



Sharps & Flats



An Official Publication of the Florida Federation of Music Clubs

Theme: "Music Gives Wings to the Intellect and Flight to the Imagination"

Song: "There's Room for Everyone in This World"

Message from FFMC President, Lisa Smith:



I am happy to once again extend greetings to every member of the Florida Federation of Music clubs through this issue of our Sharps & Flats. We should all be most grateful to Wanda Louie, the Editor of this fine publication, for her diligent work and patience. As we have now embarked upon another year of activity, it is my sincere wish that the months to come will bring to each one of you true happiness and numerous opportunities to serve your respective musical communities. I have already had the privilege of joining both Suwannee and St. Johns Districts for their meetings and am looking forward to this week spending time with the Central folks. I hope to attend as many district meetings as possible so I can get to know better the various needs and

concerns of the members of this organization. I was told by a wise past president that all the districts have a different personality or temperature and one of the pleasures of visiting each district is to experience and get to know the pulse of the group. I encourage all club members to attend their District's meeting(s) so they can receive information and inspiration that will encourage them and make them better workers for the cause of music and our Federation. The feeling of camaraderie is palpable when attending a district meeting in person.

On a slightly different topic, did you know that St. Johns and Suwannee Districts both have Junior Boards? It is true. These amazing, elected Junior officers help the district and senior clubs operate through their volunteerism. It is my wish that all Florida districts establish such boards of talented young people to involve them more in the actual functioning of the local and state organizations. I will be promoting this idea at all the district meetings I have the honor of attending. Also, let us consider thinking out of the typical box of officer positions. St. Johns has created a new Online Chair position for its Junior Board. This position will become critical to my overall vision of creating a more intense social media presence online for both our local and state groups.

In the meantime, may you all have a wonderful and productive holiday season!

Lisa Smith
FFMC President 2025-2027

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Did you know that the predecessor to our Sharps and Flats was a publication titled "State Bulletin" and within that was a section specifically for Juniors to announce their achievements year-round? Well, in an effort to promote our wonderful Juniors we are bringing back this section in the Sharps and Flats. Please send any successes or accomplishments of Junior Clubs or individual Junior members to our new Sharps and Flats editor Wanda Louie at wlpiano23@gmail.com for inclusion in subsequent publications. In addition, if you want to post Junior accomplishments on our Facebook and/or Instagram public pages, please contact our new State Junior Social Media Chair, Alvin Cheng at alvincheng31@yahoo.com so we can shout out to the world how proud we are of our Juniors!

FFMC NEW MEMBER LIAISON CHAIR

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Dominic Fusco as our FFMC New Member Liaison Chair. He is available to help guide all potential, new, and even current members who need a refresher course traversing unscathed through the membership process. If necessary, he will also be able to forward you to any individual in your respective area for additional information.

Many thanks to Dominic! You can reach Dominic at hammerstruck@comcast.net

FFMC MEMORIAL AND RECOGNITION FUND

If you are looking for a way to honor someone, consider a donation to the FFMC Memorial and Recognition Fund. These gifts can be made in honor of or in memory of members who have recently deceased. While we do not currently have a Chair for this, please send your donations to the State President, Lisa Smith, 3774 Barbizon Circle S., Jacksonville, FL 32257. She will accept the donations and will notify the family of the monetary gift. If you are interested in taking this FFMC position, please let Lisa Smith know.

IN MEMORIAM

The information contained in this section includes any membership deaths, membership extended family deaths, etc. Please send any "in memory" news to wlpiano23@gmail.com for publication in the Sharps and Flats.

Note that we do have a wonderful FFMC Chaplain, Dr. Jerome Lowe. For any prayer needs, please contact him at ljerome777@yahoo.com. Throughout the year, if your club or district has any member deaths, please contact him to give him the name of the deceased, club(s)/district(s) that he/she belonged to, date of death, how he/she served (locally, state, nationally, community, and/or church), how many years they were a member, and any personal interesting thoughts about the personality, style of leadership or particular passion in their service. This information is important so we can honor the deceased during a special ceremony held at the Spring State Convention in Niceville next June.

