



Music Lessons on Piano, Voice, Guitar & Violin

November 2025 Newsletter



Alek Wasserman, Founder



[triadmusicacademy.com](https://www.triadmusicacademy.com)

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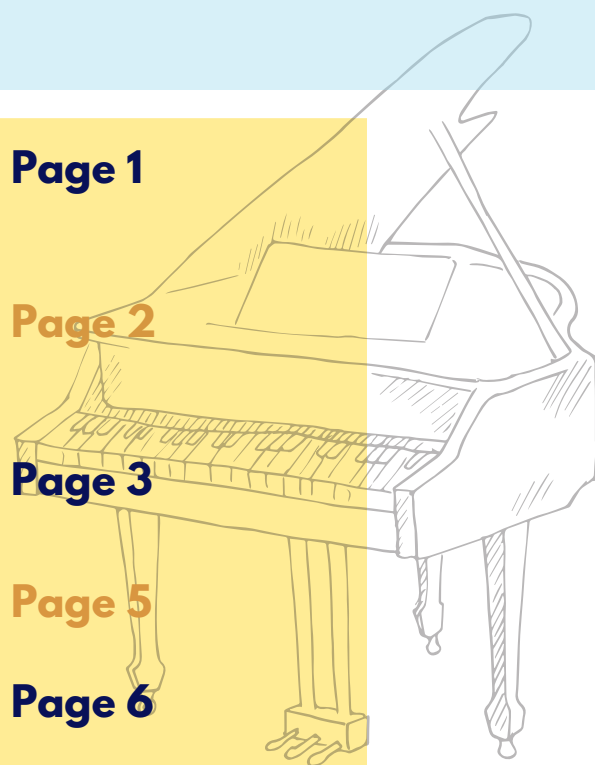
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Student of the Month: Dylan G.

Piano Student of Daniel Bukin



Q: What do you like most about piano lessons?

A: My favorite part of piano lessons is being assigned a new piece of music every week. It exposes me to a lot of unique songs I've never heard before.

Q: What other activities do you do besides piano?

A: I am currently learning Japanese alongside piano. I think both are equally fun in their own ways.

Q: What has been your favorite experience with Triad Music Academy?

A: My favorite experience definitely has to be the recital. It gave me a taste of what it is like to be a real musician. Granted, I played a really simple piece.

Q: Which musicians do you look up to or like to listen to?

A: I highly respect some of the jazz greats like Art Tatum and Thelonius Monk. On the classical side of things, I like Eric Lu. My favorite pianist is Ryo Fukui. I love his jazz piano album Scenery.

Q: Why did you decide to take piano lessons?

A: I had always wanted to learn to play an instrument, but I never knew which one it would be. After listening to a ton of piano arrangements for my favorite games, I really got into piano, and now I appreciate all genres of piano.

"Dylan is a student at NC State who only started piano lessons earlier this year. Even so, Dylan has tackled pieces such as W.A. Mozart's Piano Sonata No. 2 in F Major, and Chopin's Prelude No. 4 in E Minor. Dylan is a joy to teach!" - Daniel Bukin, TMA Piano Instructor



Teacher of the Month: Ryan Keith

Lead Violin Instructor



Q: How did you decide to become a professional musician? What did the journey look like for you?

A: I decided to become a professional musician during high school. I started playing violin in 5th grade through my school's orchestra program, and I quickly grew to love it. I participated in many youth orchestras and chamber groups, while also taking lessons, so my life was all about the violin. I decided to study music in college, and earned degrees from Kansas State University and UNC School of the Arts.

Q: What is your favorite type of music to listen to? What do you like to perform?

A: I listen to a lot of classical music, specifically string chamber music—Beethoven, Dvorak, Shostakovich, and Mendelssohn are some of my favorites. As far as performance, my favorite music to perform is anything that feels very emotionally driven. I am drawn to perform music that pulls emotion out of me—whether it's something exciting by Beethoven or sorrowful by Debussy, I tend to like music that brings out feeling.

Q: Do you have any hobbies or special interests outside of music?

A: Music definitely takes up most of my life, but in my spare time I enjoy reading, talking to my family or friends over the phone, or just spending time with my cat!

