

GCMTA NEWS



From the President

Happy New Year!

When I was younger, I always felt a little down in January. There had been so much excitement, anticipation, and joy in December, not to mention all of the material excesses of food, gifts, etc. The season was warm and inviting. It was comforting. Then, in January, everything disappeared. No more Christmas lights and decorations, no calorie-laden food, no gifts. It was barren, desolate, cold, and depressing.

Now that I am older, I really like the post-Christmas season. Make no mistake - I still enjoy Christmas, but there is something about removing all of the excess that is freeing and cleansing. It's like the baby that you see denoting the new year. Everything feels like you have a fresh start, a clean slate, and you are able to begin anew. Of course we all know that this doesn't last long.

Usually within about a week on the New Year's schedule it feels like we never had a break. All of the demands and busyness are back in full swing. But we did have a respite, however slight.

It is my prayer that as you begin this new year you are refreshed and ready to make it the best that it can be. I look forward to seeing you at our brunch on January 28 at PianoWorks.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, joyful, and musical 2026!

Kimber Kwiatkowski

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MEMBERSHIP

We have no new members to welcome today
But GCMTA's still strong and humming away.
Our circle stays warm, our music is still true
And there's always next month for someone new!
So be aware out there and do what you can do!

NFMC'S PARADE OF AMERICAN MUSIC

The Parade of American Music was a good success. The students ranged from beginner to advanced with special guest composer Pam Asberry's piano solo, "*Hope*" and Mary Marshall Dekkers beautifully performing the grand finale "*Springtime in Vienna*" by Frank Sanucci. Extra special gratitude to contributing GCMTA teachers: Mary Marshall Dekkers, Debra Hughes, Gloria Park and Jungwon Shin. And thanks to PianoWorks for supporting this project and President Kimber Kwiatkowski for coming to enjoy and support the Parade! (Now cross your fingers that we might win money again this year as we try for this NFMC Award.)



THANK YOU

THANK YOU to all of you who are part of GCMTA through the years for being integral to my being a productive music teacher. I recently was honored to receive the GMTA Teacher of the Year Award and I just had to firstly dedicate it to GCMTA because of its good influence on my career. I am living proof of being a better performer, a better teacher, an encouraged instructor and one who has been stretched in my profession because of my involvement with GCMTA, GMTA, and MTNA. I am truly very grateful to your input in my life through your involvement, administrations and hard work. We really do help each other to grow and to continue well as we work together in our Association.

-Deb Hughes

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Yulia Soboleva's student, Luka Meshchaniuk, who is a Laureate of the Florida Keys International Competition. He won first place! He recently showed off his performing prowess by presenting Timothy Brown's "*Concerto in C, Mvt 3*" with Yulia at the Parade of American Music. Bravo!

UGA PIANO SYMPOSIUM

Greetings from UGA—we hope you are doing well!

Please mark your calendars for our upcoming 2026 UGA Piano Symposium on January 31, 2026. This event is FREE; register by January 23 to reserve your spot.

UGA Piano Symposium info (registration and schedule):

<https://music.uga.edu/piano-symposium>

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season, and we hope to see you in January!

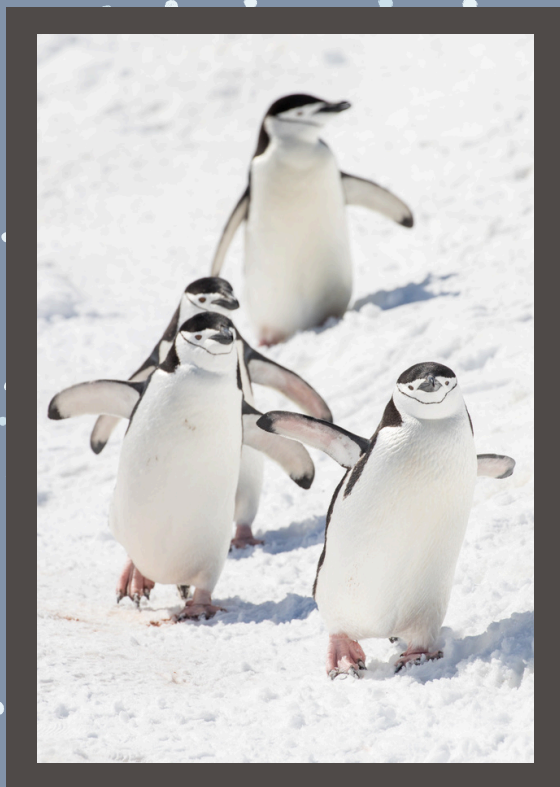
UGA Piano Faculty

JANUARY MEETING: LUNCHEON AND PROGRAM

Our next meeting is January 28, 2026. In addition to our traditional luncheon, we will have a short program introducing hidden gems from our studios. Teachers, do you have 'go to' pieces that motivate, build up, dazzle, and please the unpleasable student? We are looking for music not found in standard teaching methods, and not the pieces students already know about. In other words, while every student wants to play the first page of Für Elise, that is NOT what we are looking for. Difficulty can range from music for the earliest beginner to your most advanced (and picky) student.

