

# MARYLAND STATE MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



SPRING 2026

An affiliate of Music Teachers National Association 🎵🎶 Our 68th Year

## From the President

### Greetings,

I hope you enjoyed a festive and joyful holiday and had ample rest to prepare for the busy season ahead. I am deeply appreciative of all the event chairs who dedicate their time and talent to serving our students through a wide array of festivals, competitions, keyboard musicianship, and theory exams.

On November 15, 2025, MSMTA premiered an exciting new performance event: the Hidden Treasures Festival. Students performed works by underrepresented composers as well as composers from the traditional canon, with the option to participate in either competitive or non-competitive categories.

The first-place winner in the competitive category was Elizabeth Liv (Dr. Bok Hwa Kim). Second place was awarded to Ronan Gunning (Edwina E. Hunter), and third place to Anastasia Wong (Lara Parris). Several non-competitive divisions were also offered, in which students performed one work by an underrepresented composer and a second work by a composer from the traditional canon.

I am thrilled to announce that our own Dr. Junko Takahashi—MSMTA Immediate Past President and current Student Activities Chair—has been elected as the new Eastern Division Director. Over the years, Junko has served MSMTA in numerous capacities, most notably through her exceptional eight-year tenure as President.

Her outstanding leadership has also been recognized nationally: she was named an MTNA Fellow at the 2023 conference and became the inaugural recipient of the Gary L. Ingle State Leadership Service Award in 2024. We are confident that Junko will bring the same commitment, vision, and excellence to her work on the MTNA Board.

I am looking forward to the MTNA 150th anniversary conference in Chicago. There is still time to register for this historic conference.

Best regards,

***Edwina E. Hunter***



# Upcoming Events

It's Not Too Late! Events with upcoming registration deadlines

See [MSMTA.org](https://www.msmta.org) for complete information

- APRIL 25 (VIRTUAL): STRINGS PLUS FESTIVAL ..... Deadline: April 4
- MAY 15 (VIRTUAL): GAIL F. McDONALD HIGH SCHOOL EXAM..... Deadline: March 31
- MAY 17 (UMBC): GOTTLIEB COMPETITION ..... Deadline: April 6
- MAY 17 (UMBC): DORIS CHASE COMPETITION ..... Deadline: April 6
- JUNE 07 (WAU): CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION ..... Deadline: May 2



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**2026 October 18, Sunday**

**MSMTA Conference**

**2:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

**at Calvary Lutheran Church**

**[9545 Georgia Avenue, Silver  
Spring, MD 20910]**

# On the Composers Circle...



*World Premiere of Dr. Joel Friedman's "These Truths" performed by Sound Impact. Kayla Moffett and Regino Madrid, violins; Tiffany Richardson, viola; Danielle Cho, cello. Pictured with Deborah White-Bondhus, Li-Ly Chang, composer Dr. Friedman and MSMTA President Edwina Hunter.*

## **Premiere of MSMTA Commissioned Composition**

### **These Truths, for string quartet**

#### **By Joel Phillip Friedman**

This work was jointly commissioned by the Maryland State Music Teachers Association and the Music Teachers National Association and dedicated to dearest friend and wife Jenny Bilfield. The world premiere was on December 14, 2025, at the University United Methodist Church, College Park, MD. Further support for this project is in part by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Ann S. Matteson Composer and Improvisers Circle concert with Composer Commissioning premiere in the second half, was held on December 14th, 2025 at University United Methodist Church in College Park. The commissioned piece is "These Truths for String Quartet" by Dr Joel Phillip Friedman.

It is jointly commissioned for the Sound Impact by the Maryland State Music Teachers Association and the Music Teachers National Association 2025. "These Truths," is drawn from one of our nation's most celebrated foundational texts, the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal..." The work reflects upon our complex history as we approach the 250th anniversary of our nation's founding.

The quartet unfolds in four movements: 1. These Truths; 2. Three-fifths: "The Beautiful"; 3. March of Crimes "The Circus Comes to Town"; and 4. Towards Justice.

Deborah White-Bondhus, Composers Circle Chair, welcomed the evening's performers which started with a recital by 14 young composers, followed by MSMTA commissioned composer Dr. Joel Friedman's "These Truths for String Quartet". He spoke about the piece first, then the Sound Impact performed it. The quartet consisted of Kayla Moffett, violin, Regino Madrid, violin, Tiffany Richardson, viola and Danielle Cho, cello, who performed the piece with great color, energy, and excitement. Everyone gave them a standing ovation at the end. Edwina introduced each of the quartet members and presented the grant check to Dr. Friedman. Deborah awarded the certificates, and we took group photos. After that, we all adjourned to the social hall for a lovely, warm holiday reception. Special thanks to Deborah, Edwina, Joanna, Ann, participating

teachers and all MSMTA board members for planning and giving advice for this commissioned project for the past 2 years until its fruition. A thank you note from Dr. Friedman follows. Wishing everyone a healthy and happy New Year!