"Ryan is an excellent violin instructor whose students all seem to be perfectly happy and learning a ton. He came in and took over the violin program from the previous instructor on short notice, but he didn't miss a beat. TMA is fortunate to have him!"

- Alek Wasserman, TMA Founder & Lead Piano Instructor



Practice Tips: The Power of Patience

Learning to play an instrument isn't a sprint; it's a marathon.

Ask any professional musician how long they've been at their craft. The answers will depend a little bit by instrument, but in many cases they started learning in elementary school and took lessons through college or even beyond.

Practice hours also vary somewhat by instrument (pianists can, for example, play much longer without injury compared to singers), but consistency is always key.

I always tell my personal students, "when it comes to practicing the piano, you must be the tortoise. Don't be the hare."

Sometimes parents will ask me how often their student should practice or how long their practice sessions should be. While I always defer to the student's instructor, here are some general guidelines:

Practicing your instrument should come in short, sustainable sessions



A practice session with my child (age 10) on our home piano.

rather than in forced, long practice windows.

For many younger kids, especially piano students below the age of 8, I suggest practicing three or four days a week for 10-15 minutes to start out.

Don't turn it into a chore. This just isn't worth it for the parent or for the student. Instead, make practice fun. Turn it into a challenge: can you play the first phrase of the right hand soft? Now try it again loud! Can you play it with no mistakes?

As students age, the responsibility changes. Older students shouldn't

gamify their practice as much as young kids.

For middle school and above, I like to see students taking more responsibility.

An intermediate student should consider practicing for 30 minutes, five days a week. If they are motivated to do even more, then that's great!

For advanced students, or younger students who are really serious, I would suggest 45-60 minutes, six days a week.

I love the idea of students practicing their instrument every single day, but we certainly don't expect it unless a student is working towards a specific goal like a college audition or a competition.

Then comes the question of "how do I practice?" My personal students know that this is such a huge point of emphasis for me. Simply playing through your piece is not practicing. It never will be, except for full run throughs in the late stages of learning a piece of music.

Students should instead isolate small sections of music and run them a few times in a row correctly. If you haven't spoken with your instructor about the idea of musical form, I suggest you do so.

You will gain far more out of playing the A Section of a piece three times in a row correctly than you will out of a mistake-riddled run through of the full piece of music.

Make sure you understand the structure of the music you're performing so you can make informed decisions about how to break it down for practice purposes. This is how professional musicians practice, and there is really no reason it can't be applied for younger students, adjusted for their playing level.

Lastly, as the title of this article suggests, have some patience. Prodigies are not made overnight. Practicing your instrument is kind of like investing in the stock market - you won't improve every single day, but with steady investment overtime, you can see impressive results.

Musically yours,



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Lesson Openings

Program	Day	Time
<u>Piano</u>	Monday	4:15-4:45 PM 5:30-6:00 PM 7:00-7:30 PM
	Tuesday	6:45-7:15 PM
	Saturday	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
<u>Guitar</u>	Friday	3:30-4:00 PM
	Saturday	10:45-11:15 AM
<u>Voice</u>	Thursday	5:30-6:00 PM
<u>Violin</u>	Fully Booked!	N/A
<u>Piano (In-Home)</u>	Sunday-Friday	Various Times (Email us!)

Upcoming Events!

Fall Recitals

Sunday, November 23rd

- 1:00 PM - Studios of Barela, Chang, Mullins & Waldron
- 2:30 PM - Studios of Bukin, Caldie, Chang & Lindegren
- 4:00 PM - Studios of Fields, Hou, Schwartz & Wasserman

Temple Emanuel Winston-Salem

Recitals open to all Triad Music Academy child students. Email alek@triadmusicacademy.com with any questions!

Allison Gagnon Piano Duet Masterclass

Saturday, December 6th @ 3:00 PM

Triad Music Academy

Dr. Allison Gagnon
Collaborative Piano Department
Chair, UNC School of the Arts



Select Triad Music Academy students will be chosen to perform. Email alek@triadmusicacademy.com if you would like to watch!