

**ROCHESTER PIANO TEACHERS GUILD, INC. &  
GREATER ROCHESTER MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOC.**

## A Note from the RPTG President

Dear Members,

Welcome to a new season of the Rochester Piano Teachers Guild! I hope you all had a wonderful and rejuvenating summer and are looking forward to another year filled with growth, collaboration, and inspiration.

It is a true honor to serve as your President, and this year is especially meaningful as we celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Rochester Piano Teachers Guild! For seven decades, RPTG has been committed to supporting piano teachers, promoting musical excellence, and fostering a vibrant community of educators throughout the Rochester area. We are delighted to celebrate this remarkable milestone with special events and programs throughout the year.

RPTG has a rich and inspiring history, and I am deeply grateful to the past leaders, members, and supporters whose dedication and vision have helped shape

our organization into the vibrant community it is today. As we celebrate the accomplishments and traditions of the past 70 years, we can reflect on the remarkable legacy that brought us here while embracing an exciting new chapter together.

I hope many of you will join us for our Opening Membership Program and Meeting on September 18 at 10:00 a.m. at the home of Barbara Noval. We are delighted to welcome Nicole Yanzuo Liu, a student at the Eastman School of Music, who will be our featured soloist.

As we embark on this special anniversary year, I encourage you to participate in our programs, share your ideas, and take advantage of the many opportunities RPTG has to offer. The strength of our organization comes from the dedication, passion, and creativity of its members, and I am excited to celebrate this important milestone with all of you.

Wishing you a wonderful start to the new season. I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events and to sharing a memorable 70th anniversary year with our entire RPTG community.

Sincerely,  
Sarah Rhee



Dr. Sarah Rhee

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### Special points of interest:

- Nicole Yanzuo Liu, Guest Artist  
First RPTG Program
- NYSMTA State Conference
- Tribute to Patricia Hanson
- Gold Cup Festival
- Student Achievement Program

## 2027 Student Achievement Program



**Technique Exam** (in-person/zoom)  
Saturday, Mar. 13, 2027  
Nazareth University

**Theory Exam**  
Postmark: Thursday, Apr. 1, 2027  
Send completed Exam to:  
Kym Schifino, 19 Farm  
Field Lane, Pittsford, NY  
14534

**Repertoire Exam** (in-person/zoom/video)  
Saturday, May 22, 2027  
Nazareth University

**Registration Fee:** \$33/  
student

**Deadline:** January 15,  
2027 for full or partial  
program or March 15,  
2027 (Repertoire only)

### [Register Online](#)

**Payment:** Check payable  
to: NYSMTA District 12  
Send to:  
Bonnie Choi  
School of Music  
Nazareth University  
4245 East Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14564

## 2026 American Composer Festival



Teddy Sarah Dennis Diane

The RPTG commissioned Dennis Alexander in the fall of 2025 to compose a piece in celebration of our 70th year (1956-2026). He composed "Sweet Rochester" as a tribute to the long history of Jazz in Rochester. The 35 measure piece is very improv-

sational and truly fun to perform. Dennis says the mood is "Freely, as if improvising". Lush harmonies, cross hand passages, a change of key and "morendo" ending make this a special piece. Mr. Alexander premiered it at the American Composer

Festival on April, 18, 2026. He was gracious enough to perform it for students, parents and teachers at all five recitals throughout the long day. Everyone was mesmerized by his presence and the premier of "Sweet Rochester".