Remembering S. Michael Plaut, PhD. 1941-2025

Submitted by Cheryl Poe, Suwannee District President



It is with a heavy heart that we report the unexpected passing of Foundation for the Promotion of Music, Vice President, S. Michael Plaut, better known to us as Mike. Mike was a retired psychologist by profession who migrated with his wife, Judy, to Gainesville in 2012. It did not take Mike long to become fully engaged in musical activities and leadership roles in the greater Gainesville community. He was an accomplished amateur clarinetist who played in the Gainesville Community Band and launched a chapter of the International New Horizons Group at Oak Hammock Residential Community. Mike's leadership roles included board president of the Gainesville Community Band, International New Horizons Music, University of Florida Friends of Music, and Oak Hammock Residence Council. Perhaps most important, Mike was a kind, caring, and lifelong learner who freely shared his intellect and compassion with all who knew him.

FFMC COLLEGIATE VOICE COMPETITION

Submitted by Connie Lill

FFMC Collegiate Voice Competition – **January 31, 2026**

Application Deadline – **January 10, 2026**

Mark your calendar, check the ffmc-music.org website, and find music clubs and district clubs willing to sponsor college voice students. Now in its 75th year, our FFMC Collegiate Voice competition will be held at the First United Methodist Church, 419 NE 1st Street, Gainesville, Florida 32601.

The event will begin at 11:00am followed by lunch, a concert by 2025 winners, Cody Whiddon sponsored by the Harmony Club of Jacksonville and Lizzie Robertson sponsored by the Choctaw Bay Club in the Florida Panhandle. Each won \$2,000.00. They will then help crown the 2026 winners. Second Place winners receive \$1,500.00 and Third place winners receive \$500.00.

Clubs in 2025 included Music Club of Hollywood; Foundation for the Promotion of Music-Gainesville; Friday Morning Music Club of Tampa; Orlando Music Club. The sponsorship fees include Application Fee-\$75.00, Accompanist Fee-\$75.00 and \$150.00 toward Friday night hotel if needed. In addition, underwriters are needed for expenses towards the venue, corsages, judges' fees, photographer etc. Names will be published in the event program. Any questions, please text Lisa Smith 904-307-8897 or ffmcprez2025@gmail.com

FESTIVAL BULLETIN UPDATES

Submitted by Esther Umansky-Roth, FFMC Festivals Chair

NFMC has recently launched its online Festivals Bulletin, which includes all updates, rules and regulations, and repertoire selections. Your login credentials are the same ones used for Vivace. For new members, they may choose to purchase a [physical bulletin or online bulletin](#).

JUNIOR CONVENTION NEWS!

Submitted by Esther Umansky-Roth, FFMC Festivals Chair

May 8-9, 2026 at the University of South Florida, Tampa

We receive many questions as to why the Jr. Convention is set on certain dates that may coincide with Mother's Day, etc. Due to the massive size of our state competition (roughly 2,000 entries in 2 days with award ceremonies each night!) the hosting university cannot use any of their performance facilities or classrooms. Because of this, we are only able to book dates during the university's graduation weekend, when all college students are expected to be off campus and there are no regular or summer classes scheduled.

Popular Music Solo Event Update (at the Junior Convention)

Starting this year, teachers entering the Popular Music Solo event at the Junior Convention must be aware that the event will feature A and B divisions within each of the six levels. This change reflects the wide range of difficulty within the repertoire and without these new divisions, judges simply cannot make fair or meaningful comparisons between students.

For instance, Level 2 includes pieces as varied as Coates' "Over the Rainbow" (with simple rhythms similar to repertoire in Piano Solo Elementary 1-4) and Parrino's "Imagine," (with complex rhythms, key changes, and octave runs comparable to Difficult 1 and above). The divisions will be listed in the [Junior Procedures](#) manual shortly and available to download from FFMC's website.

Endowed Awards (at the Junior Convention)

Dr. Glen Smerage has made changes to his Chamber Music Award, which is now separated into two levels! Check out the two new awards, \$800 and \$1,600, listed on FFMC's website under the [Junior Convention tab](#)!

Have a wonderful Festival season and see you at the Junior Convention!

Esther Umansky-Roth
FFMC Festivals and Junior Division Chair

FEDERATION CUPS

Submitted by Julia Seltzer, FFMC Federation Cup Chair

Congratulations to these 60, 75, and 90 point Cup recipients and their teachers!

