



GAE NEWSLETTER Summer 2022

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WEBMASTER: [Tara Wright](#)

www.gatewaymusicteachers.org

(This first article (below) was written prior to July 9, but the Newsletter did not get sent out in time for members to get the information.)

PIANIST JOSEPH WELCH NAMED OE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Opera Edwardsville is proud to recognize the incredible talent and contribution of pianist Dr. Joseph Welch through the creation of a new role within the organization.

Joseph has been named the company's first **Artist-in-Residence**, a designation that includes involvement within all 2022 season events and acknowledges OE's deep appreciation for the talent and expertise that Joseph brings to performances and rehearsals. This new season-long designation has been underwritten by an anonymous donor. OE's ability to welcome world-class singers to Edwardsville is possible knowing that performances will be in collaboration with a pianist of Joseph's calibre.

Joseph serves as a Professor of Music at Blackburn College. An advocate for the vocal and keyboard arts, Dr. Welch is the Founder and Artistic Director of St. Louis Art Song, which recently hosted Libby Larsen in a weekend residency. He coaches studios in the Opera Theatre of St. Louis Artists-in-Training program and is the Director of Music at First Congregational Church in Bunker Hill, IL. He is the Assistant Music Director for Variety Theatre in St. Louis.

His previous music direction credits include Opera Edwardsville, SIUE's Summer Showbiz, Marble City Opera, Midwest Institute of Opera, and many summer programs. Joseph frequently works with the Illinois Symphony Orchestra. As choral accompanist, he plays for the St. Louis Children's Choirs' Young Men's Chorus and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's Holiday Festival Chorus. Dr. Welch serves on the boards of the Southern Illinois Young Artist Organization and the Bunker Hill Education Foundation. Recent awards include Member of the Year for the Illinois State Music Teachers Association - Gateway Arch East Chapter and Adjunct Instructor of the Year at Blackburn College. Dr. Welch enjoys studying genealogy, gardening, photography, farming, and home remodeling in his free time.

Joseph's new role with Opera Edwardsville comes as part of our 5th Anniversary Season. In the past four years, Joseph has been a part of over 15 OE events. Looking ahead, OE's future is all the brighter with Joseph's growing involvement within the company.

FYI: Two upcoming performances of the 2022 season are free to the public. See below:

July 9, 2022

Goldilocks and the Three Singing Bears | A free opera for kids!

Presented at the Edwardsville Public Library

The music of Mozart and Offenbach meet the magic of children's theatre for this operatic adaptation of the classic fable, **Goldilocks and the Singing Three Bears**. This 40-minute opera features music from famous operas with silly new words and fun dialogue, presented in English, and perfect for the entertainment of our youngest audiences (*and their parents too!*). Thanks to donors and sponsors, this program is free for the entire family to enjoy at no cost. *Warning, audience participation is likely!*

Join before the performance when the City of Edwardsville **Arts in the Park** series will be making crafts. Then, enjoy the performance in the main reading room of the **Edwardsville Public Library at 10am.**

The story: Goldilocks doesn't just like bugs – she loves them. When a beautiful butterfly flutters off into the woods, she chases it, forgetting a promise made to her mom to stay close to home. Trying to find her way home after eating soup that doesn't belong to her, Goldie meets Peek, a little bear. Peek confides to Goldie that a sneaky robber snuck into his family's house that very morning, licked his spoon and ate his soup. Goldie is horrified, for she knows, of course, that she's the sneaky soup robber. What should she do? Should she risk getting in trouble by telling the truth? Should she be dishonest and hope to avoid being punished?

This event is free for the entire public to enjoy thanks to OE's [2022 Season Sponsors and Donors](#). OE would like to recognize 2022 presenting Sponsors: **The Rotary Club of Edwardsville, the City of Edwardsville, the Schmidt and Barton Family Fund, Lewis Rice, and Stifel.** This

program is presented in partnership with the **Edwardsville Public Library**, the City of Edwardsville's **Arts in the Park** program and the **Edwardsville Arts Center**.

Featuring:

Ty'Ria Rounds, *Soprano*
Spencer Domer, *Tenor*
Jacob Lassetter, *Baritone*
Amy Prince, *Soprano*

Goldilocks, *a little girl who loves bugs*
Peek, *a little bear and ambitious cub scout*
Papa Bear, *Peeks father and an avid gardener*
Mama Bear, *Peeks mother and an amazing cook*

September 30, 2022

Opera Edwardsville at Edwardsville City Park | *A free community concert* Presented outdoors at the Edwardsville City Park

Following a spectacular debut outdoors in 2021, Opera Edwardsville makes a return to its new summer stage for a second **outdoor concert at Edwardsville City Park** on September 30, 2022 at 7:30pm. A sensational line up of guest artists will perform operatic highlights and Broadway favorites --Bring your lawn chairs, tables, and picnics to enjoy opera under the starry night sky and the dazzling spotlights! *Who knows, maybe the cicadas will join in chorus again this year!*

With voices that shine as bright as the iconic spotlights, OE welcomes sopranos **Emily Birsan** and **Sofia Troncoso**, mezzo-soprano **Emily Fons**, and tenor **Eric Ferring**, with accompaniment from pianist and OE Artist-in-Residence, **Joseph Welch**. To celebrate OE's 5th Anniversary, Grammy Award-winning soprano and OE Artistic Advisor **Christine Brewer** makes a special guest appearance.