## 2027 American Composer Festival



Dennis Alexander

We are excited to announce that Jeanine Yeager will be our next Visiting Composer, for the American Composer Festival on April 10, 2027 at Nazareth University. At 88, Jeanine is a "very special lady" as described by her publisher at Neil A. Kjos Music Company. She has published 48 books over her career of composing. Her resume is long and most impressive, but what may be more interesting is her 'Little

House on the Prairie' life style with her husband on their 87 acres of land. Jeannine gathers her inspiration from this serene, secluded wilderness of woods, ravines and streams overlooking a picture perfect valley. Her composing style is unique, combining new age and tonal blending with lots of pedal and exploration of sounds. Many are tone poems allowing for interpretation and expression from the pia-

nist to create a mood or feeling of peace and calm. We hope you will be able to explore her collection of compositions as soon as possible to prepare for the Festival. We will have a list of compositions for you at our opening meeting on September 18, 2026. Stacey at Akron Music will again be offering us a discount on the music you order. Teddy will be available to answer any questions.

## Piano Pedagogy Workshop

The Pedagogy Committee is delighted to announce the husband and wife team, Christopher and Katherine Fisher, will be our featured clinicians for the 2027 Pedagogy Workshop! Katherine is the esteemed author of The Piano Safari Curriculum, and Christopher has authored multiple books, notably Teaching Piano in

Groups. Both artists work with students from young children up through collegiate students. They perform together as The Fisher Piano Duo. We are delighted to welcome them to Rochester to hear their multifaceted perspective as pedagogues and performers.

The Workshop will be

held at Nazareth University, **Mon-Tues, June 21-22, 2027.**

We are truly honored to welcome such distinguished figures in piano pedagogy to our Workshop. Please mark your calendars—we look forward to a rewarding and inspiring couple of days with all of you!

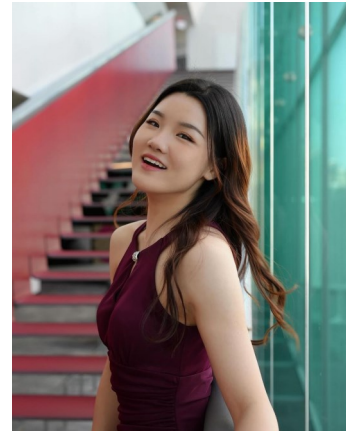
**Tasha George-Hinnant  
and  
Jacob Ertl  
Piano Pedagogy  
Workshop Chairs**

## First RPTG Program

Born in China, Nicole Yanzuo Liu began studying piano at the age of five. At sixteen, she was accepted into Juilliard Pre-College, where she studied with Matti Raekallio. She later earned her Bachelor of Music degree from The Juilliard School under Julian Martin. Nicole recently completed her Master of Music degree at the Eastman School of Music studying with Ran Dank and will continue her studies there pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree. A winner of the 2025

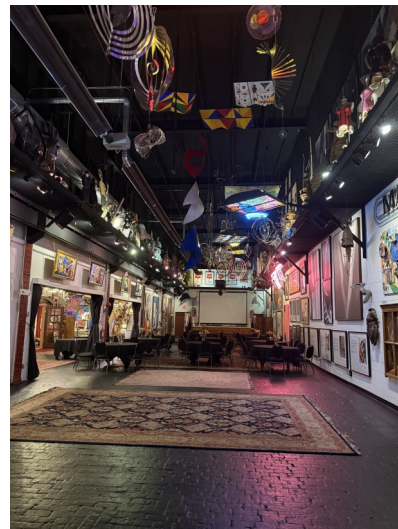
Yamaha Young Performing Artist Competition, Nicole has performed at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, Van Cliburn Hall, and the Bulgarian Embassy in Washington, D.C. She also won the Piano Concerto Competition at the Eastman School of Music, performing the Samuel Barber Piano Concerto under the direction of Kensho Watanabe. Her festival appearances include PianoTexas, the Bowdoin International Music Festival, the Garth Newel Emerging Artists

Fellowship, and the Philadelphia Young Pianists' Academy. An avid chamber musician, Nicole was a recipient of Juilliard's Gluck Community Service Fellowship, presenting interactive performances in healthcare centers across New York City. She has also performed in Juilliard ChamberFest alongside clarinetist Alan Kay.