Contact Kathy Dawal (email: kdawal81@gmail.com or text: 404-583-9769) to answer the following questions:

1. Are you coming?
2. What would you like to bring for the luncheon?
3. What piece(s) of music would you like to share? (Not limited to piano/piano solo.)



JR./SR. SCHOLARSHIP

Jr./Sr. Scholarship is scheduled on Saturday morning, April 18, 2026, at PianoWorks. Registration is online, the entry fee is \$35, and the firm deadline is March 13, 2026; please see the website at <https://gcmata.org/home/index/student-activities/juniorsenior-scholarship> for the information and repertoire requirements. This is a reminder that students must participate in at least one other GCMTA-sponsored event during the school year to be eligible.

If you have questions, please contact Cathy Thacker, NCTM, Chair, at <mailto:csbt88@gmail.com>.

CERTIFICATION

As part of our commitment to professional excellence, I encourage teachers who are not yet nationally certified to consider MTNA National Certification. Certification can be completed through the Teacher Profile Projects or Administrative Verification, and it is a meaningful way to strengthen your professional credentials and commitment to teaching excellence.

You can learn more about the process here: <https://certification.mtna.org>

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like guidance along the way.

Yanni Chan (yannichan221@gmail.com)



2026 LOCAL AUDITION

- Audition Date: Saturday, February 14, 2026
- Location: PianoWorks (2805 Buford Hwy, Duluth GA 30096)
- Registration Deadline: January 15, 2026 through TenutoWeb (<https://gmta.tenutoweb.com>)
- All applicants must register for the GATE test separately unless exempt.
- Audition Chair: Sun Hee Kim
- Sun Hee's email: sunheekim.piano@gmail.com
- Sun Hee's phone: 404-655-2993
- Judges: Vicente Della Tonia, David Watkins, Alan Woo

FEBRUARY MEETINGS

Mark your calendars! We have two events scheduled in February.

February 19, a Thursday, we co-host with North DeKalb for a presentation by Dr. Yoshiko Arahata: Teaching Piano music with dance elements beyond canon.

Dr. Arahata is an Assistant Professor at New Mexico State University where she develops a new collaborative piano curriculum and teaches music theory and composition. She also created and teaches a summer course, The Pianist's Guide to Dance Accompaniment, at the Eastman School of Music. Arahata serves on the Creative Music Making committee of the National Conference of Keyboard Pedagogy and is an active master class teacher and competition adjudicator.

Since we are co-hosting with North DeKalb, we will not have our business meeting that day.

Our second meeting is our regular Wednesday meeting on February 25. This will include our business meeting and a member recital. Please contact Kathy Dawal if you have a piece (or two) you would like to share with us. It doesn't need to be virtuosic, long, or memorized. Just something you would like to share with us. Solo, duet, or ensemble.

FUNDS REQUEST FORM

When requesting reimbursement for approved items purchased for our association, please refer to the Funds Request Form. This form can be found under "Forms" on our website. Please fill it out and email it to Nancy Morris at pianowithnancy@gmail.com. Also, please indicate your preferred form of payment (check or Zelle).

MED/PED SCHOLARSHIP

Do you have a student interested in pursuing a Bachelor of Music Education or Pedagogy degree? GCMTA offers a scholarship to qualified high school seniors. Please see the information on our website under Student Activities for more details. Application may be made online, or can be printed out and returned to Kathy Dawal by May 1.



THEORY EXAM

Georgia Auditions Theory Examination: GATE
THE ONLY OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO TAKE THE
GATE IS AT LOCAL AUDITIONS.

Date: February 14th, 2026

Exam Fee: \$15 per student

Location: PianoWorks, Duluth, GA

Registration Deadline (Online Only): January 15, 2026

Auditions Chairman: Sun Hee Kim, 404-655-2993,
 sunheekimpiano@gmail.com

Exam Administrator: Rie Hosoi, 678-596-0401,
 riehosoi@yahoo.com

General Information

Each pre-college piano or piano concerto participant in GMTA's local, regional, and state auditions is **required to take and pass** one of the four (4) theory exams ("GATEs") in order to advance beyond local auditions. Students may become EXEMPT from taking some or all of the GATEs. For exemption information, practice exams, and other important information regarding the GATE visit the GMTA website at: <http://georgiamta.org/>

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Registration for the **GMTA Theory Test** is only available **ONLINE** at the GMTA website: <http://georgiamta.org/>

FEDERATED: VIRTUAL EVENT

The final day possible for students to switch to the Virtual event is March 8, 2026. All scores (with measures numbered) and rating sheets must be delivered to Kathy Dawal by March 9, 2026. All scores and rating sheets will be returned to the teacher at the March meeting or may be picked up before that time. Further information will be provided.

