



Building Lifelong Pianists

February 2024 Newsletter



Alek Wasserman, Owner

 **Triad Music Academy**

 **@triadmusicacademy**

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

**212 N Broad Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27101**





Table of Contents

Student of the Month:
Veda A.

Page 1

We're Moving!

Page 2

How Young is Too Young?
Piano Lessons for Preschoolers

Page 3

Pianos You'll LOVE

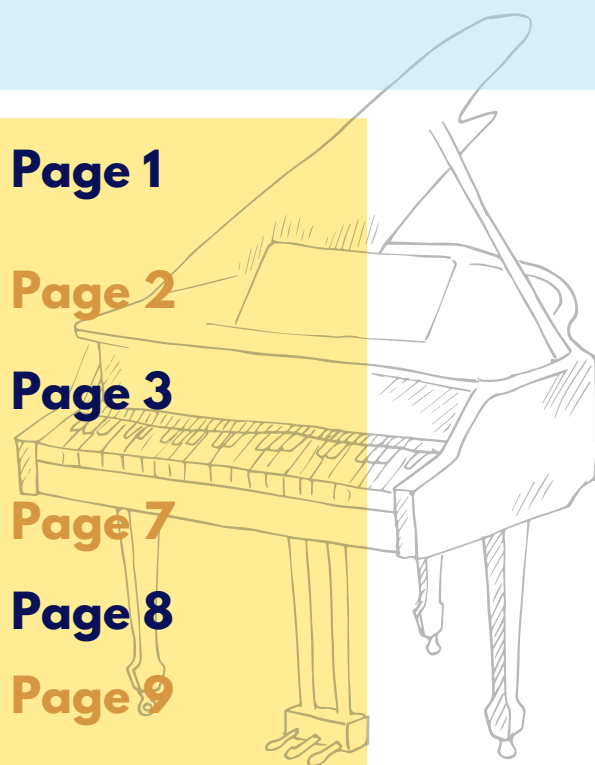
Page 7

Referrals & Openings

Page 8

Upcoming Events!

Page 9



Student of the Month: Veda A.



Q: What do you like most about playing the piano?

A: I like what it sounds like when the piano has two different sounds come together.

Q: Why did you decide to take piano lessons?

A: Because I love music and can learn to play all different types of songs that sound cool.

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

A: I like all kinds of music, I always tell my mom to turn it up in the car. I like Taylor Swift, worship music, and musicals.

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

A: Learning to play different songs on the piano.

Q: What other activities do you do besides playing the piano?

A: I love to ride my bike, make slime, read lots of books, and play video games with my brothers and sister.

“We discovered lately that Veda really enjoys singing and playing piano at the same time, so now we have even more fun in lessons! She has shown growth in both her technique and love for learning in these few months. I am so proud of her!”

-Natalie Barela, TMA Instructor



We're Moving!

Triad Music Academy will be moving to our own space at Parkway Office Suites. Be on the lookout for an email with our move-in date and further details. We are extremely grateful to [Piedmont Music Center](#) for providing our musical home for the past two years!



**New Location:
895 Peters Creek Parkway, Suite 203
Winston-Salem, NC 27103**

How Young is Too Young?

Piano Lessons for Preschoolers



By Alek Wasserman,
Triad Music Academy
Instructor/Founder

One of the most common questions I'm asked by prospective piano parents is whether their child is too young to start piano lessons.

There is no definitive starting age for piano students, so the answer to this question needs to be given on an individual basis. Starting a piano student when they're not yet ready can leave a sour taste in their mouth about learning to play the piano.

While some students start to learn the piano as young as age 2.5, others haven't developed the self-regulation necessary to be a successful student until age 7 or older.

This article will serve as both a guide for parents on the fence about starting their young children with piano lessons, and also as a brief overview of how piano lessons can be adapted for our youngest students.

*One important caveat for this essay is that we will not be focusing on

students with special learning needs, although many of the same guiding principles may still apply for them when choosing to start piano lessons.

If I were the parent of a very young child, here are five questions I would ask myself before making the decision to start piano lessons:

How long can my student focus on specific tasks? Piano lessons at this age are often adapted to a series of shorter activities, so students need to be able to focus on one portion of the lesson for about 5 minutes before moving onto the next. I would also recommend that students are able to complete at least 20 minutes of the total half-hour lesson slot in order to make lessons worthwhile for them.

How developed is my student's motor control (fine and gross)? One of the worst habits a student can develop when first learning to play the piano is pushing down hard into the keys. Does your student already have the ability to relax their forearm?

How Young is Too Young? Piano Lessons for Preschoolers, cont.

Can your student wiggle their fingers independently? These questions don't require perfect "yes" answers, but if your student struggles with independently using their index and middle fingers, lessons may be difficult for them at the beginning.

How verbal is my student, and how well-developed is their vocabulary?

