



GEORGIA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2023

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

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GMTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2022

DEBRA RAMSEY DICKENSHEETS

Debra Ramsey Dickensheets, 2022 Georgia MTA Teacher of the Year, is the Wellness Chair for GMTA and the former North Fulton MTA President. Under her leadership, NFMTA was awarded "Chapter of the Year" at the 2021 Georgia State Conference. NFMTA maintained a membership of over 80 teachers during the Covid-19 pandemic, and Deb hosted monthly Zoom meetings when meeting in-person was not possible. Fall Festival, Celebrate with Music and Local Audition events continued during her presidency, overcoming many challenges.

Debra has a private teaching studio of approximately 20 students of piano, organ, harpsichord and digital keyboards. She was awarded Teacher of the Year in 2020 and 2021 by Steinway Piano Galleries of Atlanta. She is the chairman of Alpharetta/Steinway Center for Piano Guild, for which she is a member of

the Hall of Fame and adjudicator. She is also co-chairman of the Ocee chapter of NFMC.

Debra has been Director of Music and Organist since 2014 at Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Atlanta where she oversees a fine chamber music program. Her composition for 9 handbells "Jubilate," written during the pandemic for socially distanced ringers, won 3rd place in a MuseScore competition.



**GMTA President Cathy Thacker with
TOTY Debra Dickensheets
at the 2022 Conference Banquet**



A concert organist, Debra recently played on the historic house pipe organ in the Renaissance Room at Viscaya Museum in Miami. In June, she will play on the L'Organo series at Piccolo Spoleto in Charleston that will feature music of Florence Price, Suzanne Van Soldt and Atlanta based composer/cellist Zac Lavender.

Debra's career as a professional musician began at age 15 when she was hired by the US Marine Corps to be the organist and choir director for 3rd Recruit Training Battalion at the Protestant Chapel at Parris Island, SC. Groups of soldiers came in waves, 6 weeks at a time, for boot camp. These 18-year-old men sang hymns from the Armed Forces Hymnal and some popular music. On special occasions she would play the Hammond organ in the chapel with the Marine Corps Brass Band.

Debra's piano teaching career began as an undergraduate student at Converse College in South Carolina, where she took piano pedagogy classes and taught in the precollege division. Organ pedagogy classes at Florida State University followed where she earned a master's degree in organ performance. After graduation she worked briefly in Charleston, SC, as a teacher before accepting a position as Director of Music and Organist at First Presbyterian Church of Hilton Head Island. There she also built a private studio.

She continued her education at the New England Conservatory while simultaneously teaching in her private studio. She studied organ with Yuko Hayashi and improvisation with Bill Porter. At that time, she also worked in Providence at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Grace Episcopal Church, Temple Emanuel, and Rhode Island College, directing choirs, solo playing and accompanying on the piano and organ.

In 1988 Debra and her husband moved to Gainesville, Florida, where she continued her career as a teacher, accompanist and church musician. During this time, she co-founded and was harpsichordist for the Alachua Consort, a chamber ensemble specializing in Baroque music. Deb accompanied the Willis Bodine Chorale with Orchestra and their Florida Tour as organist. Deb also served on the board of directors for the Gainesville Symphony Orchestra.

Relocating to Alpharetta in 1998, Deb started her current studio and joined NFMTA. She has served as interim musician at Roswell Presbyterian Church, Johns Creek UMC, First Church of Christ Scientist Atlanta, and Saint Brigid Catholic Church. She was a piano accompanist for 7 years for the Grammy winning Gwinnett Young Singers. Now an empty nester, she is happy to devote more time to her musical career.

You can read more about Debra Ramsey Dickensheets at the [GMTA Teacher of the Year website](#).

Debra's Teaching Tips appear on [page 8](#) of this newsletter.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

CATHY THACKER, NCTM, GMTA PRESIDENT

Happy New Year! I sincerely hope that 2023 will be your best year ever, full of happiness and musical accomplishments. As we begin a new term of officers for the Executive Board, I want to thank Immediate Past President Jan Adams and her officers for an excellent job over the last two years. Jan helped to navigate GMTA beyond the pandemic, and her hard work and careful attention to detail is much appreciated by all of us. Thank you, also, to our Executive Director, Mandy Reynolds, for her contributions to our association. All of us depend upon Mandy for her expert knowledge of everything GMTA.

Thank you to the incoming board members for your willingness to serve alongside me. I appreciate each of you giving your time to serve on the board. GMTA members, be assured that your board is doing the best job possible to assist all of you. We are open to your suggestions on how to improve our organization.

