

STAFFLINES

Monthly Newsletter of the Tidewater Music Teachers Forum

Dennis Alexander

Practical, Purposeful, and Plentiful



Saturday, September 12th, 2026

Location: ODU Diehn Center for the Performing Arts
Diehn Composers Room (Rm. 192))
1339 West 49th Street, Norfolk VA 23529

10:00 - Buisness Meeting and Workshop

12:00 - Lunch

2:00-4:00 - Masterclass - Chandler Recital Hall

see application on following page.

Biography: Dennis Alexander began his affiliation with Alfred Music Publishing in 1986. Mr. Alexander's over 450 publications and recordings created with Alfred have earned him an international reputation as one of the world's most prolific and popular composers of edcational piano music for students at all levels.

Professor Alexander retired from his position at the University of Montana in May 1996 where he taught piano and piano pedagogy for 24 years. Upon moving to California, he taught privately in addition to serving on the faculties of Cal State Fullerton and Cal State Northridge. He currently lives in Albuquerque, NM where he maintains an active composing and touring scedule for for Alfred Music Publishing. In August of 2015, he was awarded a "Lifetime Achievement Award" by the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy in recognition of his extraordinary service to the music teaching profession. His two books of "Nocturnes for Piano" also received the prestigious MTNA/Frances Clark pedagogy Award. Mr. Alexander's personal website, www.DennisAlexander.com, has become a favorite with piano teachers and features recordings, videos teaching tips, and much more

Workshop Description: Dennis Alexander has written music for every level, and in this entertaining session, Mr, Alexander will share some of his favorite teaching pieces at each level. Teachers will discover repertoire for festivals, competitions, motivation, "plays easy, sounds hard!" ---- there's something for everybody in this session! In addition, he will share other recently published music by other Alfred composers that teachers might love to incorporate into their teaching repertoire.

Piano Master Class Registration

Dennis Alexander

Perform on ODU's new Steinway Model D Concert Grand!

Masterclass: Saturday, September 12, 2026 at 2:00 PM
Location: Chandler Recital Hall, Old Dominion University
Deadline: August 29, 2026 (postmark)

Student's Name: _____

Student's Age: _____

Teacher's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Teacher's Email: _____

Composition: _____

Composer: _____

Level (elementary and up): _____ Performance time: _____

Please note that space is limited. We have room for only 4 students and 2 alternates.

There will be a limit of 1 student per teacher. Mr. Alexander will be working with each student for a time appropriate for their level (less time for elementary levels, more time for intermediate and advanced.) Please choose the piece accordingly. The repertoire list will be provided to Mr. Alexander and he will choose the performers.

The Master Class fee is \$15.00 per student. Registration form may be sent by mail or virtually, but a check is requested for the fee. Please make your check payable to TMTF. If the student is not selected to perform, the fee will be returned. Mail registration form and check to:

Susan Atkins
4357 Biscayne Dr.
Virginia Beach, VA 23455
pianolearningcenter@gmail.com



President's Letter September 2026



Welcome Back TMTF Friends! The Executive Board met earlier in August and we have planned a wonderful year for you.

I hope to see you on September 12 as we welcome Dennis Alexander- lunch will be provided but please let us know by September 7 so we can get an accurate head count. It should be a wonderful Day with Dennis and is on Saturday this year.

Please take time to look at this year's TMTF calendar and challenge yourself to plan ahead to attend at least one workshop, either in person, or online. We have both Dennis Alexander and Keith Snell coming in person to Norfolk this year! In April we will celebrate the centennial year of our TMTF Founder David Carr Glover's birth. Keith Snell has written Tidewater Sonatina for this special event and it is to be printed and available this fall.

TMTF student events are both encouraging and educational, and our masterclasses and competitions are designed to inspire the next generation of musicians. I, myself, participated in these events many years ago and found that they prepared me for college and my lifelong career as a pianist and educator. If you are new to these events, set a goal with your students to enter at least one event this year. We are happy to have new participants- and know that although we expect teachers to volunteer for the events in which you enter your pupils it is such fun to be there with them and to meet and interact with other local teachers and studios.