Cup	Student	Teacher	District	Event
60	Elizabeth Annie Blay	Wanda Louie	Suwannee	Piano Solo
60	Caitlyn Du	Zalina Gurevich	Lake Altamonte	Piano Solo
60	Jad Alexis Capella	Irena Kofman	RP North	Piano Solo
60	Eric Chen	Carol A. Hallberg	Lake Altamonte	Piano Solo
60	Pranay Reddy Gadikota	Jueun Warf	Suwannee	Violin Solo
60	Nilah Lois Hnat	Holly Ryan Jedlicka	Lake Brevard	Piano Solo
60	William Kim	Olga Glick	Bay Ridge Tampa	Piano Solo
60	Elizabeth Lai	Olga Glick	Bay Ridge Tampa	Piano Solo
60	Jayden Y. Lang	Maria I. Gomez	RP North	Piano Solo
60	Emma Christine Lee	Peggy Edwards	St. Johns	Piano Solo
60	Alexis Nicole Lyons	Diana S. Heller	RP North	Piano Solo
60	Nathan Agranovsky	Zalina Gurevich	Lake Altamonte	Piano Solo
60	Vasanth Madanmohan Parthasarathy	Debra Howard Carter	St. Johns	Piano Solo
60	Sienna Grace Pepera	Gwendolyn Louise Hernandez	St. Johns	Piano Solo
60	Lila Jane Pistorius	Sue Colvert	RP North	Piano Solo
60	Darrin Thomas	Priscilla Sheffield	Lake Central	Piano Solo
60	Addison Nicole Tinker	Mara Jurjans Lauzums	Lake Brevard	Piano Solo
60	Helen Whisler	Laura King	Suwannee	Piano Solo
60	Derek Wu	Irena Kofman	RP North	Piano Solo
60	Elizabeth Xiao	Roxanne Stevenson	RP North	Piano Solo
60	Andrew Xiong	Hee Jung Kang	Suwannee	Piano Solo
60	Samuel Xu	Ruth Lewis	Suwannee	Piano Solo
60	Catherine Xinyi Zhao	Huifang Helen Chen	RP North	Violin Solo
75	Alice Bai	Ivanka Stefanov	Bay Ridge- Tampa	Piano Solo
75	Madison Fang	Olga Glick	Bay Ridge- Tampa	Piano Solo
75	John Ibach	Susan Reed	St. Johns	Piano Solo
75	Joseph Savoie	Loretta Hake	Capital	Piano Solo
75	Derek Sung	Olga Glick	Bay Ridge- Tampa	Piano Solo
75	Allen Bin-Shang Ting	Huifang Chen	RP North	Violin Solo
75	Lyna Tran	Kenji Suganuma	Bay Ridge- Tampa	Piano Solo
75	Michael Wei	Mika Fujita	Suwannee	Piano Solo
75	Paul Fredrick Wubbena IV	Inesa Gegprifti	RP South	Piano Solo
90	Mia Hakkarainen	Huifang Chen	RP North	Violin Solo
90	Samuel Victor Wu	Kenji Suganuma	Bay Ridge- Tampa	Piano Solo
90	Aiden Zee	Maria Gomez	RP North	Piano Solo

2025 NFMC LYNN FREEMAN OLSON COMPOSITION AWARDS

Submitted by Lisa Smith, Lynn Freeman Olson Composition Chair

There were many remarkable and creative musical ideas contained within the entries for the 2025 NFMC Lynn Freeman Olson Composition Awards, and the compositions selected for awards reflected originality, a firm grasp of compositional skills, and strict adherence to the competition requirements.

The first place winners for 2025 were:

Intermediate: Charlotte Connors, student of Dan McCurry SC, for her composition, "The Ugly Duckling"

High School: Emily Bennett, student of Heather Riley MA, for her composition, "Wind Chimes"

Advanced: No Winner

There were no honorable mentions awarded in either the High School or Advanced categories but there were two honorable mentions in the Intermediate category:

Kendall King, student of Dan McCurry SC for her composition "Swing On By"

Maggie Oakman, student of Dan McCurry SC for her composition "Calm Echoes"

Congratulations to these outstanding students for their entries!

2027 NFMC LYNN FREEMAN OLSON COMPOSITION AWARDS

Submitted by Lisa Smith, Lynn Freeman Olson Composition Chair

Do you know a talented young composer? If so, please encourage them to enter the next NFMC Lynn Freeman Olson Composition Competition in 2027. The Lynn Freeman Olson Composition Awards are given biennially in odd numbered years. The applicants must be nonprofessionals whose works have not been previously published for the purpose of general public use or sales. Applicants must have current membership in the National Federation of Music Clubs and may enroll as Individual members by visiting <https://www.nfmc-music.org/payment/>. Applicants must be at the appropriate age/grade level and be studying in some area of music at the time of the application closing date (March 1) of the year of entry. There are three different categories and awards based on age/grade:

- Intermediate: Grades 7-8-9 at application date \$ 750.00*
- High School: Grades 10-11-12 at application closing date \$1,500.00*
- Advanced: High School graduates through age 25 at application closing date \$2,250.00*

*In the event of financial shortfalls, advertised award amounts may be adjusted. Applicants would be notified of the award change.