Our conference at Kennesaw State University was well attended, and it was wonderful! Wynn-Anne Rossi was an energetic and inspiring pedagogy headliner, and Paul Barnes was a spectacular conference recitalist and master class clinician. Thank you, Kristi Helfen, for planning every detail of this conference! Many thanks to Kennesaw State University for hosting us, and especially to Huu Mai and the marvelous collegiate chapter at KSU. Congratulations to the 2022 Teacher of the Year, Debra Ramsey Dickensheets, from North Fulton MTA!

Not many of you know this, but the conference recitalist and I have a personal connection. Paul Barnes and I met years ago in our hometown of Lima, Ohio. In 1985 he drove from Indiana University, where he was working on his graduate degree, to play the piano at my wedding. It was a lot of fun to catch up with him in person again at the conference.



Paul Barnes & Cathy Thacker: Then and Now



Speaking of conferences, we are already making plans for the 2023 conference, which will be held on the beautiful campus of Shorter University in Rome. 2009 was the last time our state conference was held there. 2023 is the 150th anniversary of the University, and we are looking forward to celebrating this milestone with them! Please mark your calendar now for the conference (November 2-4, 2023). I hope to see you there!

The 2022 MTNA Competitions were organized by Christina Toole and held on the campus of Columbus State University. Jan Adams and Joy Poole helped in every aspect of these competitions. Congratulations to all of our students and teachers who represented GMTA in the MTNA Southern Division Competitions. Thank you to Columbus State University for hosting the competitions.

Looking ahead, GMTA offers Auditions, GATE and GMTA Theory Tests for your students. Please pay close attention to all registration deadlines for these events. You can find complete information online at our website under the Student Activities tab. Always look for your Constant Contact each month to stay up-to-date on important news. Additional information can also be found online within our newsletters at the GMTA website.

The 2023 MTNA Conference will be held in person for the first time since 2019, and I look forward to representing Georgia at the conference. The conference will be in Reno, Nevada, on March 25-29, and I hope that many of you are planning to attend. Please let me know at president.georgiamta@gmail.com if you are planning to attend the Gala, as we have reserved a table for GMTA members.

MTNA provides leadership training to the State Presidents and Division Directors. I was able to attend the MTNA Summit in Cincinnati, Ohio, last September to learn more about MTNA's resources and to meet with other State Presidents. The training I received there will be very helpful over the next two years.

Once again, thank you to Jan Adams and the outgoing officers for their outstanding service to GMTA! I look forward to serving as your President alongside the board members for this term!



GMTA Past President Jan Adams passes the gavel to current President Cathy Thacker at the 2022 Conference Banquet



2022 CONFERENCE REPORT

KRISTI HELFEN, NCTM, PREVIOUS GMTA VP OF PROGRAMS

This year’s conference was held on November 3-5, at Kennesaw State University in historic Kennesaw, Georgia. We wish to thank KSU and the Bailey School of Music for hosting us. The acoustics of Morgan Concert Hall are just spectacular, and it was a tremendous experience to hear all of our concerts in this wonderful space.

The planning of the conference is definitely a team effort, and this year was no exception. I want to begin by thanking Jan Adams, our President, who provided tremendous leadership and wisdom as we faced various challenges and timely responses to my constant bombardment of emails! Executive Director, Mandy Reynolds, is the glue that holds us together year after year and keeps us all on track. I didn’t know until the last two years how much this incredible woman does. Cathy Thacker, who just took office as our new President, recommended our

talented recitalist and helped with many other tasks (including giving input on this article). Joy Poole served again this year by organizing door prizes and decorating for the banquet, and I certainly appreciate her wise counsel as a Past-President. Jeri-Mae Astolfi did a great job getting everything lined up with our Commissioned Composer, and her sense of humor truly helped to keep me afloat! A huge thank you to all of you—for all you did to make this conference a success and for placing your confidence in me to carry out the responsibilities of this office. Oh, and I can’t forget Huu Mai for getting the ball rolling with KSU, working with us through many logistics, and arranging amazing student helpers, and also Joe Camillo, Leigh Anne Bleichner, and Cobb County MTA for the fantastic hospitality they provided.



Huu Mai with Paul Barnes

Our Pedagogy Headliner, composer Wynn-Anne Rossi, presented three fun and enlightening sessions, and many commented that she was one of our best headliners ever! In her first session, Creative Composition in the Studio, she gave us a streamlined-approach to promote creativity and teaching composition in just 3-5 minutes per lesson. Then on Friday she began with Latin-American music but soon branched out to music around the world. We learned some fun dances, and I couldn’t help but notice some

of our attendees caught on very quickly, exhibiting some fine moves! Wynn-Anne’s last session took us on a journey from ragtime through contemporary jazz with stories

of many great musicians of that era. On top of being a wonderful presenter, Wynn-Anne is a delightful person to be around, and many of our members enjoyed time with her talking in the lobby and listening to her play on the grand piano brought by PianoWorks.



