



# AMTA Newsletter

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**November 6-8, 2008**

**December 12, 2008**

*Home of Mary TL Williams*

**January 9, 2008**

*Beyond Fur Elise:  
Stimulating Repertoire for Student  
and Teacher*

**February 14, 2009**

*Southern Keyboards*

**March 14, 2009**

*Southern Keyboards Music Store*

**March 28-April 1, 2009**

*Atlanta GA!*

**April 17-18, 2009**

*Kennesaw State University*

**May 8, 2009**

Dear Fellow Members,

Over the past two months, I have been working alongside a local web designer, Jeremy Outman, in an effort to raise the standard of the Atlanta Music Teachers Association website.

The internet is a priceless tool for communication and information. The goal of the AMTA website is to bring important information to all of our members, and to allow it to be a tool for those looking for a well-qualified music teacher.

It has just been launched this week, and we will be constantly updating it. Some improvements you will see: a clean and easy-to-navigate site, updated pictures of members and meetings, a contact page for inquiring minds, large buttons for 'Find a Teacher' and 'Join Today', and much more. One thing we are still working on is a search engine on the 'Find a Teacher' page, to make finding a teacher close to home even easier.

So I invite you to browse the website. The great thing about cyber information is it can be easily changed and updated, which is what we will constantly be managing. Our hope is that this will give the AMTA a stronger presence in this modern age.

Best regards,

Mary TL Williams  
President



By devoting just a few days to your own music education, the GMTA State Conference is the perfect way to greatly enhance your own teaching.

This year's GMTA conference will be held in the classic city of Athens. GMTA is delighted and honored to have concert artist Claude Frank with us this year. Additionally, the conference will feature presentations from "Georgia's Own" gifted teachers and scholars.

For more detailed information including detailed conference schedule and registration form, visit the GMTA website: [www.georgiamta.org](http://www.georgiamta.org)

#### **Brian Parks**

Brian Parks, former AMTA member now completing a masters' degree in composition at Wesleyan College in Middletown, Ct., will play a concert at the Ahavath Achim Synagogue, 600 Peachtree Battle Ave at Northside Drive, Atlanta, Ga 30327. Sun Nov 9 at 3:00 PM. He will perform the Beethoven Piano Concerto, a Bach program and 2 pieces he composed. The concert is free (an \$18 contribution is suggested but optional).

#### **Suzuki Piano Graduation Recital**

The Atlanta Area Suzuki Piano Association will give its biannual Suzuki Piano Graduation Recital at Spivey Hall Jan 18, 2009. (The Spring concert at Spivey Hall will be May 31, 2009). Students age 4 - 17 will perform works by Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, and Chopin. There will be 2 concerts at 1:00 and 4:00 and tickets may be purchased at Spivey Hall ticket sales. AMTA member Judith Blase will have 4 students performing.

Not every student in your studio is going to consider studying music after high school. But sometimes there is a student with a certain pronounced talent, and it would be shameful for them not to continue down a musical path.

Recently, I've had the opportunity to share lunch with a new piano professor at the Schwob School of Music at Columbus State University, Gila Goldstein. She is extremely excited about her new position, and informed me of the enthusiasm and professionalism that the school offers.

After speaking with some colleagues in our community, they seemed to express the same feeling about the Schwob School of Music, its top-notch faculty and facilities for all music departments.

Gila Goldstein will be performing Thursday, November 6, in the "Georgia's Own" Showcase Concert at the GMTA conference, along with many other fine musicians from the area. Please take the time to meet this dedicated musician and teacher, and allow her to inspire you about the future of our own music students.

The Holiday Luncheon always comes quickly, as the holiday season seems to bend our concept of time. This year the Holiday Luncheon will be held at the home of AMTA President, Mary Williams.

This casual potluck luncheon is a great time to socialize and to share teacher experiences with fellow AMTA members.

Please mark it on your calendars now, so as not to let it slip by.

I would like to share with you one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever had as a performer. I took a new turn in my performing life and sang a program of 'Great American Songs' for the Lenbrook Retirement Home!

