



MTAC PASADENA 2026 KEYBOARD THEME FESTIVAL

E PLURIBUS UNUM: Out of many, One Music by American composers

Date: Saturday, November 21, 2026

**Location: Church of Our Saviour, San Gabriel
535 W. Roses Road, San Gabriel, CA.**

Online application opens on September 1, 2026

Theme Festival Rules

2026 Teacher Work Rules

All MTAC Pasadena events require teachers' help. Board members and chairpersons volunteer their time to make this event possible. The event cannot run without your in-person support. Teachers who cannot personally work may send a qualified substitute (pre-approval required) or pay a non-work fee. **Teachers who cannot fulfill their work responsibilities will risk their students' removal from the festival.**

Please see the teacher work guidelines below.

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| • 1-2 students | 1.5 work hours or 1 recital | non-work fee \$70 |
| • 3-5 students | 4.5 work hours or 3 recitals | non-work fee \$140 |
| • 6-8 students | full day on the event day | non-work fee \$300 |

Job assignments are non-negotiable.

Application rules

- Application fee:
 - \$65 for piano solo
 - \$40 per ensemble member
- All application fees are non-refundable.

- Categories are determined by age and **not** by Certificate of Merit level.
- All participants must be between 7-18 years old as of November 30, 2026.
- Students may apply for **only one category: Piano Solo OR Ensemble**.
- Contestants in the Solo category must be studying under an active member of the MTAC Pasadena Branch.
- For the ensemble category, at least one ensemble member must be studying under an active member of the MTAC Pasadena Branch.
- **Time limits:**
 - Solo performances:
 - Categories 7-14 years old: 5 minutes
 - Categories 15-18 years old: 6 minutes
 - Ensemble performances are limited to 5 minutes.
- **All contestants, regardless of age group, are allowed to perform only one repertoire piece.**

Any performance that exceeds the time limit will be stopped by the presider, but this will not affect the judges' decisions for awards.
- All solo performances must be memorized. Memorization for ensemble performances is optional. An original sheet music score must be provided for the judges. Students who do not provide a score will not be considered for awards.
 - Photocopied music is not allowed. The Pasadena Branch complies with the MTAC State Office policy on U.S. Copyright Laws. Music purchased or downloaded from an online source must show copyright permission/proof of purchase.
- A note about using scores from IMSLP:

From Official 2-24-25 CM Policies and Procedures 6.6.7 (page 17)

6.6.7 IMSLP and Downloaded Repertoire from any music download site must contain the authorization logo or printable permissions for legal use. If the downloaded repertoire from IMSLP or other company does not contain this, then they are not permissible for use. IMSLP is a Canadian website; Canada has different copyright laws than the US does therefore it is possible for something to be public domain in Canada but still be copyright protected in the US. If the downloaded repertoire from IMSLP or other company does not contain one of the following items, then it does not meet the ... requirements: (1) Authorized logo (2) Source (where the sheet music was downloaded from).
- Previous winners from the 2025 Keyboard Theme Festival are eligible to participate but may not repeat any repertoire performed in previous years.

Repertoire Rules for Piano Solos

1. Repertoire of any musical period or style is accepted as long as it is written by an American (USA) composer. The MTAC Pasadena Keyboard Theme Festival will use [MTAC Online Piano Syllabus 2025](https://new.mtac.org/pages/all_cm_syllabi/piano-syllabus/) as the authority for a composer's "Country of Origin" designation.

The MTAC Syllabus occasionally categorizes naturalized American composers by their original country of birth rather than the USA. If the CM Syllabus lists such composers under a foreign country, they are **not eligible** for this festival. All composers must be American-born or a naturalized citizen of the United States.

To access the [MTAC Online Piano Syllabus 2025](https://new.mtac.org/pages/all_cm_syllabi/piano-syllabus/), go to:

https://new.mtac.org/pages/all_cm_syllabi/piano-syllabus/

Please refer to "Section 5: Reference" found on the bottom left side of the page for:

Composer List by Category - Category 1

Composer List by Category - Category 2

Composer List by Category - Category 3

Composer List by Category - Category 4

2. E PLURIBUS UNUM: "Out of Many, One": Since American multi-culturalism may embrace diverse musical styles, repertoire choices that bear similarities to other countries, ethnic cultures, and religions will be accepted.

Examples of accepted genres:

- Religious music
- Game music
- Musical theatre and film
- Patriotic, folk, jazz, ragtime music
- Arrangements and transcriptions (if both composer and arranger are American).

3. Performances may not include repertoire written for prepared piano or any work that requires modification or manipulation of the piano strings. No objects may be placed inside the piano. However, performers are permitted to interact with the exterior of the instrument, including the fallboard, rim, case, and music shelf guide rail. Any percussive effects on the piano must be produced using the performer's body only; tools such as mallets, drumsticks, or other implements are not allowed.

4. The use of additional small hand-held instruments, such as clappers, is permitted.
5. Theme and Variations are allowed. The contestant must include the theme and may include up to two (2) variations while observing the time limit.
6. Improvisation is allowed as long as the music for both hands remains notated. Appropriate stylistic elements may include rhythmic variation, chord embellishment, chord-based improvisation, chord-tone improvisation, and melodic embellishment.
7. Free-form improvisation, chord symbols, rhythmic charts, graphic notation, personalized shorthand, and leadsheets are **not allowed**.

Repertoire Rules for Ensembles

1. Ensembles and chamber music are accepted. The repertoire **must include piano** and must not require more than one piano.
 - Examples are piano duet, piano trio, piano and voice, instrumental sonatas or concertos accompanied by piano, etc.
2. Please note: *Ensemble* is a stand-alone category where contestants are not categorized by age.
3. The same repertoire selection rules for the Solo category also apply to the Ensemble category.

If you have any questions, please contact **Amy Choi** and **Bee Tan** (Co-Chairs) at ktpasadena@gmail.com