### Li-Ly Chang , Composer Commissioning Chair

“Dear MSMTA, Thank you for making today a wonderful and meaningful day. I enjoyed meeting all of you, the students, and the other teachers, who clearly are doing important work. The whole process from beginning to end was a very special and rewarding experience for me and I’m happy that my piece, These Truths, played a part in the proceedings. Wishing you all a lovely and relaxing holiday! Warmly, Joel”



## Certification Update

### Update from Certification VP Helen Weems



Certification breakfast September 26, 2025. Pictured left to right: Alina Konshina, Haemi Erickson, Helen Weems, Kazuko Ikemoto.

A Certification Work Group meets every other month to assist you in your journey toward a rewarding National Certification designation. Recently certified teacher Patrice Donnelly offers these thoughts on certification:

“Regardless of your other qualifications and achievements, National Certification carries with it the notification to interested parties that you are current in your performance abilities and practices, and knowledgeable in music history, theory, and artistic interpretation. The standing also focuses on pedagogical principles, business acumen, and professional collegiality with others in your field, which signals to your colleagues that you have thought through and put into practice valued studio routines. Although it may sound daunting at first, the MTNA Certification program is generous in its renewal

criteria, and once you are ready for that step, you may find a few new ideas, like I did, for continued studio and professional engagement. **In brief, I think you will be inspired by it!** Good luck with this challenging and rewarding certification. -- Patrice Donnelly, NCTM.”

Contact Certification VP Helen Weems [weemspianostudio@gmail.com](mailto:weemspianostudio@gmail.com) to join us for our next meeting!

## President

Edwina Hunter

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Junko Takahashi

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Yee-Ning Soong

## VP Certification

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Yee-Ning Soong

## Historian

Yuri Chayama

## Member-at-Large

Ann Matteson

## Immediate Past-President

Junko Takahashi

## Upcoming Meetings

Student Activities

Monday, June 1, 2026

Board of Directors

Monday, June 8, 2026

# On MSMTA Conference 2025...

We had a fabulous conference on October 12, 2025! Many thanks to Junko Takahashi, Yoon Huh and Edwina Hunter for hosting and facilitating the Conference.

Our Conference began with Dr. Michael Finlay presenting strategies for avoiding injury and building strong foundations. Studies indicate that between 70-90% of musicians experience an injury over the course of their careers. This presentation will focus on the most common injuries afflicting pianists and provide teaching strategies for their prevention.



*Dr. Michael Finlay, Piano Keys Academy, M.M Peabody Conservatory, DMA University of Montreal*

We continued with our General Membership Meeting presided by Edwina Hunter, President.



*Dr. Thomas Hecht, Faculty, Peabody Institute; Professor of Piano, Steinway Artist, Recording Artist*

Clinician Dr. Thomas Hecht held a masterclass for Intermediate/Advanced students.

Featured performers were:

Lucas Liu - Sonata in C minor, Op. 13: 1st movement by Beethoven (Teodora Adzharova)

Jenny Wang - Jeux d'eau by Ravel (Kuei-l Wu)

Megan Lai - ABEGG Variation by Schumann (Nancy Breth)

Alternate performers:

Felix Liu - Sonata in A Major, K. 311 by Mozart

Jessica Chen - Sonata Op. 57: III by Beethoven

Thanks to our selection committee: Doug Guiles, Yoon Huh, and Edwina Hunter.

Following the masterclass, Dr. Thomas Hecht performed a mini recital for our conference.

We were delighted to have Dr. Kevin Chance, our MTNA president, join us for the conference. His lecture on a “Guide to Successful Sight Reading” gave us his insights into the approaches and resources we can use in our studios to more efficiently teach students to read music.

We were fortunate to have such wonderful presentations. Thank you to the conference committee for all their hard work: David Holmes, Yoon Huh, Edwina Hunter, Constance Fischel, Sheila Jones, and Junko Takahashi.

Please mark next year’s conference in your calendars! Sunday, October 18 at Calvary Lutheran Church from 2-6pm. It will be live!



*MTNA President –Dr. Kevin T. Chance, NCTM, Gloria Narramore Moody Piano Area, University of Alabama*

Deborah White-Bondhus & Junko Takahashi

MSMTA Conference Co-Chairs

## Local Association Reports

### Frederick County MTA

Happy New Year from Frederick County Music Teachers Association!



