

# Austin Arts: Seeing Things

Hot topics and Internet memes in the entertainment world.

## **Think you can name that song? Not faster than Austin's music memory students**

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Addie Broyles / American-Statesman

Naming songs on the radio is a fun game for long road trips, but what about classical music from 200 years ago?



Debbie Tannert, seen here with her music memory students from the 2015-2016 season, is the granddaughter of Malcolm Gregory. In 2016, she retired from Mills Elementary after 30 years of teaching music, just like her mother, Mollie Gregory Tower. Photo contributed by Mollie Tower.

That's the challenge for thousands of elementary and middle school students across Texas who participate in the music memory program. It's a UIL-approved contest, so every year, the best students compete on teams at an annual citywide event.

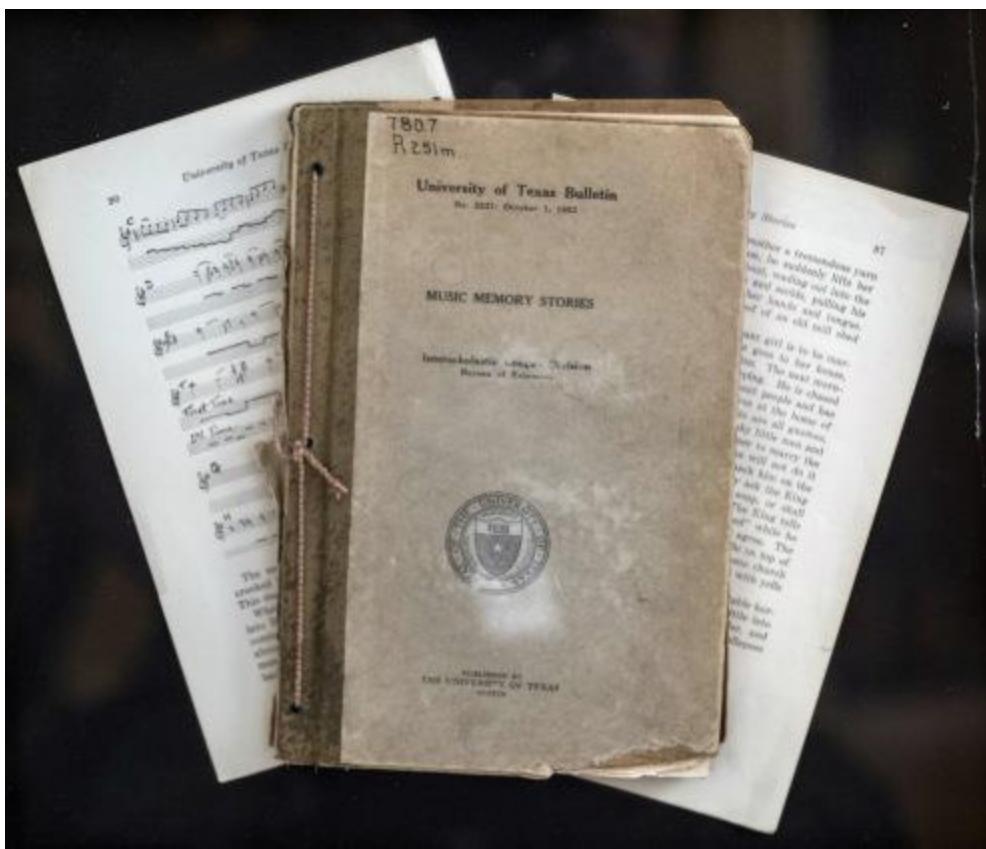
The history of these performances — usually from a live orchestra in a public place where community members gather to watch — started 101 years ago in New Jersey and has [a long history in Austin](#).

**READ MORE:** [For 100 years, music memory classes have taught more than listening](#)

This year's big AISD music memory contest returns on Saturday at the [AISD Performing Arts Center](#). There are two rounds of the competition, [one at 9 a.m. and another at noon](#). The event is free and open to the public.

After last year's music memory contest (my son was a first-time competitor), I was so moved by the experience (a live orchestra of high school students! playing for elementary students who can name a song after hearing just three seconds of it!) and story behind the family who revived it after a decades-long absence that I wrote [a story about it](#) later that summer.

