

GMTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2005



Dr. Nancy Hill Elton

The recipient of the 2005 GMTA Teacher of the Year Award is Dr. Nancy Hill Elton. Nancy began her musical studies with piano lessons from her mother and vocal study from Edward Gavin of Columbia, SC. She received the Bachelor of Musical Arts degree from the University of South Carolina where she was the recipient of numerous awards and scholarships including the music school's highest honor, the Music Achievement Award. Nancy doubled majored in degrees through the Doctorate in piano and voice. At USC she studied piano with

John Kenneth Adams and voice with Evelyn McGarrity. She received the Masters and Doctorate of Musical Arts degree from the University of Texas in Austin, where she studied piano with John Perry for seven years and completed the DMA with Nancy Garrett. Her vocal training was with Doris Yarick and Bethany Beardslee. For three summers, she pursued private piano study with Frank Mannheimer, a student of Tobias Matthay, and also attended the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California, studying piano, chamber music and accompanying with Jerome Lowenthal and Gwendolyn Koldovsky. As a student of John Adams, she was the winner of the SCMTA Pre-College Piano Auditions, and in 1972 was a national finalist in the MTNA Collegiate Young Artist Competition, winning an Honorable Mention.

Nancy has received critical acclaim as a concerto soloist and recitalist. Her reviews include statements such as "an artist capable of amazing fire and brilliance...as well as the most graceful sensitivity", "a dazzling pianist to say the very least...she exhibited technical and interpretive brilliance", "an unbelievable sense of freshness and vitality." (*The State and Columbia Record.*)

She maintains an active schedule as a piano soloist, accompanist, chamber musician, lecture recitalist and singer and has performed throughout the Southeast and other areas of the U.S. Some of her performances in recent years have included lecture recitals for the American Matthey Association at Columbus College, Kennesaw State University and the University of Central Florida in Orlando. Recent solo recitals have included performances at Erskine College, Columbia College, the University of Georgia, Blue Ridge Community College, Callanwolde Fine Arts Center in Atlanta, Central Congregational Church of Atlanta and Georgia Perimeter College. Her most recent concerto appearances include two performances with the Coastal Symphony of Georgia in St. Simon's, Georgia, playing Beethoven's 3rd Piano Concerto and Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, a performance of Beethoven's Choral Fantasy with the Musica Sacra Orchestra at First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, and this past November a performance of Grieg's Piano Concerto with the Dekalb Symphony Orchestra. Nancy has also performed as a collaborative artist with many instrumentalists and singers over the years. Of special note was a series of concerts sponsored by the Affiliate Artist Series in South Carolina where she was accompanist for the distinguished opera singer, baritone Adib Fazah.

Nancy has fashioned a dual performing career in piano and voice. After coming to Atlanta in 1982, she pursued private vocal study for 3 years with Irene Harrower. A lyric soprano, she has sung many leading operatic roles as well as art song recitals, and has accumulated an extensive oratorio repertoire. In the 1983-84 season she sang more than 50 performances in the Atlanta area schools, under the auspices of the Atlanta Opera Studio Outreach Program. 20th century literature has played a major role in Nancy's choice of repertoire in both piano and voice. Her doctoral dissertation and lecture recital, which was accompanied by Anton Nel, was a combination of piano and vocal works of Schoenberg and Webern, and she sang the Austin premier of songs by Texas composers, Priscilla McLean and Kathryn Mischell. A recording by Capstone Records released in 1999 features her as the soprano soloist in a song cycle entitled "Fantasies for Adults and Other Children" by Priscilla McLean. She is soprano soloist at First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta and a frequent soloist with the Musica Sacra Concert Series. She has sung with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus and the Chamber Chorus under the direction of Robert Shaw, and was also a featured soloist, performing Rossini's famous aria "*Una voce poco fa*" with the ASO with William Fred Scott conducting in a youth concert.

In addition to performing, Nancy devotes much of her time to teaching. She has held teaching positions at Georgia State University and Clayton State College. Currently she teaches at the Atlanta Music Academy, the Presbyte-

rian School of the Performing Arts at First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, and in her private home studio. She has taught piano students of all ages and levels, and her students consistently receive high ratings, winning numerous first and second places in many local and state competitions. On the national level she had a second place winner in the Clara Wells Piano Competition sponsored by the American Matthey Association. Many of her students have gone on to major in music.

Nancy is active as an adjudicator and clinician for many piano festivals and organizations throughout the Southeast. She is the Immediate Past - President of Atlanta Music Teachers Association and is currently the Secretary for the Atlanta Music Club. She has chaired many auditions through the years and was a presenter in a panel discussion at the 2004 World Piano Pedagogy Conference in Las Vegas. Upcoming projects include a recording of Elliott Carter's Piano Sonata with other American piano works, and a performance at the Liszt-Matthey Festival in February at UGA.

Nancy's husband, John, is a computer scientist for Pegassus Imaging Corporation and also a Math Professor at Georgia Tech. Her son Johnny is a junior at Georgia Tech majoring in Physics.