapter.
4. ASTA has developed a number of valuable teaching resources for the classroom and private studio. These resources are available online (astastrings.org) and in print.
5. ASTA members have the ability to participate in the ASTA Mentor Program. This program connects early career teachers who are looking for guidance in the classroom with highly qualified, experienced mentor teachers from across the nation. Each year ASTA accepts applications from those interested in being a mentee or mentor.
6. ASTA provides members with special rates on instrument insurance, and ASTA members are eligible for numerous other types of insurance coverage including health, dental, life, auto, educator's liability, and others.

The items listed above are just a small sampling of the programs and benefits that ASTA has to offer. I encourage you to visit the ASTA website (www.astastrings.org) and explore the many ways that ASTA can support you. We hope that you will consider joining us!

TEXASTA Young Artists Solo Competition

We are less than a year away from 2020 TexASTA Young Artists Solo Competition! The biennial event is a great opportunity for college and pre-college musicians. Please encourage your young players of violin, viola, cello, double bass, guitar, and harp to submit their recordings. The competition will be judged by a distinguished panel of adjudicators during the Fall of 2020.

The TexASTA Young Artists Solo Competition takes place every other year, and chooses state winners and honorable mentions in both the junior and senior divisions. Winners will perform at the annual TexASTA and/or TMEA Orchestra Division meeting in February 2021, at the Texas Music Educators Association Convention/Clinic. In addition, the Senior Division first place winner will receive an award of \$1,000; the Junior Division first place winner will receive \$700. A letter of intent to enter the competition will be due on September 1st, 2020, and the deadline for receipt of all application materials will be due on October 1st, 2020.

Updated information on the TexASTA Young Artists Solo competition is posted on the TexASTA website, <https://texasta.wordpress.com/solo-competition/>

Questions may be addressed to Dr. Jack Unzicker, Chair, TexASTA Young Artist Solo Competition at unzicker@uta.edu.

Creston Herron's New Teacher's session at TODA



Please complete all applicable fields on the registration form. If you have any questions, please contact Member Services. We look forward to welcoming you to the ASTA community.



703-279-2113



www.astastrings.org



Fax form: 703-279-2114
Mail form: 4155 Chain Bridge Rd.,
Fairfax, VA 22030

Who recruited you to join ASTA?

RECRUITER NAME _____

RECRUITER CITY/STATE _____

RECRUITER E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Membership Category

- Professional member
- Student member: full time student *[Please provide expected Graduation Date (MM/YY)]* _____ / _____
- Senior member: age 62 or older
- Dual: two professionals at same address *[Please complete two separate forms]*

Contact Information

- Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.
- Dr. Prof. Other _____

FIRST NAME _____ MIDDLE INITIAL _____ LAST NAME _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

PRIMARY PHONE: WORK HOME _____

CELL PHONE _____

Select a primary address where you will receive correspondence & if applicable, *AST Journal*. Home School/Work

HOME ADDRESS

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

COUNTRY _____

SCHOOL/WORK ADDRESS

(Required for Professional & Student Members)

SCHOOL/ORG. NAME _____ DEPT./MAIL STOP _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

COUNTRY _____

Tell Us About You

(Required for professional/senior and dual members)

What is your primary profession?

- Higher Education
- K-12
- Student
- Private Studio
- Performer
- Conductor
- Retired
- Music Administrator
- String Enthusiast

What year did you start teaching music? _____

What level do you teach? *(Select all that apply.)*

- Elementary [K-5]
- Middle [6-8]
- High School [9-12]
- Collegiate (Undergrad & Graduate)
- Adult

What is your primary instrument?

- Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Double Bass
- Guitar
- Brass
- Percussion
- Harp
- Piano
- Woodwind

ASTA State Chapter

Your membership dues include state chapter membership. To find your state information, visit www.astastrings.org.

Dues Payment

- \$116: Professional Member
- \$85: Senior Member
- \$57: Student member
- \$162: Dual *(age 62 or older)*

"ADD ON"

- \$15: Membership certificate
- \$7: Membership pin

TOTAL \$ _____

PAYMENT INFORMATION

- Check—make payable to ASTA (U.S. funds only)
Check No. _____
- Visa MasterCard American Express

CARD NO. _____ EXP. DATE _____ CVV _____

NAME ON CARD _____ SIGNATURE (PAYMENT AUTHORIZATION) _____

By completing this form, I confirm that this information is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Dues are nontransferable and nonrefundable. There is a \$30 charge for all items returned from the bank.