

March 1, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

The Student Composition Contest Winners Recital and Awards Ceremony took place this afternoon at the WCR Center for the Arts. A total of 19 entries were judged by Berks County musicians Chris Heslop and David Himes. Awards were generously funded by Reading Musical Foundation. Winners are as follows:

CLASS I	STUDENT	COMPOSITION TITLE	TEACHER
1st Place	Ivy Petersheim	"Floating Down the River"	Ginny Thorpe
2nd Place	Jacob Hart	"Mysteries in Minor Key"	Holly Altenderfer
3rd Place	Eden Moyer	"Zero Gravity"	Steven Katzenmoyer
Honorable Mention	Eli Hartman	"Summer Evening"	Steven Katzenmoyer

CLASS II	STUDENT	COMPOSITION TITLE	TEACHER
1st Place	Lucius White	"Beacon in Blue"	Peter Leibensperger
2nd Place	Elena Ledford	"Elena's Rag"	Ginny Thorpe
3rd Place	Jonah Sletta	"The Detective on Baker Street"	Ginny Thorpe
Honorable Mention	Sam Weis	"The Woodpecker"	Ginny Thorpe

CLASS II	STUDENT	COMPOSITION TITLE	TEACHER
Honorable Mention	Jane Weis	"Salt Lake City"	Ginny Thorpe

This message from David Himes was read to the students:

*Chris Heslop and I both said to each other that we have been composing for years, but we are still learning and we learned a lot from these compositions. What we both learned is that composing is a tricky thing whether a composer is writing a simple 16 measure-long piece or something much bigger and more complex. It comes down to ideas, motives or melodies on one hand and creativity on the other. Just the correct balancing of those two ideas, repetition and new material, is the secret to a piece that ends up being interesting. Too much of one or the other and the piece may become less interesting. We picked pieces that we think had a nice balance of established motives and creative new material as the piece progressed. We want to thank all of the applicants for being brave enough to put their ideas on paper. It is the only way to keep learning to compose.*

**Congratulations to everyone!** (This is still my most favorite event of all we do!)

**"PARTNERS IN MUSIC"**: April 26, 2026, 3pm at Immanuel UCC, Shillington. If you plan on participating, please email me an estimate on your studio's performance time. Trying to keep the event under 90 minutes, which means there might be a registration cutoff. However, don't include the commissioned works in your time – they amount to around 12 minutes at most.

Participants may register online or by emailing me the information for the program – performer names, repertoire title and composer, performance length. Rehearsal time will be available Saturday, April 25 between 9am and noon in the sanctuary. Contact me to schedule this. Also let me know if you'll need two pianos.

**OPPORTUNITY!** Local piano teacher Kory Hilpmann has a small studio and is looking to collaborate with other local teachers for a student piano recital, perhaps at the Highlands. If you are interested, contact him at [koryhilpmann@gmail.com](mailto:koryhilpmann@gmail.com) or 201-819-6203.

Berks Jazz Fest events! (some date corrections)

- March 7: Two Pianos: Kirk Reese & Andy Roberts, 7:00 pm at Yocum Institute
- March 22: pianist Emmet Cohen Quintet, 3:00 pm at the Miller Center.
- March 23, 7:00 pm GETJAZZED Student Jazz Jam at the DoubleTree; free. Always a fun evening!
- March 24 & 25, 8:30am to 6:30pm: GETJAZZED *Jazz Horizons Festival*
- March 28: Berks Sinfonietta: Gershwin Comes Alive, featuring Berks County pianist Lars Potteiger performing Rhapsody in Blue, 6pm at the Miller Center. The opening act is Berks County All-Stars Jazz Band, an auditioned group of Berks County students.
- April 3: Mike Eben & Friends: The Birth of the Cool, 7:00 pm at Yocum Institute
- May 22: Stephanie Trick & Paolo Alderighi, classical piano jazz; 7:00 pm at Yocum Institute

**IN RETROSPECT:** *From the Minutes March 7, 1966: Miriam W. Heisler, President, Angela Haage Ganster, vice-President, Pearl Kahler, Treasurer and Ruth Snyder, appointed Recording Secretary met at Zeswitz Music House with Mr. John Harrison to make plans for the coming multiple piano festival to be sponsored by RMTA and Zeswitz Music House, to be held Saturday May 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 pm in Albright College Field House. Approximate expense for RMTA was quoted at \$555, and \$575 for Zeswitz. Rehearsals will begin March 28<sup>th</sup> at Zeswitz and it was suggested several teachers attend each rehearsal to assist. Mr. Harrison will direct all rehearsals and concert and will receive \$15 for each rehearsal. Tickets of admission will be \$1.00 per person; one fee for adults and children. It was announced that 250 pupils have enrolled to date.*

**IN MEMORIUM:** You've all learned about the passing of our dear friend and teacher Marvin Blickenstaff. We are fortunate to have had him visit Reading in 2019 and 2024 with daylong workshops. We are all blessed to have been able to call ourselves his students. He will be missed.

Think spring!

Millie

**UPCOMING EVENTS... Spring meeting May TBA.**

**What would you like to do?**



This is why they have rules against bassoon playing in grocery stores...