



GEORGIA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Winter Newsletter 2018

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GEORGIA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, AN AFFILIATE OF MTNA

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TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Susan Andrews

The recipient of the 2017 Teacher of the Year Award is Susan Andrews. Superior teacher, articulate performer, valued mentor, leader and friend. These are attributes that describe the 2017 Teacher of the Year repeatedly throughout the recommendation letters received from fellow musicians, teachers and students. The Georgia MTA Teacher of the Year exemplifies true professionalism in so many ways. Her pedagogical knowledge is founded on high achievements and goals. She graduated summa cum laude with a degree in piano performance from the University of Georgia. She has continued her quest for best practice through her national certification with the Music Teachers National Association. Her students have consistently placed well in the GMTA Auditions and Federation. She is in great demand as a piano adjudicator. Susan uniquely understands that students come to their lessons with varied interests and she builds her curriculum around those interests while incorporating a variety of styles and repertoire. For all students, she builds on a curriculum of appropriate technical skills and insists on the importance of learning the nuts and bolts of music through music theory.



Susan continues to perform while modeling excellence for her students. She seeks opportunities to perform and chooses the best repertoire for her church worship. With over 30 years of experience, those who hear her are enriched through her performances.

Her leadership with Georgia Music Teachers Association exhibits consummate guidance. At the local level, she has held many offices including President of GCMTA. At the state level, Susan has served as President as well as other state offices. She has also served as chair of the Finance and Advisory Committee providing a wealth of time and experience to the work of that committee. She was selected as a 2011 MTNA Foundation Fellow. There are few people in the state that know as much about the history of GMTA as Susan. Through all events, she approaches the work

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

REBEKAH HEALAN BOLES, GMTA PRESIDENT

Greetings and Happy New Year! What a wonderful time we had at our 2017 GMTA Conference at Berry College in November. We are so grateful to Dr. Kris Carlisle for his amazing hospitality and for being so hands on in the planning and care taking of our conference. We also want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Dr. Adam Hayes and Kay Sims for all that they did to assist us. Berry College was such a beautiful place for us to come together and to be rejuvenated for another year of teaching. I think that I speak for the 157 registrants when I say that we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves!

Special thanks to Joy Poole, President-Elect, Chenny Gan, Vice President of Programs and Mandy Reynolds, GMTA Executive Director for their endless hours of checking and double checking details, corresponding with Berry, our conference headliners and presenters, and the many hours of work that they put in during the conference weekend. This takes hundreds of emails and several visits and endless days of preparation. We have surely received the benefit of their labor.



Our MTNA President, Dr. Scott McBride Smith was our Pedagogy headliner. Pianist, Phillip Bush, captivated us with a very energetic and eclectic performance on Friday evening and then poured some wisdom into our

students on Saturday morning at the master class. We were truly inspired by both of them. Another highlight of this year's conference was the presentation and performance of the commissioned work, *Microcosms*, by composer Benjamin Warsaw. We are blessed by the talent that exists here in our state! Many of the Georgia's Own members presented sessions and served as presiders, as well.

The Rome Music Teachers Association provided our hospitality and goody bags for the weekend. We always appreciate the snacks and coffee that keep us going. My personal favorite was the pound cake. Much appreciation to each of you for your contribution for our special weekend. I definitely cannot let the opportunity go by to thank Chris Syllaba and Steinway Piano Galleries for providing the Steinway Piano Galleries Educator Grants, Sam Bennett of Piano Works for their continued contribution of a Hidrau Model Hydraulic Adjustable Piano Bench for the MTNA Foundation Fund drawing, and the many local associations that contributed items for our GMTA Award fund drawings. It is contributions such as these that make many opportunities available for our members and students. GMTA is very grateful for your generosity.

As GMTA President, I have the privilege to be a part of many positive moments and activities. I am so thrilled to have the opportunity to personally congratulate Susan Andrews for being selected as our 2017 GMTA Teacher of the Year! This award and acknowledgement of Susan's contributions to GMTA and our music community as a dedicated and skilled teacher, a gifted musician and as a

continued on page 3



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servant leader is so well deserved. Susan, we appreciate you and are thankful to have this opportunity to show our respect and admiration to you!

This year we are honored to have three new 50 year members. Mrs. Jacquelyn Hutson, Mrs. Sarah Martin, and Mr. Eugene Martin were presented with their 50 year certificates at our conference banquet. What a joy to see those who have faithfully served and participated being recognized in this way. It is a tremendous accomplishment to be a part of something for 50 years and we celebrate you all!

Our Georgia MTNA Competitions were held prior to the conference on October 20-21, 2017 at Georgia College and State University. We had 90 entries this year. Of those, there will be 12 winners and 3 representatives advancing to the Southern Division Competition, which will be held at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia on January 12-15. I look forward to being there to cheer on our Georgia students!

GMTA began this year in excellent financial shape. As of December 31, 2017, our bank (checking & savings) balance is \$55,793.46; the amount in GMTA's reserve fund is

\$25,348.02; the amount in our GMTA Nolting Composition Award Fund is \$8,437.22; the amount in the Broadhurst Award Fund is \$12,580.15; and the amount in the GMTA Award Fund is \$15,032.73. Our membership as of 1/1/2018 is 649; of those 33 are student members; the number of certified members is 98.

