

Message from Judy Jenkins - CM Chair jenkinsmusic@cox.net
Certificate of Merit

Time to start again! Oh, shudder, can I possibly say that?

CM is finished for the year, and very successfully too. So why is it time to start again? Because aren't we looking at new repertoire, making decisions about each student's next level, and being alert to the dangers of summer neglect? Of course we are. I've already assigned advanced level etudes, for example. If the students "finish" them early, they can keep them on their repertoire list and move on to other things.

This word "finish" brings up a subject that very much concerns me. In fact, I think it should be a concern to any of us who consider ourselves music teachers, not just piano or violin or flute or voice teachers. **This is the trend to rush students through CM, many times skipping levels, to "finish" CM by grade 8 or 9 and not to continue through high school.** We know we have the magic triangle of teacher/student/parent. Any one of these can bring pressure to add one more certificate to the wall and one more item to the student résumé to impress the others in the triangle or the neighbors across the street. It's as if there were a race to advanced level. **This has resulted in poorly prepared students playing music that is beyond their ability; most CM evaluators have witnessed this.**

I have had very good students who truly reached advanced level in grade 9, achieved a theory exemption, and continued CM through their senior year. As always, CM provided a goal to study more advanced literature and achieve sense of accomplishment. These students constantly improved. They also liked receiving the senior medallion and the recognition that accompanied that. In addition, it is well known that college admission officers are much less impressed by something accomplished as a freshman than by an extracurricular achievement that has continued throughout the busy high school years.

This is the point. This is how we can answer parents who ask the question, "What IS the point?" This is how we can encourage students to become life-long musicians and music lovers and not just accumulators of pieces of paper (the certificates.) Many won't listen to us; in fact, many won't understand at all because we live in a society that ticks off accomplishments and then abandons them. But many will think it over and come back with "Thank you for explaining this. I trust your judgment, Mrs. Jenkins." Yes, it actually happened!!

Happy planning, and have a wonderful summer! And when it is finished, welcome back to CM. See you at Convention!

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CM Chair