

# Crescendo

## EVENTS:

Jan 24th

☞ MMTA Piano Contest,  
@ St. Ben's

Jan 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>

☞ MMTA Piano Contest @  
Bethel

Jan 31st

☞ Elizabeth Wolff  
Masterclass, 3pm-  
Schmitt Music, Roseville

Feb 4th

☞ DEADLINE- Theory  
Exam @ St. Bens (3/21)  
[\(More Info\)](#)

Feb 15th

☞ Salon se Lève, 2:30pm  
[\(More Info- P. 3\)](#)

Feb 21st

☞ Federation Gold Cup  
Festival  
☞ Schubert Club PRELIMS  
[\(More Info\)](#)  
☞ MUSICALE, St. Cloud  
6:30pm

Feb 22nd

☞ MUSICALE, Roseville  
1-5pm

Feb 28th

☞ MMTA Young Artists  
Contest- PRELIMS

May 2nd

☞ Spring Gala



## IN THIS ISSUE:

- ☞ Events P.1
- ☞ Ten Benefits of Music P.1
- ☞ Student Spotlight- Aaron Fagerstrom P.2
- ☞ Student Accomplishments P.2
- ☞ Salon se Lève P.3
- ☞ Holiday Music Recap P.4

## Ten Benefits of Music/Dance Study

*by Dr. Paul Wirth, Artistic Director*

Happy New Year everyone! You know, this year all over the world, there will be many millions of people making music... wherever you go, and no matter what the human condition is- even places where the human condition is desperate. And you'd think that those who are less fortunate certainly don't have time for the "luxury" (as many in OUR culture would think) of music. But there it is, in every type of condition, people are making music there, and that's because music is within each and every one of us. All of the ingredients of music come out of each and every one of us... like sound (our voice box), beat (our heart), rhythm (our movement), tempo (how we move), melody (the inflection in our voice), form (we all have a shape!), dynamics (whispering and YELLING!!), and articulation (our enunciation).... In fact, they ALL derive from inside us as human beings. So making music is quintessentially human, and we need to know that if we're going to be happy about all that practice time!

So you would think the benefits of music study would be well known to all, yet it's amazing how few of my students can name even two of them- let alone ten! But they are SO valuable and encouraging for them to know! So here they are... The first (and most important!) is:

**1. Music is a language.** It's a language of direct emotional expression, and there's no prose, or poetry, or sculpture, or any other art form that can

so immediately express our exact emotions as can the language of music! In fact, Leo Tolstoy called it "emotional shorthand." People like to say that a "picture is worth a thousand words"... Well, we like to say that a "melody is worth a million!" The second benefit is,

**2. Music makes you smart.** It develops the whole brain- and in fact, simultaneously lights up more parts of the brain than any other activity- cognitive, coordinative and aesthetic all engaged at once! Cognitive, because music is a language with form, with phrase structures, antecedents and consequents, and the syntax of functional harmony- full of rhetorical device! According to Dr. Charles Limb, Associate Professor of Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery at John Hopkins University, "It allows you to think in a way that you used to not think, and it also trains a lot of other cognitive facilities that have nothing to do with music." Coordinative, in that there's nothing more physically complex that the coordination necessary to play an instrument; and Aesthetic; the sensuously beautiful tone color of our instrument lights up more pleasure centers in our brains than we even know, and the arabesque inflection of a phrase can bring us to tears! Music lights up your whole brain. Compare music with basketball? Mathematics? Figure skating? Nothing else lights up all those areas with as much intensity as music. It's the energizer bunny of our brains! And through "repetition- the mother



## Student Spotlight Aaron Fagerstrom



Our January Spotlight Student is Aaron Fagerstrom. He is 18 years old and lives in Thief River Falls. He attends school online through Minnesota Virtual Academy High allowing him time to travel four hours one way for piano lessons with Dr. Paul Wirth. Aaron's other passion, besides music, is working with technology. He builds and manages websites and is learning audio and video production. Besides being an incredible musician, Aaron is

also a very thoughtful and well-spoken young man. The following is part of his journey in his own words:

*I have played piano for 13 years. My parents started me in piano lessons when I was 5 years old. They could tell I loved music and felt the piano was a good foundational instrument. I haven't stopped playing since! I am also a percussionist in my high school band and the Greater Grand Forks Symphony. My favorite part of my musical studies is performing the pieces I prepare. Whether it is in competition, a recital, or community event, I look forward to sharing the gift God has given me! I also enjoy teaching piano- it feels great to give back what I have learned over the years! It never ceases to amaze me how studying music flows into everything I do. I have learned both discipline and focus through studying piano and that impacts every aspect of my life.*

