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# 2026 MASTA RESOURCE GUIDE

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An annual resource for members of the  
Michigan Chapter  
of the  
American String Teachers Association

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THANK YOU TO OUR 2025-26 SPONSORS!



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## 2025 MASTA Chamber Music Festival Competition Winners



### 2025 MASTA Chamber Music Festival Competition Winner

Slatkin Quartet

The 34th annual MASTA Chamber Music Festival and Competition was held on Monday, March 3, 2025, at Michigan State University in East Lansing. The winning ensemble, Slatkin Quartet, performed the first movement of Antonín Dvorák’s String Quartet No. 12, “American.” The quartet members included Isabell Johnson, violin; Daniel Liu, violin; Sophia Chacko, viola; and Derek Han, cello.

Pictured above: The Slatkin Quartet in performance

Pictured left: The Slatkin Quartet with adjudicators Octavio Mas-Aracas and Rodney Page.



# President's Message

Dear MASTA Members,

I hope that this message finds all of you having successful and musically-rewarding years! It truly is my honor and privilege to serve our organization in the role of President. Thank you once again for entrusting me with a small part of MASTA's legacy!

First and foremost, I want to once again congratulate and thank each and every one of you for your tireless efforts for string music education in our state; because of your work, our chapter was recognized as the 2025 ASTA Outstanding State Chapter AND the 2025 ASTA State Membership Recruitment Award at our 2025 ASTA Conference in Atlanta, GA! These awards recognize both the quality of music education we provide to our students and the camaraderie and support that we provide to each other as music educators, and I could not be more proud of us for both of these accomplishments.

Of course, none of what we do as an organization is possible without our incredible MASTA Board Members. Their dedication of their time and talents is unmatched, and I am so grateful for their unwavering commitments to MASTA. I would like to give a special thanks to Jim VanEizenga for being my constant sounding board on ideas; serving alongside him is an honor, and I know that when I pass the gavel to him on May 15, our organization will grow and flourish exponentially under his leadership.

As I have shared previously, ASTA has been an integral part of my life for the past 28 years. When I joined this organization at age 16, I had no idea how much that the decision I initially viewed as just "signing up for a club" would shape who I am as a music educator and person; I am so incredibly grateful for each and every one of our members who has played a part in my journey. From networking to teaching opportunities, leadership experiences to yearly jam sessions with some of my musical heroes, the opportunities that being an ASTA member has afforded me are countless and second-to-none. More importantly, though, the connections and friendships that have come as a result of being an ASTA member are the best benefit of all. I wrote this last year, and I have to say it again: I truly would not be the musician, music educator, or person I am today without this organization, and I am humbled to be in a position to give back to the organization that has given me so much.

As my term as President begins coming to an end and I reflect on our organization, my thoughts still land on the word **community**. MASTA is a place where we as string music educators all belong: it is a lifeline; it is a safe space, and it is a home - our *community*. I challenge each of us to continue to strengthen the community that we have already built with each other but to also foster the growth of our community for those who are not here yet (or were here and left for whatever reasons). Music education and music educators will all be better for it.

As we look to our future, I invite you to join us at one of our many upcoming activities. Please reach out to string teachers - both K-12 and studio - and invite them to be a part of MASTA-sponsored events and our organization itself. We have so many great events on our horizon, starting with MMC (featuring our incredible headliner, Dr. LaSaundra Belcher; the Teachers Orchestra, and Jam Session/Ice Cream Social, just to name a few!). Please look throughout this Resource Guide for more information about the rest of our future events, and in the future, look for more information on our 2026 MASTA Summer Retreat. I look forward to working together with our community to grow and strengthen our membership (in not only numbers but in active participation), as well as continuing and growing our tradition of string music education excellence that we have in the state of Michigan!

Thank you again to all who serve our organization! As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions, comments, or concerns. I truly value your feedback!

In musical partnership,



Amy Marr

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# YOURS TO DISCOVER

Challenging orchestral opportunities for pre-college, advanced, intermediate, and elementary strings, winds, and percussion



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TWO-WEEK SESSIONS FOR GRADES 5-12



### SCHOLARSHIPS

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Blue Lake's extensive scholarship program helps students with camp tuition! Apply online, or invite a scholarship representative to your school. More information at [scholarships@bluelake.org](mailto:scholarships@bluelake.org) or 800-221-3796.

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# MASTA SOCIAL MEDIA



We want to hear from you!  
Share what is happening in  
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Help us spread the word  
about all the great things  
going on in our state!

Send a picture with a  
caption to Jami Kleinert at  
[mastanotes@gmail.com](mailto:mastanotes@gmail.com) or  
tag us in your posts!

## NEED IDEAS?

- Games for team building and learning
- Little known gems for the orchestra classroom
- Taking a trip with your ensembles
- Special performances done with your ensemble or private studio
- How to make the most of your orchestra budget
- Grant funding ideas
- Interview teachers that inspired you
- Guest Speakers

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Visit us at: [www.astamichigan.org](http://www.astamichigan.org)

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If your student is seeking an arts program to level up their skills, look no further than Interlochen. Offering a variety of programs and skill levels, Interlochen is a place for your students to hone their artistry, wherever they are. At Interlochen, they'll discover a welcoming community and world-class instruction.