Nicole Yanzuo Liu  
Guest Artist

## Annual Fall Recital



Come join us for our annual fall recital at an exciting new venue for us:

ARTISANworks  
565 Blossom Rd., Ste. L  
Rochester, NY 14610

Saturday afternoon,  
October 24, 2026 at 2:00

Applications are available online and by mail.

## NYSMTA State Conference Invitation

Join us Saturday, October 17, for the 2026 NYSMTA State Conference at SUNY Onondaga Community College (Syracuse, NY)!



Dr. Logan Skelton

This biennial, in-person NY state conference offers a full day of engaging and interactive events from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, including:

- Conference Guest Artist: Dr. Logan Skelton
- Commissioned Composer: Pamela Sklar
- Lecture Forums: Eleanor Gummer and Bonnie Choi
- Lightning Talks Session

### REGISTRATION

The conference is open to both NYSMTA members and non-members. Registration is now open; please sign up via the Conference website:

<https://nysmta.org/2026-state-conference/>. Online Registration will close on Wednesday, October 7 at 9:00 AM. On-site registration will also be available; however, lunch may not be provided for same-day registrants.

### CONFERENCE HOTEL/REGISTRATION

We are pleased to offer accommodations at the Residence Inn Syracuse Downtown at Armory Square for conference attendees for October 16–18, 2026. The hotel is a ten-minute drive from Onondaga Community College, and the address is as follows:

Residence Inn Syracuse Downtown at Armory Square  
300 W Fayette St  
Syracuse, NY 13202  
315-422-4864

NYSMTA attendees will have access to a discounted rate of \$179 per night, including complimentary breakfast. Please note that daily parking is \$19. To secure this rate, reservations must be made by September 16. The official booking link will be provided upon completion of conference registration. Registration is available at: <https://nysmta.org/2026-state-conference/>.

If you have questions regarding accommodations, please contact Dongwon Shin at [d.shin3@sunyocc.edu](mailto:d.shin3@sunyocc.edu). We look forward to seeing you in Syracuse!

Best wishes,  
Tasha George-Hinnant  
and Asami Hagiwara  
NYSMTA VPs for Conferences

## 2026 Junior All-Stars Winners

### LEVEL I

#### 1st Prize

Ella Lee-Dank /Rhee

#### 2nd Prize

Jimmy Liu /Suárez

#### 3rd Prize

Lena Gao /Tamate

#### Honorable Mention:

Winston Chen /Preston

### LEVEL II

#### 1st Prize

Alan Wu /Suárez

#### 2nd Prize

William Han /Suárez

### LEVEL III

#### 1st Prize

Hui Zhao /Suárez

#### Classical Prize

Hui Zhao /Suárez

### 2nd Prize

David Wu /Ertl

### 3rd Prize

Edwin Xu /Suárez

### Honorable Mentions:

Jane Xue /Preston

Ella Yu /Preston

### LEVEL IV

#### 1st Prize

Jasmine Wu /Suárez

#### 2nd Prize

Hanwen Li /Suárez

#### 3rd Prize

Erdem Lukomyansky/  
Preston

### Honorable Mentions:

Charlotte Anderson /  
Suárez

Emma Yu /Preston

### 2026 Supporting Teachers:

Jacob Ertl  
Elizabeth Kinney  
Brian Preston  
Sarah Rhee  
Elier Suárez  
Mariko Tamate

### Special Thanks To:

Beth Fischer, Chair  
Junior All-Stars Competition

Yi-Wen Chang, Judge  
Nazareth University

Elinor Freer, Judge  
Eastman School of Music

Nazareth University for the  
generous use of its facilities





## 2026 Nazareth University Piano Competition

Dear Piano Teachers,

**The application deadline for the 2026 Nazareth University Piano Competition is: Friday, September 12.**

**For more information, repertoire requirements, and the online application, visit: [Link](#)**

\*\*\*To register, click on "TO REGISTER", and then click on "Get Tickets" and "Checkout". At this point you will be asked for student/teacher information and repertoire.

