

STAFFLINES

Monthly Newsletter of the Tidewater Music Teachers Forum

Bradley Sowash

"Improve Your Groove"



Friday, March 28, 2025

Location ODU Diehn Center for the Performing Arts Rm 2119,
1339 West 49th Street, Norfolk, VA. 23529

10:00 Business Meeting & Workshop

12:00 Lunch

We will be at keyboards for this workshop and need to plan accordingly for attendees. **Please RSVP by March 14th! Let us know if you plan to attend in person at ODU.** We are also looking into this being a hybrid opportunity so if you can't make it to ODU, you can participate at your own piano at home.

Bradley Sowash is a jazz pianist, composer, and educator specializing in improvisation. After many years as a touring performer and recording artist, he turned his attention to introducing 'recovering classical pianists to the joys of musical creativity in online jazz piano classes, at teacher conferences, and through his widely acclaimed publications. As an educator, he pioneered live online group jazz piano lessons, co-founded 88 Creative Keys with Leila Viss, and presents frequently at national music conferences and webinars. His publications include widely acclaimed keyboard improvisation books (Kjos Music) and several volumes of hymn arrangements (Augsburg Fortress Press). In addition to creating many resources for music teachers, he self-publishes works for ballet, big band, choir, film, orchestra, solo piano, and string quartet. As a performer, Bradley played and recorded with Rock bands from age 15 to 22 including daily performances at the Ohio State Fair. After music school, he switched his emphasis to Jazz performing full-time both as a soloist and with his trio/quintet in concert halls, churches, and innumerable casual settings throughout the United States and Europe for over three decades. His emotional style and formidable technique have prompted favorable reviews in national publications including The Village Voice and Billboard Magazine among others. As a sideman, he has played with such luminaries as The Cab Calloway Orchestra, Meredith Monk, and The Mills Brothers. His broadcast credits include seven seasons of appearances on the PBS-TV series, The Piano Guy, and National Public Radio has aired selections from his nine CDs.

Workshop Description:

Improve Your Groove Deepen your students' sense of time, awareness of phrase lengths, and ensemble skills with easy piano and percussion accompaniment patterns, teaching with "rhythm boxes," utilizing technology, and more in this hands-on, interactive workshop. Rationale: Most young musicians learn by playing their

instruments with peers in a student orchestra, concert band, jam band, or group class. Student pianists, on the other hand, because they typically practice and perform alone for many years, often miss out on learning essential ensemble skills such as – Steady beat – Realize the necessity of keeping a steady pulse and avoiding pauses to fix notes. – Listening – Understand aurally how piano parts fit into an ensemble. – Form – Become skilled at keeping their place in the structure of a tune. – Rhythm section – Learn to provide essential chords and style-specific beats in contemporary ensembles in conjunction with a drummer and bassist. To compensate for reduced opportunities to play with others, it's especially important for piano teachers to emphasize these skills in the lesson.



President's Letter March 2025



As I look forward to the upcoming MTNA Conferences and think about all of the sessions and workshops that will be beneficial to you all and my own teaching, I thought I would also reflect upon and share a few takeaways from sessions from the VMTA Conference and our January workshop in Tidewater.

At the VMTA Conference, Guest Artist and Clinician, Dr. Shelly Berg spoke to us about internal musicianship. We need to think of the story and context of the song; make music before the notes and all the details. When we improvise and let our students improvise, it changes our relationship to the music itself and we gain agency to the song. When we think of improvising, start with chords. Definition of scale is chord tones and notes in between. Don't be afraid to try things out. He mentioned, in a video game, you start at a lower level and progressively get harder; you may lose a life but you keep going and get better every try.

At our January workshop with Dr. Nancy Klein from ODU, she recommended we assess ourselves while we speak as we teach. Everyone uses their voice daily, but those of us who teach, lead, sing and direct, often use our voices more than the average person. It is important for us to be carrying our bodies, which are our instruments, in the proper way: tall, with support and with good posture. We should warm up our voices and treat it as we would our muscles when working out and our pianos which get regular tunings. Without doing those things, we can hurt ourselves and possibly lose our voices over time. So next time you are sitting and talking to your students, check yourself to make sure you're sitting tall and giving your ribs, lungs and diaphragm room and support to move and speak freely.

