



STAFFLINES



Monthly Newsletter of the Tidewater Music Teachers Forum

Dr. Sam Gingher

“Lesser-Known Composers & Rare Repertoire Gems for the Studio”



Friday, March 13th, 2026

Location: Jordan Kitt’s Music
5164 Virginia Beach Blvd, VA 23462

10:00 Business Meeting & Workshop

12:00 Lunch

Dr. Samuel Gingher currently serves as Assistant Professor of Piano Pedagogy at East Carolina University, with previous faculty positions at Northern Arizona University, Millikin University, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Bradley University. His current research interests include classical piano improvisation pedagogy and the discovery and performance of rare masterworks. Dr. Gingher’s world-premiere recordings of piano trios and four-hand piano fantasies by Carl Czerny are available on the Naxos label. Dr. Gingher has been the winner of several competitions and recipient of many awards, including the Krannert Debut Artist Award, first prize in Brevard Music Festival’s Solo Piano Competition, first prize in WVU’s Intersection between Jazz and Classical solo piano festival competition, the 21st Century Piano Commission Competition at UIUC, and concerto competition winner at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the LaGrange Symphony Orchestra Young Artists Concerto Competition in Georgia. He has performed and taught in piano and chamber music festivals in North Carolina, Michigan, Illinois, California, Arizona, West Virginia, Austria and Switzerland, and has played in a variety of new music, chamber and jazz groups. Dr. Gingher is an active member of MTNA and has served as a clinician and adjudicator for state conferences in Illinois, Arizona, New Mexico and North Carolina. For many years, he served as the DAMTA Piano Performance and Theory



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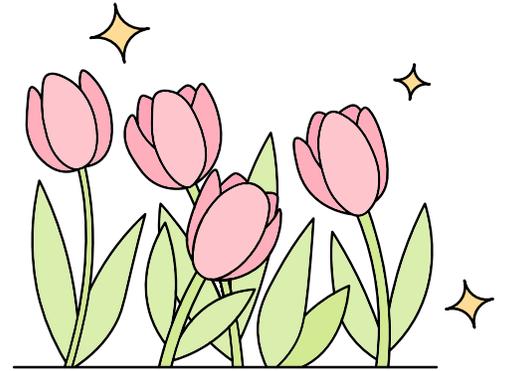
Chair for the ISMTA Achievement in Music Exams, and currently serves as the Piano Performance Festival Director for NCMFTA. Dr. Gingher has additional experience as a composer, arranger and free-lance audio engineer, having served as producer or engineer for albums on the Naxos, Centaur, Albany, MSR Classics and Pacific media labels. He holds a DMA in Piano Performance and Literature, MM in Piano Pedagogy, and MM in Piano Performance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and BM in Piano Performance from UNC-Chapel Hill. He has worked in masterclasses with Thomas Lymenstull, Ann Schein, Barry Snyder, Kirill Gerstein, Ian Hobson, Anton Kuerti, Wolfgang Watzinger and Nelita True. His former piano mentors include Timothy Ehlen, Thomas Otten, Edmund Paolantonio and Constance Kotis.

Workshop Description:

Discover fresh, inspiring, and underrepresented repertoire for students of all levels in Lesser-Known Composers & Rare Repertoire Gems for the Studio. This session highlights hidden treasures by lesser-known composers, offering practical strategies for integrating these works into the teaching studio. Attendees will receive repertoire lists, historical context, and teaching tips aimed at broadening students’ musical horizons while supporting inclusivity and curiosity at the keyboard.



President's Letter March 2026



I have been watching the Winter Olympics, marveling at Italy's beautiful countryside, as I rooted for the athletes. Their skill and dedication to their sport is inspiration and resonates with my training as a performing musician.

One young man has been of particular interest to me as he is from Virginia and is gifted with superior, compared to godlike, skills that have never been seen before on ice. His parents both were ice skating competitors and seem to have passed on their love and talents. For many days this young man exuded confidence and a winning personality. I was so excited for him to represent our nation and when I heard that he practiced for 10 hours each day I knew that he would certainly win the gold medal for himself. He had just helped to cement the gold medal win for his teammates with his ease, strength, and grace. The media could not get enough of this young 21-year-old man, promising big things to come.

On the day of the individual competitions, many of the competitors fell on the ice and were penalized. Our boy was safely backstage and not able to witness what was happening, however when his time came to compete, the world was shocked when he fell not once but numerous times. His final score overall averaged to eighth place. He did not win any of the three medals at all! The media had a field day, doing up close camera shots of him as he tried to hide his disappointment. What impressed me most was how he handled the results. He congratulated the gold medalist sincerely and graciously. He admitted in his media interview that he had let negative thoughts into his head just as he went in to compete. He also shared that he was not in a good place and was unable to do his best at that moment.

While heartbreaking to witness, the experiences of this exceptional young man has resonated with me as a performing musician. How many times have we let negative or wandering thoughts into our head during performances and practice times? Have we behaved graciously toward others who may have received some recognition that we thought we should have attained? This young man is dedicated, working long hours at a sport that he loves with the support of his family, coach, and friends. He tries to do his best, accepts his failure for what it was, and genuinely congratulates others for their achievements. I feel that his spirit and graciousness are an example and lesson to all which can be applied to both the performing arts and many situations in our lives.