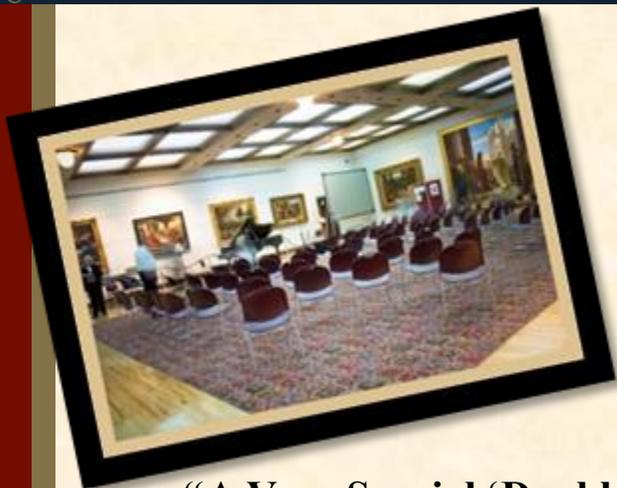
*While my practice procedure depends on the piece, I do have some routines. When first learning a piece, I learn one phrase at a time using various types of measure reps and practice rhythms. As competitions and performances approach, I will perform my pieces straight through without stopping, then go back and fix trouble spots. "Turtle tempo" is also an important part of my practice routine, especially leading up to a performance! Due to my fluid schedule, I usually end up practicing in 2 or 3 separate sittings per day.*

*In order to understand what the Wirth Center has meant to me, you need to know where I come from. I live in a small, rural town in Northwestern Minnesota. I had little to no access to a young classical piano community until I was introduced to Dr. Wirth. When I attended the Young Artist World Piano Festival for the first time, my life changed. I finally met people my age who were as passionate about the piano as I was. I was home. The friends that I have made through the Wirth Center and the festival have challenged me to be a better musician and person. Through the Wirth Center, I have made friends that will last a lifetime.*

Aaron will be performing in our upcoming Salon se Lève recital on February 15<sup>th</sup> at the Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church in Minneapolis. More information can be found on page 3 for this event that you do not want to miss!

### STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- ☞ Bravissimo!! And Congratulations!! Go to Johnny Mattson, pianist who won First Prize in the Dakota Valley Symphony Concerto Competition. In April, he will be performing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Movement of Chopin's Concerto No. 1 in E Minor with the DVSO. Johnny is a senior from Rochester and a student of Dr. Wirth with whom he studies at the Schmitt Center in Roseville, MN.
- ☞ A Big "Bravo" goes to Lilly Xie and Eliana Szabo who regularly perform at the Café Renaissance in Waite Park, MN. It is an award winning restaurant, with a grand piano right in the middle of the dining room! Reservations are usually not needed and the entertainment is, well... Pianotastic! Lilly and Eliana would love to see you!
- ☞ Congrats to ALL for a great performance at Winter Recitals!



**Sunday, February 15th**  
**2:30 pm**

*All Concerts will take place in the Art Gallery at the  
Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church.*

## **“A Very Special ‘Double-Delight’ Thursday Musical Valentine”**

Featuring two equally phenomenal young artists- at least that’s what the Thursday Musical judges declared, as pianists **Crystal Cheng** and **Aaron Fagerstrom** were awarded co-first prizes at the Thursday Musical Competition last spring! You’ll certainly want to come and hear them for yourself, as this Salon se Lève recital will be “Doubly Delightful”... and especially heartfelt!

**Click Here!**

*For Full Salon se Lève Season Info*

## **WELCOME! Christopher Goering: New Executive Director of the Wirth Center for the Performing Arts**

We are both delighted and proud to welcome Christopher (“Chris”) Goering to the team of professionals at the Wirth Center for the Performing Arts! “Delighted,” because he is a perfect fit for us, with his BM in Music Theory and Composition, his MM in Piano Pedagogy, and with a sharp mind and social ease befitting his appointment. And “proud,” because he is a product of our school! - first as a student, and then as a teacher for 10 years. His commitment to, and love for the WCPA is well documented, and exudes from him when he talks about the school. It is in fact, “infectious!”

