

GCMTA NEWS



From the President

Finally, a little cooler weather! I hope that you are enjoying the slightly cooler mornings and evenings. Add to that the changing colors in nature and you have near perfection.

In last October's newsletter I wrote about my then 81-year-old student. She is German and grew up walking to her piano lessons when she was a child through the rubble of World War II. She says her older brother played better than she did. They both stopped playing as they grew older and life and careers consumed their time.

My now 82-year-old student had a challenging year. She and her husband worked on their estate planning, including conveying an apartment in Germany to their daughter, requiring an extended trip there for the month of May and involvement with the Consulate. Upon her return from Germany, she had carotid artery surgery in which she was more or less indisposed for three weeks.

Last month we were able to resume lessons. She always says she played better before I arrived. Don't we all! After a warm up run through, she played Schumann's Soldier's March really well. Her brother played the piece as a child. He is now in a care home in Germany. I suggested that we record her, and she can play the recording for him over the phone.

After we made a plan for the recording, she talked a little more, and then she said, "You are my best friend." She has many friends, so I was somewhat surprised. After I thought about it, though, it made perfect sense. Music is not just little dots on a page and how you play them. According to the National Institute of Health, music acts as a powerful human bonding mechanism by synchronizing our bodies and brains through rhythm while releasing neurohormones that create shared feelings of closeness.

Happy human bonding!

Kimber Kwiatkowski

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AFTERGLOW

After the meeting, yes, after the meeting,
When MTA business is all done,
We gather together for AfterGlow—
Where we join for laughter and fun!

We laugh and chat, yes, we laugh and chat,
We share our stories as we go,
We sit together, catch up awhile,
And enjoy the friendly AfterGlow.

We eat our lunch, yes, we eat our lunch,
With smiles and friendship all around,
Good food, good friends, good conversation—
What a wonderful place to be found!

So won't you come? Yes, won't you come?
Join us after GCMTA
Bring your smile, bring your stories,
And spend some time with us today!

Come to AfterGlow, Yes, AfterGlow,
Where members meet and friendships grow—
To laugh, to chat, to share, to cheer.
Won't you come and join us here?

EVERYONE is INVITED to LUNCH less than 10 minutes away from PianoWorks: **Arte, 1291 Old Peachtree Rd NW #210, Suwanee (1st Floor: Cafe)** after our meeting on October 28. It was superb to laugh, compare stories and get to know each other and we want to do it again! All participants truly felt an "AfterGlow" after our September meeting! Please JOIN in on the fun!

HOSPITALITY

Please sign up to help bring refreshments to our
GCMTA meetings!

<https://m.signupgenius.com/#!/showSignUp/10C0848ACA92AA5FD0-64907620-gcmta?useFullSite=false>

Please contact Sarah Peterson with any questions.

Petersonmom6@gmail.com

NFMC ANGIE GREER'S MUSIC IN POETRY AWARD

For Junior members: November 1 is the deadline, any style of poetry from 8 - 30 lines long. Go to NFMC-music.org for information.

Music in poetry, let your words take flight,
Let your poem find its rhythm, let your voice shine bright.
November first is the deadline,
So create, revise, and share—
The Angie Greer Poetry Contest
Is waiting for your writing there.

Visit NFMC-music.org for info and download, or email bndhughes@comcast.net.

OCTOBER MEETING

October 28: Incorporating Jazz Into The Piano Student's Diet

Dr. Geoffrey Haydon, Coordinator of Keyboard Studies at Georgia State University, will help us meet the challenge of including jazz in our studios. He will begin with a short introduction about why and how jazz is beneficial to both students and teachers, then consider 12-bar blues, chord progressions, voicings, improvisation, styles, and contexts. Make sure to arrive by 9:45 a.m. for coffee and a performance of a piece by an American composer. Our business meeting starts at 10 a.m. with Dr. Haydon's presentation following. The meeting is at PianoWorks - 2805 Buford Highway, Duluth, GA 30096.