Wynn-Anne Rossi, GMTA Conference Pedagogy Headliner



Wynn-Anne Rossi



**Paul Barnes,
GMTA Conference Recitalist**

Paul Barnes, Professor of Music at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, was our Conference Recitalist and Master Class Clinician. Well-known for his many collaborations with Philip Glass, he performed several Glass pieces on the Friday night recital along with his favorite Bach Prelude and Fugue (BWV 867), a Chopin Ballade (Op. 23), a specially commissioned work by Native American composer Ron Warren, and *Illuminations on a Byzantine Chant* by Victoria Bond. He displayed brilliant

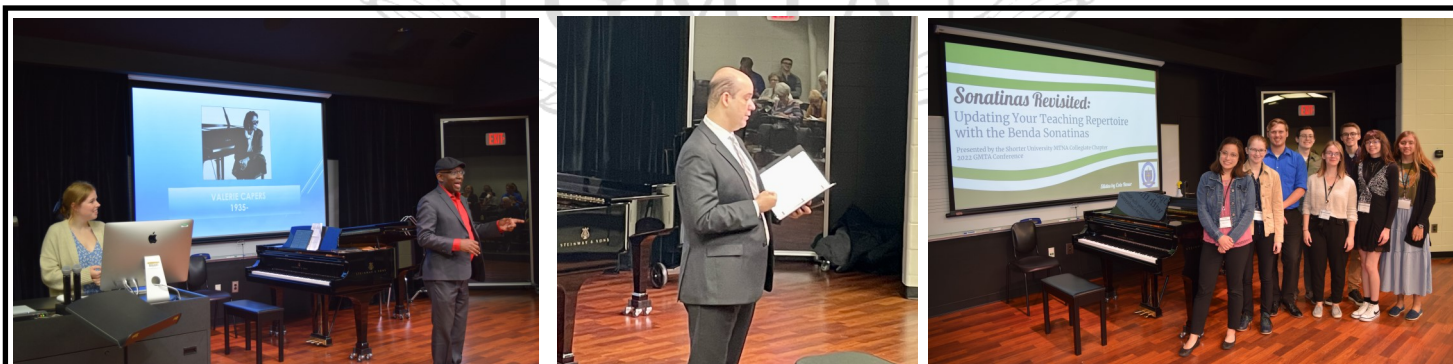
technique and sensitivity and even performed chants before two of his pieces in which the audience participated with an underlying held pitch. The overall effect with the acoustics in Morgan Concert Hall was gorgeous. Paul's Master Class with the GMTA students was both lively and instructive, and his idea to project the score on the hall's screen while he worked with them proved to be a wonderful added bonus.



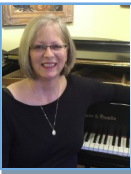
**GMTA Conference Master Class
with Paul Barnes**

On Thursday night our Pre-College Concerto Winners performed movements from Chopin Piano Concerto (Op. 11) and Mendelssohn Violin Concerto, Op. 64. To start things off for the evening Robert Henry put together a marvelous group of KSU faculty, students, and alumni who performed songs for voice, violin, and piano by Brahms; an energetic piece for two marimbas; and a movement from a two-piano concerto by Mozart accompanied by flute and string quartet.

We had 13 presenters who covered a wide variety of topics including chamber music repertoire, solo piano works by black composers, choral music, teaching students with autism, and protecting yourself from hearing loss. The last session on Saturday on the piano etudes of Philip Glass given by Dr. Alan Woo dovetailed nicely with the previous night's recital. Several of our presenters were college students, and we were delighted to have 30 collegiate members who attended this year!



**GMTA 2022 Conference Presentations:
James Weidman, Dr. Vicente Della Tonia, Shorter University Collegiate Chapter**



During the business session on Friday afternoon GMTA grants were awarded to Zackary Price, Matthew Shipes, Cameron Fuhrman, and Joy Poole. Following this was the premier of the GMTA 2022 commissioned work, *Time and Memory*, by Brandon K. Smith. The suite, written for flute and harp, was inspired by the way a particular time of day can evoke a memory. A longer time slot was permitted this year for the composer to give introductory comments about his work and a post-performance Q&A session.



**GMTA Commissioned Composer,
Brandon K. Smith**



**World Premier of *Time and Memory*
at GMTA 2022 Conference**

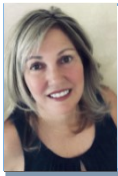
From there we headed over to Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History, just a short drive away, for a delicious banquet catered by Delightful Bitefull. Here the 2022 Teacher of the Year Award was presented to former North Fulton MTA president Debra Dickensheets, the officers for the 2022-23 term were installed, and newly certified members Elena Dorozhkina, Yingzhou Hu, and Amaris David were recognized.

As always, numerous talented students were highlighted in the various MTNA and GMTA Winners Recitals. Thank you to Huu Mai and Christina Toole for organizing these recitals. The high level of musicianship displayed by our students and teachers never ceases to amaze me.



