

2026 DMTA PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL May 16

The Durham Music Teachers Association (hereafter known as DMTA) Performance Festival allows all interested students the opportunity to prepare musical selections to be evaluated by a qualified judge. Hard-working, talented students who participate are presented with an assessment, rating, and certificate.

If a student is unable to attend the festival in person for a specific reason, the teacher may contact the festival chair and request permission to have the student submit a YouTube video. If approved, video must be submitted by 5:00 PM on May 6. [Video submission](#) instructions will be provided once approved.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE & FEES

Online registration will be available **April 8 - April 22 midnight.**

Registration Fees	DMTA member	Non-DMTA member
Solo event	\$20	One time Teacher Fee - \$50 Plus \$20 per student
Young Artist	\$25	One time Teacher Fee - \$50 Plus \$25 per student
Duo & ensembles	\$10 per student	One time Teacher Fee - \$50 Plus \$10 per student

If the student has not been studying with the current teacher for 1 year or less, the teacher entering the student must include the name of the past teacher on the registration. **Fees are due upon festival registration and are non-refundable.**

TEACHER PARTICIPATION

The Festival is the largest DMTA each year. It greatly benefits all participating students and teachers as well and the group at large. With that in mind. ALL MEMBERS of the organization to volunteer their time and help during this special day.

Teachers whose students participate in the Festival **MUST** volunteer 8:45-12:00 or 12:45-4:00 or 3:00-6:00 on the day of the Festival but are encouraged to volunteer all day if possible. Volunteer positions include monitoring, helping with food, checking in students, clean up, etc. If the teacher is unable to attend the Festival due to extenuating circumstances, the teacher MUST send a substitute (spouse, parent of student, or responsible student) with prior knowledge of and coordination with the Festival Chairperson.

REGISTRATION: Registration is on-line and will be available April 8-22 Midnight.

Once registration is closed, (April 22 at Midnight) scheduling begins. The goal is on May 4 you will receive an email with your students name, category, room location, and time. Please check your students name and category carefully. If name and/or category is not correct, please let the festival chair know by May 7. NO corrections will be honored after May 7. This includes trophy name plates and certificates.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The festival is open to all music students age 5 through high school seniors. In addition, there is also an adult student category.

Entry category is determined by age on the day of the festival – May 16, 2026.

The Adult Student category is for post-high school students.

Each student may enter in as many categories as they would like. However, due to the complexity of festival scheduling, we may not always be able to honor all requests for students in multiple categories; we appreciate your patience and understanding in these instances.

Students competing for awards must play from memory except in the composition, duo and ensemble categories. Students who do not wish to memorize will still receive an evaluation, rating, and certificate.

Students who do not provide music for the judge do not qualify for an award but will still receive an evaluation, rating, and certificate.

COPYRIGHT LAW

In compliance with US Federal Copyright Laws, DMTA follows the rules and guidelines below for its Performance Festival:

- INSTRUMENTAL SOLO STUDENTS are required to submit a published, copyrighted version of the music to the judge. If works are accompanied, the accompanist must also have a published, copyrighted version of the score (except as noted below). Page turners are permitted (teachers are not allowed to turn pages for their students). Photocopied pages are allowed to assist page turns.
- VOCAL STUDENTS do not need to have a copy for the judge. Vocal accompanists are required to play from a published, copyrighted version of the score (except as noted below). Page turners are permitted (teachers are not allowed to turn pages for their students). Photocopied pages are allowed to assist page turns.
- DUOS & ENSEMBLES are required to submit a copyrighted version of music to the judge. If students perform with music then they must also play from a published, copyrighted version. Page turners are permitted (teachers are not allowed to turn pages for their students). Photocopied pages are allowed to assist page turns.
- YOUNG ARTIST PARTICIPANTS are required to submit a published, copyrighted version of the music to the judges. If works are accompanied, the accompanist must also have a published, copyrighted version of the score (except as noted below). Page turners are permitted (teachers are not allowed to turn pages for their students). Photocopied pages are allowed to assist page turns.
- COMPOSITION CONTESTANTS must follow the specific rules for that category.
- MUSIC DOWNLOADS or PUBLIC DOMAIN: No photocopied music which is under current copyright or from a copyrighted collection may be used. Any PDF of public domain works or legally purchased music must be accompanied by a completed and signed [MTNA Competition Release Form](#). If music has been purchased and downloaded from the internet, please have a receipt or some other “paid-for” validation with the teacher, parent, or student name printed either at the bottom of the first page or on a receipt of purchase. This must be shown at time of registration.