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.



FESTIVAL INFORMATION

West Gwinnett Federated Chairs - Rebecca Bonam at rbonam@bbclilburn.org & Susan Andrews

Festival Date: February 27th, 2027

Location: Berean Baptist Church, Lilburn

Events: Piano, Voice, Instrumental (mainly flute,) and Music Theory

Central Gwinnett Federated Chairs - Kathy Dawal at kdawal81@gmail.com & Lisa Ogg

Festival Date: March 20th, 2027

Location: First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville

Events:

North Gwinnett Federated Chairs - Young Lee at eyoung20@gmail.com and Eunji Kwon

Festival Date: March 6th, 2027

Location: First Baptist Church, Duluth

Events: Piano, Ensembles/Concertos, Voice, Music Theory

Virtual Federated Event Option - Kathy Dawal, Melissa Slocum

Festival Date: March 22nd, 2027 - Video Submission Upload Deadline

Location: online only, no competition available for High School

PLEASE record these dates on your calendar now, and **PLEASE** pass your District date along to your studios NOW. Calendars continue to fill up quickly for our busy students and it is far easier to set aside the day now than to be frustrated with conflicts later. Remember that if you enter students into your District Festival, you are required to work the day of your District Festival. If you have questions, please contact your District Chair.



The National Federation of Music Clubs observes American Music Month annually in November through the Parade of American Music.

FUN FREE event: Saturday, November 28, 11:30 - 1:00

YOU are invited to enjoy American Compositions at PianoWorks, 2805 Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30096!

(Must register to perform by November 20 at bndhughes@comcast.net.)

- **ELIGIBILITY:** Open to all instruments and voice, all ages; music must be by an American composer (U.S.-born or naturalized)
- **PERFORMANCE:** 5 minutes or less; memorization optional
- **REGISTRATION:** Firm deadline November 20 with name of performer, title of selection, composer, & teacher's name. First come, first served. Limited spaces available. Contact Debra Hughes - bndhughes@comcast.net
- **RECOGNITION:** All performers receive a certificate & an American gift

JR./SR. SCHOLARSHIP

Jr./Sr. Scholarship is set for Saturday morning, April 17, 2027, at PianoWorks. Dr. Vicente Della Tonia, Jr., will be the judge. Registration is online, and the firm deadline is March 19, 2027; 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.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

We are using our Dropbox Library for all virtual events in GCMTA. Please see the Music Day article in this newsletter for instructions. Naming your files correctly is important. It will ensure that your student's performances are placed in the correct grade and event. If you need any help in getting your files named or uploaded, please contact Kathy Dawal by text or email.

Text: [404-583-9769](tel:404-583-9769), Email: kdawal81@gmail.com

I am still hoping to find someone to work with me as a backup in Digital Resources. You do not need to be an expert. If you feel comfortable with computers you are probably more than qualified. You do not need to know coding, or have any specialized skills. The main qualification is a desire to help GCMTA.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Please submit your nominations for our 2027 Teacher of the Year! We have many wonderful and deserving teachers in our organization. You will find all the information about the nomination process on our website. The deadline for submissions is December 31, 2026.

Please contact Gloria Park if you have any questions.



CERTIFICATION

MTNA Professional Certification: Project 1 – Teaching Philosophy

In our last newsletter, we introduced the **MTNA Professional Certification** process. For independent teachers, certification consists of five Teacher Profile Projects:

1. Teaching Philosophy
2. Repertoire Analysis
3. Present Your Teaching
4. Professional Teaching Environment
5. Professional Business Practices

You can work through the projects at your own pace, beginning with the areas that best match your current experience and materials.

Project 1: Teaching Philosophy

The first project invites you to reflect on **what you believe about music teaching and why you teach the way you do**. Your statement should communicate your educational goals and provide insight into your approach to teaching.

As you begin, consider:

- What are your goals for your students?
- What do you want students to gain from music study?
- How do you address individual learning needs?
- What teaching strategies are important to you?
- How do you encourage musicianship and independent learning?