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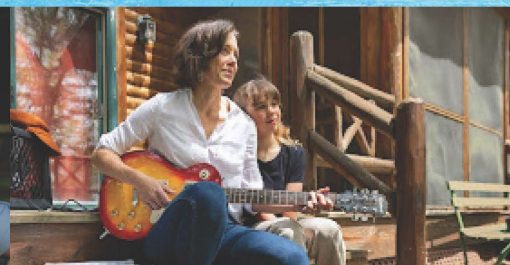
INTERLOCHEN ARTS CAMP | Grades 3-12  
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INTERLOCHEN ONLINE | Kids to adults  
A year-round source of expert online arts education



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21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL

# MMC

MICHIGAN MUSIC  
CONFERENCE

JANUARY 22-24, 2026

DEVOS PLACE  
AMWAY GRAND HOTEL J.W. MARRIOTT  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI

## MASTA HEADLINER: Dr. LaSaundra Belcher

All sessions will be in the Imperial Ballroom.

Friday 9AM – Building Community Through Accessible and Inclusive K-12 String Music

Friday 2PM – Teaching Music Through a Culturally Inclusive Lens

Saturday 11AM – Grant Writing 101: From Idea to Application

Saturday 1PM – Leading with Joy in the Orchestra Classroom



**Dr. LaSaundra Belcher** is a respected conductor, educator, and arts leader with over 20 years of experience in public schools, higher education, and community music programs. She is the Founder and Executive Director of the Wake Forest Community Youth Orchestra in North Carolina, where she leads initiatives that expand access to high-quality music instruction for students from rural and under-resourced communities.

Dr. Belcher is a sought-after guest conductor and clinician for All-State and Honors Orchestras across the country, with recent engagements in Montana, Georgia, California, Minnesota, Nevada, and North Carolina. She is also a featured speaker at major music education conferences, including the Texas Music Educators Association, Michigan Music Conference, and NAFME's Pacific Northwest Conference. In 2026, she will serve as an adjudicator for the American String Teachers Association's National Orchestra Festival.

In addition to her national presentations, she provides professional development for music educators, equipping teachers with practical strategies to foster student success, increase engagement, and strengthen music programs. Dr. Belcher teaches at Shenandoah University, where she equips aspiring arts entrepreneurs with the tools to build successful, sustainable businesses. Her work reflects a deep commitment to inspiring joy through music, fostering student growth, and empowering educators to create uplifting, engaging learning experiences for all students.

# 2026 Michigan Music Conference Annual MSBOA/MASTA Teachers Orchestra

## Welcome back Teachers Orchestra!

We are thrilled to be joined by Emily Freeman Brown, Director of Orchestral Activities from Bowling Green State University! She brings a wealth of conducting and teaching experience to the orchestra. You can learn more about her from her [website](#).

We are performing some fantastic selections this year: [Snow Falling in Autumn by Chris Pilsner](#), [In the Spirit of Bach by Samuel Adler](#), and Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis by Vaughan Williams. You can find a link to the Google Drive folder with all parts and scores below. Please review the schedule and other important details about Teachers Orchestra below.

### 1. Schedule

Thursday, January 22, 2026

Please plan to pick up your registration before our session. Our session is being held in the Pantlind Ballroom (Amway Grand).

12:00-12:30pm Check-in, warm-up, socialize

12:30pm-2:15pm - Rehearsal Lab

2:30-4:00pm Conducting Symposium + program run through

Friday, January 23, 2026

7:00pm - Performance in the Ambassador Ballroom (Amway Grand). Call time 6:15pm. This performance will also feature the MASTA Soloist Competition Winner

Attire: Concert black (all black top and bottom, no jacket, no tie).

### 2. Parts

Please print and bring your own copies! Click [this link](#) to access a copy of the parts and scores.

### 3. Conducting Symposium

If you are interested in getting individualized feedback from our clinician about your conducting, please register for the Symposium when you register for the conference. This is a great opportunity!

There is an additional fee for participants. Contact [Mark Stice](#) with your questions.

Please contact [Michael Edwards](#) with questions regarding Teachers Orchestra.

# 2026 Michigan Music Conference MASTA Jam Session

Bring an instrument and come participate in the Third Annual MASTA MMC Jam Session! We will be playing tunes in the Celtic and bluegrass styles. We will provide charts for a few unison tunes; participants should feel free to bring other ideas or charts as well. Come relax and make music with us! This session will be held on Friday, January 23, 2026, in the Ambassador Ballroom, following the Teachers Orchestra performance.

# 2026 Michigan Music Conference Meeting and Event Schedule for MASTA Members

## Thursday, January 22

9:30 AM: Winter MASTA Board Meeting – Pearl Room, Amway

Noon - 4 PM: Teachers Orchestra Rehearsal – Pantlind Ballroom, Amway

## Friday, January 23

8 AM: Winter MASTA General Membership Meeting – Imperial Ballroom, Amway

7 PM: 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Teachers Orchestra Performance – Ambassador Ballroom

8 PM: 3rd Annual Jam Session and MASTA Ice Cream Social – Ambassador Ballroom

## Saturday, January 24

9:30 AM: All-State Middle School String Orchestra – DeVos Performance Hall

10:15 AM: All-State High School Orchestra – DeVos Performance Hall

For a list of all the MASTA educational sessions please visit:

<http://michiganmusicconference.org>.



