

Music Education Network for - The Visually Impaired - *An International Coalition of Parents, Educators, and Students*

- MENVI Headquarters -

Southern California Conservatory of Music

Mail: 22726 Roscoe Blvd., West Hills, CA 91304

Phone: (818) 704-3819; E-mail: <richardtaesch@menvi.org>

Website: www.menvi.org

Journal – Fall 2012

Issue 37

MENVI Journal

***News Journal has a new home; new links; Roster 16; BANA music code revisions;
Music Touch - A new tool for braille music literacy***

ATPC TO TAKE OVER BRAILLE JOURNAL

The Alternate Text Production Center – ATPC – will take over production for embossing and mailing of our next journal in early 2013. There are nearly 200 members of MENVI who subscribe to braille editions of the tri-annual periodical.

Our sincerest thanks to Braille Institute for the many years it has served our network in producing the early newsletters and journal editions. Also, very happy retirement wishes go to Carol Jimenez. Her excellent care of the network through Braille Institute Press has been greatly appreciated by all of us.

- *The A to Z of Carnegie Hall ...*
- *Rising Star American Tenor Nicholas Phan*
- *Marvin Hamlisch left imprint ...*
- *Piano Sonata in the key of Kepler ...*
- *Tumbling Villa-Lobos ...*
- *Bizet's Flower Song ...*
- *Elliot Carter still composing at 103 ...*

These are just a few, so take a look to see what might be of interest to you. Special thanks go to member, Edgar Cabachuela, for providing this service to our webmaster every week.

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER 16

Our 16th Edition of the membership listings will soon be available to member subscribers. Be sure to check your listing now for accuracy and active updates. The print edition alone has well over 50 pages, indicating the enormous growth of your network since 1997. Unfortunately, costs now prohibit hardcopy of the document; however, electronic files in *Word* are complete with hyperlinks for email networking with fellow members.

Every effort is made to prevent the roster from going to anyone but registered members so as to protect your privacy. It is therefore up to members themselves to help us prevent unauthorized use of the roster for private mailing, commercial, or promotional purposes. Help us in this effort by reporting anyone who may be using our member list for any purpose other than networking among registered members.

ARTICLE TITLE LISTINGS

Members at large are now able to access links to a list of subjects, article titles, and most primary information contained in our periodicals dating back to 1997 beginning with Issue No. 1. Go to: www.menvi.org/article_listings.html or simply click on “article subject listings” anywhere that it appears on the site itself.

EXCITING NEW LINKS ON OUR WEBSITE

If you haven't been up to the MENVI site lately, you may want to take a new look at the “*Other links of general music interest*” section. Some of the new subjects from articles that have found their way into our collection are:

DISCUSSION LIST ACTIVITIES

[Contributed by Assistant Webmaster, Jacob Sexton]

There are a number of transcriptions of very interesting discussions that have taken place on our discussion list in recent times; you can see some of them at the “Articles and Discussion” page on the site. A few of the recent subjects that have appeared there lately are:

- *Accessible Theory exam test material?*
- *Marking braille music scores*
- *More on conducting questions*
- *An excellent website for singers*
- *Discussions on fingerings*

The list sees many subjects and interests from members, and common topics include teaching methods, music braille issues, audio and verbal communication, and accessibility.

New applicants sometimes choose to ask for more information before subscribing to *menvi-mail* or to *menvi* web news. If you are not on the discussion list, and would like to join in now, go to the site and fill out an updated application.

www.menvi.org

TEACHERS, TRANSCRIBERS, & MUSIC READERS' COLUMN

Most everyone who receives this periodical is affected in some way by revisions and changes to our Music Braille Code. Transcribers, readers, resource teachers, and more owe thanks for the many hours invested by those who watch over and protect these vital standards. Of all the braille codes in existence, the music code is the **ONLY** braille code that is unified throughout the world.

The codebook – *MBC, 1997* – is currently undergoing a major revision process. Thanks to pioneers like Bettye Krolick, and all others of the BANA Music Technical Committee, our standards remain high and continue to undergo refinement.

Once the BANA committee formally approves the new codebook, we will announce it on our list and in the next journal issue 38.

Other areas that will be revised and clarified in the new codebook include format suggestions for textbook footnotes, transcriber’s notes, and some issues having to do with harmonic analysis. The chapter on classic guitar has also been re-worked as well. Special thanks go to MENVI member, Tina Davidson, for providing the BANA committee with some new guitar examples for that chapter.

Look for future articles in our journal dealing with new ideas on classic guitar notation; for example, some experimentation is underway to create temporary *schematic* depictions in bar-over-bar formats that can be used to help students better understand and analyze the code presentations for guitar.

