

NYSMTA
Virtual Symposium



NEW YORK STATE MUSIC
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



Featuring Guest Presenter

Leila Viss

Dear NYSMTA Members and Friends,

Thank you for joining us today for the NYSMTA 2025 Virtual Symposium. Of the many ways you could be spending your Saturday afternoon, we are honored that you have chosen to spend it with our community of people passionate about music and lifelong learning.

We are thrilled to welcome Leila Viss as our Guest Presenter and look forward to learning from her expertise in effective, student-centered communication, an area that is of profound importance to teachers and which is constantly evolving.

In addition to our guest presenter, we are pleased to present our customary Lightning Talk session, which draws upon the expertise of both new and long time members of our community. We hope today's Symposium provides many compelling ideas and inspires continued exploration at the upcoming State Conference in October 2026. We extend a special thanks to the Lightning Talk Sub-Committee, led by Asami Hagiwara, for her outstanding work in designing this segment and her organizational expertise. We also express our gratitude to the other members of the Conference Planning Committee, especially: President Tomoko Uchino, President-Elect Laura Amoriello, Immediate Past-President Jacob Ertl, past Vice-Presidents for Conferences Mary Holzhauer and Deborah Martin, Vice-Presidents for Professional Activities Amber Liao, and Treasurer Gary Palmer. Our thanks also go to Pokie Huang, Lily Li, and Gary Fisher for promoting the event through our website, social media, and the newsletter. One more thanks is due to Pokie Huang for the design work on the Symposium Booklet. We are deeply grateful to those who have planned and executed previous in-person conferences and virtual symposiums, as much of today's structure builds upon their success.

We look forward to engaging with you throughout this day of varied and interesting topics and invite you to consider continued involvement with NYSMTA. As we move forward in our fast-paced world, we hope the ideas and community fostered through this organization inspire all of us with creativity, hope, and the promise of connection with each other.

Sincerely,

Tasha George-Hinnant & Asami Hagiwara
Vice-Presidents for Conferences (2025-2026)

Tomoko Uchino
President

SCHEDULE

2:50-3:00pm	Zoom Room opens
3:00pm	Welcome and Introductions
3:10-3:55pm	Lightning Talks: Presentations
3:55-4:10pm	Teacher of the Year Award / General Meeting
4:10-4:20pm	Break
4:20-5:20pm	Guest Presentation: Leila Viss Words Matter: Does Your Feedback Need Fixing
5:20pm	Closing Remarks

SYMPOSIUM PLANNING COMMITTEE

Vice-Presidents for Conferences

Asami Hagiwara (2025-2026)

Tasha George-Hinnant (2025-2026)