I am on my second and final year as your President- it is going by fast and I must say that I have enjoyed it, and most of all, working with you! If you have suggestions that you wish to share with me, please do not hesitate to do so.

Mom and I will be moving to our new house around the end of September (fingers crossed that it will be ready then). This is a bit daunting, but I know that we will love being in Suffolk near family. Please use my old Portsmouth Address for now for any mailings, but the new address is already listed for you in the Studio Companion.

Musically Yours,
Sally

MTNA Grant News

Dear TMTF Members,

I would like to express our sincere appreciation to **Sally**, for her tremendous efforts in helping bring the **David Carr Glover Festival** to life.

A very special thank-you goes to her for taking the initiative during our time at the **Music Teachers National Association National Conference in Chicago** to negotiate with composer **Keith Snell**, regarding the commission of a special new work for the festival. Her willingness to make that connection and help coordinate this important commission has added something truly meaningful to the project. Having a work created especially for the festival will provide a wonderful way to honor David Carr Glover's legacy while also creating something new for students, teachers, and our musical community.

I am also extremely grateful that the grant I wrote in support of the David Carr Glover Festival was **approved by the Music Teachers National Association**. Receiving this funding is an exciting milestone for the project, and the grant funds will be used toward making the festival and its educational opportunities possible.

I would especially like to recognize **Susan, Laura, Sally, and Emily** for the time and care you devoted to reviewing and editing the grant. Your assistance in refining the language and ensuring that the proposal met the required **word limits, funding amount, and grant specifications** was invaluable. Grant writing is truly a collaborative process, and your thoughtful suggestions helped strengthen the final application.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to **Mun Lee**, for handling the financial and administrative responsibilities with extraordinary efficiency. Once the grant was approved, she completed the necessary **tax paperwork within approximately 15 minutes**, helping us move forward without delay. Then, upon receiving the grant check, she ensured that the funds were **deposited the same day**. That level of responsiveness and dedication is deeply appreciated.

This project demonstrates what can happen when members of an organization contribute their individual talents toward a shared vision. From developing and writing the grant, to editing the proposal, completing the necessary financial documentation, securing the funding, and working with Keith Snell on the commissioned composition, each person has played an important role in moving the David Carr Glover Festival from an idea toward reality.

Sally, thank you again for your leadership and for helping make the Keith Snell commission possible. Susan, Laura, Emily, and Mun Lee thank you for everything you have contributed to this project as well.

I am incredibly excited about what we are creating together and look forward to seeing our work culminate in a memorable David Carr Glover Festival that celebrates music education, creativity, collaboration, and the lasting influence of David Carr Glover.

Josh Miller, M.M. Piano Pedagogy

Chair: Publicity and Levels of Progress

Tidewater Music Teachers Forum

2025-2026 TMTF Achievement Award Report

One hundred seven students of 5 TMTF teachers were enrolled in the 2025-2026 Achievement Award Program. TMTF Achievement Awards were presented to 20 students of 5 TMTF Teachers in 2026. The teachers were Susan Atkins, Donna Halleck, Mun Lee Han, and Josephine Jones

1st Achievement Award

Jack Anthony
Sabrina Brouillard
Caden Gambito
Kevin Lin
Paxton Lin
Eva McCormick
Kayla McCormick
Arantxa Mendoza
Alexis Morales
Adrian Orozco
Morgan Ratcliffe
Thomas Shi
Nora Unnikrishnan
Leila Unnikrishnan

2nd Achievement Award

Emma Chow
Ava Salib
Aaron Tran
Kyan Yuan

4th Achievement Award

Andrew Chow
Anisha Warusavitharana

Please encourage your students to participate in TMTF, VMTA or MTNA events and enroll in the TMTF Achievement Award Program this year.

Josephine Jones, NCTM
Achievement Award Chairperson



2027 VTMA Theory Test

It's time to get ready for the 2026 VTMA Theory Test!

Location: Old Dominion University

Webb Center

1301 W 49 St

Norfolk, VA 23529

Date: January 30, 2027

Registration Deadline: December 18, 2026

Registration Fee: \$15.00

Co-Chair: Susan Atkins, NCTM

4357 Biscayne Drive, Virginia Beach VA 23455

(757) 282-8220

pianolearningcenter@gmail.com

Co-Chair: Sally Copeland

(757) 376-7348

srcopela@odu.edu

Theory test completion required to participate in the VMTA District Auditions
Written exam and Listening, levels Primer-12, based on musical knowledge (not school grade).