President,
Laura Cardin

MTNA 2025 National Conference

March 15-19, 2025
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Mark your calendars and register now for the **2025 MTNA National Conference, March 15-19**, at the Hilton Minneapolis.

The MTNA National Conference has long been the premier gathering for **professionals and leaders in the music teaching profession**. As an attendee, you will have the unique opportunity to:

- Connect with new and established peers
- Learn about the latest trends and topics in the profession
- See the newest offerings from more than 100 exhibitors
- Come away inspired and refreshed in your practice

2025 VMTA Conference

It is my pleasure to announce that our 2025 VMTA State Conference will be hosted in Northern Virginia at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia from November 6th to November 8th.

We hope you will set aside the time and make plans to join us!

Warm Regards,
Christy Tallamy, NCTM
VMTA President-Elect

MTNA's New Virtual Conference TEMPO: Teaching, Education, Music & Pedagogy

Online April 25-26, 2025

Music Teachers National Association's new, completely virtual event is for music educators, students, and industry professionals. The virtual conference will provide attendees the opportunities to hear from colleagues and pedagogues in the field covering a range of topics, including teaching techniques new research, the future of the profession, best business practice, lesser-known repertoire and much more.

Tempo Registration Now Open -

www.mtna.org/Tempo/Registration

	On or Before 3/26/25	After 3/26/25
Members	\$175	\$225
Collegiate Members	\$50	\$75
Nonmembers	\$200	\$250
Collegiate Nonmembers	\$85	\$100

2025 Sight Reading and Skills Test Report

Sight Reading Text

10 Teachers Participated

86 Students Registered

82 Tests Take

38 Superior, 21 Excellent, 13 Very Good, 6 Good, 2 Pass, 2 Fail

Skills Test

10 Teachers Participated

117 Students Registered

109 Tests Take

87 Superior, 18 Excellent, 4 Very Good

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who participated in judging and working the registration desk on the day of the event. Your invaluable time and dedication in encouraging you students' musical pursuits are greatly appreciated.

Scores and judge sheets have been mailed to the participating teachers. Ribbons and certificates will be distributed as soon as they are received from the state.

Thank you again!

Mun Lee Han, NCTM

Sight Reading and Skills Local Chairperson

Glover Scholarship Auditions

This is a friendly reminder that the deadline for the David Carr Glover Scholarship Auditions is **March 15th**. The event is going to be held on April 5th at Monumental United Church in Portsmouth. Please make sure that **two** typed judging sheets accompany each student's application. If a student's application form has two sheets, be sure to staple them together so that they do not get mixed up with other application forms. Also, please **do not** staple the application form to the judging sheets. The applications and judging sheets should all be mailed in a large envelope and not folded. Please check the TMTF Yearbook and TMTF Activity Book for more detailed information.

Lynn Kleisler, NCTM

Glover Scholarship Auditions Chairman

MTNA Certification

Want to be a better music teacher? Consider the MTNA Certification Program. Imagine those 4 little letters after your name - NCTM, Nationally Certified Teacher of Music. Going through the process not only made me a better piano teacher but also gave me respect from my students, parents and peers. MTNA offers certification for any instrument including voice.

Attending our meetings are a way to find out about certification and be encouraged to complete the process. VMTA and TMTF both offer a \$100 reimbursement (total \$200) to offset the cost of certification.

Find out more at
www.certification.mtna.org.

Have questions? Ask me anything!



Friday, March 7, 2025
10-11:30 AM Zoom or in-person

Please RSVP to Susan Atkins, TMTF
 Certification Chair
pianolearningcenter@gmail.com

Get Involved in TMTF!

We have plenty of opportunities to get involved in by helping with events, such as judging, administering various tests, auditions and recitals. These are excellent opportunities to contribute your talent and connect with other music teachers.

Contact the event chairperson or president or president-elect for opportunities you are interested in helping out with.

We would greatly appreciate your presence!