The program was originally to be a piano recital similar to the one I played last year for AMTA. The program coordinator, who is very familiar with my singing, asked me back in the summer to include a few songs like those of Irving Berlin. Well, after I started looking for the songs, I got so carried away, I ended up doing an entire program of jazz standards of Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Haogly Carmichael, Richard Rogers, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern, Michael Leonard and several others. I had so much fun singing "Deep Purple" and "Stardust", "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes," to name a few! I even memorized the words!!

It was so wonderful to see one person after another come up to me afterwards with tears in their eyes as they recalled growing up with these songs, or having had them sung at their wedding!

It was a very special day for me. Although I have known most of these songs all my life, I never felt I could make time for them before. That has changed now. What a wonderful new dimension for me to include this incredible music in my life and share with others. It was also really fun to perform them with my wonderful amateur jazz pianist/ mathematician/computer scientist husband, John!

The program was part a concert series presented by the Lenbrook Square Foundation. There are quite a number of retired musicians in the musically appreciative audience, including a former first clarinetist with the Atlanta Symphony. I will be back there in November accompanying a violinist!

AMTA member and APS music teacher, Esther Domingo, has a treasure trove of music she is hoping to find a new home for. The music will be sold a discounted rate to raise money for her school's music budget.

Available is music for everything including classical repertoire, sheet music, pop, music for orchestra, band, dulcimer, duets, and more.

Ms. Domingo's collection of music is conveniently housed at Clairemont Baptist Church, on Clairemont between Buford Hwy and Dresden Rd. Contact Ester for more info.

CELEBRATE ALL SAINTS  
WITH THE MUSIC OF  
**RALPH VAUGHAN  
WILLIAMS**  
(1872-1958)

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS  
FESTIVAL

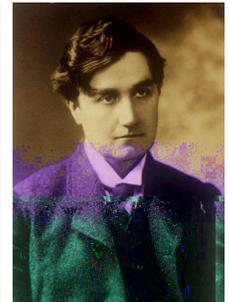
**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1: ALL SAINTS' DAY**  
7:00 P.M. HYMN FESTIVAL WITH THE HYMN TUNES  
OF RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2: ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY**  
10:30 A.M. SUNG MASS AND BAPTISM  
CHORAL FAITH OF OUR FATHERS TAUGHT OF OLD  
O TASTE AND SEE  
LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN  
ORGAN VARIATION ON SINE NOMINE BY ROBERT LIND  
HYMN TUNES VARIATION ON KINGS LYNN BY LIND  
SINE NOMINE, KINGS LYNN, LASST UNS ERFREUEN

7:00 P.M. **EVENSONG FOR ALL SOULS' DAY**  
CHORAL MAGNIFICAT AND NUNC DIMITTIS IN C  
THE SOULS OF THE RIGHTEOUS  
INSTRUMENTAL SIX STUDIES IN ENGLISH FOLKSONG  
FOR CELLO AND PIANO, HOLY DINA, CELLIST  
VARIATION ON THE CALL BY ROBERT LIND

**ST. AIDAN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
13560 COGBURN ROAD  
ALPHARETTA, GA 30004  
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[WWW.STAIDANS.ORG](http://WWW.STAIDANS.ORG)

JOHN SABINE, ORGANIST/CHOIRMASTER  
REV. ROBERT WOOD, RECTOR  
REV. KEITH OGLESBY, ASSOCIATE RECTOR



Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1911

HYMNS TUNES AT  
THE HYMN FESTIVAL

SINE NOMINE  
KINGS LYNN  
LASST UNS ERFREUEN  
FOREST GREEN  
THE TRUTH FROM ABOVE  
THIS ENDRIS NYGHT  
KINGS WESTON  
MONK'S GATE  
KINGSFOLD  
SALVE FISTE DIES  
THE CALL  
DOWN AMPNEY  
OLD HUNDRETH  
CAELITES PLAUDANT  
RANDOLPH

It was a very wet morning. Something rare. It almost made you want to stay in bed, were it not for something rarer—a master class by noted artist-teacher Phillip Kawin. Expectations were high for the event. Here was a faculty member from New York's Manhattan School of Music, a man for whom four MTNA chapters provided funding. Questions brewed in the mind: how would he put students at ease? Would he be talkative, funny, or demanding? What jokes, metaphors or anecdotes would he pass on? What about technique? What about sound? And what is this innovative approach to piano playing he describes? A master class by an artist-teacher of such renown was rare, and extremely exciting.