For detailed instructions and registration form, please see the 2026-2027 Studio Companion

How to prepare your students:

The Theory Syllabus, sample tests, answer keys and audio files can be found on the VMTA website in the Member Area.

Please let me know if you cannot access the website and/or need hard copies of these documents.

Susan Atkins, NCTM

MTNA Certification

NOW THERE ARE ONLY TWO MONTHLY MTNA CERTIFICATION MEETINGS

VMTA has a new Certification Chair - Rene Johnson.

She is holding monthly meetings on Google Meet. Always on Monday nights at 8:00 and always just 1 hour.

VMTA Certification Meetings:

- September 14
- October 19
- November 16
- January 25
- February 22
- March 15
- April 19
- May 17
- June 21

TMTF Certification Meetings:

- September 11
- October 9
- November 6
- January 8
- February 5
- March 5
- April 16
- May 14

Contact Rene Johnson at r@renej.us to ask for an invite.

Even if you are only thinking of getting certified and just have questions, please come to any meetings that fit your schedule.

If you can pay the \$200 fee upfront, when you complete the process, TMTF and VMTA will refund the fee. (Ask me for details)

You don't know where to start? Come to the next TMTF meeting on September 11 at 10:00 am - it's on Zoom!

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

Have questions? Ask me anything!

Friday, September 11th, 2026

10-11:30 AM Zoom or in-person

Please RSVP to Susan Atkins, TMTF Certification Chair

pianolearningcenter@gmail.com

The **Tidewater Music Teachers Forum**

would like to WELCOME

FOUR NEW MEMBERS this year to our Forum!

Zooey Cusher - Newport News

Maggie Garrett - Virginia Beach

Heekyung Lee - Norfolk

William Pearson - Norfolk

We are so glad to have you! We look forward to meeting you at the meetings and getting to know you. Please let us know if we can help you in any way!

Donna Halleck, Membership Chair



TMTF CALENDAR

September

- 7 - Labor Day
- 8 - Chesapeake Public Schools -
First Day of School
- 11 - TMTF Certification Meeting
- 12 - TMTF
Meeting/Workshop/Luncheon**
- 21 - DEADLINE: Staffline News



October

- 2- TMTF Executive Board Meeting
(Zoom or Google Meet) 10 AM
- 2-3 - NC State Conference at ECU
- 9 - TMTF Certification Meeting
- 12 - Columbus Day
- 16 - DEADLINE - Sacred Music
Festival
- 16 - TMTF Meeting/Workshop**
- 21 - DEADLINE - Staffline News
- 31 - Halloween
- 22-24 - VMTA Conference

HAPPY
Birthday!



September

- 2 Josephine Jones
- 11 Patricia Kennedy
- 16 Sharon Alston
- 20 Tonya Holland
- 30 Vernon McCart



Sacred Music Festival

It's our first TMTF event of the Fall!

This is the best opportunity for your students in all levels, from beginners to advanced, to prepare pieces for Play-A-Thon, Christmas Revitals, church offertories, preludes and specials without the pressure of memorization