You'll be sure that members of Malcolm Gregory's family will be there to watch his love of music pass on to yet another generation of careful music listeners. Here's a glimpse into their story:



A book belonging to Malcolm Gregory from 1923 on the Music Memory Contest which he participated in during the early 1920's copied in Austin, Texas, on Monday, June 6, 2016. Malcolm Gregory first participated in the Austin ISD's Music Memory Contest in the 1920's. The family has helped keep that program alive and successful. RODOLFO GONZALEZ / AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN



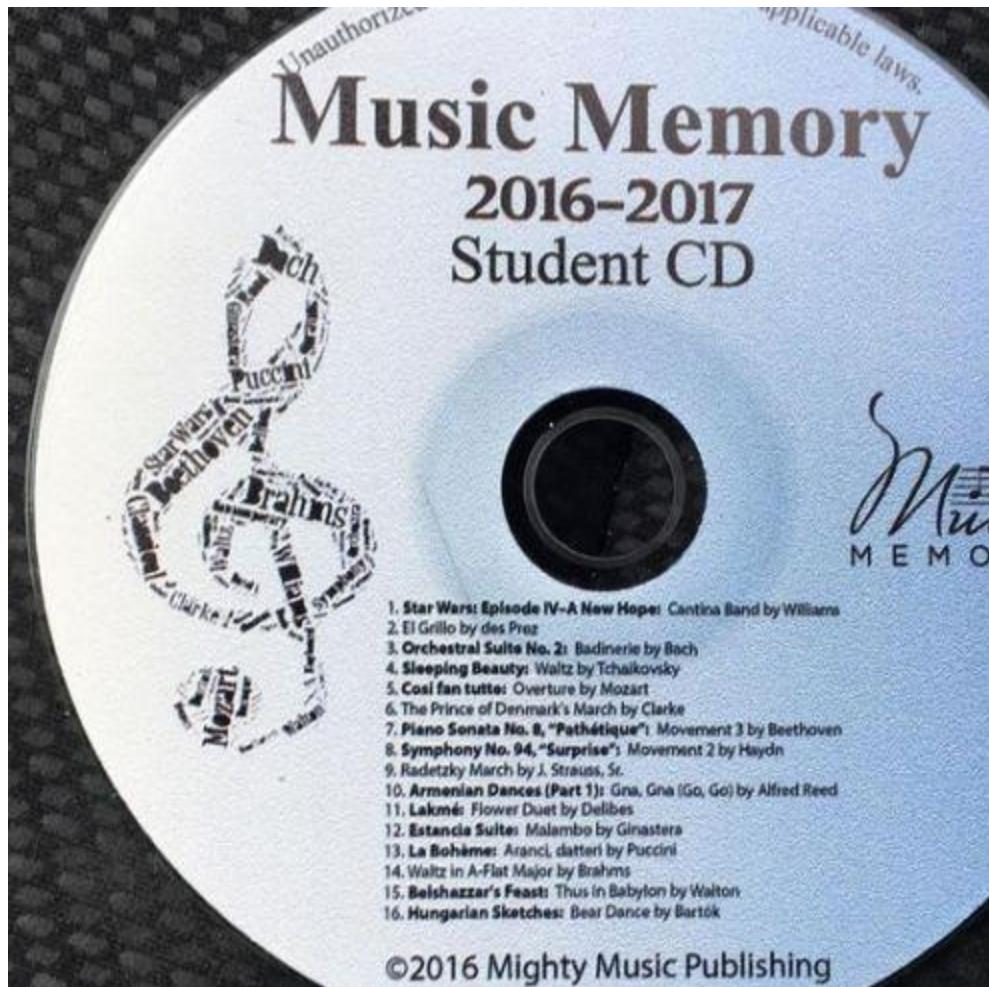
June 6, 2016- A copy of a circa 1920's photograph of the Music Memory Contest trophy made in Austin, Texas, on Monday, June 6, 2016. Malcolm Gregory first participated in the Austin ISD's Music Memory Contest in the 1920's. The family has helped keep that program alive and successful. RODOLFO GONZALEZ / AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN



June 6, 2016- Debbie Tannert, her daughter, Christina Tannert, Mollie Gregory Tower, and Peggy Gregory Brunner, left to right, pose for a portrait holding a Music Memory Contest trophy dated 1921 in Austin, Texas, on Monday, June 6, 2016.

Malcolm Gregory Mollie and Peggy's father, Debbie's grandfather and Christina's great grandfather, first participated in the Austin ISD's Music Memory Contest in the 1920's. The family has helped keep that program alive and successful.

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Mollie Gregory Tower, the daughter of Malcolm Gregory, who first fell in love with music contests as a boy in the 1920s. She now runs a music memory contest that writes curriculum to teach listening skills to young people. This is the list of UIL-chosen material for this year's music memory contest, which takes place on Saturday at the AISD Performing Arts Center.