Past Vice-Presidents for Conferences

Mary Holzhauer

Deborah Martin

Lightning Talks

Asami Hagiwara

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Tomoko Uchino

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Publications

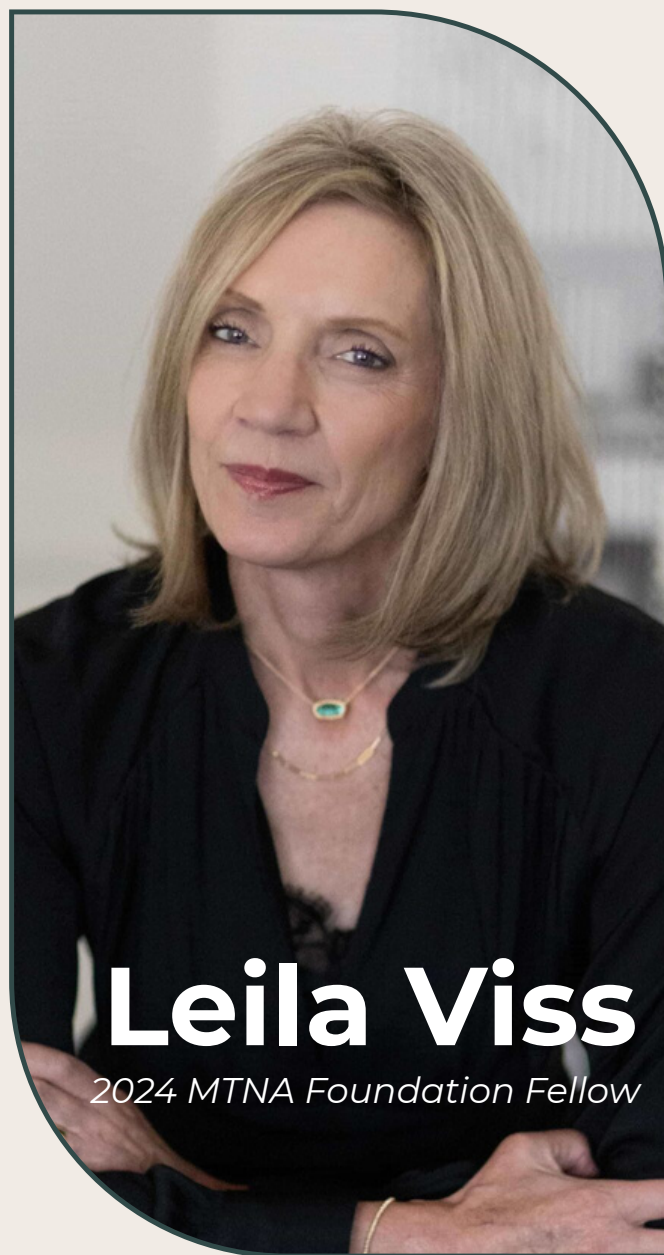
Pokie Huang

Gary Fisher

Words Matter: Does Your Feedback Need Fixing?

Effective feedback is crucial for student progress, but traditional methods often fall short.

Drawing on Joe Hirsch's *The Feedback Fix*, this session introduces "feedforward" strategies, focusing on shaping future actions rather than fixing the past. Using Hirsch's REPAIR framework, attendees will learn practical tools to foster a growth mindset, encourage student ownership, and avoid common feedback pitfalls. Through interactive discussions, participants will discover how to inspire independent, engaged learners in their music studios.



Leila Viss

2024 MTNA Foundation Fellow

Leila Viss creates imaginative, tech-savvy resources for her in-person and online piano studio and website. She founded Space to Create where she empowers pianists and teachers to connect with their creativity through improvisation, composition, and arranging. A longtime church musician and dynamic speaker, she co-authored *Found in the Wake*, a memoir of loss and resilience. Viss is Colorado's 2024 MTNA Foundation Fellow and a 2025 Frances Clark Center Outstanding Service Recognition Award recipient.

LIGHTNING TALKS

Beyond Injury: The Benefits of One-Hand Piano Repertoire

Anna Dunbar, University of Oklahoma

This lightning talk explores the rich history and pedagogical value of one-hand piano repertoire. The historical legacy of one-hand works are discussed, and then the presentation highlights four key categories of pedagogical one-hand piano repertoire—etudes, lyrical melodies, dances, and recital closers. Pedagogical one-hand music offers opportunity for artistic growth, technical development, and inclusive opportunities for pianists of all ages and abilities.

Creative Hubs of Music Experience by Intentionally Incorporating Composition

Laura Blanchard, Achieving Excellence Interdisciplinary Opportunities, LLC

A how to discussion integrating composition into private music instruction to foster creativity and a unique musical voice. It outlines two key tools: teaching through scenarios to spark inspiration and using mentor pieces with a mind map to analyze musical elements. This approach cultivates critical thinking, personal choice, and problem-solving, empowering students to become musical innovators beyond performance.

Feldenkrais Method - Awareness Through Movement

Wendy Wong, Movement Awareness Learning

Feldenkrais Method is a form of somatic education, where students learn awareness through movement. Benefits include a more aware and flexible body and brain. Feldenkrais Method has always benefited musicians, such as Yehudi Menuhin and Narciso Yepes, and is being taught in many music colleges. Included in the Lightning Talk is a lightning lesson, I hope this would give a more 3D introduction, a glimpse, of what the Feldenkrais Method could bring to you.