- **USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** Students may submit music to the judge via any mobile tablet, iPad™, or similar electronic mobile device (iPhones™, Androids™, or similar mobile phones are NOT permitted). The device must be unlocked and the scores must be easily accessible and legible by the judge. If a student selects this option then they must complete the [MTNA Competition Release Form](#) before registering. The student assumes all risks and responsibilities. DMTA, its officials, staff, or invited judges are not liable for any possible damages incurred by the choice of this option.

Accompanists may also use electronic devices. If so, they must also complete the [MTNA Competition Release Form](#) and submit the form to the registration desk. The accompanist will receive an authorization slip that will be shown to the room monitor ahead of the performance time.

If you have questions or concerns about your music, please contact the appropriate Festival Instrument Head prior to the day of the Festival. On site, Festival Instrument Heads may visually check music if needed.

FESTIVAL ENTRY CATEGORIES

1. INSTRUMENTAL SOLO: Piano, String, Other

Entry is by age category:

- 5-8
- 9-11
- 12-13
- 14-15
- 16+
- Older Beginner: (age 12 or older with 3 years or less of study)

Arrangements appropriate to the instrument and to study are permitted. All pieces from method books are allowed. Solo performers must memorize their music to be eligible for awards. Solo performers playing with music will still receive an evaluation, ratings and certificate.

2. VOICE: Classical

Entry is by age category:

- 5-8
- 9-11
- 12-13
- 14-15
- 16+
- Older Beginner: (age 12 or older with 3 years or less of study)

Classical music selections are permitted. This can include spiritual, hymns, folk arrangements, art songs etc. Jazz, pop, rock, or “belting” style singing will not be judged.

3. VOICE: Musical Theater

Entry is by age category:

- o 5-8
- o 9-11
- o 12-13
- o 14-15
- o 16+
- o Older Beginner: (age 12 or older with 3 years or less of study)

Styles can include Theater Legit, Character songs, musical theater-type jazz and musical rock.

4. JAZZ PERFORMANCE: Any age/any instrument or voice

Jazz arrangements from early method books are acceptable, although more advanced, fully composed pieces are acceptable. The goal is to present material in a stylistically appropriate way. No improvisation required.

5. JAZZ IMPROVISATION: Any age/any instrument or voice

Jazz arrangements are acceptable. The student should be more advanced than those in the jazz performance category. For voice students, some improvisation, appropriate stylizing and phrasing are expected. For instrumentalists, performers must improvise on either a 12-bar blues or modal tune (like *Impressions* by John Coltrane). An accompanist may provide vamping patterns for soloists (including piano students). Because “jazz standards” are often performed from a chart, required scores for judges can be waived.

6. DUO: Two performers, any age/any instrument or voice, divided into three categories:

Entry is by age category:

Elementary Duo: Two students ages 5 through 11 as of the day of the festival.

Junior Duo: Two students ages 12 through 15 as of the day of the festival.

Senior Duo: Two students ages 16 through high school senior as of the day of the festival.

- If the two performers are in different age categories, then category classification will be determined by the age of the **oldest student in the category**.
- Must be two equal musical parts.
- Please check with the Festival Chair to determine the availability of two pianos.
- Decisions will be made by the Festival Committee and are final.

Performance Time: A maximum of 10 minutes for all Duo categories

Repertoire and Performance Guidelines:

- Transcriptions and arrangements are allowed.
- Memorization is NOT required.
- All entrants must abide by the federal Copyright Law (see heading under Copyright Law).
- Entrants must number the first measure of each system in their piece.
- Photocopies allowed for page turns.
- A page turner is permitted.

7. ENSEMBLE: Three or more performers, any age/any instrument or voice.

- This category may be divided by age and/or instrument depending on the number of entries. Divisions would be similar to those used for the Duo Category.
- Age classification will be determined by the age of the **oldest participant in the category**.
- Must be 3 or more equal musical parts.
- Decisions will be made by the Festival Committee and are final.

