



**Music Lessons on Piano, Voice & Guitar**

# October 2024 Newsletter



**Alek Wasserman, Founder**



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

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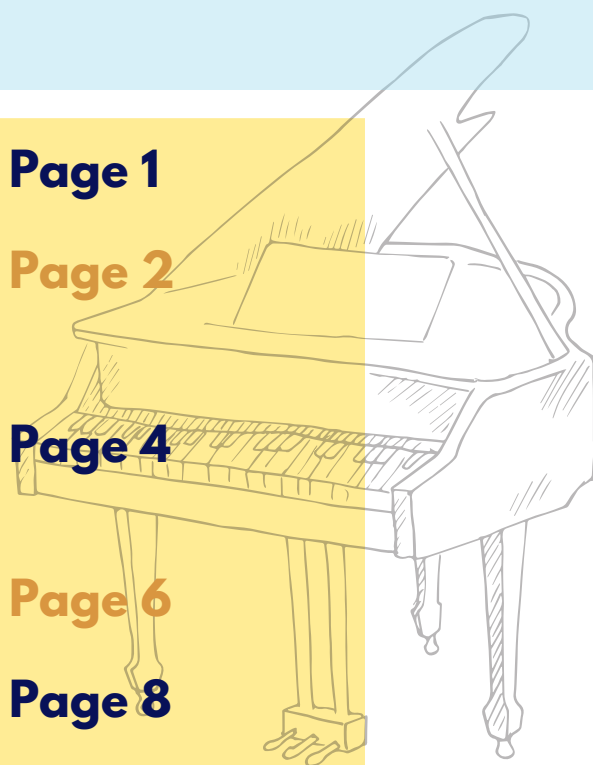
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# Student of the Month: Anay K.

Guitar Student of Mark Fields &  
Piano Student of Alek Wasserman



**Q: What do you like most about piano and guitar lessons?**

A: I like them because I like playing my favorite songs on both instruments.

**Q: What other activities do you do besides piano and guitar?**

A: I do swimming. I like playing with my brothers and playing video games.

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

A: My favorite experience is to learn how to play music and be able to play my favorite songs.

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

A: I like Metallica!

**Q: Why did you decide to take piano and guitar lessons?**

A: I wanted to play more than one instrument.

“Anay is demonstrating the qualities to be successful at playing guitar. He had never played guitar before and his growth shows, practicing, true interest, and dedication are very important to success.”

- Mark Fields, TMA Lead Guitar Instructor



# Lifelong Learners: How Adult Students Learn to Play the Piano



**By Alek Wasserman,  
Triad Music Academy  
Instructor/Founder**

**Adult students are one of the most fun categories of piano student to teach. You can speak with them just like you would a colleague, and they come to lessons 100% of their own volition.**

**Adult students can have a variety of reasons why they choose to pursue the piano, but the majority fall into two camps:**

- 1. Those who took lessons as kids and quit, but want to try the piano again**
- 2. Those who always wished they could play the piano, and have never had lessons before**

**The journey is different for adult students than it is for children. Learning the technique of the piano is more challenging, but music theory comes more easily and is more interesting for them.**

**Adult students also typically have a more well-defined idea of what they'd like to get out of their piano lessons, or what type of music they want to learn.**



**An Adult Student performing on TMA's annual Adult Student Recital, held on August 24th, 2024.**

**At TMA, we value our adult student population, who make up roughly 11% of our student body at time of writing.**

**Many of our teachers have experience working with adult beginners. While this article is focused mainly on piano students, many of the same principles apply to learning voice or the guitar, as well.**

**We teach the bulk of our adult piano students in two method book series, featured on the next page.**



Faber Adult Piano Adventures, Book 1.

As I wrote about last August in [Finding Balance: Middle C Method Books](#), The Faber Piano Adventures series breaks up its material into child, older child, and adult beginner editions.

I am not, generally speaking, a huge fan of Middle C method books. I find that they are expedient, but have the tradeoff of oversimplifying the piano experience for students, causing problems with their development down the line.