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## 2025 MASTA Teacher of the Year



**The 2025 MASTA  
Teacher of the Year was Wendy Stuart, Director  
of Orchestras at Troy High School.**

Wendy accepted the award from MASTA President-Elect, Jim Van Eizenga at the Michigan Music Conference. Congratulations, Wendy! Thank you for all your contributions to Michigan string teaching!



## 2025 MASTA Career Service Award

**The MASTA Executive Board awarded the MASTA  
Career Service Award to Alan MacNair!**

Alan received the award from MASTA President, Amy Marr at the 2025 Michigan Music Conference.

Thank you, Alan, for your contributions to MASTA and string education in Michigan!



# MASTA at ASTA National

Michigan ASTA was honored with two awards from National ASTA this year: The State Chapter of the Year Award and the Membership Award. MASTA President, Amy Marr and President-Elect, Jim Van Eizenga received these awards on behalf of MASTA at the State Leadership meeting at the National Conference in Atlanta. In addition, Judy Palac was awarded The Presidential Award for Outstanding Service.

Michigan was well represented in other areas of the conference with presentations by Joel Schut, Amy Marr, and Ji Huyn Kim and performances by the Ann Arbor Pioneer High School orchestras as a part of the National Orchestra Festival. Former MASTA member and current Principal Bass of the Philadelphia Orchestra, Joseph Conyers, was the keynote speaker!





MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE  
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# Michigan String Educators Workshop

Led by Dr. Michael Hopkins, University of Michigan

June 25-27, 2026

Ann Arbor, MI

The String Educators Workshop is an intensive three-day experience with two tracks designed to meet educators' needs in a friendly, collaborative environment.



[smtd.umich.edu/string-workshop](https://smtd.umich.edu/string-workshop)

## 2026 Instructors

### Michael Hopkins

Double Bass, String Pedagogy,  
Rehearsal Techniques

### Charles Laux

Violin, Viola, Eclectic Styles,  
Group Pedagogy

### Kelsey Dewar

String Immersion Class for  
Band & Choir Directors

### Abigail Alwin

Cello Technique

# MASTA Executive Board Nominees

## President-Elect



### Jean Lee:

Jean Lee is the Instructor and Coordinator of String Music Education at the Michigan State University College of Music. She teaches string pedagogy and string methods courses while growing the string music education program through student recruitment and retention

outreach programs. Lee is well-known throughout the Midwest as an accomplished clinician, conductor, Suzuki violin teacher, and adjudicator. She brings nearly two decades of experience to her role within the University along with a unique skill set as an entrepreneur and brand strategist. Whether in the classroom, leading an orchestra, or working one-on-one with students, Lee loves connecting with young musicians to help them develop their talents and see their potential through music education.

Lee is a proud graduate of Michigan State University where as an undergraduate, she studied violin with I-Fu Wang and piano with Deborah Moriarty. She graduated in 2004 with a Bachelor of Music Education before also pursuing her graduate studies in Music Education at the University of Michigan.

Before joining the university's faculty, Lee taught music for fourteen years in the Okemos Public Schools, a district renowned for having one of the state's strongest orchestra programs.

Throughout her career, Lee has led orchestras of varying age groups—from elementary strings to university-level musicians. She also directed orchestras at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Twin Lakes, Michigan; the Michigan Chapter of the American Strings Teachers Association String Camp in Howell, Michigan; and the New England Music Camp in Sidney, Maine. She is an active member of the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association, the American String Teachers Association, and the Suzuki Association of the Americas.

In addition to applying her expertise as a strings educator and orchestra director, Lee is actively developing new strategies and outreach programs to attract string musicians to careers in music education.



### Linda Trotter:

Ms. Linda Trotter has retired, after 42 years of teaching, from her role as the orchestra director at West Bloomfield High and Middle School; and previously in the Detroit Public Schools. She also served as an adjunct professor at Marygrove College. Linda holds a Bachelor of Music in Education from Michigan State University and a Masters in the Art of Teaching from Marygrove College. She also attended Adrian College and completed advanced coursework at Wayne State University.

During her educational career she has been very active with MASTA as the Secretary for over 10 years and the MSBOA Liaison. She also served MSBOA as the Vice President of Orchestra Activities and Secretary for District 4. She was also a member of the MSBOA State Executive Board as Vice President of Orchestra

Activities and Secretary/Treasurer.

During her tenure at West Bloomfield High, West Bloomfield Middle and Orchard Lake Middle Schools, her students consistently earned Superior and Excellent ratings at the MSBOA Orchestra Festival and Solo & Ensemble.

Throughout her career, Linda was recognized for her outstanding contributions to orchestra education and has been honored as the MASTA (2020) Orchestra Teacher of the Year and the MSBOA Orchestra Teacher of the Year (2010 and 2025). Her expertise extends beyond the classroom as she serves as a string adjudicator, guest conductor, and clinician, to help shape the next generation of musicians.

