

GMTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2007



GEORGE MANN

BIOGRAPHY

The recipient of the 2007 GMTA Teacher of the Year Award is George Mann from Lithia Springs. George came to Georgia in the Fall of 1974 and has been an active member of MTNA and GMTA since that time. Prior to coming to Georgia, he served on the faculty of the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati and at Kansas State College of Pittsburg. He joined the faculty of the University of West Georgia in Carrollton in 1974 and taught there until 2002. Since that time, George has taught at Berry College in Rome and currently is part of the adjunct faculty at LaGrange College. He received his Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance and his Master of Music in Piano Performance at the College Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati. He received his Master Teacher Certificate in 1987.

George has been an active performer in the Carrollton area as well as all over the state of Georgia. His recording "Sensual Classics" was commissioned by Intersound Recordings in 1997. He has been a frequent adjudicator in

state MTNA competitions in Alabama, Florida, Kansas, South Carolina and Tennessee as well as for many regional piano competitions in Georgia. His publication "Adding Expressions and Style to Music of the Romantic Period" was published by Clavier in October of 2002. He has performed with the Rome and Dekalb Symphony Orchestras. His recitals include performances at the University of West Georgia, Winthrop College, Brenau University, Emory University, Austin Peay University and LaGrange College.

George has served GMTA well-twice as College Auditions Chair, twice as Vice-President for Programs and twice as Member-at-Large. He has held many positions in his own Western Georgia Music Teachers Association, frequently as President and Co-President. He was active in the reorganization of this group in 1977. Since 2004, he has also been a member of the Greater Marietta Music Teachers Association. He is well known for his lectures and workshops in GMTA and MTNA. These include, "Introducing Students to Romantic Piano Music," "Auditions from an Adjudicator's Perspective," "The World of Schumann," "Exploring the Sonatas of Haydn," "Stage Fright," "Accompanying Skills," and "The Role of Parents in Music Lessons."

His students have been the recipients of numerous awards in GMTA as well as other solo and concerto competitions. Many have been selected as finalists, alternates, or honorable mention recipients. Students have been admitted to music programs at the College Conservatory of Music, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Peabody Conservatory, Catholic University in Washington, D.C. and many other fine schools. One of his former students writes: "I hope my words can paint a picture of this teacher--committed, professional, compassionate, experienced and inventive. One mark of an excellent teacher is that no lesson is wasted. Even in weeks that I felt as if I had not practiced enough, he made what could have been a waste

of time into a very worthwhile lesson."

A fellow professor of music says: "He is a performer, teacher, master class expert, nurturer and a great man. He is one of the most gifted piano teachers I have ever known. He is a major force in the professional music world. His private lessons and courses can be compared to that of any of the finest teachers throughout the country. He is tireless, selfless, and a true "unsung hero." His excellent educational background, coupled with personal integrity and genuine concern for his students and colleagues make him very special."

Beyond his years of service to GMTA, George has served as organist and director of music at St. Julian's Episcopal Church in Douglasville from 1988-1992 and from 1995 until the present. He recently won a composition contest in which he wrote a congregational mass to celebrate the centennial of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta. The mass will be sung at the concluding service of the Centennial year at St. Philip's Cathedral in Atlanta. He has performed for music clubs and private schools in several Georgia cities. In 2006, he organized a series of four concerts for the Cultural Arts Center in Douglasville which has become a regular part of the annual schedule of events sponsored by this organization. He has frequently performed for Carrollton civic groups and also has been involved with many summer piano teacher workshops and summer music camps.

Our Teacher of the Year has touched the lives of many, many students, fellow musicians and members of his community in a way that will impact and influence the world of music for years to come.

Congratulations George on your many accomplishments and contributions. We applaud you as GMTA's Teacher of the Year for 2007.

GEORGE MANN'S TEACHING TIPS

"THE ART OF PRACTICING"

Practicing is an integral part of piano study at every level. A major task for all piano teachers is to help students establish good work habits. Left on their own, many students mistake quantity (how much they practice) with quality (how well they practice). They frequently make no distinction between playing a piece and practicing a piece. Practicing often becomes something the hands do without any input from the mind or the ear. As teachers, we should give directions on how to work, but it is essential that we take lesson time - frequently - to practice with the student so that he/she understands clearly what we are after.

At this point, the student must assume responsibility to follow the practice directions given in the lesson. To help with this, I devised the questionnaire given below for self-evaluation of work habits in different aspects of practicing. If presented in a non-confrontational way, these questions make students think about how they are using practice time. After having been critiqued by teachers, adjudicators, and audiences, students are usually happy to be the ones evaluating themselves. Moreover, a truth discovered by a student will often make a deeper impression than a teacher's repeated suggestions.

A good practice routine is absolutely essential for progress to take place since practicing, rather than lessons or performances, is the greatest period of time a student spends at the piano. The questions below emphasize different things that I consider important in my teaching. This questionnaire may be copied and modified as necessary for any level student. When I have my students fill this out, I give them the option of sharing the answers with me or keeping the results to themselves.

The purpose of this questionnaire is not to tell me what I usually know but rather to make each student aware of how well the practice time is being spent. If a student chooses to share the questionnaire with

his/her teacher, it is interesting to keep this on file and have the student fill out another one several months later and compare the results.

PRACTICE QUESTIONNAIRE

Rate yourself on the statements below according to following scale:

1 - almost always **2** - often **3** - sometimes **4** - almost never

- (1) I spread my practice over the entire period between lessons rather than doing most of my work on the day before I see my teacher.
- (2) On a lesson day I practice after I get home to go over everything covered in my lesson.
- (3) I have a specific time set aside each day for practice.
- (4) I practice even on days when I do not feel like spending time at the piano.
- (5) When I practice, I rarely play all my pieces through from beginning to end. I often start in the middle or near the end of a piece.
- (6) I often isolate tricky sections for special practice.
- (7) I frequently play the left hand of any piece (new or old) by itself.
- (8) I do some of my practice without pedal.
- (9) When I have a fast piece “up to speed”, I continue to do some work at a more moderate tempo.
- (10) When I have a piece memorized, I check to be sure I have established starting places.
- (11) When I have a piece memorized, I still practice it with the score.
- (12) When learning a new piece, I tap out tricky rhythm patterns on the keyboard cover while counting out loud.
- (13) When learning a new piece, I resist the temptation to play the piece “expressively” and “up to tempo” if this means I end up missing notes, ignoring fingering, etc.
- (14) When learning a new piece, I am especially careful about fingering.
- (15) I work on technique (scales, arpeggios, exercises, etc.) consistently.
- (16) Sight reading is an important part of my practice routine.

(17) I use a metronome as needed.

(18) I practice with a pencil, marking missed notes, fingering, etc. as well as things to ask my teacher at my next lesson.

(19) I try to have specific goal(s) for each practice session. These are goals that I can realistically accomplish in a specific practice period.

(20) When I finish a day's practicing, I can say exactly what I have accomplished.

George Mann

Lithia Springs, Georgia

Professor of Music, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, Georgia (1992-2002)

Adjunct Faculty, Berry College, Rome, Georgia (2002-2004)

Adjunct Faculty, LaGrange College, LaGrange, Georgia (2004-Present)

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