Bring a Friend to Our TMTF Workshops and Earn Rewards!

Invite a fellow music teacher to join you at any of our TMTF Workshops! When you bring a friend, both of you will receive a \$10 Music & Arts gift card as a thank you.



Special Membership Incentive from MTNA - For New Members

Do you have friends and colleagues who want to invest in their professional development but aren't yet members of MTNA? There could not be a better time to join! From now through June 30, active members joining **for the first time** will receive a 50% discount on national membership dues. (Many state and local affiliates offer a discount too!)

Invite your colleagues to join online today by sharing the link below, or having them call us at (888) 512-5278, Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M.-4:00 P.M. Eastern Time.
[Join Online Today!](#)

Thank you for your support in growing and strengthening MTNA!

⚠️ This membership expires June 30, 2025, and will require full dues for the next membership year (beginning July 1) be paid at that time. Members will receive their statements for the 2025-2026 year in April.

TMTF CALENDAR

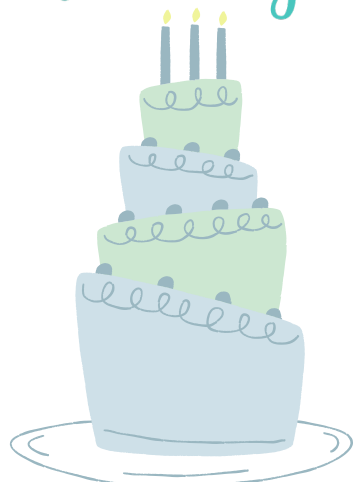
March 2025

- 1** **DEADLINE - TMTF Play-A-Thon** (participation in scholarship events deadline)
- 8** TMTF Levels of Progress - *Portsmouth, Virginia Beach*
- 9** TMTF Levels of Progress - *Virginia Beach, Norfolk*
- 15** **DEADLINE - TMTF Glover Scholarship Auditions**
- 15** **DEADLINE - TMTF Honors Recitals Auditions**
- 15-19** MTNA Conference – *Minneapolis, MN*
- 21** **DEADLINE - Stafflines News**
- 28** 10:00 a.m. TMTF Meeting/Workshop - Clinician: Bradley Sowash
Old Dominion University's Diehn Center for the Performing Arts
1339 West 49th Street, Norfolk, VA. 23529

April 2025

- 5** TMTF Glover Scholarship Auditions
Monumental UMC, 450 Dinwiddie St, Portsmouth, VA 23704
- 11** **DEADLINE - VMTA Eastern District Auditions**
- 11** **DEADLINE - Glen Mayberry Scholarship Auditions**
- 21** **DEADLINE - Stafflines News**
- 25** 10:00 a.m. TMTF Meeting/Workshop - Clinician: Philip Powell, DMA
Jordan Kitt's Music - 5164 Virginia Beach Blvd., VA 23462
- 26-27** TMTF Honors Recitals Auditions – *Marsh School of Music*
328 Office Square Ln #102, VA Beach, VA 23462

Happy
Birthday



March

- 1 Laura Cardin
18 Mary Ann Medlin
19 Walter Noona
22 Elizabeth Sjolund
30 Cathy Bryan
30 Galina Epelman

April

- 3 Jessica Sammataro
10 Joan Edwards
24 Anna Perkins Settle





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Stafflines Advertising Rates

The following advertising rates are for Stafflines news that is not related directly to TMTF activities.

Two to three line announcement such as a recital or job opening : No Fee

One half page (8.5" x 5.5") : \$10.00

Full page (8.5" x 11") : \$20.00

Make check payable to TMTF and send along with your ad to the Stafflines Editor

Piano Showcase
pianoshowcaseva.com
Greenbrier Mall

J. Scott Bailey
President

(757) 420-1130
(757) 714-3307 Cell
pianoshowcaseva@yahoo.com

KAWAI



Tidewater Music Teachers Forum

Local Chapter of the Virginia Music Teachers Association Affiliated
with the Music Teachers National Association

Violet Cusher, Editor | 31 Sinton Road | Newport News, VA 23601