In addition to her teaching roles, Linda's conducting platforms includes MASTA String Camp, Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, Walled Lake Day for Strings and the Dearborn Youth Symphony Orchestra. She has also lent her expertise as a sectional and chamber music coach for MASTA String Camp and several local school orchestra programs, embodying a commitment to nurturing musical talent at all levels. She is currently teaching several students private violin lesson.

As a violinist, Linda is a member of the Michigan Philharmonic, Warren Symphony, Dearborn Symphony, the Grosse Pointe Symphony and the Go4Baroque Chamber Ensemble. Her musical journey has seen her share stages with legends like Stevie Wonder, Barry White, Lori Morgan, The Celtic Women and The Eagles, and her recording credits include collaborations with icons such as Aretha Franklin, William Banfield and Fred Hammond.

## Secretary



### **Stacey Bowen (incumbent):**

Stacey Bowen studied Violin Performance at Michigan State University and earned her Master's in Violin Performance from the University of Texas at Austin.

Stacey is a string educator at Detroit Country Day School. She has worked for Detroit Country Day School for 29 years. Eight years as the PK-Kindergarten general music instructor and Second – Fifth Grade Strings and as the Director of Orchestras in the Middle and Upper Schools and the Middle School Performing Arts Department Chair. Currently, Stacey is the Upper School orchestra teacher.

Stacey is active in the music community frequently and sought out to be a clinician in Michigan and Indiana. She has worked with students for pre-festival band and orchestra concerts in preparation for MSBOA Band and Orchestra festivals, Solo and Ensemble lock-ins and recently the Mid-Level String Clinic in Waterford. Stacey has served on the board for the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association as Vice President of Solo and Ensemble and for a short time as the Adjudication Chair. She has previously served on the MASTA board as Newsletter Editor.

In her free time Stacey free-lances on the violin and viola as a member of the Go 4 Baroque String Ensembles and as a community theatre pit musician.

ASTA is an important resource for all members (teachers and students) nationally. ASTA offers conferences, syllabi, scholarships for students to attend the National ASTA Conference and resources for teachers to use in the classroom. There is also a teacher mentoring program which is beneficial to all teachers, especially now in these uncertain times. I served as a mentor for teachers in the 2019-2020 school year.



### **Sarah Maurice:**

Ms. Sarah Maurice received her bachelor's degree in music education from Michigan State University and her master's degree in music education for the University of Michigan. Sarah currently teaches orchestra at Van Hoosen Middle School and Rochester Adams High School in Rochester Hills, MI. She previously taught orchestra with both Hudsonville Public Schools in Hudsonville, MI and Black River Public School in Holland, MI.

Throughout her 23 year career, Sarah has shared her passion for string instruments; creating high quality ensembles and learning experiences for her students. Her ensembles consistently earn high praise from colleagues, clinicians, and adjudicators alike. While at Black River, her Advanced Orchestra performed at the Michigan Music Conference.

In addition to teaching in public schools, Sarah has presented pedagogical sessions at the Michigan Music Conference, the Midwest Clinic, and the ASTA National Conference. She is a sought after clinician and mentor. Sarah has been a member of ASTA throughout much of her career and has served MASTA Strings Camp as a cello coach, Chamber Music Director, Instructional Coach, Music Director, and Program Director.

Outside of teaching, Sarah and her husband, Chris, share their home with two children and an ever-evolving menagerie of pets. Her family has also opened their home to seven international exchange students and Sarah maintains

close relationships with her global daughters. She enjoys performing, knitting, and spending time with family and friends.

## Treasurer



**Cynthia Atkinson:**

Cynthia Atkinson is the Orchestra Director at Byron Center West Middle School, where she is dedicated to fostering a love of music and helping her students discover their true potential. Now in her fourth year of teaching, Cynthia combines her expertise in music and business, having earned a Bachelor's degree in Music Education with a minor in Business Management from Western Michigan University—where she also served as president of the WMU MASTA chapter—and an Associate's degree in Applied Science from Alpena Community College, along with a certification in Small Business Management. She is also currently pursuing a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction to develop her pedagogical skills and further strengthen her approach to teaching string methods.

In addition to leading the school orchestra, Cynthia teaches private lessons and is an accomplished cellist, performing with ensembles such as the Gaylord Community Orchestra, Alpena Symphony Orchestra, and the Vintage Parlor Orchestra. Her passion for sharing music with the community shines through in all she does, inspiring students and audiences alike through her leadership, musicianship, and commitment to music education.



**Merlyn Beard:**

Merlyn Beard has taught in Waterford Schools for 32 years, sharing his passion for music with students. Mr. Beard is the Director of Orchestras at Waterford Kettering and Waterford Mott High Schools. He taught at the elementary, middle, and high school levels as the orchestra program was restored after a twenty-five-year hiatus. Both high schools regularly have ensembles and soloists that earn Division I ratings at MSBOA District and State Festivals. The orchestras have performed outside Michigan many times, including at Disney World in Orlando, FL, Lexington, KY, Nashville, TN, and Cedar Point in Sandusky, OH.