Coming up soon!! The 2018 MTNA Conference will be March 17-21 in Lake Buena Vista, FL. I hope many of you are making plans to attend! Information for the conference may be found on the MTNA website (www.mtna.org). Last April, the 2017 MTNA Conference in Baltimore was attended by 22 GMTA members. It was a wonderful conference which featured great sessions and recitals. I hope many more of you will take advantage of this fabulous opportunity for professional growth and personal enrichment.

This has been a great year for me serving as your President. I look forward to all that this spring holds. Auditions and festivals are just around the corner. Please always watch for your Constant Contact each month and read carefully to stay up to date. Additional and more extensive information can be found in the quarterly newsletter or on the website. Best wishes to you all!



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Auditions

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 Sunday, March 11, 2018
 Saturday, April 22, 2018

Piano auditions arranged by appointment. Contact:
 Dr. Carol Gingerich
 cginger@westga.edu
 (678) 839-6273



(678) 839-6516
 music@westga.edu
 westga.edu/music



with a cheerful spirit. Because of her wealth of experience, she is our “go to” person for direction and wisdom in matters regarding local associations as well as those pertaining to GMTA or MTNA issues that may arise. Her knowledge of the organization is invaluable to GMTA.

A former student writes:

“She taught me confidence, how to set and achieve goals, to never give up, that persistence is key, and of course, to play the piano.”

Our 2017 GMTA Teacher of the Year was nominated by Cathy Thacker.

Special Thanks to the 2017 GMTA Teacher of the Year Selection Committee:

LaNelle Nash, NCTM, 2013 Teacher of the Year, Jan Adams, NCTM, 2015 Teacher of the Year, Joy Poole,

A few things her colleagues say:

“A truly amazing mentor,”

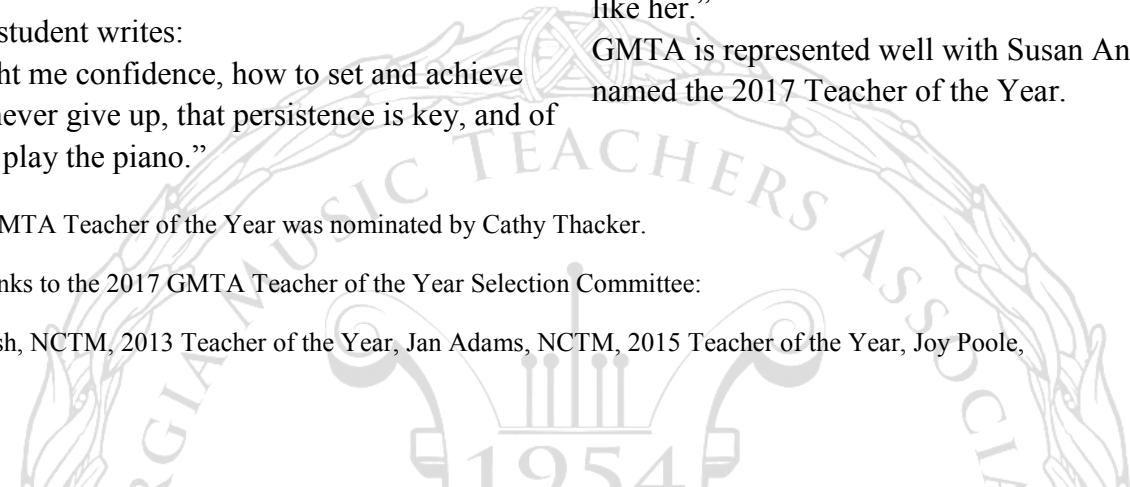
“Source of invaluable guidance and encouragement,”

“No one is more deserving,”

“A perfect choice for teacher of the year,” and

“The teacher of the year award was created for people like her.”

GMTA is represented well with Susan Andrews being named the 2017 Teacher of the Year.



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From an early age, I've known that I wanted to pursue teaching piano as a career. But teaching piano is not a job to me.....it's a calling which continues to bring me deep personal satisfaction.

My studio is a mixture of ages, levels, and innate abilities, which presents an interesting challenge. The youngest is five and the oldest is mid-60s. My students include six beginners, two adults; 75% are in method books and 25% are working on advanced repertoire. In the course of a week, there are students who enter my studio who display one or more of the following traits: difficulty counting and maintaining a steady beat, inability to quickly identify notes around middle C on the staff after years of lessons, lack of fluency in scale performance, confusion over theory concepts, technical deficiencies, or over-involvement in extra-curricular activities which prevents adequate piano practice. But, thankfully, there are also students who practice diligently, understand theory concepts, shape phrases well, can voice a melody properly in either hand and bring the music to life with some degree of artistry. Through the years, I've had more students in the first category than in the second, but my calling demands that I give the same effort to each and every one, regardless of the natural aptitude or degree of talent. A teacher must love people, children in particular, and possess an abundance of patience and perseverance. We should derive enjoyment from the challenge of imparting information in ways the students can understand, and gratification from observing a student who can finally perform a piece successfully after struggling with the technical challenges.