Helpful hints for music transcribers:

[*Yes, readers, you too should read this; what affects transcribers, affects you even more.*]

Transcribers have individual and unique ways of making their work as accurate as possible. Here are a few things that some have said work well for them:

- With vocal music, try seeking the phrase structure of the word lines, carefully marking the breaks where you feel they may happen. This can be an enormous help when proofing. Worry less about breaking measures, and consider the reader’s need to see music in logical phrases in performance.
- If a print page break interrupts the flow of the music line, perhaps move it slightly ahead to where a break in rhythm occurs. Your reader will approve, even if the indication does not occur exactly where the print page actually turns.
- While proofing, try holding thy head in a fixed position while moving eyes only from computer screen to your print copy; one can hold the place better, and ease fatigue.
- If your reader requests contracted braille for English song text and surrounding verbiage, it might be prudent to include a caveat in your transcriber’s note page to the effect of: “*English song text and other surrounding text appear in contracted braille by request of the reader.*” This way, someone who is code stringent won’t assume unkind things of you.

READERS: Transcribers often go through agonizing decisions such as how to make your music more readable; some decisions include how to treat runover lines, or make sight-singing exercises flow so that you can show up the print readers in your class (and many braille music readers do). These special efforts may not be noticeable to you, but nonetheless, should be appreciated.

Take notice of things that you think might reveal special expertise and care on your behalf. Let the transcriber know that you are aware of such things, and appreciate the efforts. Truth to tell, few readers neither notice nor take the time to compliment a careful transcriber on his or her work; but many will criticize accuracy and grumble at an error, which is usually much less important than the former.

* * *

ANNOUNCEMENTS / REMINDERS

Membership Rosters (again)

Be sure to verify your member contact information now, before new rosters become available. When you see names in the listings with no addresses or emails, it usually means that someone forgot to update. Changes can **ONLY** be implemented when an update application is filled out: go to www.menvi.org. Need to contact the Webmaster for online service or a new file? Call toll-free at: **866-824-876**

ONLINE WEBMASTER INFORMATION

About our Privacy Policy – from the Webmaster, Jared Rimer

Our privacy policy has different sections dealing with: Contacting MENVI, our application, cookies, email lists, files being posted and links, spam and viruses, contacting other members, and the ongoing online database that is maintained by the webmaster. This policy is not written in legal terms as seen on most sites. We invite members to look at the privacy policy, which is linked on all pages. Or just give me a call if you need information.

Jared Rimer – Webmaster
866-824-7876 toll-free or 818-921-4976
Jacob Sexton Assistant Webmaster
888-810-2235 toll-free
E-mail the web team at: contact@menvi.org

ARTICLES FROM OUR MEMBERS

MUSIC TOUCH from DANCING DOTS New Tool for Braille Music Literacy

This fall, Dancing Dots announces the development of a whole new technology for learning music theory and braille music. The new Music Touch series exploits the power of the Talking Tactile Tablet hardware to teach concepts of music and how it is written in braille using a multimedia approach. The first of the planned series of courseware presents the content of Richard Taesch's Introduction to Music for the Blind Student: A Course in Braille Music Reading, Part I. The authors plan future additions to the series that present more of Mr. Taesch's work as well as completely new educational games and quizzes.

Over the past two years, students at St. Lucy Day School for the Blind in Philadelphia have tested the courseware. Their feedback and that of their music teacher, Mrs. Maria Ceferatti, has been invaluable. Over the course of two rounds of testing, braille reading students from fourth to eighth grade, demonstrated marked improvement in their understanding of musical concepts like scales and intervals, as well as their ability to read and write braille music.

How Does it All Work?

Students place a prepared sheet of braille paper on the flat surface of the Talking Tactile Tablet (TTT), a kind of horizontal touch screen device that attaches to your PC via a standard USB connection. When you press anywhere on the braille page, the TTT talks back to you, sings back to you or plays the tune back to you. You can learn to read and to write music in braille while perfecting your music theory skills.

Students learn at their own pace. Each sheet introduces new concepts of music theory and braille music notation and offers numerous activities to help you to learn and apply those concepts.

Learn all about scales, intervals, time signatures, Key signatures, rests and rhythms. Learn three different names for each note of the scale: letter name, solfege name and scale number. Learn how to read and write all of the above in braille music notation.

You respond to quiz activities by pressing on the correct answer or by entering the braille using the braille keyboard included. For example, Music Touch might say: "Find all of the quarter rests on the page." You press on any of those symbols and Music Touch affirms your answer by saying "Good", "Great", etc. If you should press any symbol that is not a quarter rest, you will hear a message such as "No", "Not right", etc. Other activities will instruct you to enter your response on the braille keyboard.

The system allows for plenty of independent study but the presence of a teacher is still very important. Throughout the course, students need to be reminded to actively read the braille while listening and singing. Teachers remind them to read and help them to get to know the TTT and its operations. Teachers need not be music specialists although a musical background is a plus. Using the teacher guide included, teachers can learn right along with their students. The system is flexible enough to allow for one-on-one instruction or a small class setting.

Dancing Dots is accepting orders for this new courseware, which will begin shipping this fall. For more information, see www.DancingDots.com and look for the link for "Music Touch."

* * *

PROBLEM SOLVING BY OUR MEMBERS

Following is a very interesting question that was sent by one of our members.

"Our Women's Chorus director is requiring that we write solfege syllables into one piece per concert. Since I read braille, I was wondering how I might accomplish this. I'm going to attach a sample of my current system".

