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Florida State Music Teachers Association

FSMTA – District 9 Conference Workshop

Saturday, September 6th, 2025

Conference Location: Florida Southern College, Lakeland

Unearthing the Hidden Gems of Piano Literature

Presenter: Dr. Fen-Fang Chen

(Re-)Discovering an obscure female piano pedagogue: Marie Jaëll, her teaching methods, and compositions

Blog: "Does anyone know who Marie Jaëll is?" I asked while presenting at a conference in 2023. The audience responded with complete silence. I had, at the time, a desire to promote who Marie is, what she has accomplished in research for her piano teaching method, how she conducted her research, and why she is significant. After all, she composed over 80 different works, many of which were intended for pedagogical purposes. These works serve as excellent additional resources for teaching materials. In this presentation, I aim not only to promote Marie and her contributions to piano literature and pedagogy but also to compare her pioneering method with current methods. Additionally, I will share my interview with Irakly Avaliani, a pianist trained using her method. Lastly, I will demonstrate and discuss one of her pedagogical composition sets, *Rainy Day*.



Fen-Fang Chen, an associate professor, serves as the director of piano and keyboard studies and teaches keyboard musicianship, applied piano, piano pedagogy, and piano ensemble at Florida Southern College. She also sits on the Board of Regents of the National Music Honor Society, Pi Kappa Lambda. Dr. Chen completed two doctoral degrees at the University of Mississippi: a Doctor of Arts in Piano Pedagogy and a Doctor of Philosophy in Music Education.

She has taught at various institutions, including the University of Mississippi, Birmingham-Southern College, Miles College, and Indiana State University. As an active performer, Dr. Chen often performs on both the piano and the pipa (a traditional Chinese lute instrument) at various recitals and concerts. With a strong interest in efficient and effective ways of learning and practicing piano, Dr. Chen has presented her research at national, state, and regional conferences. She received the Outstanding Professional Research Poster Award from the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy at the National Conference. This January, Dr. Chen was awarded a sabbatical to pursue her new research project on discovering the teaching methods and compositions of Marie Jaëll, a French female piano pedagogue and composer.