It is important to focus on the individual student, rather than attempt to keep the student on my pace of progression through the method books. Lessons must be tailored to each individual student's abilities and learning style, and they must be allowed to progress at their own pace. Most students have the following weekly assignments: scales, technique book, lesson book, theory, literature piece and/or supplemental

sheet music in progress for an upcoming performance. Some students can only handle one or two assigned pieces each week. A portion of each lesson must be devoted to instructing the students how to practice.

I use a large amount of supplementary material in addition to the method books. Hymn arrangements, popular music, jazz and other books as well as sheet music spark students' interest. I often lend the students books, and frequently sheet music is assigned from my extensive music library. If a student is struggling in a level, assigning them supplemental materials on that same level will slow their progress, but will reinforce the concepts and result in a better grasp of the technical or conceptual challenges.

Motivation and recitals: While recital and festival participation is strongly encouraged because it provides motivation, builds self-confidence and offers the challenge of working towards goals, it is not appropriate for every student in my studio. It's my task to determine which students can benefit from these experiences, and which students would be negatively impacted by the experiences.

The music for recitals and festivals is assigned far in advance of the performance date. This is vital for a successful performance and helps diminish performance anxiety. Memorization must be complete at least a month in advance. Several weeks before the recital, I record the student using an iPad. After viewing the video, we discuss recital deportment, stage presence, and the actual performance itself and ways to improve it.

Memorization is always required at my recitals. I usually have three per year, one in advance of fall events, one in advance of February/March performance events, and one at the end of the school year. Students are divided into groups so that the length of the recitals is no more than one hour. In addition to a solo piece, in the spring recital each student performs an



TEACHING TIPS, CONTINUED

SUSAN ANDREWS, 2017 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

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ensemble piece that is performed with a parent, another student or with me. Collaborative music making is important to the students' overall development.

One of the successes in my studio is the point/trophy program that was developed by Jean Mann, which I borrowed and have been using it for years. The students earn points for well-prepared lessons, memorization, performing in public, and composing. Trophies are awarded for each 100 points the students earn. Trophies are presented at the recitals, and the parents assume the expense. Older teenage students may choose to opt out of the trophy program, but elementary and middle school students are very excited at the prospect of receiving trophies, and they usually work diligently to get the maximum number of points each week. The points given at each lesson give an immediate evaluation of the lesson to students and parents.

Through the years, most of my students have not chosen a career in music; however, I'm gratified by the several dozen former students who are currently public school or independent music teachers, church musicians, or pursuing other musical endeavors. Equally as important, most of the students whom I've been privileged to teach have learned a skill that can enrich their lives and gained an appreciation for music. They will recognize the significance of music study for their own children, and they will hopefully support and attend recitals and concerts. The music lessons I teach enable me to not only impact many lives in a positive way, but also allow me to participate in the advancement and preservation of music as an integral part of our culture.



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FOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND PROGRAM INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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The 2017 GMTA State Conference was well-attended and a great success, thanks to everyone involved. We would especially like to thank the hard work of the music faculty and staff at Berry College: Kris Carlisle, Adam Hayes, Kay Simms, Eric Hanson, Kathryn Nobles, and many others. Berry’s beautiful and majestic campus served as the backdrop to three days of fascinating talks from Georgia’s Own and international headliners.



Dr. Scott McBride Smith, current MTNA President, gave two enlightening sessions about Musicality and Motivation for students, culminated by a candid and interesting Q&A Session. Dr. McBride Smith’s humor, international experience, and extensive knowledge of piano pedagogy made for a refreshing learning experience.

On Friday night of the conference, pianist Phillip Bush presented a brilliant recital featuring early and late Beethoven, Crockett and Debussy. His virtuoso technique, spectacular dynamics and idiomatic grasp of each work’s historical style was truly impressive.



Commissioned Composer, Dr. Benjamin Warsaw, presented a newly completed cycle of miniatures entitled Microcosmos. The set of pedagogical pieces were full of dynamic color, character and mood. Dr. Warsaw even brought some self-published copies of the score with ink drawings made by a friend to go with each piece. The originality of the compositions and score were very well received by everyone in attendance.



The program was outstanding, from presentations to performances! The sessions by our Georgia’s Own were creative, informative, and helpful, with topics covering pedagogical concerns, introducing new repertoire, business concerns, and more. It is always so inspiring to hear our Georgia students performing at the state conference, from the master classes to the winners recitals from MTNA and GMTA we are so fortunate to have so many talented young people within our state.

Thanks to all the organizers, teachers, students, and parents who made all the sessions and performances a big success. We can’t wait until next year!



NORTH FULTON MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

www.NFMTA.com

**President
Serene Lee
Smlig1348@gmail.com**

**2nd VP Membership
Portia Hawkins
pshawkins8@aol.com**

The GMTA Nolting Composition Award Fund was established in 1987 and initially funded by beloved GMTA member Betty Nolting. It is given at the GMTA Conference each year to first-place winners in the MTNA Student Composition Competitions for the state-level competitions in each age category.

The GMTA Broadhurst Junior Piano Award Fund was established in 1992 by the Broadhurst family in commemoration of Joan Broadhurst. This award is presented annually at the GMTA conference to the winner of the MTNA Junior Performance Competition.