We’ve had a successful start to our year, with four Halloween recitals in October, and a new event called FCMTA Holiday Cafe in December. This was a casual “coffeehouse” recital event to benefit a local non-profit restaurant that employs disabled workers. 68 students

### Local Association Presidents

Anne Arundel All-Shore MTA  
Helen Smith Tarchalski

Bowie MTA  
Brian Gorman

Greater Baltimore MTA  
Joanna Greenwood

Carroll County MTA  
Teresa Bliss

Charles County MTA  
Michele Avrck

Greater Columbia MTA  
Deborah White-  
Bondhus

Frederick County MTA  
Karen Skelly

Howard County MTA  
Christopher Hall

Greater Laurel MTA  
Jan Puckett

Montgomery County MTA  
Yuri Chayama

Prince Georges MTA  
Janice Kilgore Wood

Southern Maryland MTA  
Debbie Smedley +  
Mary Stevens

and multiple teachers performed. Member Tatjana Podjaski-Desler suggested and chaired this very successful event.

Teachers also enjoyed an excellent presentation by local jazz specialist, Quentin Walston, on bringing improvisation into student lessons, at our October Professional Development meeting. Member Laurel Carroll gave an informative presentation at the November meeting on Teaching Audiation, and we enjoyed our yearly potluck Holiday gathering in December.

The first quarter of 2026 will hold Keyboard Musicianship and Theory Testing, as well as our annual Sonatina/Sonata adjudicated festival, and Senior Living Recitals in March. Spring will finish with the Ensemble Festival, and mixed teachers' Studio Recitals.

Karen Skelly, FCMTA President

## Greater Baltimore MTA

Greater Baltimore had a wonderful recital in November at the Essex campus of CCBC. The Spring continues with a fun informal concert called "I Love that Piece" which allows students to play a favorite piece from any genre (classical, pop, jazz, musicals). It was run for the first time last year and was well attended. Theory and Musicianship Testing follow in March. The second recital will be on April 26th and our competitions for Middle, High and Collegiate students follow in early May. In February, we held our association meeting and had guest speaker Katie Ostrosky lead us in a workshop on Applications of Dalcroze Eurythmics in the Piano Studio at White March Music Academy.

Joanna Greenwood, President GBMTA



## Greater Columbia MTA

GCMTA has had a wonderful fall season!! We started with a great masterclass hosted by Gulnura Brown and clinician Dr. Hsiu-Hui Wang on January 10, 2026 at First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ellicott City, MD. Performing students were Amos Monroe (Helen Weems), Kristen Arthungal (David Holmes), Lewei He (Miri Frenkel Yacubovich), and Emma

Lu (Grant McMullan).

Many thanks to Helen Weems for working on our website and doing the Student Activity booklet. A special thank you to David Holmes who agreed to be our secretary for this year and was elected unanimously.

We would like to welcome new members: Dora Misumi, Miri Frenkel Yacubovich, Jing Zhang. We now have 41 members!

This Spring holds several popular events. Friends and Family, a festival where students can enter with friends and family, was chaired by Janice Puckett in January. It included 29 students from 5 studios which

made for 15 ensemble groups including piano, violin and flute. Music Tells the Story Festival, chaired by Helen Weems, is a unique festival where the students write a story to enter with their music. 51 students and eight teachers entered this year – studios of Lorena Brougher, Janice Puckett, Helen Weems, Olga Kuperstein, David Holmes, Dr. Joan Spiknall, Ya Chu Yang, and Grant McMullan. We will have 3 more Outreach programs this spring: Sunday 2/8 at Brightview, Sunday March 9<sup>th</sup>, and April 19<sup>th</sup>. Grant McMullan will chair the Columbia/Laurel MSMTA Theory program on March 14<sup>th</sup>. I would like to thank all our chairs and officers who work so hard to make this organization operate smoothly.

Our next meeting will be on May 8, 2026, at the studio of David Holmes at 9:30AM.

Deborah White-Bondhus, President GCMTA

## Greater Laurel MTA

Our combined Halloween and Composition Festivals (both chaired by Deborah White-Bondhus) started the school year off with a bang, featuring 13 students playing their own compositions and 245 Halloween performances entered by 14 teachers. November brought our Orchestra Concerto Competition featuring, among other concerti, a previously commissioned concerto by Betsy Jo Angebrannt and the twenty-first concerto Alexander Peskanov has written for our organization. Winners of this competition played with orchestra on our winners concert. The week following our Orchestra Concerto Competition, we had our Piano Concerto Competition which is held in recital format (both events chaired by Doug Guiles and Jan Puckett). Our Ensemble Festival was held the first Saturday in December (chaired by Grant McMullan). We held our Theme Festival, “Poetry & Music” (chaired by Yee-Ning Soong), on Valentine’s Day.