Chris is a lover of music, from classical composers to modern rock artists. As a musician, he enjoys all styles and genres. He loves composing new solo and duet music, mostly for the piano. As a teacher, he encourages musical creativity in his students and often incorporates composition and improvisation in the lessons. He is also an active performing musician in the Central Minnesota area, playing regularly with his two rock bands on keyboards, bass guitar, and vocals, all of which gives him firsthand knowledge of music, music teaching, music performing, and how our school works - “a perfect fit!” All this he will bring to his new function of growing the WCPA as our Executive Director.

Christopher began piano lessons at age 6 with his mother, Maria Goering. He was a student at the Wirth Center for his senior year of high school, studying with Dr. Ann DuHamel, and began teaching privately at the Wirth Center in 2004. He studied with Dr. James Dennihan and Dr. Paul Wirth during college, finishing his degrees in May 2008 at St. Cloud State University where he received his Bachelor of Music degree in Music Theory and Composition (2006) and his Master of Music degree in Piano Pedagogy (2008). He was appointed Executive Director of the Wirth Center in October, 2014 and also maintains a lively studio of about 40 students. Christopher and his wife, Jacinta, live in St. Cloud - not far from the WCPA, where he also lives!

Please say “Hi” to Chris in the hallways of our school, and join us in congratulating him on his new position at the WCPA!

## 10 Benefits...continued from page 1

of learning," we also learn how to learn through music. It's brain food! It's also a...

**3. Performance skill.** Now I've given many talks on "Preparing for Recitals and Contests,"- developing the skills for performing in front of an audience. The truth is, if you're going to be successful at anything in life, you're going to be asked to demonstrate it in front of others. And there's no better experience for this than playing in recitals and musicales and the like, where you learn that performing before an audience is a step beyond just being able to play the piece, or dance a dance-one that involves a whole constellation of applied psychological skills and physical skills. The fact is, performance anxiety is a known scientific phenomenon which must be conquered for a successful lifetime career. Performing in our monthly musicales is the first step in this direction, so hopefully you aren't missing out on this valuable, actually "free" opportunity! Music study is also an...

**4. Applied skill.** Through it, we learn to teach our hands and bodies economical movement skills- valuable for all life's rhythms and endeavors... crafts, carpentry, masonry, typing, knitting, surgical procedures- any applied professional skill!!! It's also a...

**5. Discipline.** We don't always feel like practicing, but we learn to override those feelings to accomplish the greater good. This shows up on college teacher recommendations! It's a...

**6. Service.** Church, clubs, family gatherings, school choir

accompaniments and athletic events utilize music. It's...

**7. Fun and teaches social skills.** When playing in ensembles, we learn how to work with others on a project! How to compromise and be malleable with others. It's also a...

**8. Science.** The circle of fifths, acoustics and the form and structure of music is all scientific in the sense of following universal laws and being organized or systematic. The overtone series and the mathematics used in some compositions (for e.g., Bartok's use of the Fibonacci sequence) is part of studying and understanding music. Again, music makes you smart! Through music study, we also...

**9. Become musically literate.** With the musical ingredient of form, a Sonatina = Sonata = Quartet = Symphony = Concerto, and it's also the same form used for "Expository Writing!!" (exposition-development-recapitulation-coda = thesis-development-restatement-closing!) Essays, novels, film scripts, and the like, and even college recommendations are written in "Sonata Form." And finally, for some of us, music is a...

**10. Career.** One of the very few of which if you are not already fluent in it before college, you would have little to no chance of choosing it!

So there they are- just ten of the benefits of music/dance study which I enjoy to sharing with my students. If they keep them in mind, they know what they are doing is important to them!



## Holiday Music at Crossroads Mall

Thank you to all the students listed below who performed at the mall and helped spread some holiday cheer!

Shawnda Houg, Teddy and Corrielle Baumgartner, Maria and Anna Makarova, Sharon and Becky Botz, Chris Baugh, Abby Thelen, Jared Campbell, Ana Deal-Hansen, Lilly Xie, Eliana Szabo, Bella and Trinatie Downare, Violet and Nora Steil, Lucas Eisennagel, Kate O'Hara, Annika Dauer, Becca and Steve Metoyer, Owen Anderson, and Curt Goering.

Thank you to instructors Chris Goering, Karin Rau, Angela Ringsmuth, and Ashley Brown for helping to make this a special event!



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