Project 1 is limited to **600 words**, making it important to be clear, focused, and personal.

Next issue: We'll take a closer look at Project 2: Repertoire Analysis.

Learn more: certification.mtna.org

CENTRAL FEDERATED FESTIVAL UPDATE

Date: March 20, 2027

Location: Lawrenceville First Baptist Church, Lawrenceville

Please make sure to turn in your student rosters on or before October 15th to avoid having a late fee. Submit your rosters at <https://georgianfmc.org/membership/junior-club-application/>

First, go to <https://georgianfmc.org>.

Click on "Membership/Members Area"

Then select Junior Club Registration.

Add the required information.

Contact Kathy Dawal or Lisa Ogg if you need help.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Hello everyone! My name is **JIEUN OH**, and I live in Suwanee, Georgia. I moved to the United States from South Korea about five years ago and have been enjoying building a new life and musical community here. I earned my bachelor's degree in Korea and recently began pursuing my master's degree. This semester is my very first semester in the program, and I am excited to continue growing as both a musician and teacher.

I have been teaching children for about ten years and currently work with many young piano students. In addition, I serve as an instructor for a youth orchestra at a Korean Catholic church. One of the most rewarding parts of my work is meeting young musicians and helping them discover the joy of music.

My family includes my wonderful husband and our three daughters, who are 8 years old, 5 years old, and almost 2 years old. They certainly keep life busy and fun!

I enjoy connecting with people, sharing ideas and information, and learning from one another. I have been so happy with the warm welcome I have received from everyone, and I am looking forward to getting to know all of you better in the future.

AND..... **GLORIA PARK**

I was born in Washington, D.C. and grew up in Virginia. My parents immigrated from Korea the year before I was born, so we didn't have a lot of means. But music was always important to my parents and they were always singing - at home, at church, in the car. They always had on classical music (there was a wonderful classical music station in D.C. for many years) and I remember doing Saturday chores to Beethoven symphonies with the turntable playing vinyl records.

I started piano lessons with a neighborhood grandmother who had cats. My brother was allergic and the teacher also saw some potential in me, so I auditioned with another teacher, Suzanne Guy, and studied with her until I graduated. I cannot even express how much I learned from her as well as the opportunities she opened up for me - summer study in Moscow, music camps, master classes, etc.

I did not intend to study music in college, but I couldn't stay away. So I got my bachelor's in Music at the University of Virginia, and a masters in teaching Elementary Education so I could be a school teacher. By the time I was about to graduate, I felt more called to ministry and prayed for an opportunity to continue to serve on campus. That's when I got a job as an adjunct piano teacher at UVA and realized I really enjoyed it and have been teaching ever since in various ways.

I met my husband Billy on a mission trip to Kazakhstan, and we have had 4 kids in 4 states. They are now adults (1 is married) and live in 4 different states and we look forward to the holidays when we can all be together. Billy is the pastor of New Covenant Presbyterian Church, so aside from teaching piano, that's where I invest most of my time and energy.

Being a part of GCMTA has helped me continue to grow as a teacher and has allowed me to meet so many wonderful people who have inspired me in many ways. I look forward to learning about all of you!

PERFORMANCE DAY

Date/Time: December 5 @11-4PM, time may be adjusted depending on interest

Location: Von Maur in Mall of Georgia

Registration Fee: \$10/student

Sign-up here! 15 minutes per studio MINIMUM. Studio Timeslots due by the October meeting (10/28).

Details on performers due on November 21.

Contact: Jennifer Luo at jenniferluopianostudio@gmail.com

Styles of Music: This event is open to all instruments. Christmas music is encouraged, but other styles of music are welcome! Duets and trios are encouraged. There is no limit for how many pieces each student performs, as long as they stick to their allotted time. Memorization is not required.

Day of Performing: Schedule each student to arrive 15 minutes PRIOR to their time slot. There will be no bowing or announcements. Feel free to dress up for the holiday spirit!

