GCMTA NEWS

From the President

Welcome to March, the month of all things green and all things Irish. In that vein, if you did not attend the pedagogy headliner presentation at the GMTA conference in November, you really missed a lucky clover. Dr. Barbara Lister-Sink, classical pianist, music educator, and global leader in injury-preventive keyboard technique, treated the audience to an arrangement of a tune that needed no introduction. Everyone knew it within the first four notes. She said that her mother, of Irish heritage, used to love to hear her play it.

I was on a mission to find the arrangement when I returned home, and find it I did. It was printed by Schott & Co in London in 1911. Known as "Nr.6. Irish Tune from County Derry (Name Unknown)", it appears in a book of British Folk-Music Settings by Percy Aldridge Grainger. A certain George Petrie published "The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland" (Dublin, 1855) based on a collection of melodies gathered by Miss J. Ross, of New Town, Limavady, Co. Derry (Ireland). Mr. Petrie wrote:

"For the following beautiful air I have to express my very grateful acknowledgment to Miss J. Ross, of New Town, Limavady, in the County of Londonderry – a lady who has made a large collection of the popular unpublished melodies of the county, which she has very kindly placed at my disposal, and which has added very considerably to the stock of tunes which I had previously acquired from that still very Irish county. I say still very Irish, for though it has been planted for more than two centuries by English and Scottish settlers, the old Irish race still forms the great majority of its peasant inhabitants; and there are few, if any counties in which, with less foreign admixture, the ancient melodies of the country have been so extensively preserved. The name of the tune unfortunately was not ascertained by Miss Ross, who sent it to me with the simple remark that it was 'very old,' in the correctness of which statement I have no hesitation in expressing my perfect concurrence."

We know it as "Danny Boy". I wonder what the Irish, several hundred years ago, knew this tune as, and if they could have ever imagined that we would still be playing it today.

To the timelessness of music –

Kimber Kwiatkowski

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NFMC Awards

Please contact Debra Hughes bndhughes@comcast.net if you can perform an American composer at one of our upcoming meetings. This provides good opportunity for our chapter to earn money which helps provide scholarships to GCMTA students.

Membership

Welcome dear Yingling and Xiao - two new lights in our lane,
Your voice and violin can join our chord with bright refrain!
We're richer now, our circle wider with hearts in unity;
Welcome to GCMTA where teaching music builds community.

We welcome our newest members: **Xiao Shi** from Suwanee who teaches violin and **Yingling Zhu** who teaches voice! We are so glad you are part of GCMTA!!

MTNA is Launching a New Website!

You should have received an email from mtnanet@mtna.org with important login instructions. This email will have the subject line "Activate Your New MTNA Account" and may look different from typical MTNA correspondence; if you do not see it in your inbox, please check your spam or promotions folders. Your current username and password will NOT work on the new site so follow the instructions to access all of the wonderful webinars and other useful information found on MTNA's website.

GCMTA Music Education/Pedagogy (MED/PED) Major Scholarships

Do you have a student planning to pursue a degree in Music? High school seniors pursuing a Bachelor of Music Education or Pedagogy are eligible to apply for a $500 scholarship. See our website for further information.

CERTIFICATION

"Just after I completed my Masters in Piano Performance in 1996, my husband and I moved to the Atlanta area where we have lived for almost 30 years now. I always loved learning and setting goals for myself. An opportunity came up to add some important and special letters after my name - NCTM. I decided to study, put together a portfolio, and take a written exam to be allowed to use the NCTM after my name. Since 1997, I've loved having NCTM after my signature. It comes with a standard of excellence and professional credibility that has served me well over these years. NCTM shows potential groups, boards, and families that I am nationally recognized and on lists of credible piano teachers.
I recommend the process to all music teachers. "

- Mrs. Amy VanderLugt, NCTM

If you are not yet nationally certified, I warmly encourage you to explore this meaningful professional milestone, whether through the Teacher Profile Projects or the Administrative Verification pathway. https://certification.mtna.org/

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://gcmta.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.