LIGHTNING TALKS

Communications Skills for Young Musicians

Lucie Vagnerova, BKT Education

Developing great communications skills helps young musicians grow as artists and individuals. In my work with middle and high school students, I've seen the value of creating a space to ask: "why do you play?" and "what skills have you built up through playing music?" Learning to speak about music with clarity empowers students to connect with others, advocate for the arts, and reflect on their own values and goals.

Femmes de légende: The Piano Music of Mel Bonis

Bonnie Choi, Nazareth University

French Romantic composer Mélanie Bonis (1858–1937), known as Mel Bonis, wrote over 300 works, including 65 for piano. This talk offers an overview of her piano music—character pieces, concert works, dances, children's pieces, and four-hand duos—which blend lyricism, modal and chromatic harmonies, and Impressionist colors.

The Art of Practicing®: A Unique Pedagogy for the Whole Musician

Laura Amoriello, Opus Ithaca School of Music/Rhapsody in You Piano Studio

The Art of Practicing® is a unique, student-centered approach to music teaching that guides musicians toward their natural abilities. Students find expressive power and confidence onstage through traditional mindfulness practices, a progressive approach to instrumental technique, and connection to the visceral impact of musical details.

LIGHTING TALK PRESENTERS



Anna Dunbar

University of Oklahoma

Anna Dunbar is a doctoral student in Music Education and Piano Performance at the University of Oklahoma, where she also serves as a graduate assistant teaching classes including aural skills. She enjoys planning conferences such as the MTNA Collegiate Symposium, teaching private piano lessons, being on the board for her collegiate MTNA chapter at the University of Oklahoma, and sharing her research and passion through conference presentations at the local, state, and national level.



Laura Blanchard

Achieving Excellence Interdisciplinary Opportunities, LLC

As CEO and Founder of AEIO, I leverage my passion for knowledge sharing and the art of communication to empower others. My journey as an entrepreneur in the EdTech space is fueled by a belief in the power of words, music, and media. Holding a masters in music, Laura is highly proficient across various instruments, a public speaking champion, skilled in business strategy and development from her former corporate life. I am dedicated to fostering growth and excellence through innovative learning experiences.

LIGHTING TALK PRESENTERS



Wendy Wong

Movement Awareness Learning

Wendy is a Guild Certified Feldenkrais Practitioner, and a member of the Feldenkrais Guild of North America. Wendy has been delivering lessons at schools, at government and non-government organizations (such as at the 2019 Hong Kong Book Fair with the Israel Consulate General Hong Kong, and at the 2023 UNESCO International Day of Education online workshop), and at corporations, public workshops, and private groups.



Lucie Vagnerova

BKT Education

Lucie Vágnerová, PhD (she/her) is an arts educator and education consultant. After a decade of teaching college music courses, she now teaches young musicians to communicate about their work so that others can connect to it. As a college consultant, she empowers applicants to leverage their music backgrounds in the admissions process. Find more about her work at www.bkteducation.com

LIGHTING TALK PRESENTERS



Bonnie Choi

Nazareth University

Bonnie Choi is Associate Professor at Nazareth University. A Fulbright Scholar, she has presented lectures at EPTA, MTNA, NCKP, and NYSMTA. Her international engagements include masterclasses and lectures on piano and harpsichord at the National Harpsichord Competition in Kansas, the Hanoi Conservatory of Music in Vietnam, the Shanghai Conservatory, Hong Kong Baptist University, and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.



Laura Amoriello

Opus Ithaca School of Music/Rhapsody in You Piano Studio

Dr. Laura Amoriello is Piano Chair at Opus Ithaca School of Music and operates a private piano studio, Rhapsody in You. She holds degrees from Teachers College, Columbia University, Penn State University, and Westminster Choir College. Laura is a Certified Teacher of The Art of Practicing® and President-Elect of NYSMTA.

NYSMTA CONFERENCE 2026

Mark your calendars

We are delighted
to announce our
Guest Artist for the
2026 Conference!



Dr. Logan Skelton

Join us for a day of discussions, learning, and collaboration!
Saturday, October 17, 2026 at SUNY Onondaga Community
College (Syracuse, NY).