This event will feature state-of-the-art amplification provided by Chicago's **Aphorism Studios**, led by audio engineer **Dan Nichols**, names Person of the Year by the Chicago Tribune in 2021 for Classical Music.

A post-concert **champagne reception** is planned at the Edwardsville Public Library for OE Season Sponsors and Donors, with a 5th Anniversary toast and artist meet-and-greet.

Featuring:

Emily Birsan, *Soprano*
Sofia Troncoso, *Soprano*
Times

Emily Fons, *Mezzo-soprano*
Eric Ferring, *Tenor*
Tribune

Joseph Welch, *Piano*

"Bright and glittering" –*Opera News*

"Sofia Troncoso's delightful soprano is worth waiting for" –*The*

Grammy nominated and lauded by *Opera News* as a "Rising Star"

"An emerging tenor of considerable promise" –*Chicago*

With special guest appearance:

Christine Brewer, *Grammy Award-winning soprano and OE Artistic Advisor*

Discount Program at Office Depot/Office Max???

Did anyone else receive an email about the Office Depot/Office Max Discount Program? (See below.) When I inquired with their customer service, I found out that there was not much of a discount! Previously, we were receiving copies for \$.04 per copy. That was a great deal. Now the regular price is \$.12 per copy. A person is supposed to sign in online to their account and choose the “store discount program” from the menu to receive the discount. From the app, you will receive an access code to use at check out. The discount only amounts to 15% off the total price.



Office Depot/OfficeMax Discount Program Updates

Office Depot’s Business Solutions Division was rebranded to ODP Business Solutions on May 1, 2022. The MTNA member discounts on print services and business supplies from Office Depot/OfficeMax **will continue to be available** as they have been for many years.



There are a few updates to the program outlined below that relate to how members access the discounts. Additional information will be provided via email as it becomes available:

- The generic Store Purchasing Cards used by associations like MTNA have been phased out and replaced by the Store Discount Program. Members can register a new account or sign-in to their existing account by clicking [HERE](#). Select the checkbox during registration to enroll in the Store Discount Program or, once signed-in, click the “Store Discount Program” menu item from the account menu.
- Once enrolled at the link above, you may make **online purchases** at www.odpbusiness.com for delivery or in-store pickup at any Office Depot® or OfficeMax® store.
- To receive discounts on **in-store purchases**, download the ODP Business Solutions app ([Android](#) and [iOS](#)) and sign in to your account. From the app you will be able to access a digital QR Code to present at check-out in any Office Depot® or OfficeMax® store.

Please direct questions about these updates to Ryan Greene, Director of Membership Development and Affiliate Relations at rgreene@mtna.org.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS AND NOTES

From Dr. Stephanie Owen: Evangelina Duman, voice student of Dr. Stephanie Owen, received a letter of participation on July 13, 2022 from the Manhattan competition. The critique stated “excellent talent, marvelous technique, and superb musicality.” Evangelina sang by memory, four pieces in Italian by Settime Caccini of the 16th century.



GAE HISTORY

Some time ago, possibly when I started my term as GAE President in 2018, I thought it would be a good idea to get the history of Gateway Arch East organized and in one place. At one time, I had the binder containing several items such as yearbooks, festival programs, news clippings, etc. in my possession. I'm not sure what has happened to that now. We may have even had a member serve as Historian or perhaps it was the secretary that kept track of this. I decided to put some of the information about the officers and chairpersons into a document. We also have the number of GAE members listed in most cases and some stats as to the number of teachers entered in AIM along with the number of teachers. I am still working on a few updates. If you have ever served as Secretary of GAE, we need your help. It seems we are missing the binder or notebook containing the past minutes. If anyone has this in their possession, please let us know! (Gill, Debbie, or Joan).

I would like to personally thank Joe Welch for offering to take over the position of Newsletter Editor and Membership Chair. In the future, you may send any noteworthy news to him that you would like to share with the group in an upcoming newsletter. For those who might be interested, I plan on sharing some tidbits from the GAE History document that I'm working on or something that I have found in some of our former newsletters (Karen Koch did an excellent job of writing our Newsletter for many years!) She often added an interesting article to each Newsletter and they are still worthwhile reading today!

FYI For your information, I am sharing the list of names of our members who served as President through the years. I am also featuring the biography which I found of former GAE member Marian Chao, who was chosen as our first MOY when that program was instigated by ISMTA. She was a very kind person and a mentor to me. Living in Collinsville, she had many students and I often attended her recitals. We even worked together as AIM co-chairs at one time.