Performance Time: A maximum of 10 minutes for all Ensemble Categories

Repertoire and Performance Guidelines:

- Transcriptions and arrangements are allowed.
- Memorization is NOT required.
- All entrants must abide by the federal Copyright Law (see heading under Copyright Law).
- Entrants must number the first measure of each system in their piece.
- Photocopies allowed for page turns.
- A page turner is permitted.

8. COMPOSITION: Entry is by age in one of two categories, ages 5-11 and ages 12 and older

Awards:

- Awards for the 5-11 category are the same as for Older Beginner
- Awards for the 12 and older category are the same as for solo 12 and older.

Please read the following instructions carefully:

- Only one composition per student.
- Composition may be in any style for any medium.
- Entrants must have prepared the composition with the teacher listed on the comment sheet but must be the student's own work. The name of the teacher should not appear on the score.
- Score **must** be completely notated by the composer. The manuscript must be in the composer's handwriting, or in the form of a computer printout produced by the composer.
- Measures must be numbered at the beginning of each system.
- Performance time for the composition may not exceed 10 minutes.
- A recording must be submitted for compositions requiring 3 or more instruments.

Procedure for entering all listed below must be clearly marked with name of student, title of composition and category entered and handed in by the registration deadline:

- Completed Festival registration form
- Written composition
- A recording if for 3 or more instruments

9. YOUNG ARTIST CATEGORY: Entry is by age in one of two categories (ages 13-15) and (ages 16-up) by performers who have won a monetary 1st Place Award in a previous DMTA Festival.

The younger category is for instrumental performers ages 13-15 only. The older category is for instrumental and classical voice students ages 16 and up.

Students in these categories remain in the Young Artist Category the following years regardless of ratings (*once in Young Artist, always in Young Artist*). Students who win awards in the Young Artist category may win again in future years. All general festival rules apply.

- **Young Artists** must submit a published, copyrighted version of the score or solo part.
- **The accompanist** must also have a published, copyrighted version of the score (except as noted above). Photocopies may be used to help with page turns provided the original music is also present. Page turners are permitted (teachers are not allowed to turn pages for their students).
- **Duos, Ensemble, Jazz, Composition, Musical Theatre Vocal performers do NOT compete in the YA category.**

10. ADULT: Entry is for all students who are post-High School

- Students of any level may enter solo piano, solo voice, solo string.
- Students do not need to play from memory.
- Students may play up to 3 pieces within an 8-minute time limit.
- All performers will receive an evaluation and certificate.
- No winners or recitalists declared.
- Adult category will take place mid to late afternoon on the day of the festival.

REPERTOIRE AND TIME LIMITS FOR ALL CATEGORIES

Students may perform a maximum of three pieces.

- Young Artist: 12 minutes
- Solo 16-up: 10 minutes
- Ensemble: 10 minutes
- Composition: 10 minutes
- Duo: 10 minutes
- All other categories: 8 minutes

Timing will begin from the beginning of the accompaniment if there is an introduction. Tutts may be cut from the accompaniment in order that the performance fits inside the time limits. For Soloist Age 16+, Young Artist, and Ensemble, an additional monitor MAY be used to keep time. Judge will stop the student at the maximum time limit if needed.

Honors Recital: Recitalists may only perform a single selection chosen from their festival repertoire. **Recital Performance time limit is not to exceed 5 minutes. One movement or one piece ONLY. Cuts are allowed.**

AWARDS

- **All students who participate will receive an evaluation, rating and a certificate.**
- **Students who receive a Gold or Silver rating will receive a gold or silver seal on certificate.**
- Students who perform from memory and those in the composition, ensemble and duo categories are eligible to receive an award, except for the 5-8 year old category.
- Students must provide music for the judge to qualify for an award.
- Awards are based primarily on the quality of performance, musical conviction, and poise, rather than the difficulty of the composition.
- Award winners will be chosen on Saturday.