The GMTA Honors Award Fund, established in 1993, includes honorary and memorial gifts and is awarded at the discretion of the GMTA Finance Advisory Committee. Awards from this fund are given to senior string, vocal, and brass/woodwind winners of GMTA auditions. Donations not designated for a specific fund go into this fund.

2017 Steinway Grant Winners

Laura Gordy - Student Scholarship

Dr. Judith Siegel - Student Scholarship

2017 GMTA Grant Winners

Martha Childers - Student Scholarship

Kristin Humbard - Student Scholarship

Derek Vann - Teacher Education

Sarah Peterson - Teacher Education

2017 Georgia Young Artist Piano Performance winner from the MTNA Competition

Siyu Li (also receives a \$400 grant from Steinway)



MTNA FOUNDATION

We are proud of our Georgia members who continue to give to the MTNA Foundation. At this year's conference, we raised \$420. Thank you to each of you who gave! When you make a contribution to the MTNA Foundation Fund, you are benefitting the progress of a more musical tomorrow through programs that nurture the creation, performance, study and teaching of music. The [MTNA FOUNDATION FUND](#) distributes more than \$150,000 in grants and awards each year. [Click here to make your online contribution](#) and join in as we work for a more musical tomorrow.



We were delighted to sit under the teaching of our Pedagogy Headliner: Dr. Scott McBride Smith, who had just returned from Shanghai where he serves as Visiting Professor at the Shanghai Conservatory and Normal University.

Friday afternoon Dr. Smith gave us the tools to motivate

that big group of students in the middle who just need a little push. Four to six percent of our studios will perform the most advanced repertoire, while 12%-17% will quit. Interest, being one of the six basic emotions, will persist even if the activity is not always pleasant. Some degree of challenge is necessary; however the music must always be doable, i.e., in short increments of increasing difficulty. Linking piano to an interest the student had prior to lessons as well as fostering competition between students with short-term reinforcement is often a formula for success.

Practicing as soon as the student returns home from the lesson is the best time to secure what has been learned. Have the student video his practice and send it to you once or twice a week. Student reliability, in relaying how much he has practiced, increases significantly by having him record the amount of time and sign it, preferably at the top of the page. Rewarding students is beneficial, but mixing up the perks and not dispensing them every time even if they are earned increases effectiveness. Hedonic adaptation is strong; we are happier after receiving materialistic gain, but only for a short time. Then we revert to our previous level of happiness.

Praise as a motivator is an American ideal. The Chinese believe compliments more than do American students since they are handed out with less regularity. For praise to be effective, it must be earned and genuine. The younger the child, the more praise is needed. Older children are more skeptical. Praise only the traits they have the power to change. Praise the effort, not necessarily the result. Don't praise what they already like to do. The same part of the brain processes praise as it does tangible rewards.

Many parents subscribe to the entity theory: each person is born with a certain amount of talent. When their child does not excel in music, they blame a genetic deficiency. At the other end of the spectrum is Malcom Gladwell's "10,000 hours": with hard work you can become an expert at anything.

Sometimes what is credited as giftedness or the result of persistent practice is actually precocity, which does not result in long-term higher achievement. In addition, the ability to delay gratification has long term musical as well as life benefits. Educate parents on what music instruction entails. Set aside one lesson period per semester for a parent-only conference. Not only does this status report help the parent, but more importantly the teacher can learn about the student. Occasionally placing a student on probation requiring five hours of practice per week can have the desired effect on him and his peers! Publish a newsletter highlighting students' accomplishments.

Piano sales were highest in the 1920's and again in the 1970's. Since then there has been a downturn. Many parents today did not have any musical instruction. Ignore negative behavior, although defiance must have consequences such as a stern look, time out, or time away from privileges. Actually the student feels closer to the teacher when he perceives that the teacher cares enough to be specific about what he doesn't like. Outings like a studio night followed by a party are great ways to solidify the relationship with students.

Friday morning Dr. Smith talked about musical punctuation and the art of interpretation. The meaning of signs used in music has changed over the centuries. Eighteenth century music may be compared to speaking, while nineteenth century music is more similar to singing. Twentieth century is more percussive. The ends of phrases are indicated by long notes, rests, and notes lower in pitch, or new musical ideas, or the repeat of an old one following. The original meaning of a slur was to play legato. In the eighteenth century, the slur implied an accent on the first note and the last note was to be short. Increasingly in the 19th century, long slurs show musical grouping or phrasing. Lifts and other types of musical punctuation are at the discretion of the performer. Portato was so common in the 18th century that it was called the "normal" way. There-

fore, Mozart played in a more sustained, but detached way.

Romantic phrasing said that an ascending series of notes demands a crescendo, its highest note the strongest accent, the descending series of notes a decrescendo. Of two notes the higher is the stronger. The dynamic accent brings attention to a note by loudness or by taking more time, i.e., stretching the beat, known as “agogic.” With an agogic accent, you play later in the beat. A negative accent is indicated by getting suddenly softer, eliciting surprise or contrast.

During the Classical era, accents were metrical, meaning one assumed there were strong and weak beats. Grammatical accents are associated with phrases, the strongest being the first, thus superseding metrical accents. Pathetic accents (pathos) were full of feeling and hence more important than grammatical accents.