Teacher Responsibilities: Teachers MUST be present throughout their students' performances. Teachers will arrange their students in performance order at the event. You may choose to provide a program of pieces for your studio. Teachers who overestimate the length of their time slot must fill the rest of the time with their own performance. Teachers may self-promote through business cards or flyers. Teachers will be given certificates to give to each of their students after their performance.

GMTA THEORY EXAMS

Georgia Auditions Theory Examination: GATE

Passing the GATE exam, or exemption from it, is required in order for students with an OP rating to move on to Regional or State Auditions. This exam is given in conjunction with GCMTA Local Auditions. Click here for [date and location information](#).

THE ONLY OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO TAKE THE GATE IS AT LOCAL AUDITIONS.

Exam Fee: \$15.00 per student

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

Registration Deadline: January 15, 2027

Registration for the **GATE** is only available **online** at the [GMTA website](#).

CONCERT OPPORTUNITY

Echoes Across Horizons:

**American Voices in
Classical Piano**

Junwen Liang

[Click here](#) for details!



NOTES FROM YOUR AREA FEDERATED CHAIR

Thank you to everyone who turned in your Sr. Club dues on time so that our treasurer could take care of payment and registration for all three of our districts.

Important Changes:

1. Our GCMTA Executive Board voted to increase the Student Registration fees to \$30/student for the first event, and \$15/student for a second event. This is because venue rental costs went up significantly this year, and because our State and National organizations are also raising their per student fees.
2. The GCMTA deadline for new teachers to join a Sr. Club/District (Central, North, West) is November 30th, 2026, for the upcoming Festival season. Processing the memberships, dues, and getting access to the bulletin all require time. We will not deny any teacher membership or access to a Festival, but additional fees may be required and access to a Bulletin may be affected.

Updates from our **National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC)**:

- The online Bulletin has been updated to include more of the rules and information you need to register students for festival events. You can find the online bulletin by logging in to your Vivace account.
- **PLEASE double check your student records in Vivace** now for accuracy. Teachers are responsible for names being spelled correctly and birthdates being correct. The following information is in the Teacher's checklist from National:
 - **Archive** all students who are no longer studying with you. (This should only be done once a year at the end of the Festival year. Please make sure it is done after July 1st and prior to the beginning of the school year so that transferring students can be added to the new teacher's studio list.)
 - **Review** each student record and make sure that the "Name for Official Documents" is completed if the student does not wish to use the First, Middle, and Last Name in the student information tab. Example: Will Baggaley instead of William Therian Baggaley
 - Make sure you have accurate information for each of your new students. Verify this with the parent: Date of Birth and Full Name. Ask if the student has a different name that should be listed in "Name for Official Documents."
- Going forward, any changes to Birthdates will require a **copy of a Birth Certificate** or other proof of birth document sent to National. They will not allow changes anymore without that documentation. **So, Please Be Accurate when you enter student information into Vivace the first time.**
- **Student Certificates and Vivace Comment & Rating Sheets**
 - Student Certificates (Participation, Superior, etc) should be kept by parents/students as proof of participation in a Festival. These, along with comment and rating sheets should be kept by parents as proof of participation, proof of ratings, and proof of districts and levels in case of student transfers. Please stress the importance of keeping these documents with your studio families.
 - All **Comment & Rating Sheets are to be printed from Vivace**, not filled in by hand from blank sheets. From NFMC: "Note: The rating sheet is to be printed from Vivace because it contains all verified information. A rating sheet with information added by hand is NOT official although we know that sometimes this has to be done on the day of Festival."

Updates from our **Georgia Federation of Music Clubs (GFMC)**:

- They are anticipating a \$1/student increase in fees for next year
- All questions regarding Festivals should go to your chairperson(s) first. Please do not email board members directly with your questions. If your chair person does not know the answer to a question, they will forward your question to the appropriate person at the state.

NOTES FROM YOUR AREA FEDERATED CHAIR (CON.)