**GMTA Executive Board at the
2022 Conference Banquet**

It has truly been a privilege to serve as VP for Programs these last two years. Stepping into this position now is Jeri-Mae Astolfi, who is already hard at work planning our 2023 conference, and I promise, you will not want to miss it. I hope to see you there!



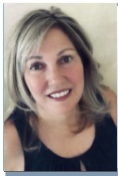
It has been my pleasure to teach music for many years, nearly 24 of which have been in the state of Georgia. Teaching in my own diverse studio of many ages, levels, cultures and interests has been eye-opening. Music truly is a universal language, and I look forward to many more years of sharing with others.

- 1. Take care of your health.** In March of 2021, to my surprise, I was diagnosed with invasive carcinoma, a type of breast cancer. Dutifully, I had gone to get routine screening, thinking there would not be a problem as with all my previous mammograms. But this time was different. The radiologist said there was an abnormality that needed to be biopsied and subsequently needed surgery and radiation treatments. Fortunately I was able to schedule surgery the week after my studio’s spring recital. Treatment continued over the summer, and I was back teaching in August as a grateful cancer survivor. I attribute my comparatively easy treatment routine to early detection. Regular routine screening is the key to minimizing the effects and treatment of many types of cancer. Please get your cancer screening. Other preventative health care, especially appropriate vaccines, at minimum, help keep you out of bed and working in your studio, and at best could save your life. A healthy teacher is a better teacher. Visit your primary care physician a least once a year and follow his/her advice for cancer screening and vaccinations.
- 2. Take care of your students’ health.** I have a sign at my front door that says “Wash hands. Many fingers use these keys.” Every student uses sanitizer before putting their hands on the keyboard. We use masks as recommended by the CDC, keeping in mind individual risk of infecting, and social distancing. Parents know there is an option for Zoom lesson at their regular time or make up lesson later on and use it if their child has a fever or other symptoms of illness out of respect for me and the other students.

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3. **Set goals at the beginning of each year.** Your student will have individual needs to be addressed. That is one of the beauties of private lessons. These can change year to year, sometimes even mid year with cultural changes and schoolwork demands. Be flexible. The pupil might want to learn a particular piece or style of music. Set realistic practice goals. I often find that accomplishments lesson to lesson and efficient practice habits are more important than minutes/hours practiced each week. Plan short-term, midterm, and long-term projects for your students. Not every student wants to be a concert pianist, and your goals may not be their goals or their parent’s goals. Keep a dialogue going.
4. **Positive reinforcement goes a long way.** When my husband and I moved to a home on acreage in rural north central Florida, we decided it was time to get a Labrador Retriever puppy. We joined a dog class with a very good trainer who recommended the book “Don’t shoot the Dog” by Karen Pryor. It is all about changing behavior through positive reinforcement. It not only works for dogs, but for athletes and musicians. This book was a game changer for my teaching.
5. **Meet the students where they are.** Not all musical backgrounds are the same. No matter what age, some know more, and some are more receptive than others. It is our duty as a teacher to find out where each student is in their musical journey and help them along the way, sometimes filling in gaps.
6. **Keep up to date on new technology.** Use of the internet and apps can be very helpful teaching aids. Almost daily since the pandemic, I use Zoom, ForScore, and MuseScore. www.coursera.org is a good solution for training at a reasonable price. There are some especially good music technology classes through Berkeley for Protools, electronic music, and general technology.
7. **Sing with your students.** Whether or not you are a vocal trainer, it is good to demonstrate musical line and phrasing through singing. It is one reason new Music Director of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Nathalie Stutzmann, is successful.
8. **Break it down.** When tackling a difficult piece of music, break it down into small pieces and then string them together. Routinely practicing start to finish, as many students tend to do, can be overwhelming and counterproductive.
9. **Take ADVERSITY and make a good thing out of it.** During the height of the Covid-19 pandemic my students were not allowed to attend lessons in-person at my studio. Zoom lessons over the internet that I had never even considered doing prior, became a lifeline for my studio and are now a regular part of the week. For various reasons, mostly distance and transportation, it is still a good option for some students. Our regular concert hall venues also became unavailable during Covid-19. I started informal “Front Porch” recitals in our yard as an alternative way for students to share music. Families and friends bring lawn chairs and blankets for a relaxed afternoon of music played from the digital piano and keyboard set up on the porch. This recital has become so popular we still have a “First Saturday in Fall” recital on the front porch



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<p>President Debra Ramsey Dickensheets dickensheetsmusic@gmail.com</p>	<p>2nd VP Membership Esther Martin ecmstudio@gmail.com</p>
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GMTA AWARDS RAFFLE

Immediately after the master class at our state conference, teachers gathered for the raffle drawing. Thank you to our local associations for donating lots of fun prizes, including Starbucks gifts, music bundles, great gift cards, baskets of spa delights and much more. There were many excited teachers whose names were drawn and then chose a gift from the vast assortment. Proceeds from the sale of raffle tickets support the GMTA Awards Fund.

