

Virginia Music Teachers Association

Blue Ridge Chapter

Annual Report

2010-2011

Blue Ridge Chapter is comprised of a small group of teachers from a wide geographic area, stretching from Bluefield to Abingdon. Although small in membership, Blue Ridge Chapter sponsored four events during the 2010-2011 teaching year.

On September 18, Dr. Melody Payne presented a workshop at Bluefield College, entitled "Practicing: Pedagogical Applications of Current Research".

Melody Payne's Biographical Information:

Most recently, Dr. Payne was Assistant Professor of Piano Pedagogy at Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi, where she directed the Piano Pedagogy program, taught piano and related courses, and directed the Taylor School, the preparatory division of the Mississippi College Department of Music. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and a Master of Music in Piano Pedagogy and Doctor of Philosophy in Music with emphases in music education and piano pedagogy from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, where she studied piano pedagogy with Steve Betts and piano with Constance Carroll. Dr. Hanberry has presented research on practicing, early- and intermediate-level pedagogical piano compositions, and piano performance accuracy at the National Conference of the Music Teachers National Association, the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, and the Mississippi Music Teachers Association State Conference. She has presented lecture recitals and workshops on beginning group keyboard experiences, intermediate piano literature, practicing, and technology in the piano studio at local and state levels. Additionally, Dr. Hanberry is an active adjudicator and collaborative pianist. Dr. Melody Hanberry Payne has recently moved to the Marion, Virginia area where she is setting up a studio and providing adjunct instruction at Emory and Henry College.

On November 6, our annual Kelly Strickland Hymn Festival was scheduled at two locations: Wytheville Baptist Church in Wytheville, and First United Methodist Church, Bluefield, Virginia. The chapter decided to hold the festival in two locations this year to encourage more student participation. The purpose of this festival is to encourage students to participate in the music programs of their places of worship.

On March 19, a Masterclass was held at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Wytheville, with Dr. Tracy Cowden of Virginia Tech providing instruction for the students. Students performed two selections from memory: one from the traditional repertoire, one from the 20th Century repertoire. Seven students, ranging in experience from intermediate level to college level, participated in this educational event.

Dr. Cowden's biographical Information:

Tracy Cowden, Associate Professor of Piano and Vocal Coach at Virginia Tech, has appeared as soloist with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, the Chamber Orchestra of Southwest Virginia, the Central Ohio Symphony Orchestra, and the Virginia Tech Symphonic Wind Ensemble. As a collaborative pianist, Tracy frequently performs with a diverse array of soloists and chamber ensembles, including recent concerts with tenor Paul Sperry, soprano Caroline Worra, oboist Joseph Robinson (retired principal oboe, New York Philharmonic), and fellow members of the Wintergreen Chamber Players at the Wintergreen Summer Music Festival. Tracy also recently recorded five new works for trumpet and piano with colleague John Adler on a CD titled *Confronting Inertia*, which was released by Origin Classical in October 2009. Tracy has previously performed with the Cavani Quartet, the Audubon Quartet, the Carpe Diem String Quartet, and the Marble Cliff Chamber Players, and in recitals with principal musicians from the Montreal, Vancouver, Boston, and Columbus symphony orchestras.

In addition to her work as a performer, Tracy was recently honored for her work as a teacher with a Certificate of Teaching Excellence from the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Tech. Also active as a clinician and lecturer, she has presented master classes and workshops on topics related to collaborative music-making and creative programming at national conferences for both the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) and the College Music Society (CMS), as well as in Virginia, Michigan, and Ohio. Most recently, Tracy presented a workshop on cross-disciplinary concert models at the CMS International Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia. She has received two Faculty Research Awards from the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Tech to pursue creative programming ideas; the most recent resulted in the commission of a new set of songs by composer Gregory J. Hutter (a fellow Western Michigan University graduate) for soprano, cello, and piano, set to the poetry of Edgar Allan Poe, and premiered in November 2009. Tracy is a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music through MTNA, and also currently serves as Treasurer and Collaborative Chair of the Virginia Music Teachers Association. At the national level, she served on the planning committee for the 2009 MTNA National Conference.

A Michigan native, Tracy has previously served as a faculty member at Ohio Wesleyan University, Kalamazoo College and Hope College. She received the D.M.A. and M.M. degrees in Piano Accompanying and Chamber Music from the Eastman School of Music, and a B.M. degree in Piano Performance from Western Michigan University. Her principal teachers have included Jean Barr, Douglas Humpherys, Fernando Laires, and Phyllis Rappeport.

On April 16, our annual Ribbon Festival was held at Bluefield College. Approximately fifteen students, representing four teachers, performed solo pieces in the style of their choice by memory. Each received an award ribbon.

Our year-end business meeting date and time are TBA. Agenda items include evaluation, planning and the election of new officers.