Uploading Recorded Student Performances for the Virtual event: Deadline March 12, 2025

For a rating, music must be memorized and no music score should be visible on screen.

The performer's face and hands must be visible at all times in the video. For more advanced students, making face, hands, and feet visible in the video is best.

No editing, zooming, or panning is allowed.

Each piece must be one continuous shot/video. No editing or combining.

Name each of the two recordings using your level, student name (last_first) and choice or required. For example:
 E4_Smith_John_Choice; E4_Smith_John_Required

Upload the two video recordings per student to this Dropbox Link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/kZBxRyEHKD59GCOsC1iK>

PREPARING FEDERATED DOCUMENTS

By now, you all are likely in the final stages of memorizing and polishing pieces with your students. One final step is to get your documents prepared. Please remember that all students must bring either commercially printed, or purchased digital copies of their music. Don't forget to number the measures! And, keep in mind that no photocopies are allowed, nor is there a provision for leaving music for students at any of the desks. If siblings are sharing music, please coordinate with the parent/caregiver to make that happen and note it in the scheduling notes box in the registration form.

Each student must have a rating sheet printed from Vivace. There are two ways to print your rating sheets. If you only need to print a rating sheet for one student, you can do it from within "My Students." If you need all your rating sheets, there is an easier, quicker way. Both methods are outlined below.

To print out individual rating sheets:

Log in to Vivace.

From the Home page, click on "My Students"

For each student, go to the Action column. Click on the third icon (Go to Performances List).

On this new page, the top listing is for our 2026 event. In the action column, click on the Adobe icon.

Your rating sheet will be downloaded to your downloads file on your computer.

Clicking on the downloaded document will open it, allowing you to print it out.

To print out rating sheets for your entire studio:

Log in to Vivace.

From the Home page go to Festivals

Select "Central Gwinnett"

From the Action column, select the third icon (Download Rating Sheets). My document opened into a new screen. From there, you can print it out, or save it to your computer.



FROM YOUR AREA FEDERATED CHAIR

What: Federated Student Registration in Vivace now OPEN!

When: Register your students in Vivace now through Jan. 30th, 2026

Video Tutorial: If you have never done student registration in Vivace before, or you need a refresher, this is a tutorial I recorded.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxFhcOolksY>

Payments:

The Registration Deadline for everyone is Jan. 30th. Payments are due no later than Feb. 2nd. Fees are \$28 for the first event + \$15 for each additional event. Once your registrations have been approved in Vivace, you will receive your invoice. Payments should be made to our GCMTA Treasurer, Nancy Morris via Zelle or Check.

Fees can be paid by Zelle to Nancy Morris at events@gcmta.org or by sending a check to Nancy Morris at:

GCMTA Treasurer

Nancy Morris

3125 Dogwood Creek Pkwy,

Duluth, Ga. 30096

Remember:

- NO Photocopies of music allowed
- Forms for Specially Capable Musicians (JR-3-13) are due at the time of Registration and to be given to the Festival chair. <https://www.nfmc-music.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/JR-3-13-1.pdf>
- Teachers are required to work the day of the event
- Judging is closed and parents are not allowed to sit in on performances

Other questions should be directed to your Festival Chair.

Virtual Event:

If you have a student or students who need to participate in the Virtual Event, please check with your Festival Chair. Festival chairs should be receiving information shortly (if they have not already) and they will be able to provide you with detailed instructions for that event.

Enjoy preparing for your Festival!

-Melissa Slocum

REGISTERING YOUR STUDENTS FOR FEDERATED FESTIVAL

January 30, 2026 is the deadline for registering your students for Federated Festival. Please follow these steps:

Log in to your Vivace account at: <https://festivals.nfmc-music.org/login.php>

If you do not have an account, please contact your festival chair. For Central, it is Kathy Dawal or Lisa Ogg.

Click on: My Students. Find the student you wish to register. Under the action column, click on the second icon. (Register for Festival).

On the pop-up box, click "Select" for the Central Gwinnett Festival.

On the next box, select the event, such as "Piano Section," Violin Section."

Then select the specific event, such as "Piano Solo." Then select the level. Then click on Register.

Fill out the required boxes on this page.

Information we need:

Siblings: We need first and last names of siblings, duet partners, accompanists, etc.

Scheduling Notes:

If your student is in the high school competition, participating virtually, or playing out of district, note it in this box. If the student has a time conflict and needs to play a.m., or p.m., or during a certain time window (such as between 10 a.m., and 2 p.m.) put that here.

Questions, problems?

Contact your event chair.