One of our named GMTA awards is The Betty White Fund which offers a grant to a teacher. The recipient for this year was Joy Poole. Congratulations, Joy!

MTNA FOUNDATION RAFFLE

Piano Works once again generously donated a hydraulic piano bench for our MTNA Foundation raffle. We are excited to announce that our 2022 conference winner was one of our collegiate members, Rex Dipietro, from Young Harris College! Thank you to everyone who purchased a ticket to support MTNA Foundation.

EDUCATOR GRANTS

The GMTA annual budget provides for several teacher grants each year. Members submit an essay outlining their desired use for the monies should they receive them, and the executive board reviews the essays and determines the winners. Our 2023 GMTA teacher grant recipients are Elena Dorozhkina, Cameron Fuhrman, and Matthew Shipes. Congratulations to these teachers! These grants will assist/enable them to pursue meaningful endeavors for themselves and/or their students.



GMTA member Nancy Elton is happy to share the news of the release of her second album with Albany Records. American Record Guide last review stated "technically and musically immaculate." Works include Chopin Ballades #1 and 3, Berceuse, Barcarolle; and Rachmaninoff selected Preludes, Etude Tableau and Sonata #2 in Bb Minor. Available from Albany Records or Amazon.com.



GMTA is excited to welcome Brandon Walker as the 2023 GMTA Commissioned Composer



Brandon Walker is a versatile, award-winning composer and musician whose music takes you on a visual journey. His classical and cinematic compositions have premiered with orchestras across North America, including the Reno Pops, Brazosport, Scarborough, and Brantford Symphony Orchestras.

Brandon's passion is crafting music and engaging listeners by utilizing the many vivid colors of the modern-day symphonic orchestra. His background in jazz and classical composition, as well as his experience with film and music audio production, are significant influences.

He performs solo piano regularly in the Savannah, Georgia, area. In addition, he has played saxophone for the Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra, the Fabulous Equinox Orchestra, the Jazz Connection Big Band, Bohemian Swing, and many other groups at venues and festivals.

In 2020, Brandon won "Producer of the Year" at The Niagara Music Awards, recognizing his work with The Jimmy Stahl Big Band. Other career highlights include eight Golden Reel Award Nominations and winning a Gemini and two Directors Guild of Canada Awards. Additionally, as a writer and a publisher with ASCAP, his compositions have been played on National Public Radio, KUSC, JazzFM, WUCF, and many other radio stations across North America.

Brandon enjoys spending time with his family and enjoying the culture, waterfront scenes, and history of the Savannah, Georgia, area. Catch up with Brandon at [MusicByBrandonWalker.com](https://www.musicbybrandonwalker.com).

For GMTA's 2023 commissioned work, Brandon has proposed to write a four-movement suite, "Stages," for soprano saxophone and string trio. The proposed "Stages" will follow a music student's journey in four parts—each movement will bring to life a learning stage for the student. The soprano saxophone will represent "the student," and supporting, challenging, and engaging this voice will be a string trio (violin, viola, cello). Proposed performers include the composer on soprano saxophone and intermediate/advanced high school students from Atlanta or Savannah, Georgia, on violin, viola, and cello.



MTNA COMPETITION REPORT

CHRISTINA TOOLE, PREVIOUS GMTA VP OF MTNA COMPETITIONS

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The 2022 MTNA state competitions were held at Columbus State University's Schwob School of Music on October 21-22nd. Special thanks to Composition Coordinator Jeri-Mae Astolfi and to Jan Adams and Joy Poole for their tremendous support and help with hospitality and on-site duties.

There were 85 entrants participating this year, including 3 composition entries.

The State and Southern Division Winner Results can be viewed on the [GMTA website](#). We were pleased to have a great Winners Recital with 9 performers during the GMTA conference at Kennesaw State University!

Georgia had 12 winners and 4 state representatives move on to the Southern Division video round, where Hanna Jung (student of Katherine Emeneth) won the Junior Woodwind Performance category. Alexander Aull (student of Matthew Shipes) won the Young Artist Brass Performance category – congratulations to both of these performers and their teachers!

The 2022-23 MTNA National Competitions will be held during the National Conference, March 25–29, 2023, in Reno, Nevada.