Learning to play the piano is an activity which requires the use of a large vocabulary of different terms and concepts. In a typical first lesson, students will begin to explore white keys, black keys, piano posture, piano hand shape, high notes, and low notes, among other concepts. The good news is that none of this needs to be perfect from the jump, but it's certainly helpful if you are sure that your student can handle it.

Does my student know the alphabet?

Fortunately, this is an easy one. The musical alphabet runs from A-G, and then it repeats. If your student can already sing the ABC's, you're in good shape when it's time to learn the white keys!

How readily does my student follow directions? Unfortunately for piano teachers, students sometimes do not follow directions or respect the expertise of their instructor. This happens at all levels of education, from preschool to graduate school. But if your student is still in some iteration of the "terrible twos," they may not be ready yet for a one-on-one, 30-minute piano lesson. If this is the case, "Mommy and Me" or Kindermusik classes may be more appropriate.

Quickly, let's also go over some realistic expectations for preschool pianists before we dive into the teaching adaptations for these students.

There is a wide range of how piano lessons for the very young might look. Some approaches may be essentially general music classes or "Mommy and Me" classes with some emphasis on the piano, and a lot of focus on developing generalized music skills like listening and keeping a steady pulse.

How Young is Too Young? Piano Lessons for Preschoolers, cont.

While there is nothing wrong with this approach per se, at Triad Music Academy, our focus is building lifelong pianists. As such, we prioritize learning the piano while making it fun and accessible for students in the preschool age range.

Regardless of which approach is taken to teaching preschool-aged piano lessons, one nearly universal reality is that play and repetition are necessary for these children to retain and enjoy their learning. Expect progress to look slow, especially if you have an older child who started piano lessons in elementary school to compare. Preschoolers may not learn a new piece of music every single week in their lessons, and that is completely appropriate at their developmental level!

Lastly, preschool pianists need lesson materials that are developmentally appropriate for them. Here's a quick overview of some of the method books and materials we use in piano lessons for this age group.



Piano Safari Friends, by Katherine Fisher and Julie Knerr Hague

“Piano Safari Friends” is the preschool adaptation of [Piano Safari](#), one of my personal favorite method books to teach from. What I really like about this book is that it cleverly uses manipulatives for students to accomplish fun, tactile piano learning with vibrant colors and sound piano technique. Piano Safari Friends focuses on rote piano learning, so students do not learn to read music at first.

Since it is part of a larger method book series, Piano Safari Friends links directly into “Piano Safari: Level 1,” which is where students first learn to read music.

How Young is Too Young? Piano Lessons for Preschoolers, cont.



Piano Safari Piano Decorating Kit, by Katherine Fisher and Julie Knerr Hague

While I never advocate for attaching permanent stickers to a piano, the Piano Safari Piano Decorating Kit is a very useful (and removable) tool for enticing young learners to map out the keyboard. Identifying groups of two black keys versus groups of three black keys can be difficult for younger pianists, but it becomes fun and unique when posed as “zebra stripes” versus “giraffe spots.”

Another book for preschoolers in the TMA repertoire is “WunderKeys Piano for Preschoolers: Book 1.” While I have not personally used this book with a student, other instructors have reported success with its story-based learning format.

WunderKeys has more of a pre-reading focus than Piano Safari in the sense that it explicitly does not include familiar tunes, incentivizing students to engage in reading music on the page. (This system uses a highly simplified version of music notation rather than a traditional grand staff.)



WunderKeys Piano for Preschoolers: Book 1, by Andrea & Trevor Dow

If you have any questions about your student’s readiness for piano lessons, please fill out our [Contact Form](#) to set up a FREE consultation. We will be more than happy to answer all of your piano learning questions!

-Alek Wasserman
Founder & Lead Instructor

*A Sweetheart of a
deal for all TMA
families*



**Pristine Previously Played
Owned and Loved
STEINWAYS
Priced at a fraction of New
STEINWAYS**



**PIEDMONT
Music Center**

212 N Broad St,
Winston-Salem, NC
(336) 724-9612

Referrals & Openings

Current students: now until March 15th, receive ~~\$25.00~~ off your next month's lessons when you refer a new student! Just tell them to text (336) 497-1136 and include your name in their initial text.

Openings:

Teacher	Location	Day	Time
Austin Caldie	In-Studio	Sunday	1:45-2:15 PM & 2:45-3:45 PM
Shannon Lindegren	Lexington Home Studio	Thursday	9:00-9:30 AM & 12:00-12:30 PM
Alek Wasserman	In-Studio	Tuesday	7:15-8:00 PM

**Fully Booked Instructors:
Natalie Barela, PG Hazard & Han Vu**

Upcoming Events!

Annie Jeng Masterclass

Saturday, April 13th @ 4:00 PM

[Piedmont Music Center](#)

Annie Jeng
Assistant Professor of Piano &
Piano Pedagogy, UNC Greensboro



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

TMA Spring Recital

Saturday, June 1st @ 4:00 PM

[Piedmont Music Center](#)

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

***Recital may be updated to different times for different teachers' studios, TBD. Any changes will be communicated in advance by email.