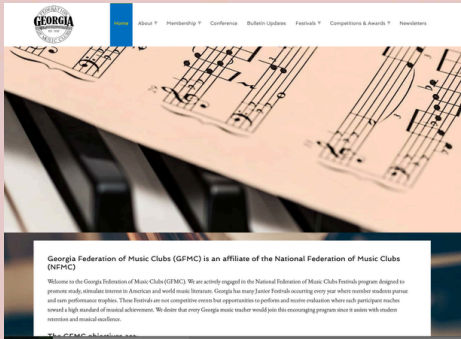
Jr. Club Rosters and Payment are Due October 15th

Now it is time to compile our Student Rosters and submit our Jr. Club Registration form and fees online.

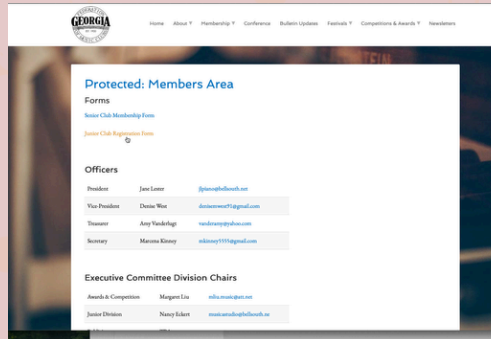
All Jr. Club Registrations are due no later than October 15th, 2026. Registrations received late are automatically assessed a \$50 late fee.

Please follow the steps below to register your Jr. Club for your District (West, Central, or North Gwinnett). I have also created a brief video tutorial for you if you prefer to see the steps in video form. (It is 7 mins) <https://vimeo.com/1114384039/6fed74f247?share=copy>

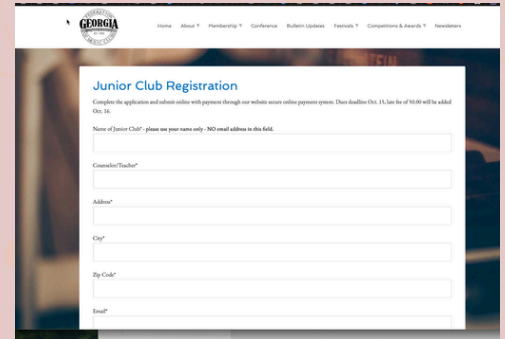
1. Go to <https://georgianfmc.org>



2. Select 'Membership' and drop down and click on 'Membership Area' (the password is georgiapeach). This is the screen you should see.



3. Select the link for 'Jr Club Registration Form.' This is the form that should be on your screen.



4. Complete the online form

- o the name of the Junior Club is your studio name or your name (whatever you have used in past years)
- o enter your name for Counselor/Teacher
- o enter West, Central, or North Gwinnett for your GFMC Senior club
- o enter West, Central, or North Gwinnett for the Festival in which your Jr. Club members participate
- o enter one student name at a time (alphabetically) and click Add New to continue entering student names for all students who will be participating from your studio
- o your total fee will be automatically calculated, so click on 'Proceed to Payment Screen' to make a secure Credit Card payment for your Jr. Club Registration

5. You will receive a confirmation email from GFMC with your payment and roster listed. You are to forward this to your festival chair. No handwritten or typed rosters to your chairman are acceptable.

6. **You must FORWARD both your payment receipt email and your Jr. Club Roster email to your festival chair.**

That's it! Your Jr. Club will be registered. **Remember that the deadline to register your Jr. Club student rosters and payment online is October 15th, 2026.**

If you need more information or instructions, please visit <https://gcmta.org/home/index/student-activities/federated-festival/nfmc-membership>

Thank you for participating in NFMC Festivals!

♪ GCMTA MUSIC DAY 2026

Dear Teachers, Parents, and Students,

We are excited to welcome you to **GCMTA Music Day 2026!**

Please review the information below carefully and mark all important dates on your calendar. GCMTA Music Day includes both **In-Person** and **Virtual Participation** options.