GAE PRESIDENTS:

Cynthia McDonough	1981 (April)
Clare Wee	1981 (October) – 1982
Karen Rogers	1982-1983
Marian Chao	1983-1986
Mary Carow	1986-1989
Karen Koch	1989-1992
LeAnn Halvorson	1992-1994
Darice Palmier	1994-1998
Deborah Meier	1998-2002
Amy Jo Sawyer	2002-2006
Donna Guillaume	2006-2010
Heidi Shepherd	2010-2014
LeAnn Halvorson	2014-2018
Deborah Meier	2018-2022
Gill Cerbin	2022-

About Marian Chao (1997-1998)

Marian Chao is the Gateway Arch East Chapter Member of the Year. She was one of the original members of ISMTA in the chapter's vicinity. In 1972 Marian, Frances Tonnies, and Adeline Burgoyne, who are all still members of Gateway Arch East, entered some students in "Plateaus of Progress," and ISMTA performance evaluation held at SIUE. It was the beginning of a local chapter. Marian has taught piano for 40 years and has found the syllabus exams to be helpful in giving structure to her students' lessons. Marian earned her Ph.D. in biology. She is State Certified and has also studied with Ruth Slenczynska. Marian has most recently served her local chapter as membership chairperson.

(Information from ISMTA Members of the Year 1997 Conference handout.)

About Frances Tonnies (1998-1999)

Frances Tonnies has been chosen as the Gateway Arch East Music Teachers Association Member of the Year. Tonnies determined to learn piano when she was given a three-octave toy piano, however, there were no teachers available in the area.

As a teen, the highlight of her week was tuning the family radio to the Sunday night New York Philharmonic concerts with Ernest Hutchinson.

Frances was introduced to many composers, some of her favorites being Beethoven, Schumann and Grieg. At age 19, she began to take weekly lessons at a St. Louis music school, traveling an hour each way by train. Practicing was squeezed into the late evening of her 12-hour work days.

Years later, Frances expanded her music skills with several years of theory and music courses from Washington University. She sang with the Civic Chorus for the St. Louis Symphony while there. She has worked as church organist, choir director, and piano teacher. In 1986, Frances received an Apolistic Blessing for her years of music service in the church. She received a Certificate Emeritus in 1987, recognizing her 25 years of participation in ISMTA.

(Information from ISMTA Members of the Year 1998 Conference handout.)

About Karen Rogers (1999-2000)

“According to my Mother, I showed a very early interest in the piano.” ‘notes’ Karen Rogers, Gateway Arch East Chapter Member of the Year. It is no surprise then that she holds three degrees in piano performance (Bachelor of Music from the University of Illinois, a Masters of Art and a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Iowa).

Karen has been an active member of the ISMTA for 25 years and MTNA for 26 years. A current Professor of Music at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Karen’s favorite part about teaching is watching over the years as her students grow and develop in ability. “Learning about teaching is a lifelong, continuing process,” she adds.

Karen’s most memorable performance was accompanying Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue for a competition-winning student in New York City’s Carnegie Hall. Bach and Beethoven are Karen’s favorite composers “because their music is so highly structured and beautiful in architecture.” A special thanks to Karen Rogers from the local Gateway Arch East members for her 21 years of support.

(Information from ISMTA Members of the Year 1997 Conference handout.)



Thanks to Tara Wright, our webmaster, who has been working to update our GAE website. You will find most of our MOY information on the website very soon!

Gateway Arch East Member-of-the-Year 2022-2023

Deborah Meier



Deborah Meier has been an independent piano teacher for more than 40 years. She has a B.S. in Elementary Education from Concordia University Nebraska (1974) and an M.S. in Elementary Education from S.I.U.-Edwardsville (1981). After teaching in Lutheran schools for nine years, she pursued an interest in piano teaching. In addition to teaching in her home studio, she also taught in the piano program at Holy Cross Lutheran School in Collinsville, IL. Her students actively participated in recitals, A.I.M., National Guild Auditions, Clavinova Festivals, Illinois Grade School Music Association Contests and Mid-America Music Association Festivals.

A member of the Gateway Arch East MTA since 1985, Deborah has served as Southern District Auditions Chair, Treasurer, A.I.M. Co-Chair, Vice-President, President and currently holds the position of Newsletter and Yearbook Editor. She is also a MusicLink teacher (1999—present) and serves as the MusicLink State Coordinator for Illinois. In addition, she has been serving as church organist for nearly 50 years after first being introduced to the organ when she was in junior high. In addition to playing the organ, she has served as a choir director, accompanist, and handbell ringer. She also enjoyed accompanying the choir at Metro East Lutheran High School in Edwardsville and went on performance tours with their band and choir. She continues to stay involved by playing in the MELHS Pit Orchestra for their spring musicals.

Deborah currently teaches a few students in her home studio and takes time with her husband to visit their two grown children and 5 grandchildren. She is thankful for all the joy that music has brought to her life and appreciates the friendships she has made with the members of her local chapter.