Mozart was the first to have all his pieces published and the first to notate his dynamics. Haydn had “published” his compositions; Chopin changed his compositions with each edition. Fingering, pedaling, beams and bar lines— together with the importance of dissonance over harmony as well as tempo are all contributing factors to presentation of the score. Regarding the latter, Carlo Maria Giuliani perceived tempo as the most important aspect as he contrasted the human pulse with new tempos to present varying emotions in his opera.

Friday afternoon Dr. Smith took questions from the audience on a variety of topics, such as contrasting Western and Chinese studies in music. The Chinese see majoring in

music as a fall back alternative if a child is not good enough to succeed in a career in math or medicine. The highest number of students taking piano lessons in the U.S. was in the 60’s and early 70’s as parents wanted their children to be well-rounded in their education. Now video games, sports, and the desire for instantaneous fulfillment battle for students’ time. There are fewer jobs for piano majors in academia.

Taking a dim view of requiring students to perform from memory, a practice begun by Clara Schumann and perpetuated by Franz Liszt, Dr. Smith wondered at the benefits of such a custom. He ended his part in the conference with a few words at the dinner Friday evening.

Commenting as President of the Music Teachers National Association, he said the organization is in strong financial shape; however, the trend is for Americans to not join social organizations as they did in the past. Membership tracks piano sales, and piano sales are down. Nevertheless, we are expanding internationally with 500 members in China. They have their own officers and board of directors. On another note, with more members wanting to present at conferences than there are openings, MTNA is starting satellite conferences. Locating venues for events will be an opportunity for creativity as increasing numbers of public universities and other sites are requiring lengthy expenditures of time and money for training to prevent sexual abuse.

As always sitting under the tutelage of Dr. Scott McBride Smith is a privilege as he offers up the highest quality of instruction in as engaging a format as exists anywhere.

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Ben Leaptrott
bleaptrott@brenau.edu
678.613.8723

ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM



The Conference Recital for the 2017 GMTA Conference was presented by Phillip Bush, Associate Professor of Piano and Chamber Music at the University of South Carolina School of Music.

Following an introduction by GMTA Vice President of Programs, Chenny Gan, Mr. Bush opened the recital with two Beethoven works: Sonata in D major, Op.10, No. 3 and Sonata in E major, Op. 109. These two contrasting masterworks were exquisitely performed by Mr. Bush, and hearing them together was a joy.



Following an intermission, Mr. Bush performed Pilgrimage by Donald Crockett, Professor of Composition at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. Composed in

1988, Pilgrimage is Crockett's only solo piano work to date. Mr. Bush gave a commanding performance of this ambitious, often pointillistic, and very virtuosic work.



Mr. Bush concluded the recital with Debussy's Pour le Piano. Mr. Bush's voicings and use of colors throughout were beautiful, and his superb and facile technique was simply breathtaking. The audience showed their great appreciation to Mr. Bush with an extended standing ovation.

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PERFORMANCES: Music majors perform on Steinway and Boesendorfer pianos and one of the most well-known organs in the Southeastern United States (Goodwyn-Candler-Panoz Organ).

TRAVEL: Music students have attended international summer music festivals or studied abroad in Spain, Korea, Greece, Austria, Germany, and Italy.

SCHOLARSHIPS: Range from \$500 to full-tuition.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Students regularly present or compete at events held by organizations such as Georgia Music Teachers Association, Georgia Music Educators Association, the National Association of Teachers of Singing, Music Teachers National Association, and others.

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Meet Dr. Chenny Gan '02 Assistant Professor of Piano and Collaborative Piano

Dr. Gan regularly appears in performance and teaching engagements on three continents. Her work mentoring young musicians has brought success in places as diverse as the inner city neighborhoods of Los Angeles to New York's Carnegie Hall, the Mozarteum, and the St. Petersburg Conservatory in Russia.

Dr. Gan holds degrees from Wesleyan College, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and the Doctor of Music Arts in Piano Performance from the University of Southern California.



2017 GMTA Commissioned Composition
Microcosms, 16 Progressive Pieces for the Developing Pianist
 By Benjamin Warsaw

An Interview with the Composer by Pam Asberry

Pam Asberry (PA): *How long have you been playing the piano? And how old were you when you started playing?*

Benjamin Warsaw (BW): I started out with group lessons in elementary school. At first I practiced on a keyboard but after a year or two my parents purchased an acoustic piano and I started traditional lessons. I continued until I was 14, stopped lessons during my high school years, and started lessons again when I was 18. So I have been playing the piano for a total of 26 years now.

PA: *What is the difference between improvisation and composition? In your opinion, what are their respective merits?*

BW: Improvisation isn't written down and is always changing. Most of my composition begins with improvisation, but when I find something I like, I write it down and composition begins! I improvise every day but I don't compose every day.

PA: *What were your early passions and influences?*

BW: My first influences were Bach, Scriabin, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and the like; I listened to a lot of music by these composers when I was ten to twelve years of age.