♪ IN-PERSON PERFORMANCE

Saturday, November 14, 2026
First Baptist Church of Duluth
2908 Duluth Hwy #120
Duluth, GA 30096

📅 PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Date	Important Deadline
October 16, 2026	Online Registration Deadline & Last Day to Make Changes to Registration
October 21, 2026	Registration Fee Due
October 23, 2026	Teacher Exemption Fee Due
November 7, 2026	Virtual Performance Paperwork Due
November 10, 2026	Virtual Video Submission Deadline & Last Day to Request a Change from In-Person to Virtual
November 14, 2026	♪ GCMTA MUSIC DAY

📄 FORMS

Registration Form & Music Day Information:

<https://gcmata.org/home/index/student-activities/music-day>

GCMTA Forms:

<https://gcmata.org/home/index/forms>

■ STUDENT ENTRY FEES

\$30 per student and \$20 for each additional event

Payment Options 1. Zelle: events@gcmta.org OR

**2. Mail a check to: Nancy Morris, GCMTA Treasurer
3125 Dogwood Creek Pkwy Duluth, GA 30096**

■■ TEACHER WORK REQUIREMENTS

All teachers who enter students are required to work at Music Day, **regardless of student cancellations.**

7 or Fewer Students: Work ½ day

8 or more students: Work full day

Teachers who are unable to fulfill their work requirement may:

- Pay **\$50** for a ½-day exemption
- Pay **\$100** for a full-day exemption
- Arrange for an **approved adult substitute**

Please notify **Serene Lee** at naeb22@att.net if you cannot fulfill your work requirement.

Teacher exemption fees are due by October 23, 2026.

■ VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION

Video Submission Deadline: Tuesday, November 10, 2026

Paperwork Submission (music scores & a comment sheet with assigned teacher number written on the back of comment sheet) Deadline: November 7, 2026

Virtual Participation Guidelines

- 1. Record each piece individually.**
- 2. Make one continuous recording of each piece.**

You may record your pieces as many times as necessary. However, you must submit **one continuous recording of each piece** made with **one camera/device**.

- No multiple shots, No editing, No panning

The recording should show the performance continuously from beginning to end.

3. Name each video file correctly.

Please name each recording using:

Two-digit grade + Student Name (last_first) + Piece Name

Example:

06_Smith_John_Minuet

4. Submit your video recordings.

You may either:

- Send the two video recordings to your teacher, **or**
- Upload them directly using the GCMTA Dropbox submission link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/y95tt80hr9ua09963hif>

📢 IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Registration Receipt & Editing Your Registration

After completing registration, you will receive an **email receipt**. **Please keep your receipt!**

The receipt contains an **edit link** that allows you to make changes to your registration through **October 16, 2026**, which is the registration deadline.

Schedule Changes

Once the schedule has been mailed out, **no requests for schedule changes will be accepted**.

However, students may request to change their performance format from:

In-Person → Virtual

This change may be requested through **November 10, 2026**.

Virtual → In-Person changes are not permitted.

To arrange a change from in-person to virtual performance, please contact Kathy Dawal kdawal81@gmail.com

Assigned Teacher Number on Comment Sheets

Please remember to **write the assigned teacher's number on the back of each comment sheet.**

Original Music

Please remind students to **bring their own original copy of the music on Music Day.**

Students should not rely on sharing music books, as doing so may disrupt the performance schedule and cause delays.

♪ THANK YOU!

Thank you to all of our teachers, parents, and students for your participation, preparation, and support in making **GCMTA Music Day 2026** a successful event.

We look forward to seeing everyone on **Saturday, November 14, 2026!**

GCMTA Music Day Committee



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A STAGE
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A meaningful live-performance
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• APPLICATION DEADLINE
JANUARY 15, 2027

• PRELIMINARY ROUND
FEBRUARY 20, 2027
Live Recorded Round

• FINAL ROUND
APRIL 3, 2027
Live Performance



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