The Kettering Orchestras, as part of the music department, have raised over \$100,000 to support the families in need during the Christmas Season through their Holiday Collage Charity Benefit Concerts in the last 22 years.

Mr. Beard has been active in MSBOA and served MSBOA District 4 as Vice-President of Workers (2007-2009), Treasurer (2009-2014), President (2007-2019), Vice-President of Orchestral Activities (2024-Present). At the state level, he has served as Chairman of the Festival Improvements Committee (2014-2020), State Vice President of Orchestral Activities (2020-2023), including as the

MSBOA liaison to MASTA. Merlyn was selected as the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association Orchestra Teacher of the Year in 2020 and the District 4 Orchestra Teacher of the Year in 2008 and 2019.

Mr. Beard earned his Bachelor of Music Education from Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with a focus on cello and voice. His Master of Music in Orchestral Conducting is from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan.

Mr. Beard and his wife, Cherub, are active in their church's music program. When they are not teaching music to students, their priority is visiting their three grown children and two grandchildren.

## Member at Large



### **Jaime Fiste:**

Jamie Fiste, 2024 MASTA Teacher of the Year, is Associate Professor of Cello at Central Michigan University, where he has taught since 2000. An active recitalist and chamber musician, his numerous performances have taken him across Europe and the U.S. Dr. Fiste has presented at national conferences, coached at international festivals, and frequently leads master classes for students of all ages. He earned degrees from the University of Illinois and the University of Notre Dame.

**Please vote using [THIS LINK](#) by January 3, 2026**



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of you, teachers!**

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# MASTA

THE 35TH ANNUAL

## MASTA CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL & COMPETITION

MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2026 | 9:30AM-5:00PM  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



### FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE

- FACULTY PERFORMANCE
- ENSEMBLE COACHING FROM WORLD-CLASS FACULTY
- TWO ENRICHMENT CLASSES
- CERTIFICATES & EVALUATIONS
- COMPETITION PERFORMANCE



### ELIGIBILITY

- GRADES 7-12 MICHIGAN RESIDENTS
- STRING CHAMBER ENSEMBLES (PIANO AVAILABLE)



### COMPETITION PRIZE

- \$200 CASH PRIZE
- PERFORMANCE AT THE MSBOA HONORS RECITAL



### REGISTRATION

- \$53 (FESTIVAL ONLY)
- \$63 (FESTIVAL & COMPETITION)
- \$10 ADDITIONAL FEE FOR NON-ASTA MEMBER

REGISTER BY **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026**  
TO SECURE YOUR PLACEMENT!

MORE INFORMATION 



EMAIL: JI HYUN KIM  
jkim@albion.edu



FESTIVAL & COMPETITION GUIDELINES  
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DATE**



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**JUNE 16-20**

Session 3  
**JUNE 22-27**

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**Registration Opens  
January 2026**



**More Information** [www.mastastringcamps.org](http://www.mastastringcamps.org)

# 2026 MASTA Teacher of the Year Nominees



## Ingrid Dykeman-Corle

For over 30 years, Mrs. Dykeman-Corle taught Orchestra (MS/HS) to hundreds of students in Michigan and the Grand Rapids area. She has over 40 years experience as a private studio string teacher and currently runs a private cello studio (EL through adult). Her students participate regularly in their school orchestra program, district/state MSBOA solo and ensemble/local concerto competitions as well as youth/adult orchestras within the area. Many of her students continue playing in college, major/minor in music performance and/or music education.

Mrs. Dykeman-Corle was awarded the Michigan Band and Orchestra Association Teacher of the Year for the state of Michigan in 2019 and has been a finalist for MASTA Teacher of the Year in 2009. She has been the recipient of the Llewelyn L. Cyvan String Scholarship 2007, the Opera Grand Rapids Betty Van Andel Scholarship 2006 and the Hope College Music/Academic Scholarship (1980-1984). She has served several terms/positions on the MASTA state board and has served on the MSBOA Alternative Styles String Committee and as the string representative for District X. She has also served many years as an ensemble cello coach and assistant

camp director for the MASTA string camps.

Mrs. Dykeman-Corle served for eight years as an adjunct faculty member at Hope College and worked as a guest professor/lecturer, outreach guest conductor/ cello section coach and music education field placement employee. She has conducted for numerous MSBOA Middle School/High School String Clinics as well as clinics for many schools out of and across the state of Michigan. Mrs. Dykeman-Corle has conducted several summers at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. She is currently serving as an MSBOA string judge for the state of Michigan at both district and state levels and has done so for over 25 years. She been a lower strings coach/ middle school orchestra director at Knollcrest Music Camp. She has volunteered many summers as a counselor/Cobra (electric) cellist for the Mark Wood Rock Orchestra Camp in Kansas City, Kansas.

Ms. Dykeman-Corle received her BM in Music Education with an emphasis in cello performance from Hope College. She received her MM in Music Education from the University of Michigan. She has played cello (traditional/electric) with numerous orchestras and ensembles around the Grand Rapids area. She credits her love for teaching music to her first orchestra/private cello teacher, William Cridge. She thanks her family, teachers/colleagues and friends for all their love and support.