MTNA Competition Winners at the 2022 GMTA Conference



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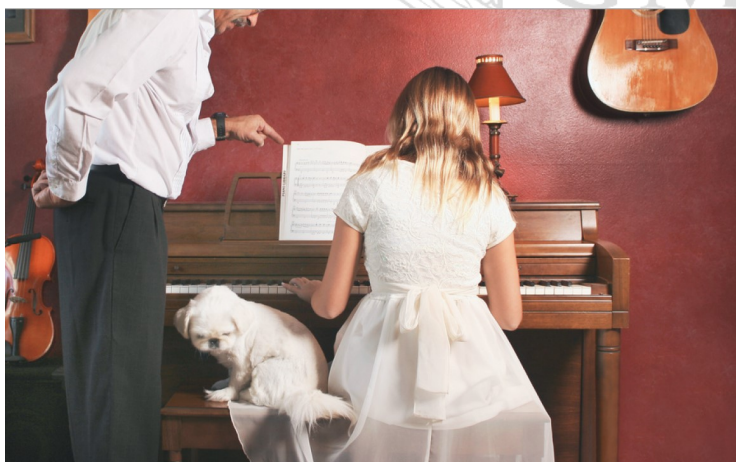


Huge congratulations to all student performers who shared their talents in the recitals and masterclass at the GMTA Conference this past November! Another huge congratulation to all teachers for helping these young musicians find their artistic voices!

We are excited for the upcoming in-person State Auditions, which will take place on April 14 and 15, 2023, at Piedmont University, in Demorest, Georgia. Regional Auditions will continue with the virtual format, while the Local Auditions will be at the discretion of each Association.

Please be aware that the deadline for GMTA State Auditions registration for Pre-College Piano Concerto, Piano Grade 12 and Piano Duet, along with Local Auditions, GMTA Theory Test and GATE is **January 15, 2023**.

For additional information about GMTA Auditions, visit the [GMTA Website](#) and click on “Student Activities.” Information about the required GATE (Georgia Auditions Theory Exam) is available [here](#). I’m looking forward to your students’ participation in the State Auditions!



We are committed to supporting piano teachers and students on their musical journeys!



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CERTIFICATION REPORT

ROBIN ENGLEMAN, NCTM, GMTA CERTIFICATION CHAIR

As of December 31, 2022, GMTA had a membership of 579 and of those, 91 are nationally certified. Since July 1st, we have 4 new certified teachers in Georgia! Amaris David, Elena Dorozhkina and Yingzhou Hu have become nationally certified using administrative verification. Graceanne Starr has moved from Wisconsin to Georgia and transferred her certification. Welcome to all of you!

Why certification? Read one MTNA member’s explanation:

I have three degrees in piano performance and am tenured at a public university, but I chose to become certified because I wanted the credential granted by one of this country’s oldest and foremost music teaching organizations. Obtaining MTNA Professional Certification publicly acknowledges my years of training and experience and demonstrates my commitment to continued excellence in teaching.

*Erin Bennett, NCTM
FL Certification Chair*

One of my goals as your state certification chair is to see the number of certified music teachers in our state increase. My hope is that you will explore the possibility of becoming certified this year by visiting the [certification webpage](#) or clicking on the logo. If you have additional certification questions, contact me at englemanr@bellsouth.net.



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VICENTE DELLA TONIA, NCTM, PRESIDENT

The Atlanta Music Teachers Association would like to thank all teachers and students who participated in the 2022 Romantic and Impressionistic Piano Competition. The judges commended the high level and refined artistry displayed. CONGRATULATIONS to everyone!

We would love to invite the GMTA community to join us on **January 29, 2023** for a concert and masterclass by **Kemal Gekić** at Georgia State University/Perimeter Clarkston campus. Please stay tuned for a presentation by **Dr. Fen-Fang Chen** (February 10, 2023) and our very first **Teachers Collaborative Concert** (May 7, 2023).

Visit <https://www.atlmta.org/> for more information. Hope you can join us for these free events!



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Music Teachers Association
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Please visit our website for info on:

- Romantic Impressionistic Piano Competition
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GRACE HUANG, PRESIDENT

This past fall, Athens Music Teachers Association held its 20th annual Sonata & Sonatina Festival and the annual Fall Recital. Both events included performances by pre-college through college undergraduate pianists. Teachers enjoyed kicking off the academic year at the fall welcome meeting and potluck; other semester events included a lecture-recital by Dr. Elena Dorozhkina and an end-of-semester holiday lunch gathering. AMTA also enjoyed seeing several of its student and college faculty members present at the GMTA conference!

Spring semester kicks off with the UGA Piano Symposium on January 21st, with guest headliner Jeremy Siskind and UGA piano faculty Greg Satterthwaite and James Weidman. All music teachers are invited to attend this **free** event. AMTA students will soon be gearing up for local auditions, the Intermediate and Advanced master classes, AMTA e-Festival, and Athens-Oconee Federated Festival. Teachers will also enjoy guest presentations from Natalie Smith (Heart Music co-founder) and Dr. Jeri-Mae Astolfi. We look forward to a musically fulfilling semester ahead!