**The 2026 Nazareth University Piano Competition takes place on Sunday, September 27, 2026.**

**The competition theme this year is "American Landscape".**

For additional details, please see the repertoire requirements listed for each age division on the Competition webpage as listed above.

There will be 3 age divisions: Young Pianists (ages 6-10), Junior (ages 11-14), and Senior (ages

15-18). In addition to cash prizes for the 1st and 2nd place winners in each division, the winner of the Senior Division will receive an invitation to present a senior recital in Wilmot Recital Hall at the Nazareth University School of Music.  
**SPECIAL PRIZE:**

**"Diversity in Music Award"**  
*This special award is given to a deserving participant in each age division who performs a work by an under-appreciated composer of color as part of their 2 required repertoire selections. The com-*

*poser may be black, indigenous, or a person of color (all non-white people) from any style period and country.*

*Prize: Young Pianist - \$25, Junior - \$50, Senior - \$50*

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Best wishes,  
Jacob Ertl, Director  
Nazareth University  
Piano Competition

## 2026 Vincent Lenti Piano Competition Winners

### YOUNG PERFORMER'S DIVISION

**1st Prize**  
Noah Lee-Dank / Rhee

**2nd Prize**  
William Han / Suárez

**3rd Prize**  
Joseph Koczot / Noval

### JUNIOR DIVISION

**1st Prize**  
David Wang / Martin

**2nd Prize**  
Anthony DiBiase / Gabriel

**3rd Prize**  
Naoki Li / Kobler

### SENIOR DIVISION

**1st Prize (tie)**  
Cason Jung / Gurevich  
Takuya Li / Kobler

**2nd Prize**  
Not awarded

**3rd Prize**  
Oscar Bemfield / Medel

### RECITAL PRIZE PRESENTATION

This special prize is personally awarded by Vincent & Christina Lenti in recognition of an outstanding performance in the winners' recital.

Takuya Li / Kobler

## 2027 Gold Cup Festival

The 2027 Gold Cup Festival will be on Saturday, January 30 at the Nazareth University School of Music. The online application form will be open from November 2 through December 5, 2026.

Each participating student must prepare and perform two memorized piano solos (for the Solo Event) for a panel of judges. The only exceptions are piano duets and hymns, which do not need to be memo-

rized. The second piece must be written by a different composer. Complete pieces composed for the piano in original form (not simplified or arranged versions) should be selected.

Photocopied music will not be accepted. Digitally-produced scores will be accepted if accompanied by appropriate documentation or permission from the composer/website generating the score, OR

from the publisher stating that the score is out of print, OR proof that the score is in the public domain. Original scores are preferred.

You are free to use a selection from any syllabi/list of published music when choosing repertoire. Alternatively, any level of appropriate pieces from any nationality or time period would be acceptable. Eighteen repertoire levels are listed in the

festival "Guidelines," which are on the [festival web page](#).

Please note that the teacher must be a current member of the Rochester Piano Teachers' Guild, Inc. The festival is organized and run by a small committee of RPTG members. For 2027, the festival fee is \$35 per event (solo, duet, hymn).

## Thank You Patricia Selover Hanson

**A tribute to one of our most outstanding RPTG/NYSMTA teachers and colleagues, offered by her great admirer, Brian Preston**



Patricia Hanson

When I came to the Eastman School of Music to begin collegiate work in 1973, Patricia (Pat) Hanson was the first community piano teacher I met here in Rochester. It was my great fortune to work with her husband, Dr. John Hanson as my freshman theory class teacher. Knowing that I was studying piano with Pat's former professor at Eastman, John introduced me to his wife, and we have all been friends ever since. I can proudly say that Patricia Hanson has been a consistent professional support to me and so many others over the decades.