PA: *Which composer were you most influenced by and which of their pieces had the most impact on you?*

BW: I was more influenced by some of the great performers and their interpretations of various composers' music: Horowitz (Scriabin, Mussorgsky Pictures at an Exhibition, his last concert at Carnegie Hall), Rubenstein (Saint-Saens 2nd Piano Concerto), and Barenboim (Beethoven Complete Sonatas).

PA: *Can you describe the first piece of music you ever wrote?*

BW: I started composing when I was 14. The *Little Nocturne in C minor* (edited slightly and included in *Microcosms*) was the first piece I ever wrote and was heavily influenced by Chopin's Prelude in C minor. I set it to paper using a ball-point pen and called it "Opus 35, Number 2." This piece sat dormant for twenty years before I edited the beginning and ending and two or three measures in the middle and added it to *Microcosms*.

PA: *Do you compose using pen and paper? Music notation software? Something else?*

BW: I start with a pencil and staff paper. It's a tough process, but as I proceed I gain clarity. After the music is finished, I engrave it using Sibelius music notation software.

PA: *When you were asked to do the commissioned work for the 2017 GMTA Conference, what parameters were you given?*

BW: I met Rebekah Healan at an Athens Music Teachers Association meeting, where I presented a workshop on how to learn and teach the Chopin etudes to students. At the end of the presentation, I played *Creatures* [the last piece in *Microcosms*]. Rebekah remembered that piece and many months later she invited me to be this year's Commissioned Composer. She said the work could be anything – any amount of time, any genre, any instrument – but that I would have a limit of twenty minutes to perform at the conference.

PA: *How long did it take you to complete *Microcosms*? What are some of your favorite pieces in the collection?*

BW: That's hard to say as I had been working on this project "in my head" prior to this commission. Several pieces in the collection are smaller works that I had already started and needed to finish or edit; others were written specifically for the commission. Since I knew I would be presenting to a group of piano teachers, I came up with the idea of putting together a method book – something practical that could be used by students and teachers alike. I liked the idea of making it a coloring book as well and approached my good friend Alicia Perez [who also teaches at Armstrong State University in Savannah] about doing the artwork. It was a challenge to find the words to explain what I was after and there was a lot of trial and error and back and forth but in the end she was really able to bring my ideas to life.

PA: *What are some of your favorite pieces in the collection?*

BW: My favorite piece varies according to my mood, but strong contenders are *Creatures* (biggest variety of sound), *Sleepyhead*, *In the Clouds* (fully diatonic), *Amorphous Rain*, *Race to the Morsel* (Schumann-esque, sort of a bagatelle) and *Pearlene*. But every piece has its own charm and will appeal to different people.

PA: *What challenges have you faced as a composer? Have they changed over the course of your career?*

BW: My biggest challenge is not judging my work harshly while I am in the process of writing; that can render me unable to finish a piece. As much as possible, I try to get my ideas on paper without judging, then go back and edit as needed. This is a daily struggle for me and I suspect it will be for the rest of my life.

PA: *What do you personally consider to be incisive moments in your work and/or career?*

BW: Figuring out how to piece together my career after receiving my doctorate at Boston University was pivotal. Family is important to me so I moved back to the Atlanta area and eventually became the head of the piano department at Armstrong University in Savannah. I do what I do because I love it, not because I think I am going to make a lot of money or be famous as a result. I find great joy in empathizing and bonding with others over this intangible, out-of-this-world thing that we could physically do without. But being selected as the 2017 Commissioned Composer for GMTA is definitely a high point in my career! This is something I didn't expect or ask for and recognition as a composer is very humbling.



PA: *Is there a piece of music you wish you had written?*

BW: The next piece of music I want to write!

PA: *If you could have been present at the premiere of any one work, which would it be?*

BW: I wish I had been at Woodstock in 1969, because of what was happening politically at the time with music a symbol of freedom. I love the energy of rock concerts.

PA: *The role of a composer has always been subject to change. What is your view on the political/social/creative tasks of composers today and how do you try to meet these goals in your work?*

BW: Music transcends politics and emotion. I believe it is important to be true to your own voice, not writing something that is going to sound like it came from someone else. All we really have in this world is our voices; developing our individual voices is the most important thing we can do.

PA: *Is there anything else you would like to add?*

BW: I am grateful to everyone who purchased *Microcosms* at the conference; however, pages 51 and 52 are reversed in the first edition. For a revised copy, email me at benjamin.warsaw@gmail.com.

PA: *Thank you, Benjamin Warsaw for sharing your time and talent with us. I can hardly wait to see what the future has in store for you!*

Benjamin Warsaw's music can be heard on YouTube, Spotify and iHeart Radio. For more information, visit www.benjaminwarsaw.com.



GMTA AUDITIONS

CATHY THACKER, NCTM, VICE PRESIDENT GMTA AUDITIONS

I hope that many of you are preparing students for the 2018 GMTA Auditions. Regional Auditions will be held on Saturday, March 17, 2018, at the five locations throughout our state. The local associations comprising the regions stay the same as last year. College Piano, Voice, Instrumental and Instrumental Concerto State Auditions will be held on April 7, 2018, at the University of Georgia in Athens. Pre-College Piano and Piano Concerto State Auditions will also be held at the University on April 21, 2018.