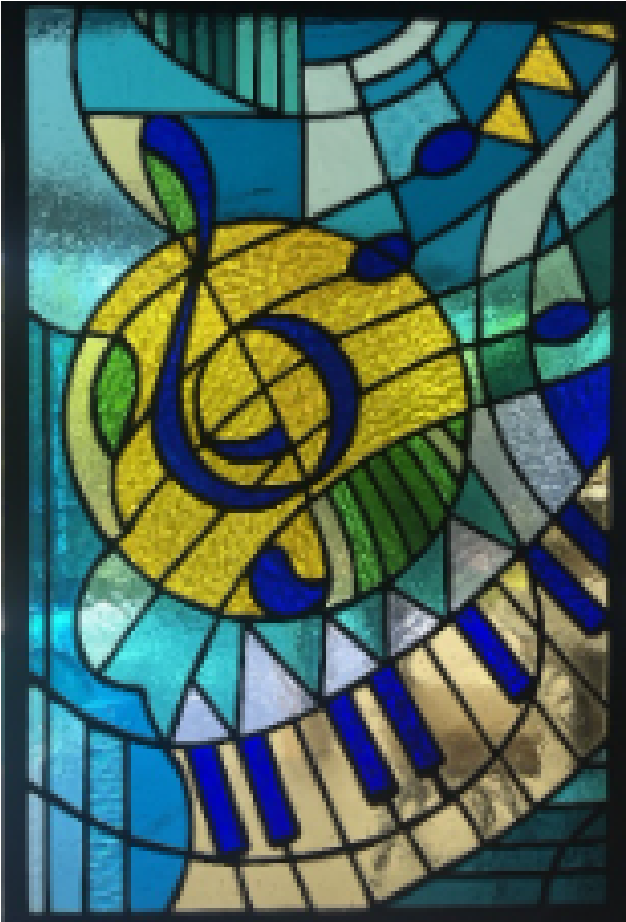
This event will be held at Thalia Lynn Baptist Church on Virginia Beach Blvd and at Monumental Methodist Church in Portsmouth on Saturday, November 21, 2026.

You can find the instructions and Registration form in our TMTF Studio Companion Book. The deadline for *registration is October 17, 2026*.

If you're searching for good music to use, I highly recommend Wendy Steven's *Hymns I, II, and III* (www.Composecresate.com) And *Play Hymns* - from Alfred.com.

Don't let this event pass you by! Get Involved!

Donna Halleck
Sacred Music Festival Chariperson





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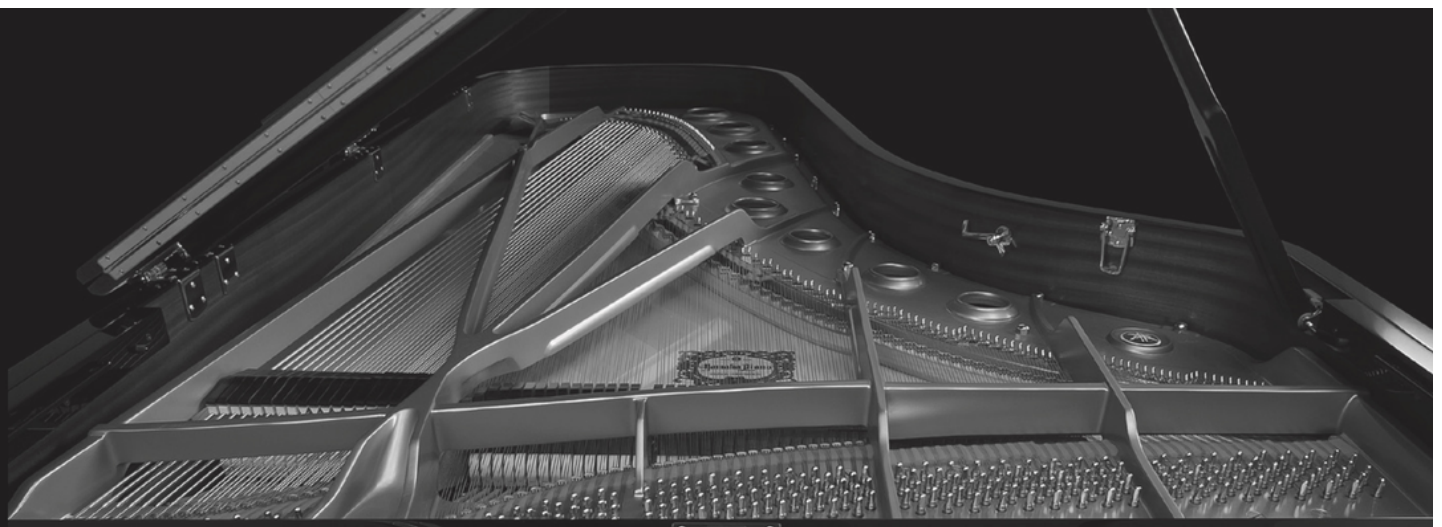
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Stafflines Advertising Rates

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



Tidewater Music Teachers Forum

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

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