Several years ago, Pat decided that she needed to step down from her work on the Howard Hanson Committee, a service she had been involved in since the 1970s. Both the onset of the pandemic and general logistics of life had made that commitment too difficult. The RPTG Board accepted my offer to write a tribute thanking her for the many years of service to our teacher organizations. This time, logistics of my life severely slowed the project, but thanks to Pat's willingness to meet with me along the way, I am thrilled to honor her by sharing these recollections of her life and career in music.

A native of Tonawanda, New York, Patricia Selover's mother was a private piano teacher and casually gave Pat her first piano lessons starting from about age three. Already by age six, Pat performed in a masterclass in Tennessee where Guy Maier, another Buffalo area native and Juilliard School

piano faculty member heard her play. He immediately contacted renowned Eastman Preparatory Department teacher, Evelyn Prior asking her to take on Pat as her student, which she did without hesitation.

Patricia studied piano with Evelyn Prior from age six to 16 as a student in the Eastman Preparatory Department. Pat's list of early accomplishments is astounding. At age eight, she performed her first full piano recital in Buffalo's Kleinhans Music Hall. During summers, Mrs. Prior sent Pat to study at the Chautauqua Institute's Summer Piano Program in order to be taught and mentored by world-class teacher-performers who were in residence. It was celebrated Juilliard professor, James Friskin who worked with Pat during her many summers at Chautauqua. In pre-teen years, Patricia won the opportunity to solo three times with the collegiate orchestra, now called the Chautauqua Festival Orchestra. At age nine she performed the Mendelssohn 2nd Concerto in D minor, at age 10 she performed the Beethoven 1st Concerto in C major, and at age 11 she performed the Saint-Saëns 2nd Concerto in G minor. As a teenager, 14 year old Patricia soloed with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra performing the Beethoven Emperor Concerto, and at 16 she performed the MacDowell D minor Concerto. This line-up of achievements has to be a record for those of any age who ever attended the Chautauqua Institute's Summer Piano Program!

It was following Patricia's Chautauqua performance of the MacDowell Concerto that her life changed forever. Dr. Howard Hanson, Director of the Eastman School heard that performance, and he immediately offered the Selover family The Ford Fellowship, a full scholarship for Patricia to enter the Eastman School undergraduate program that very fall, only about a month away.

At that point, 16-year-old Patricia had just finished her junior year in high school, yet the opportunity was so marvelous that the family accepted Dr. Hanson's offer which included caring for all the details needed to enroll, as well as ensuring that Patricia would be accepted into the piano studio of legendary pedagogue, Cecile Genhart. Because all of this was such a last-minute surprise, she needed to delay her start in college until late September.

On Pat's beginning day as an Eastman undergrad, her initial class was scheduled to be freshman theory. Because of a morning meeting with the Dean of Students and a necessary trip to the school bookstore, she showed up for class a bit late. Little did she know that her future husband, John Hanson was one of the students in that class. Some time later, John told Pat that when she walked into the room with theory class already in session, he said to himself, "That's the woman I'm going to marry!"

*(continued on page 7)*

## Patricia Hanson *(continued)*

While at the Eastman School, Patricia Selover studied piano exclusively with Cecile Genhart, receiving her Bachelor's Degree and Performer's Certificate in 1959. As part of the Performer's Certificate, Patricia performed the Tchaikovsky B-flat minor Concerto with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. Following graduation Pat began her Masters in Piano Performance. During our conversations together, Pat recounted to me stories of prizes she received in both national and international competitions during her undergrad years. Early in the 1950s, the National Guild of Piano Teachers ran a solo competition which is no longer in existence. Mrs. Genhart highly recommended Patricia to participate. Pat had to send taped recordings to California for adjudication. She won First Prize in that year's National Guild Competition. In 1955, Pat entered the prestigious Leventritt International Piano Competition. The winner that year was future world-renowned pianist John Browning. Patricia Selover, 5 years Browning's junior, took one of the Runner-up places. An astounding accomplishment for someone so young.