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LOCAL ASSOCIATION HIGHLIGHT—COBB COUNTY MTA

JOE CAMILLO, NCTM, PRESIDENT

CCMTA conducted a successful Solo/Ensemble Festival in October at KSU. We assisted with hospitality and other GMTA conference needs at KSU in early November. In December, we held Pianothon, a major scholarship fund-raiser, at the Town Center Mall December 2-4 followed by our December luncheon hosted by the Silva family. Silva Music Studios also provided a fine piano for our Pianothon event.

Our February 3, 2023 meeting will include a presentation by David Watkins. On February 4 we will conduct our Local Spring Auditions and Theory testing at KSU, along with our Winners Recitals. The March meeting will focus on advanced planning and performances by members of our MTNA Student Chapter at KSU. April will feature a luncheon hosted by Leigh Anne Bleichner at her home. We are pleased to have been able to enjoy these worthwhile events and look forward to a great year ahead!

JOE CHAPMAN, PRESIDENT

The Northeast Georgia Music Teachers Association is pleased to announce a piano pedagogy clinic with renowned composer and pedagogue Jennifer Linn on April 22, 2023 at the University of North Georgia in Dahlonega. The program will feature *Young and Impressionable*, a lecture/demonstration detailing a variety of Impressionistic pieces accessible to elementary and intermediate piano students. The clinic will also include a “Student Recital with Comments,” a session designed to offer maximum student participation while including formative feedback and musical insight from Ms. Linn. Check-in will open at 8:45 am with the first session beginning at 9:15 am. The clinic is scheduled to conclude at 1:15 pm.

Through the generosity of NEGMTA, **this clinic is open to all GMTA and Georgia Federation of Music Clubs members free of charge.** [Preregistration](#) is encouraged as seating is limited.

Participants in the “Student Recital with Comments” will perform a variety of repertoire representing different levels of advancement. In addition to performances by students of NEGMTA members, students of teachers from other local GMTA associations are invited to apply for participation in the program. For more information on the recital application process and clinic details, please email Dr. Keith DeFoor, NEGMTA Vice-President for Programs, at kdefoor@yhc.edu.



AT YOUNG HARRIS COLLEGE, WE BELIEVE THE GREATEST RISK IS LETTING TRUE POTENTIAL REMAIN UNREALIZED.

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FOR SCHOLARSHIPS AND PROGRAM INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Young Harris College Department of Music
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 (800) 241-3754 ext. 5155
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JUDGES LIST REPORT

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MICHELLE PECK, GMTA JUDGES LIST CHAIR

I'm pleased to announce that six new judges have been added to the GMTA Judges List:

Dr. Ngan Nei (Yanni) Chan
Stephanie Freeman, NCTM
Julie Harbin, NCTM
Dr. Yingzhou Hu
Colette Keogh, NCTM
Dr. Jerico Vasquez

For a full list of Judges, refer to the [GMTA website](#). Anyone who is interested in being included on the GMTA Judges List is strongly encouraged to apply. In particular, voice and instrumental judges are needed. Applications and recommendations for applicants are submitted online on the [Resources page of the GMTA Website](#).

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As we welcome the new year, many GMATA local associations are already making plans for the 2023-2024 school year! Local association events provide wonderful venues to advocate for the arts and to increase awareness of the role they play in a healthy, flourishing society. Partnering with others in these events can develop new audiences and fresh appreciation for the arts, increasing their reach and impact in raising awareness. Here are five partnerships local associations might consider as they plan upcoming activities:

- 1) Team up with other artists. Host an evening where artists in your area can exhibit their work, complemented by performances by your local GMATA association. Perhaps a local eatery would be willing to donate refreshments! Or present a performance in collaboration with a community/university visual art class or writing workshop, pairing musical performances with visual and written final projects.
- 2) Partner with reputable non-profit organizations. Organize a recital of animal-themed compositions, and invite local animal rescue centers to bring pets up for adoption to a post-recital meet-and-greet. Identify a cause your local association feels passionate about; plan a fund-raising performance for an organization that supports that cause, and invite a representative from the organization to give a short presentation at the performance.
- 3) Bring music to the public by collaborating with local gathering spaces. Contact libraries, museums, restaurants, retirement centers, malls, coffee houses, hotels, parks, hospitals, boutiques, airports—anywhere people gather—and ask if they would be willing to host a student performance. (A surprising number of these venues have pianos, so you might not need to rely on a keyboard!) You could arrange annual performances at several of these spaces, providing a recurring service to the community while supplying your students with valuable performance experience.
- 4) Get the press involved! Contact your local papers, event bloggers, and radio stations. Ask them to publicize your events, to write a local-interest article highlighting your collaborations within the community, to attend and review one of your local association performances, or to provide some air time spotlighting your chapter's activities.
- 5) Include your students' perspectives. Ask your local association students to write brief statements explaining what music means to them. Incorporate these statements at your events: display them on posters around the performance space, print them in the program, project them on an overhead screen, or ask students to read them aloud! (You might also ask parents to contribute their perspectives on how music study has benefitted their children.) As music educators, we are keenly aware of the positive impact music can have on our students' lives, but some of those attending our events may not be so aware. This is a great opportunity to lay the groundwork for more widespread arts advocacy.