2017 Pre-college Conference Recitalists

I have emailed all Local Auditions Chairs their packet of information concerning Local Auditions. If you have not received your packet, please let me know right away and I will send you this information.

Thank you to the GMTA staff for your many hours of tireless work! You do a tremendous job and help make the entire Auditions process a smooth operation. Please thank all of these teachers who volunteer much of their time for our students.

Be sure to check our website for online registration and information about the Auditions. Do not hesitate to email me or one of the GMTA staff if you are uncertain about the process.

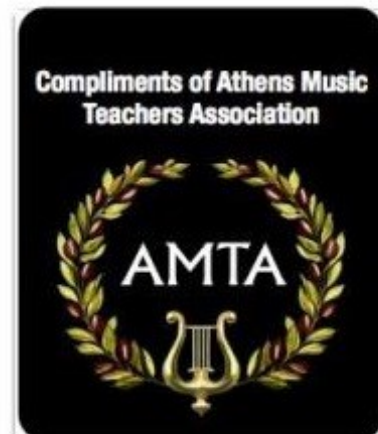
Let's make this a wonderful year!



2017 College Conference Recitalists



Donna S. Dasher, NCTM, President
Donna S. Dasher, NCTM, Membership Chair
(912) 727-4490
dsdasher39@gmail.com





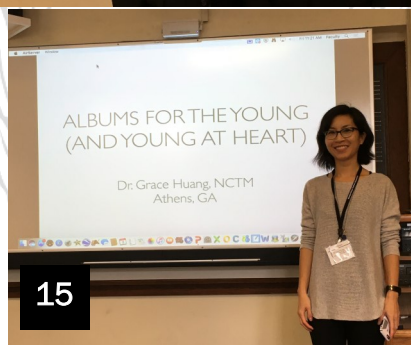


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Decatur Music Teachers Association**Charles Hutton, president**

Decatur Music Teachers Association reaches the Winter break doing well. On November 18, Ellie Feibish organized our Fall Music Fest and for that we are deeply grateful (it was her first year as chair!). Student numbers were up and member volunteering was energetic and enthusiastic.

Coming up very soon will be our January 27 deadline to register for Spring auditions and the Jo Evans Scholarship. Both events take place February 24 at Agnes Scott College. The scholarship is for high school students playing the slow movement of a Classical sonata. We'd like to increase our number of applicants and we give cash prizes, so go to <http://www.decaturmusicteachers.com/student-activities/jo-evans-scholarship-auditions> for more information. Students of any GMTA teacher are welcome to apply.

DMTA still has four more presenters remaining this year. Over the next four months, we look forward to learning from Miranda Dohrman (performance anxiety), Dr. Jerico Vasquez (literature and music of the Romantic period), Dr. Soohyun Yun (developing reading skills), and Dr. Carol Gingerich (performance practice overview). Our meetings are on the first or second Monday morning of the month and visitors are always welcome. Visit <http://www.decaturmusicteachers.com/2017-18-dmta-calendar> for exact dates and times.

DMTA wishes all GMTA members a Happy New Year!

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As of December 2017, our membership stands at 648 members. I would like to acknowledge our new and re-
newing members:

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Joshua Davis | Natalie Higgins | Patrick Rice |
| Samantha Deen | Jessica Hutcherson | Zachariah Schmidt |
| Amber Dobbs | Adam Jaffe | Corinne Schulzke |
| Angela Duncan | Grace Kim | Mireille Silva |
| Maggie Frick | Jeni Kong | Kristeen Sorrells |
| Grace Garnett | Savannah Lee | Jenneffer Widjaja |
| Haley Gravitte | Gloria Lemus | Cindy Wilkinson |
| Hanson Greenwell | Colleen Lively | Tracy Xian |
| Andrew Harry | Tatyana Popovych | Li-wen Yao |
| | | Zhishan Zhang |

Attention!!! 50% off Trial Membership Going on Now!

NOW is the best time of year to join MTNA and try out a six-month membership. New members joining after January 1 receive full benefits through June 30 at half off the national membership rate! Many states also provide a 50% discount too.

Just for trying this incredible offer, here are some of benefits you will receive (for details, check out www.mnta.org for details):

- MTNA conference at the member rate. The next MTNA conference is at the Disney Coronado Springs Resort in Florida on March 17-21.
- Certification in instruments, voice, recreational music making and group piano
- Educational webinars—available live or recorded to watch after
- MTNA e-Journal
- Office Max/Depot discount card—significant discounts, up to 80 percent!
- Travel discounts from hotels, car rentals and more
- Legal resources, including copyright and tax information
- Studio resources, including brochures
- Insurance services
- The MTNA eFestival—a non-competitive performance evaluation opportunity for students and/or teachers
- Student performance and composition competitions

So, why not give it a try? Even more, why not invite some of your friends to join with you? You'd be amazed at what this organization can do for you and your music studio.

Presenter Proposals for the 2018 GMTA Conference are now being accepted. Please submit the online form by April 1, 2018 to be considered for the 2018 GMTA Conference to be held at the University of Georgia on Thursday through Saturday, November 1-3.

Questions? Contact Chenny Gan, VP Programs, at cgan@wesleyancollege.edu.