### Nominator's Statement:

Ingrid Dykeman-Corle has been a music educator in the state of Michigan for more than 30 years. During those years, she had the pleasure of teaching, elementary, middle and high school orchestra in the Kentwood and South Haven public schools. Since August 2017, she has been an adjunct professor of music education at Hope College. She is also currently a string clinician with Meyer Music and has a studio where she teaches private cello lessons in Grand Rapids.

Mrs. Dykeman-Corle is an active private cello instructor and has had more than 40 years of experience as a private studio string teacher. She has served on community and state boards including MASTA (membership chair) and the Friends of the Opera/education committee for Opera Grand Rapids. She has previously served as the string committee representative for MSBOA District X and was also an active member on the MSBOA string committee for alternative musical styles. In the beginning of her career, she was also very active in the MASTA Summer String Camp, serving as a camp counselor, instructor and eventually the assistant program director. She has conducted ensembles at several camps including summer sessions at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. Mrs. Dykeman-Corle served as an MSBOA string judge for the state of Michigan at both district and state levels for more than 20 years.

As a classical cellist, Mrs. Dykeman-Corle has had the pleasure of performing with various groups such as Westshore Symphony, Grand Rapids Symphony, Schenectady Symphony, Joia Trio, and the Chancellor Flute and Bow Trio. She has also performed on her Cobra electric cello in numerous praise bands around the Grand Rapids area and at the Mark Wood Rock Orchestra Camp, in Kansas City, Kansas.

In addition to receiving the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (MSBOA) 2019 Orchestra Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Dykeman-Corle received an MSBOA emeritus award during the Michigan Music Conference. She was previously a finalist for the MSBOA Orchestra Teacher of the Year recognition in 1996, 2010 and 2012, as well as a

finalist for teacher of the year for the Michigan chapter of the American String Teachers Association (MASTA) in 2009. She was honored by “Who’s Who” in “American Teachers” in 2005 as one of the top fine arts teachers in America.



### **Derek Weller**

Derek Weller has been the instructor of bass at the Interlochen Center for the Arts for 38 years. In addition to his role at Interlochen, Weller is on the faculty at Eastern Michigan University, is Principal Double Bass of the Detroit Opera Orchestra, is a member of the Toledo Symphony Orchestra and is Associate Principal Double Bass at the Carmel Bach Festival. He is also a frequent substitute musician with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra. Weller teaches bass for the Dorothy Gerber String Program in Petoskey, MI in addition to having a robust private bass studio in Ann Arbor with students ranging in age from 4 to 86.

Weller has averaged three students every year being chosen for both the middle school and high school Allstate programs. He has had a student win first place at the Stulberg International String Competition. Weller has also frequently had students place in the International Society of bassist 15 and under competition, 18 and under and preprofessional divisions.

Weller has had numerous former students win auditions in major symphony orchestras and opera companies in the US, Europe and Asia. Additionally, Weller has numerous students with prestigious teaching positions throughout the world.

Weller has given numerous masterclasses at LSU, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Stanford University, San Jose State University, The Cleveland Institute of Music and the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Italy.

In his spare time, Weller enjoys drinking fine tea, cross-country skiing and biking.

### **Nominator’s Statement:**

I am honored to nominate Derek Weller for the Michigan Chapter of ASTA Teacher of the Year. I have known and worked with Derek for almost thirty years, including co-teaching double bass at Interlochen Center for the Arts, and I have seen him make countless, enduring impacts on students’ lives. Derek’s ability — whether working with a complete beginner or an advanced college-level student — to meet each musician where they are, and to inspire them toward musical excellence, is remarkable. His private studio remains robust and thriving; my own child studies bass with him and has flourished under his mentorship.

In addition to his private teaching and studio work, Derek’s influence reaches far beyond individual students. He currently serves on the faculty of Interlochen Arts Academy and Eastern Michigan University, while maintaining a high-level professional performance career as Principal Double Bass of Michigan Opera Theatre Orchestra, with regular performances for the Toledo Symphony Orchestra and frequent appearances with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Moreover — and crucially for this award — Derek has demonstrated long-term, dedicated service to our state’s bass community through his ongoing work with Michigan BassFest. As a clinician at BassFest, he has generously given his time and expertise to help young bass students from across Michigan grow: teaching technique, guiding ensemble and solo work, and fostering a statewide culture of excellence and camaraderie among string bass students and teachers.

Derek’s professionalism, educational breadth, and willingness to serve the community make him stand out — not only as a teacher whose private students thrive, but as a mentor who helps raise the level of bass teaching and playing across Michigan. For these reasons — the excellence of his teaching, the depth of his professional performing career, and his sustained commitment to statewide bass education through Michigan BassFest and related activities — I wholeheartedly nominate Derek Weller for MASTA Teacher of the Year.

**Please vote using [THIS LINK](#) by January 3, 2026**

# 2025 MASTA Retreat

The 2025 MASTA Retreat took place at Michigan State University on Sunday June 29, 2025. There were two tracks offered: one for studio teachers and one for classroom teachers. This year we invited Joanne May to come and present on Rolland Technique. It was a great day of learning!