Billed as a "Workshop for Gifted and Advanced Students," Kawin began with what were almost the most elementary exercises possible. First, a polyphonic exercise for one hand: using a five finger position, play an eighth note staccato trill played with slower legato steps. Second, an exercise in chord balance: play a simple triad, but release two of the notes instantly, while holding the last one for emphasis. With these two examples, Kawin teaches even the earliest beginners about balance and polyphonic playing. His primary theme is clear. Tone is synonymous with technique.

More elementary concepts follow, these more innovative. Consider how we walk, he says, always with opposing motions between legs and arms. Taken a step fur-

primary example (opposing movements in walking) enough times to seem a little excessive, and also got slowed down by transposing exercises and discussing scale fingerings. Perhaps he mistook his audience's quiet understanding for disagreement, and tried to convince through repetition; or maybe he thought that we wouldn't understand without several examples of each exercise. Perhaps it is merely an issue of time management. In any case, a short outline, mapping out his ideas beyond the beginning concepts would have been appreciated. It's a tribute to Kawin's ideas that we were hungry for more.

From a weakness, to a strength: Kawin's anecdotes and imaginative descriptions bring both pleasure and concentrated insight. They spring from his own mind as well as the teachings of others, and a choice sampling would include "don't let all the air out of the balloon," John Perry's definition of portamento as "a frustrated legato," Chopin's "suppleness before everything," and a most simple and powerful image to explain leggiero playing: "it's like picking up little grains of salt from the keys." These and other comments bring to mind Franz Liszt's wit in his Weimar master classes.

Liszt sometimes used that wit to attack rather than befriend, as when he would angrily tell the unprepared, "wash your dirty linens at home!" but Kawin had no such problem with his students this past October—their accuracy was much too good for that. Instead, Kawin as teacher constantly focused on building students' understanding of the textural and contrapuntal interplay within the music. Bass and soprano were often played without middle voices, hemiolas accented against, rolled chords balanced, and under-played melodic notes given clarity and meaning. Students were constantly challenged to hear and play with their ear and intellect as their guide, not their fingers.

Sometimes, this constant challenge uncovered a tendency in Kawin's teaching that seemed counter-productive: the expectation of instant perfection. Often, while the student incorporated a new suggestion, the master would interrupt. Of course, interruption in itself is expected in a master class. The problem is that Kawin's interruptions almost always regarded a previous topic, diverting attention from the most recent concept. Without a single-point focus, students sometimes appeared off balance, unable to synthesize all of Kawin's details to his standard. This, in turn, led to more interruptions, a slowed momentum in the class, and sessions going over time. Taking a more big-picture view might have resulted in more rapid progress, helping students to save face and perform at their best. According to Kawin, Leon Fleisher says "they pay me to make complaints." I wish that Philip Kawin would stop complaining long enough so that the students could demonstrate what was asked of them.

Outside of his critiquing, Kawin showed a pleasing variety of ways to isolate difficulties, always with the intent of realizing a particular sound. A student playing Bach (Partita no. 2, Rondeau) was instructed to practice the piece on the closed fallboard to help articulation and coordination. The preceding Sarabande was practiced totally differently, by actually singing the right hand while playing the left hand on the piano. Lastly, the most bewitching (and also nerve-wracking) example of this sort of practice occurred during Kawin's coaching of Liszt's *La Campanella*. Seeking the timbre of bells, the master strove for near inaudibility in a right hand octave passage by juxtaposing single and two-handed playing. For several minutes, incessant repeated D#'s ebbed and flowed between clangorous and haunting. At its softest, the attack of the notes would become practically inaudible, leaving only a pure tone behind. During these moments, the highest art of piano playing came into view. An image of great pianism not as a demonstration of velocity, or accuracy, or even clichéd prettiness, but great pianism as absolute control of sound. Phillip Kawin leads his students to reach for that sound, a sound that borders on the architectural and the orchestral. Once heard, that sound stays in the ear—hauntingly. When the master class was over, we were fatigued physically, but mentally stimulated. Upon leaving, it was a surprise to see that it was still raining. That would be gone by the end of the day, but the sound, and those ideas, would remain. They are all too rare.