Arts Awareness & Advocacy Organization Spotlight:

*Each Arts Awareness & Advocacy article will highlight organizations that promote arts awareness and/or advocacy in Georgia. **Georgians for the Arts** (georgiansforthearts.org) features arts-related news from around Georgia, as well as thorough listings of opportunities to advocate for the arts through local and state government. **Georgia Council for the Arts** (gaarts.org) supports arts organizations through programs, services, and grants (many of which local GMATA associations with non-profit status may be eligible to apply for).*

Presenter proposals for the 2023 GMTA Conference are now being accepted. Please submit the online form by April 1 to be considered for the 2023 GMTA Conference. The conference will be held Thursday-Saturday, November 2-4 at Shorter University.

Questions? Contact the VP of Programs, Jeri-Mae Astolfi at programs.georgiamta@gmail.com

To submit a proposal, click [here](#).

2023 GMTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

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

- 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(s) of support
- Professional colleague letter(s) of support
- Nominating letter from the state organization

Nominations must be submitted by **Monday, September 11, 2023**. The online form is available [here](#). The winner will be acknowledged at the 2023 GMTA Conference Banquet. With so many excellent teachers in Georgia, please consider nominating one of your favorites!

Nomination questions? presidentelect.georgiamta@gmail.com

For a list of past Teachers of the Year, and to read their Teaching Tips, visit the [GMTA Website](#).



GMTA AWARD FUNDS

MARY ANN MCTIER, GMTA AWARDS

Rewarding students as excellent musicians is a key value of GMTA. Each local association as well as individual teachers can participate in congratulating students through financial donations to our General Award Fund and our named awards. Please consider how you and your local association can increase awareness of this aspect of our organization.

The GMTA General 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 and MTNA Competitions. Donations not designated for a specific fund go into this fund.

The Nolting Award in Composition 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: elementary, junior, senior, and young artist. Each student receives \$100.

The Broadhurst Award in Piano was established in 1992 by the Broadhurst family in commemoration of Joan Broadhurst. This award is presented annually at the GMTA conference to the winners of the MTNA Junior and Senior Piano Performance Competition. Each student receives \$200. Donations were made to this fund this year by Jeffery Broadhurst and Nancy Broadhurst Dellaria.

The Betty H. White Award Fund was established in 2019 by the White family in commemoration of Betty H. White. This \$400 award is presented annually at the GMTA Conference to one of the GMTA Teacher Grant recipients for a student in financial need.

Please consider making GMTA Awards/MTNA Foundation donations a line item of your local association budget. Together we enrich and reward our outstanding students.

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January 2023

- 15 GMTA State Auditions Registration Deadline for Pre-College Piano Concerto, Piano Grade 12, Piano Duet
- 15 Registration deadline for Local Auditions, GMTA Theory Test, and GATE

February 2023

- 27 Registration deadline for Regional Auditions. Local auditions ratings due. GATE scores due.

March 2023

- 10 GMTA Regional Auditions Video Submission Deadline
- 13 Registration Deadline for GMTA State Auditions (College Piano, Voice, and Instrumental)
- 15 Deadline for completed GMTA Theory Tests to be mailed to Trudi Norman
- 25-29 MTNA Conference 2023 in Reno, Nevada
- 27 GMTA State Auditions Volunteer Form/Fee Due

April 2023

- 14-15 GMTA State Auditions, Piedmont University
- 22 GMTA Executive Board Meeting (tentative)

May 2023

- 1 Graded GMTA Theory Achievement Tests (not GATE) & Certificates mailed to participating teachers

June 2023

- 1 Deadline for all GMTA Expense Reports to be submitted to the Executive Director for reimbursement
- 30 Membership Renewal Deadline: Membership year runs July 1-June 30

September 2023

- 1 Deadline to apply for GMTA Commissioned Composer Award
- 11 Application deadline for GMTA Teacher Grants
- 11 Application deadline for GMTA Teacher of the Year
- 30 Student Membership Renewal Deadline: Student membership year runs October 1-September 30

October 2023

- 1 Fall registration deadline for GMTA Theory Test/GATE

November 2023

- 2-4 GMTA Conference at Shorter University

Executive Board:

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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 institution's 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 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 15th) June 15th (Deadline: May 15th) September 15th (Deadline August 15th)

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