March will bring our Young Musician’s Competition (chaired by Wendy Dengler), followed by our Lisa Bussing French Music Competition (chaired by Douglas Guiles) and, finally, our Kirchhof Competition in May (also chaired by Douglas Guiles). A very busy and, hopefully, a very productive year.

Jan Puckett, GLMTA President

## Montgomery County MTA



Montgomery County MTA enjoyed a lively and productive fall and winter season, with great student participation and exciting activities—and there is even more to look forward to this spring!

Between October 2025 and January 2026, MCMTA hosted seven student events, including two online programs. A total of 271 students participated, averaging 38 students per event—an encouraging level of engagement across our programs. We extend special thanks to Steinway Piano Gallery in Rockville for their generous support in hosting our “Magic Autumn” Elementary Recital in October. The Halloween-themed recital was festive and fun, and the inclusion of vocal performances added welcome variety to the program. We are grateful to the event Chairpersons—Anna Xuan Song, Olga Soukhoveev, Miri Frenkel-Yacubovich, Bonnie Kellert, Junko Takahashi, and Yoon Huh—for their dedication and hard work.

The energy continues into a busy spring season, with nine student events scheduled between February and early May. These activities would not be possible without the dedication and generosity of our Officers, Chairs, judges, and volunteer teachers, whose time, energy, and commitment are deeply appreciated.

In mid-December, the MSMTA Keyboard Musicianship Exam was held at the Montgomery County Test Center at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park. Despite snowy morning conditions, the exam ran smoothly from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., serving 201 students from 14 teachers. Sincere thanks go to Chair Svetlana Volkova for her tireless work.

Our membership meetings also brought members together for learning and connection. We are grateful to Jordan Kitt's Music in Rockville for their continued support in providing a welcoming home for MCMTA at their concert hall. In December, we enjoyed a members' concert and potluck brunch. In February, Dr. Albert Hunt—clarinetist, performer, educator, and arts administrator—will present *From Jail to Juilliard and Beyond*, sharing his inspiring personal and professional journey. Many thanks to Immanuela Gruenberg for organizing our educational programs, to Carol Brody for her warm hospitality, and to Cynthia Cathcart, who provides treasurer's reports at each meeting and works behind the scenes throughout the year to manage our bookkeeping.

We are also excited to share that the MCMTA Board has approved plans for our 60th Anniversary Concert. A committee is organizing this special event for the fall, and more details will be announced soon.

With many performances and activities ahead, I wish everyone a joyful and productive season of music-making. We look forward to the upcoming events, and I hope to see you in Chicago at the 2026 MTNA Conference!

Warm regards,

Yuri Chayama, MCMTA President

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### Deadline for Next Newsletter

Please e-mail all notices for inclusion in the Summer MSMTA newsletter by Friday, June 12, 2026 to VP Publications, Yee-Ning Soong:

[ningsy23@gmail.com](mailto:ningsy23@gmail.com)

The MSMTA newsletter is published three times annually by the Maryland State Music Teachers Association. It is available for viewing at [msmta.org](http://msmta.org).

### ADVERTISEMENTS

Ads will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Contact [ningsy23@gmail.com](mailto:ningsy23@gmail.com). Rates are:

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November (Priority Consideration for Departmental and Linehan Scholarships)  
Saturday, November 1, 2025 (instrumentalists only)

Friday, November 7, 2025 (vocalists only)  
Audition Applications Due: October 19, 2025

January (Priority Consideration for Departmental and Linehan Scholarships)

Friday, January 23, 2026 (vocalists only)  
Saturday, January 24, 2026 (instrumentalists only)

Audition Applications Due: January 4, 2026

March

Friday, March 27, 2026 (vocalists only)  
Saturday, March 28, 2026 (instrumentalists only)  
Audition Applications Due: March 15, 2026

June (Late Applicants and Transfers Only)

Thursday, June 4, 2026 (all)  
Application deadline: May 26, 2025

[music.umbc.edu](http://music.umbc.edu)



**Many thanks to the following organizations who donated tickets to the MSMTA Conference Raffle:**

**Weinberg Center for the Arts (4 tickets)**

20 West Patrick St.  
Frederick, MD 21701  
Box Office: 301-600-2828  
www.weinbergcenter.org



**Sundays At Three (4 tickets)**

<https://sundaysatthree.org>  
Sundays At Three presents chamber music played by many of the exceptional professional musicians who live and work in the Baltimore-Washington region, or were raised in Howard County:  
Location: Christ Episcopal Church, Columbia, Maryland  
Time: 3:00 p.m. to approximately 5:00 p.m.  
High school students admitted free.  
Younger children admitted free with an adult.

**Musical Arts International (2 tickets)**

[www.musicalartsinternational.org](http://www.musicalartsinternational.org)  
Tickets: regular \$20, student \$15  
Ticket order Information: 301-933-3715



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