Resources provided can be found [here](#).



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# MASTA 2026 SOLO COMPETITION

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## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

For string players ages  
**16-23 YEARS OLD**  
(as of January 1, 2027)

## INSTRUMENTAL CATEGORIES

ENTRANCE FEE **\$50** **\$75**  
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Submit a video audition online.  
Deadline: **11:59 p.m. on November 1, 2026**  
A distinguished panel of judges will choose up to five finalists.



### FINAL ROUND: LIVE

**Sunday, November 15, 2026**  
Conrad Recital Hall at Hillsdale College.

## MANY THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:



MASTA Solo Competition 2026 Guidelines: [www.astamichigan.org](http://www.astamichigan.org)

Questions? Contact the MASTA Solo Competition Chair, Melissa Gerber Knecht at [mknecht@hillsdale.edu](mailto:mknecht@hillsdale.edu)



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## 2025 Early Career Recognition Award Nominees



**Linden de Leeuw:** Linden de Leeuw is the 5th–12th grade orchestra teacher in Ferndale Public Schools and the Sinfonia Conductor with the Detroit Metropolitan Youth Symphony (DMYS). They have previously taught in the Troy School District and with organizations such as MASTA Camp, the Ypsilanti Youth Orchestras, and the Crescendo Detroit program.

Linden first became involved with MASTA in college, where they served as a board member of the University of Michigan student chapter for four years. In 2019 they were recognized at MMC with the MASTA Student Chapter Leadership Award. They have fond memories of summers spent as a MASTA Camp counselor and cello coach. These days, they spend summers running a middle school orchestra day camp and high school orchestra sleepaway camp for Ferndale students, as well pursuing a master's degree in music education at U-M. Their current master's degree work focuses on building orchestra curricula that

integrate improvisation and creativity into the classroom.

As an orchestra teacher, Linden is passionate about bringing new and creative experiences to the classroom. They have helped commission new works for orchestra, collaborating with Armond Vance Wimberly and Rodney Page to bring three world premieres to their programs. In 2023, Linden founded the Creative Music Ensemble with DMYS—an elective where students explore creative music-making through improvisation and composition. Linden has presented at the Michigan Music Conference and currently serves as Membership Chair on the board of MASTA. In 2025 they received the WXYZ Exceptional Educator Award. In their free time, they enjoy their Detroit-based life creating music and building community—whether through improvising, composing, folk jamming, singing songs, or sharing meals—as well as rock climbing and nature-based travel.

**Nominator's Statement:** Linden has built strong relationships with the students and community members of Ferndale, serves as the MASTA membership chair helping to grow and sustain our organization, has served as a MASTA camp counselor, and directs a youth orchestra. Linden is a collaborative colleague that brings a high level of detail and thought to this work!



**Samantha Farmer:** Samantha Farmer is the Orchestra Director at Novi Middle School and an active private cello teacher in the Walled Lake area. Samantha played an integral role in the founding of the MSBOA District IV and XVI Honors Orchestra, and she served as the VP of Orchestral Activities for MSBOA District IV during the '21-'22 and '22-'23 school years.

Over the last decade, she has also worked as a clinician and coach for numerous events, including the Walled Lake Day for Strings, Clarkston Day for Strings, and the Mid-Level String Clinic. Samantha has also been a presence at MASTA Camp since her undergraduate years, serving as both a sectional coach/counselor and orchestra director. She holds a Bachelor of Music Education from Western Michigan University (2016) and a Master of Music Education from the University of Michigan (2024).

**Nominator's Statement:** Samantha Farmer's teaching abilities have impressed me since she took an independent study with me when she was in high school. She worked with me daily, assisting and teaching a class of sixth grade Orchestra students. Her abundant natural abilities were honed at Western Michigan University and student teaching in St. Joseph with Burke

Lokey and Rachel Cabanilla. Samantha then went on to her current teaching position at Novi Middle School.

She also served as Music Director at Session I at MASTA Camp. She received her Master of Music Education from the University of Michigan.

Samantha as a high school senior showed teaching abilities beyond many student teachers. She's creative, dedicated, organized and cares deeply for her students. She's actively involved in the profession, organizing the east side String Reading Sessions, MSBOA Solo and Ensemble Festivals, the MSBOA District 4 and 16 Honors Orchestra, as well as maintaining a small cello studio. Her work in Novi reflects the quality of her teaching, as her students are consistently well prepared for the high level of performance demonstrated by the Novi High School Orchestras.

I am so grateful to have been part of Samantha's musical journey, as her orchestra and cello teacher through middle school and high school and I'm immensely proud to call her my colleague. I respectfully nominate Samantha Farmer for the MASTA Early Career Recognition.



**Allison Holden:** Allie Holden is in her 10th year teaching orchestra at Rockford Public Schools. At North Rockford Middle School, Mrs. Holden has grown the orchestra program from 120 students to 205. Through her development of the Rockford Instrument Fund, she has helped defray instrument rental costs for economically disadvantaged music students assisting 46 families and counting. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Allie directs the Sinfonia Orchestra at St. Cecilia Youth Ensembles. Currently, she is Vice President of the Rockford Education Association where she brings her perspective as a music teacher to advocate for better working conditions for educators and improved learning environments for students. She is also an active MSBOA Solo & Ensemble adjudicator and has been a guest clinician for area orchestra programs.