- **Composer Statuette:** All students in the 5-8 categories will receive a composer statuette. One recitalist may be chosen by the judge.
- **Book Award:** Students who give the best performance in 9-11 solo, elementary duo, older beginner, and jazz performance categories receive book awards. Students who have already won a book award receive an alternate prize - choice of a different book. One recitalist may be chosen by each judge.
- **Ribbon Awards:** Judges may, at their discretion, award Honorable Mention to a limited few who do not win first or second place prizes and to students in book award categories.
- **Trophy:** Students who enter the festival for 3, 6, 9, and 12 years will receive a trophy. It is the responsibility of the teacher to indicate the correct year on the registration form.
- **Monetary Awards:** Students age 12 and up, except Older Beginners and Adults, who play by memory are eligible for monetary awards (see table below). 1st and 2nd places are given monetary awards. The judges may award additional Honorable Mention awards. First place winners are expected to perform ONE piece at the Honors Recital on Sunday.
- *A judge may choose NOT to pick a winner in any given category.*

AWARD TYPES & AMOUNTS:

CATEGORY	1st	2nd	3rd
SOLOS	\$50	\$25	Honorable Mention
DUOS	\$60	\$30	Honorable Mention
ENSEMBLES	\$90	\$45	Honorable Mention
4 or more performers	\$100	\$50	Honorable Mention

Entry Categories	Ages (as of May 16, 2026)	Certificate	Statuette	Book	Honorable Mention	Monetary Award
Solo	5-8	✓	✓			
	9-11	✓		✓	✓	
	12+	✓			✓	✓
	Older beginner	✓		✓	✓	
Voice: Classical	5-8	✓	✓			
	9-11	✓		✓	✓	
	12+	✓			✓	✓
	Older beginner	✓		✓	✓	
Voice: Musical Theater	5-8	✓	✓			
	9-11	✓		✓	✓	
	12+	✓			✓	✓
	Older beginner	✓		✓	✓	
Jazz Performance	Any age	✓		✓	✓	
Jazz Improvisation	Any age	✓			✓	✓
Duo	Under 12	✓		✓	✓	

	12+	✓			✓	✓
Ensemble	Under 12	✓		✓	✓	
	12+	✓			✓	✓
Composition	5-11	✓		✓	✓	
	12+	✓			✓	✓
Young Artist	13-15	✓			✓	✓
	16+	✓			✓	✓

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES ON FESTIVAL DAY

- **Teachers must volunteer one of the following times: 8:45-12:00, 12:45-4:00, 3:00-6:00 or send a pre-approved substitute. Please consider helping all day.**
- Pick up your 3, 6, 9, 12 years of participation trophies, Composer Statuettes for ALL 5-8 years old (and possibly Book Awards) **throughout the day on Saturday**. Trophies, Statuettes, and Book Awards cannot be given to students or parents and are not delivered to the teacher. You may authorize another teacher to pick up your trophies for you. Other awards and prizes will be available at the **Honors Recital on Sunday May 17 at Nelson Music Room.**
- Check with any winners or recitalists to make sure they will be available to play in the recital.
- Notify the Festival Chair no later than **7:00 p.m.** to confirm that your student will play or not play for the Honors Recital.

SUNDAY HONORS RECITALS (to be held in Nelson Music Room)

Sunday, **May 17, 2026** at **3:00 & 4:30** (*Times are subject to change*)

- **3:00 FIRST RECITAL** – **Generally** the following recitalist will perform in this recital, but please check with festival chair for confirmation:
 - o Solo winners ages 12-13, 14-15
 - o Young Artist 13-15
 - o 5-8 recitalists
 - o Withers-Nakarai Winner
 - o possibly Duos
- **4:30 SECOND RECITAL** – **Generally** the following recitalist will perform in this recital, but please check with festival chair for confirmation:
 - o Solo winners age 16+
 - o Some duos and ensembles
 - o Young Artist 16+
 - o Jazz, 9-11
 - o Older Beginner recitalists

- o **First place monetary winners** are expected to play **ONE** of their festival pieces at the Sunday Afternoon Honors Recital. **Recital Performance time limit is not to exceed 5 minutes. One movement or one piece ONLY. Cuts are allowed.** In the event the 1st place winner is not playing, the 2nd place winner will be invited to perform at the Honors Recital. We will make every effort to notify the 2nd place winners as soon as possible but no later than 8:00 p.m.

- **In the event no first place winner was declared, no one will play in that category.**
- **A recitalist may be chosen by the judge to perform in the Sunday Honors Recital from all categories that do not have a 1st place monetary winner.**
- **Monetary awards will be distributed at the Sunday Honors Recital. Any check not picked up at this recital will be mailed to the teacher.**