Pat Selover and John Hanson were married in 1957 and by fall of 1960 they had both accepted positions at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Several years later, John felt he should complete a PhD for further opportunities as a music theory professor. In 1966, they returned to Eastman for him to accomplish that. Once earned, the Hansons

were asked to join the music faculty at Carroll University in Waukesha, Wisconsin. While there, Patricia competed in and won the Chicago Symphony Young Artist Competition affording her a performance of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto with the Chicago Symphony at the Ravinia Summer Festival. Pat mentioned to me that during her tenure at Carroll University, she had a few coachings with Paul Badura-Skoda who was teaching for a brief period at the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

In 1970, Eastman School director, Walter Hendl phoned John asking him to please consider returning to fill an Eastman School position that was available in the theory department. Pat and John returned to Rochester raising their family here with John teaching on the full-time Eastman faculty and Pat developing a private piano studio.

It was somewhere in the midst of the 1970s that I was invited to hear an RPTG student recital being held in the parlor of Cutler Union, now part of the Memorial Art Gallery. I was quite used to hearing very fine pre-college piano performances while growing up in the Baltimore area thanks to my connections with several Peabody teachers. But I had never heard anything like the students of Patricia Hanson. The tone, the shaping, the gentle flexibility of tempo and the total performance confidence were something almost unreal. Right then I realized that the bar was set very high and that I had better work

and teach unbelievably hard if I were to have students who could come up to this level of music-making. I can still recall some 50 years later that the most amazing performance I heard that day was one of her students playing Grieg's "To Spring". Heavenly! Being present at that recital was a real revelation and inspiration!!

By 1984 with their family grown, Pat accepted a full-time position at the Eastman School teaching both pre-college and collegiate secondary piano students. She was awarded the Jack L. Frank Award in 1990, the Eastman School of Music's highest award for excellence in teaching. In the early 2000s Patricia had such a reputation that she decided to focus primarily on teaching pre-college students in the Eastman Community Music School. Along with that, she has also worked with many adults over the years, some who were and still are successful teachers wanting to raise their own standards and increase their pedagogical knowledge. Patricia Hanson has produced countless competition and award winners. Whenever she presented a student in the RPTG Hanson Auditions, you knew you were in for a treat! Their performances, no matter what the level of repertoire, were polished, artistic and exemplary. When I talk with colleagues who continue to coach with Pat, it is obvious that there is an infectious energy and enthusiasm that she shares at every lesson. I was floored to learn that she maintains a student from

Japan who takes her lessons via Zoom! What amazing dedication Pat has for our art!

Patricia Hanson joined MTNA in 1960 at the time of her first collegiate appointment. When she and John settled in Rochester in 1970, she joined both RPTG and NYSMTA, teacher membership affiliations she maintains to this day. In those early years, RPTG was forming a financial base for its recently established scholarship fund. Pat gave public solo recitals at the Cutler Union Auditorium to raise money for that purpose. I was privileged to hear her brilliant, as well as poetic playing on one such occasion!

In 2016, NYSMTA presented Pat with a citation which recognizes her many years of excellence in piano teaching. The plaque states:

**PATRICIA SELOVER  
HANSON**

In recognition of her distinguished career as a passionate performer, as a teacher of the highest musical and pianistic standards, and as an eloquent inspiration to fellow musicians and teachers.

Thank you, Patricia Hanson for the many years of highest-caliber piano teaching you have so selflessly given to this community and beyond. We are all indebted and extremely grateful.



***DUET: A Joint Newsletter***

**ROCHESTER PIANO TEACHERS GUILD, INC. &  
GREATER ROCHESTER MUSIC TEACHERS  
ASSOC.**

Elier Suárez, Editor  
158 Highland Parkway  
Rochester, NY 14620

Phone: (585) 461-5359  
E-mail: [elier@elier.com](mailto:elier@elier.com)

**DUET is also on the Web at:  
[rochesterpianoteachers.org](http://rochesterpianoteachers.org)**



At the 2026 RPTG Potluck Dinner