To submit a proposal, click here: <https://georgiamta.org/conference-proposal.php>

MTNA CERTIFICATION

CYNTHIA DEFOOR, NCTM, CERTIFICATION CHAIR

As of January 1, 2018, Georgia has 649 members and 96 nationally certified members. We rank 26 (13.4%) for nationally certified members. I am evaluating strategies used to promote Certification in other state and local association programming and events. If you have any questions regarding these reports or ideas for growing the MTNA Certification program in Georgia, please do not hesitate to contact Cynthia DeFoor, cdefoor@yhc.edu



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2018 GMTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

JOY POOLE, GMTA PRESIDENT-ELECT

20

The GMTA Teacher of the Year Award is presented annually to a member of GMTA in recognition of life-time achievement as a music teacher, with excellence in teaching, musicianship, professional activity, and service to the community and/or state.

Any GMTA association or member may nominate any other GMTA member for the Teacher of the Year. The GMTA Teacher of the Year will be selected from nominated applicants and entered in the MTNA Teacher of the Year competition.

The online submission form will require the following information or uploaded documents:

<http://www.georgiamta.org/memberResources-teacherOfTheYearApp.php>

- Teaching/professional achievement
- Number of years of teaching experience
- Evidence of teaching excellence (i.e. students' successes)
- Accomplishments/contributions to MTNA
- Participation in Local, State and/or National MTNA programs
- Community involvement
- Former student and/or parent letter of support (upload document)
- Professional colleague letter of support (upload document)

Nominations will need to be submitted online by Monday, September 10, 2018.

The winner will be acknowledged at the 2018 GMTA Conference Banquet.

With so many fine teachers in Georgia, please consider nominating one of your favorites.

For a list of past Teachers of the Year and to read their Teaching Tips go to: <http://www.georgiamta.org/memberHonors-TOTY.php>

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February 2018

- 26 Registration Deadline for GMTA Regional Auditions
- 26 Deadline for Regional Coordinators to submit Judge information to VP of Auditions

March 2018

- 15 Deadline for completed GMTA Theory Tests to be mailed to Diane Boyd
- 17 GMTA Regional Auditions
- 17-21 MTNA Conference, Orlando, Florida
- 19 Registration Deadline for GMTA State Auditions
- 24 FAC Meeting

April 2018

- 2 Officer reports due to Secretary for upcoming Executive Board Meeting
- 7 GMTA Council of Local Association Presidents Meeting and GMTA Executive Board Meeting; University of Georgia, Athens, GA
- 7 GMTA State Auditions for College Piano, Instrumental, Voice, Instrumental Concerto, and College Piano Concerto; University of Georgia, Athens, GA
- 21 GMTA State Auditions for Pre-College Piano and Piano Concerto; University of Georgia, Athens, GA

May 2018

- 1 Graded GMTA Theory Achievement Tests (not GATE) & certificates mailed to participating teachers
- 1 Deadline for articles to be included in the GMTA Summer Newsletter. Articles should be submitted to Nancy Riley at nancy.riley@gmail.com.

June 2018

- 30 Active Membership Renewal Deadline. Active membership year runs from July 1 thru June 30.

August 2018

- 1 Deadline for articles to be included in the GMTA Fall Newsletter. Articles should be submitted to Nancy Riley at nancy.riley@gmail.com

September 2018

- 10 Application deadline for GMTA Teacher of the Year, Steinway Teacher Awards, GMTA Teacher Grants (Deadline always on second Monday of September)
- 12 Online application deadline (3:00 p.m. Eastern Time) for MTNA Competitions
- 30 Student Membership Renewal Deadline. Student membership year runs from October 1 thru September 30.

October 2018

- 1 GMTA Theory Achievement Tests (not GATE) mailed to Local Associations

November 2018

- 1 to 3 GMTA State Conference, University of Georgia, Athens, GA

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See Website for

2017 RIPC Info



North Dekalb Music Teachers Association

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The Georgia Music Teachers Association (GMTA) is a member of the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) and memberships are jointly held in both organizations. Members receive subscriptions to *The American Music Teacher*. Membership is open to individuals professionally engaged in any field of musical activity and dues should be sent to MTNA, 1 W. 4th St., Ste. 1550 Cincinnati, OH 45202. MTNA is available toll-free at 1-888-512-5278 to answer your questions regarding membership dues or on the web at www.mtna.org.

Notice

The GMTA Newsletter is an information journal focusing on matters directly related to MTNA, GMTA and local associations only. It does not promote the studios of individual teachers or institutions by publishing articles regarding the accomplishments of teachers, students, or an institutions' activities. Paid advertising is available for this purpose. GMTA expressly reserves the right to refuse publication of any article, photograph, or advertisement contrary to the objectives of MTNA or the Associations. All articles are subject to editing due to size or content.

Advertising

Limited advertising space is available for firms or individuals who have a product or service of specific interest or benefit to GMTA members. All correspondence regarding advertising should be sent to the Executive Director, Mandy Reynolds by fax (770) 945-7504 or by email georgiamta@gmail.com

Submittals

GMTA publishes its online newsletter three times per year. Publication dates and their respective deadlines are as follows:

January 15th (Deadline: December 1st)

June 15th (Deadline: May 1st)

September 15th (Deadline August 1st)

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