MARCH MEETING

Our March 25, 2026, meeting is a special one. Each year we invite three outstanding students to perform in a Master Class. This year our clinician is Dr. Patricia Dinkins-Matthews, Associate Teaching Professor, Chair of the Performance Area, Piano, Vocal Coaching, Piano Skills, and Collaborative Piano, at the Emory University Department of Music.

Dr. Dinkins-Matthews is an outstanding teacher who combines technical and artistic skills with a kind and gentle manner. She puts her students, their parents, and their teachers at ease. You won't want to miss this program.

Jakob Cheban, student of Patti Bennett, will perform Ronda Alla Turca, by W.A. Mozart.
Benjamen Vasquez, student of Susan Andrews will perform Sonata, Op. 53 I. Allegro con brio, by L. van Beethoven.
And, Adrian Kosasi, student of Lisa Gaal, will perform Rhapsody in D Minor by Melody Bober.

To allow our performers to return to school, we will start with the Master Class and have our business meeting afterwards. Please be sure to arrive by 9:45 a.m.

West Gwinnett Federated Festival

The West Gwinnett Festival was a very successful, smoothly-run event on Saturday, Feb. 28 at Berean Baptist Church. There were 203 Superiors, 12 Excellents, 1 Satisfactory, 2 Comments Only, and 21 will play virtually or out of district.

Voice Scholarship Winner: Olivia Crook (Deanna Peterson). Honorable Mention: Caylah Griffin, Kari Hassan, Ava Richards (Deanna Peterson), Isla Dysart (Deb Hughes).

Woodwind Scholarship Winner: Alaina Boulanger. Honorable Mention: Avery Parry. Both are students of Marcia Rygh.

High School Piano 1st Place Eva Huynh (Cathy Thacker); 2nd Place Sebatian Dimu (Cathy Thacker); 3rd Place Isaac Hong (Cathy Thacker); 4th Place Ariana Encarnacion-Rivera (Marcia Rygh) Honorable Mention: Dinara Fernando, Suny Peck (Susan Andrews); Matthew Goldie (Becky Bonam); Chloe Stanley (Yumi Patterson); Ella Munar (Cathy Thacker); Vedaant Rana (Marcia Rygh)

From Your Area Chair

Thank you to the 44 Teachers who participated, or are participating, in one of our 3 Gwinnett County Federated Festivals! Together, we celebrate the musical accomplishments of almost 600 students!

Please be patient with your Festival Chairs this month. We have to wait on Virtual and Out of District ratings to come in, prepare budget reports, and double check the Vivace records for accuracy. In addition, we are using Vivace to prepare all the required State Reports, including orders for Gold Cups. This process takes time. Gold Cups will not arrive right away. Your chair will let you know when they have arrived, and how they intend to handle distribution for you. Gold Cups typically arrive in late April or early May, but delays happen. So please understand that we cannot guarantee a delivery date of cups for your Spring Recital or other events.

If you have suggestions for making your festival better in some way, please reach out to your Chairperson this month. I will be meeting with all of our Festival Chairs early next month to review this past year's festivals and processes. We are already looking ahead for ways to make things easier and better for everyone.

Again...thank you for making Festival season so successful!

-Melissa Slocum

MusicLink

MusicLink is a national non-profit organization that links teachers who are willing to reduce their tuition by at least half with underprivileged students who otherwise may not receive a musical education. If you are already lowering your fees to help a family in need, why not join MusicLink? For more information on the benefits contact Chris Morrow at twomorrows93@gmail.com.

2026

Competitive Piano

Technithon and Hymnfest

Saturday
April 25, 2026

Berean Baptist Music Academy
1405 Hewatt Rd SW
Lilburn, GA 30047

For additional information, contact Rebecca Bonam; 770-375-8460 or rbonam@bbclilburn.org.