Mrs. Holden has served as MSBOA District 10 treasurer and music education liaison, served as MASTA membership chair, and administered and hosted MASTA Bass Fest-West. In the 2020-2021 school year, she led virtual after-school instruction for the middle school orchestras at Greenwich Public Schools in Connecticut. Additionally, she has worked as a MASTA Strings Camp Counselor and Interlochen Ensemble Manager.

Allie holds music education degrees from University of Michigan and Michigan State University and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Teaching and Curriculum from MSU through a state-sponsored grant. She credits her involvement in MASTA, MASTA camp, and her ASTA mentor Gabe Villasurda for her development early in her teaching career.

**Nominator's Statement:** Allison is in her 10th year as the orchestra teacher at North Rockford Middle School, where she began her career as an Orchestra Teacher. She is consistently working to make the orchestra program at Rockford better, and is an advocate for all students having the opportunity to play a stringed instrument. She was one of the teachers that started the "Instrument Fund" through a grant she wrote to the Rockford Education Foundation. This grant has allowed many students to receive a discounted rental rate for their instrument so that they can participate in the orchestra program (and band program!) at Rockford Public Schools.

Allison is always thinking of the next "big" thing that she can do to provide opportunities and experiences for her students. She brings in guests & clinicians for her students and is always looking for ways she can improve her teaching--this all shows through the growth of the orchestra program at Rockford Public Schools! Allison has also served on the board of MASTA in the role of Membership chair. Outside of teaching school, she has completed the training and has served as a solo & ensemble judge for MSBOA. This year, Allison has also taken on the role of conducting the Sinfonia Youth Orchestra at the St. Cecilia Music Center in Grand Rapids.

**Please vote for 1 nominee using [THIS LINK](#) by January 3, 2026**

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Industry Showcase Sessions

Committee Roundtables

Master Classes

Music Reading Sessions

Jam Sessions, led by Martha Mooke

For registration information, please visit [www.astastrings.org](http://www.astastrings.org).

# MASTA Outreach General Info

## PROGRAM GRANTS

Maximum \$500

Program Grants assist string programs in providing instruction or other enhancement activities - clinics, artists in residency, special projects, etc. These grants are generally not awarded toward the purchase of supplies or equipment.

## PD GRANTS

Maximum \$250

Professional Development Grants help individuals pursue education or training that will enhance their string playing and/or teaching.

## CAMP SCHOLAR- SHIPS

### Partial Scholarships

MASTA Camps scholarships are partial funding that is awarded to students attending Sessions 1, 2, or 3 who have a teacher who is a MASTA member. Students are awarded scholarships based on financial need and application review. Students must be registered for camp and have paid the application fee.

# MASTA Outreach Deadlines

SEP. 1

## Program/PD Grants

For requests that will take place between Oct. 1 and May 31

APR. 1

## Program/PD Grants

For requests that will take place between June 1 and Sep. 30

APR. 15

## Camp Scholarships

Students must be registered for MASTA Camps and have paid the application fee

CONTACT

Joanna Van Eizenga,  
Outreach Chair

joanna.bozin@gmail.com  
989-614-1141



American String Teachers Association

The American String Teachers Association Certificate Advancement Program (ASTACAP) provides a comprehensive curriculum and program of examinations designed to serve string teachers and their students in the United States and abroad.

Exam Date and Site:  
Sunday, February 22, 2026  
Madison High School  
3498 Treat Hwy.  
Adrian, MI 49221

Postmark Deadline for Teachers:  
December 23, 2025. Please honor this  
for scheduling

Additional info, including registration forms and requirements can be found [HERE](#)

If you have any questions, please contact:

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Please view out ASTACAP invite video [HERE](#)



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## MASTA Project Directors

Chamber Music Festival: Ji Hyun Kim – [jihyunkim.vln@gmail.com](mailto:jihyunkim.vln@gmail.com)

MASTA String Camps: Ted McDonald – [mastacamps@gmail.com](mailto:mastacamps@gmail.com)

Membership Chair: Linden DeLeeuw - [linden.deleeuw@ferndaleschools.org](mailto:linden.deleeuw@ferndaleschools.org)

Michigan Music Conference Coordinator: Jean Lee – [leejean@msu.edu](mailto:leejean@msu.edu)

MASTA Social Media Coordinator: Jami Kleinert - [mastanotes@gmail.com](mailto:mastanotes@gmail.com)

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State String Outreach & National Honors Orchestra: Joanna Van Eizenga – [joanna.bozin@gmail.com](mailto:joanna.bozin@gmail.com)

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MMC Liaison: Dan Scott - [dscott1996@gmail.com](mailto:dscott1996@gmail.com)

MSBOA Liaison: Maritza Garibay – [maritza.garibay@detroitk12.org](mailto:maritza.garibay@detroitk12.org)

Northern Michigan Initiative: Danielle Simandl – [danielle.simandl@gmail.com](mailto:danielle.simandl@gmail.com)