Only one composition may be entered any given award year and applicants who receive awards are not permitted to enter the same category a second time. Applicants who receive awards and whose compositions are subsequently published cannot re-enter the competition. It is important to note that solo/ensemble arrangements and ensemble settings of standard works are not eligible. All award recipients will be notified on May 18th of the award year. Each applicant must submit the [JR 8-2](#) application and additional required materials postmarked by March 1st to the national chair. Exceptions will not be granted to this deadline. Additionally, applications will not be accepted more than one month prior to the postmark deadline. For more information, please visit <https://www.nfmc-music.org/> and download form [JR 8-1](#) as well as the application [JR 8-2](#).

2026 JUNIOR COMPOSERS CONTEST
Submitted by Lisa Moore, FFMC Composition Chair

Consider the annual music writing challenge for your young creative students! Junior members are invited to submit their own compositions. Upload materials (score and mp3 recording) by **February 1**. List of FFMC awards by age division:

Class I (ages 9 & below)	1st Place \$100	2nd Place \$50
Class II (ages 10-12)	1st Place \$200	2nd Place \$150
Class III (ages 13-15)	1st Place \$400	2nd Place \$250
Class IV (ages 16-18)	1st Place \$500	2nd Place \$350

See [JUNIOR COMPOSERS CONTEST RULES JR 7-1](#). Any medium is accepted (keyboard, voice, other instruments or any combination thereof). There is a \$30 entry fee to be paid online directly to NFMC. Entrants who wish to earn “Gold Cup” points pay \$6.00 more for composition event. Earn up to 8 points for Superior (multiple instruments) or 7 points for Superior (written for a single instrument). Refer to Festival Bulletin, page xviii. Additional details can be found on the FFMC website:

<https://www.ffmc-music.org/junior-composers-contest>

Questions? Email Lisa Moore, FFMC Composition Chair, at composition@ffmc-music.org

LET’S CELEBRATE STRINGS

The NFMC Arts Division established awards to recognize outstanding efforts which encouraged appreciation of string music. Join us as we CELEBRATE STRINGS in the 2025-26 club year. NFMC reports [AR 3-1](#) and [AR 3-2](#) list suggested activities, ideas, and programs. Senior Clubs can apply for monetary awards (10 at \$100 each) for exceptional string programs and projects. Junior Clubs are eligible to apply for funding (10 awards at \$25 each). Email report by **April 1, 2026**, to Celebrate Strings chair Jennifer Guzman jenniferguzman@me.com

DISTRICT AND CLUB NEWS

Orlando Music Club Celebrates 50 Years in May 2025

CONGRATULATIONS

“PASS THE GAVEL”

Honoring Presidents – Past and Present



Pictured from Left to Right

Elaine Knight, Trudy Hom, Gayle Stein, Bette Hunting, Lisa Moore, Jeannine Mongeon

Suwannee District/Foundation for the Promotion of Music

Submitted by Cheryl Poe, Suwannee District President and Linda Blessing. FPM President

Suwannee District/FPM launched its fall season of music making at our District Meeting September 26 at the Community Foundation of North Central Florida, in Gainesville. Lisa Smith, FFMC President, was our guest of honor. Twenty-five members and guests enjoyed a delicious luncheon while listening to Hannah and Mikaylah Jewell perform lovely duet selections.

Members of FPM and its Associate Organizations have an exciting season planned for friends, family, and our extended Gainesville community. All our performances are free and open to the public. Visit our [Facebook page](#) (Foundation for the Promotion of Music) and website <https://www.thefpm.org/> for up-to-date information about location, and times of concerts, recitals, outreach projects, and festivals.



Past FFMC President Claudia Brill
FFMC President Lisa Smith



FPM President Linda Blessing



Suwannee Dist Pres Cheryl Poe
FFMC President Lisa Smith

FFMC DONATIONS WELCOME!

Donations are welcome! Your contribution keeps music alive! From scholarships, to competitions, to performances - you will directly impact the performing arts!

Link: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/donate-to-ffmc>

Thank you for your contributions!

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We would love to hear about your district and club activities, programs, successes and accomplishments and Junior member news. Send in any news and announcements for the next issue of Sharps and Flats to

Wanda Louie, editor wpiano23@gmail.com

Deadline is March 1, 2026