Here is the sample of her system:

Soprano: 1-mi-fa, sol-mi-do, re-mi-fa, mi-sol--, sol-mi-do, la-la-la, la-sol-fa-la, sol, sol
Alto: mi-do, re, ti, do-re, sol, do-re-mi, fa-fa-fa, mi-re-do-mi, re--, re, mi-fa, sol-mi-do, re-mi--fa

An alternative suggestion for her follows:

"If you are required to do it in hard copy like the others, you might try using only the initial letters of the syllables. That could save time, and be easier for you to read"

Here is her soprano line done in that way:

Soprano: 1mf, smd, rmf, ms--, smd, ll, lsfl, s, s

This method could be used in theory books where the syllables are aligned under notes, and when there might be a preference to avoid creating large spaces between them.

WORRIED READERS COLUMN

Many braille music readers have expressed concern over the possible adoption of the UEB (Unified English Braille) code, and what the changes will mean to them.

Although the following information does not infer any definitive decision yet, it may of some help to know that the National Braille Association – NBA – does not support the adoption of UEB as a standard code in the November decision process at this time. This does not mean that they oppose the concept of a unified code, but are presently maintaining discussion on the hardships that this particular adoption may present.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

A little anecdote just for fun

It is quite amazing to learn that so many music braille readers often share a common hobby of Ham Radio. Yes, contrary to some belief, amateur radio is quite alive and well and still serves as a kind of national-guard backup for emergency communication.

Perhaps next to smoke signals, braille and the Morse code may be the oldest forms of direct digital communication. As a hobby, radiotelegraphy has flourished even more since the FCC licensing requirement for code proficiency was removed.

Perhaps you will enjoy this short "letter to the editor" found in a hobbyists' popular radio journal. [Apparently inspired by the futuristic novel, "1984" by English author, George Orwell]

2084 by George Oh'Well

Dear Editor:

I'd like to thank you for your thoughtful comment regarding those of us who "... *clicking a mouse will never replace pushing buttons and turning dials.*" In the eighties before my own work involved so many hours a day on a computer, I was thrilled at my first attempt at digital RTTY [radio teletype] – it was really fun.

A night or so ago, I dreamt that I was about to shower before settling down to a relaxing evening of ham radio. Knowing that Big Brother monitors our "Smart water meters," I first needed to step up to my 2084 computer keyboard (neatly installed in my water closet) in order to adjust the flow, set the time, and access the desired water using my conservation-defined software. After a 12-hour day on a similar keyboard, I had lost my special shower password. Drat!

I reached for my W/C Smart Phone (no digital pictures, please) to seek customer support in Calcutta. They were so helpful, and the shower took place about 3 hours later. Needless to say, 20-meter [licensed H.F. radio spectrum] propagation was down by the time I saddled my J-38 [vintage military telegraph key]. Sigh!

MENVI Specialists Committee

Band Music/Director - Rick Coates,

Band & Music Technology - The Governor
Morehead School - rick.coates@esdb.nc.gov

Braille Piano Music Library Resources - Stephanie Pieck,
Concert Pianist; Braille Music Instructor for New
York Commission for the Blind and Visually
Handicapped - themusicsuite@verizon.net

Braille Music Textbooks and Formats - Ed Godfrey -
Braille Program Assistant, Washington Talking Book
& Braille Library, Seattle - ed@wtbbl.org

College/University Disabled Student Services -

1. Jeff Senge, Cal State University, Fullerton
jsenge@exchange.fullerton.edu
2. Mary Ann Cummins-Prager, Cal State University,
Northridge - CSUN
mary.ann.cummins-prager@csun.edu

VI Computer Music Access and Instruction - David Pinto,
VI Music Instruction and Computer Music Access;
President of *YesAcessible.com* and Director of
Academy of Music for the Blind – info@ouramb.org

Large Print –

1. Joan Hudson-Miller, JHM Consulting, Inc.
(Formerly: President, LRS Large Print) -
lrsjhm@aol.com
2. William McCann, *Large Print and Publications* –
Dancing Dots – info@dancingdots.com

Music Transcriber Training and Certification –

Karen Gearreald, Braille Music Advisor/Instructor
for The Library of Congress, Washington DC –
karen118@cox.net

National Braille Association - Lawrence Smith,

NBA Music Committee - musicbrl@earthlink.net

Postsecondary Braille Music Literacy & Advocacy –

Valerie Gaer-Sandler M.M., Postsecondary Education
Specialist - vgaer@msn.com

Professional Transcriber Software and Technology -

Robert Stepp, President of Computer Application
Specialties Company (*ED-IT PC; Braille 2000*) -
Bob08@braille2000.com

Programs and Resources – David Goldstein, Director of

National Resource Center for Blind Musicians –
info@blindmusicstudent.org

Student Certification (Practical/Theory Examinations) -

Grant Horrocks, SCCM Piano and Conservatory
divisions - siloti@sbcglobal.net

VI Computer Assisted Technology -

William McCann, President of Dancing Dots
Braille Music Technology - bill@dancingdots.com

MENVI ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Karen Gearreald
David Goldstein
Bill McCann
Jared Rimer (MENVI Webmaster)
Stephanie Pieck
Jacob Sexton (Assistant Webmaster)
Robert Smith
Maureen Carole Young