I am excited to be attending this year's MTNA Conference in Chicago where I will witness some of the best young musicians that our country has to offer, and I look forward to hearing presentations and lectures from colleagues from all over the United States. I hope to bring much of that excitement and joy back to you for my presentation in May!

Best, Sally

2026 Sight Reading and Skills Test Report

Sight Reading Test

7 Teachers Participated

64 Students Registered

60 Tests Taken

36 Superior, 17 Excellent, 3 Very Good, 4 Pass

Skills Test

7 Teachers Participated

104 Students Registered

95 Tests Taken

75 Superior, 16 Excellent, 3 Very Good, 1 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 time, effort, and willingness to serve made the day run smoothly and successfully.

A very special thank you to **Laura Cardin, Jeanette Winsor, and Joshua Miller** for stepping in to help with judging. Your invaluable time and dedication in encouraging students' musical pursuits are truly appreciated. Your thoughtful feedback and support make a lasting difference in their musical growth.

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 for supporting our young musicians.

Mun Lee Han, NCTM

(Sight Reading and Skills Local Chairperson)



Request a grant for free VMTA Conference Registration

TMTF has been awarded two “Golden Tickets” which will pay for the conference registration fee for two of our chapter members. (Recipients will be responsible for travel and hotel.)

To apply for these grants, email TMTF President Sally Copeland tidewatermtf@gmail.com

- Name
- Contact info
- Why you would like to attend this year’s VMTA conference?
- Is this your first VMTA conference?

Application deadline July 1, 2026

Recipients will be announced in August.

MTNA Certification



Let's get certified!

The MTNA Professional Certification Program exists to improve the level of professionalism within the field of music teaching. It benefits the members of the profession itself, as well as the public who interacts with the professional. For the music teaching professional, certification provides prestige, recognition and the potential for student recruitment and increased earning power. For the public, certification helps readily identify competent music teachers in their communities.

Monthly local certification meetings are held via Zoom. Watch the Stafflines and your email inbox for the day and time of each meeting.

VMTA and TMTF are offering a \$100 reimbursement each (total \$200) to offset the cost of certification.

You too can be an NCTM (Nationally Certified Teacher of Music).

For more information, go to certification.mtna.org.

Certification meeting schedule:

September 19

October 10

November 14

January 9

February 13

March 6

April 10

May 8

10:00-11:30 am on Zoom

2025-2026 Local Chairperson:

Susan Atkins, NCTM

4357 Biscayne Drive

Virginia Beach, VA 23455

(757) 282-8220

pianolearningcenter@gmail.com

Levels of Progress 2026

Registration Deadline: January 16, 2026 (postmark)
Event Dates: March 7th and 8th (Details are
in the Studio Companion)

Levels of Progress is a non-competitive opportunity for students of all levels to receive a performance evaluation on two contrasting pieces. Students may enter in piano, voice, organ, strings, guitar, or ensembles. Each student receives an evaluation sheet and a certificate of achievement. Judges are local teachers and members of TMTF.

Levels of Progress is also TMTF's major fundraising event for the year, so please make sure to encourage and prepare your students to participate! This allows us to continue to provide quality presenters for our meetings and additional opportunities for our teachers and students. Remember, Levels of Progress is a requirement to enter the Honors Recitals Auditions!

Please mail, email, or deliver registration forms to the event chair by the deadline:

Chairperson: Joshua Miller
Address: 9511 1st View Street #4
Norfolk, VA 23503
Email: tmtf.lop@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!

TMTF EVENT CALENDAR

March 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

11 DEADLINE - Play-A-Thon Pledges to TMTF
 2-6 Cape Henry Collegiate Spring Break
 2-6 Norfolk Academy Spring Break
 6 TMTF Certification Meeting
 7 TMTF Levels of Progress - VA Beach and Portsmouth
 8 TMTF Levels of Progress - VA Beach and Norfolk
 8 Daylight Savings (move clocks ahead 1 hours)
13 TMTF Meeting/Workshop
 14 DEADLINE - TMTF Glover Scholarship Auditions
 15-16 ODU Spring Break
 21 DEADLINE - TMTF Honors Auditions
 21 DEADLINE - Glen Mayberry Auditions
 21 DEADLINE: Staddlines News
 21 DEADLINE - VMTA Eastern District Auditions
 21-25 MTNA Conference - Chicago, IL

April 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

5 Easter
 6-10 Chesapeake & Virginia Beach Public Schools Spring Break
 6-10 Norfolk Public Schools Spring Break
 6-10 Suffolk Public Schools Spring Break
 10 TMTF Certification Meeting
17 TMTF Meeting/Workshop
 18 TMTF Glover Scholarship Auditions
 21 DEADLINE: Stafflines News
 25-26 TMTF Honors Recitals Auditions

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
- 6 Lisa Powell Carter
- 10 Joan Edwards





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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

KAWAI



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

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