However, adult students are one of the few categories of students that are served well by these books.

Because of the simpler hand positioning, Faber is able to incorporate lots of familiar tunes from various genres that keep adult students motivated and interested in their piano learning.

I've found, by and large, that my

adult students have a positive experience with using the Faber Adult Piano Adventures series, and that the limitations of a Middle C method book do not generally stand in the way of their goals.

For most adult students, Faber Adult Piano Adventures is a solid choice for a manageable, fun piano lesson experience.



Piano Safari for the Older Beginner, Book 1.

However, we do have another solid option. [Piano Safari](#) is an eclectic piano method book, meaning that it is not fixed around a Middle C position.

For a minority of students who are more patient to see robust piano-playing results, Piano Safari for the Older Beginner is the better choice.

In short, this is a piano teacher's piano book!

**Piano Safari, in all of its editions, puts far more emphasis on piano technique and supplemental materials like improvisation and theory, than the majority of other piano method book series.**

**Unlike Faber, Piano Safari lumps the older child (middle/high school) and adult beginner categories together into this single book, but it contains a wealth of piano playing knowledge.**

**The tradeoff is that Piano Safari does not “dumb down” the piano playing experience. This book will make playing the piano difficult from the jump. In a sense, I view this as a more honest way to teach the piano.**

**At the same time, most adult students do not, in my experience, want a difficult piano playing experience.**

**But the reality is, as I’ve learned in my 23+ years of playing the piano, that playing the piano is difficult (but very rewarding)! There’s no way around it.**

**Regardless of which method book is right for you as a prospective adult student, the important part is that we have a couple of solid options. I always ask adult beginners which approach they’d like during the**

**registration process, and that guides their method book and teacher placement.**

**Finally, I’d like to briefly cover performance opportunities for adult students.**

**As seen in the captioned picture at the beginning of this article, TMA holds an annual Adult Student Recital each August. We kicked off this tradition in August of 2023, and it has since evolved.**

**Our Adult Student Recital is held in our Main Hall, which allows for an intimate and more casual recital experience.**

**Adult students are encouraged to bring friends and family, and to share their “why” for taking piano lessons before they perform.**

**The answers vary widely, but the one constant thread is that it’s never too late to learn to play the piano.**



**-Alek Wasserman  
Founder & Lead Piano Instructor**



# Voice Instructor: Peyton Wheeler



## Peyton Wheeler

**BM in Vocal Performance  
(German Minor),  
University of North Carolina  
Greensboro**

**Triad Music Academy welcomes our second Voice Instructor, Peyton Wheeler!**

**Peyton will serve as a great addition to our budding voice lesson program, with her unique skill set.**

**As an operatic mezzo-soprano, Peyton is a recent graduate of UNC Greensboro's Vocal Performance program, where she also minored in German.**

**For classical singers, it is extremely useful to learn either German, Italian, or French. I look forward to Peyton's future success with our students, especially when it comes to German opera or lieder (art song).**

**Furthermore, Peyton has upcoming engagements with Opera Carolina as Principal Resident Artist, and she's already performed various roles with the UNCG Opera Theatre, Opera in the Ozarks, and Middlebury College. Peyton's opera ensemble performances have included stints with the Greensboro Opera and Music On Site, Inc.**

What I really enjoyed about the interview process with Peyton was that she is very down-to-earth, even with all of her accomplishments. She has developmental plans for all of her voice students, and she has previous experience teaching for Bold Music in Greensboro.

Peyton said the following about coming to work with TMA:

“I’m so excited to begin working with Triad Music Academy! In my lessons, I prioritize healthy singing and musical literacy, along with helping my students find joy in music as my teachers did for me.

“I received my Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from UNCG in 2023. While my ‘forte’ is opera, I also have experience singing and teaching classical song, musical theater, and popular song, so if you can dream it, we can sing it!”

It’s really a spot-on take when you consider that today’s voice lesson students want to sing in various styles. What we’ve seen since starting the program in April is that musical theater and pop music are very in-demand (thank you, Taylor Swift!), but many students still crave the classical singing experience.

I also personally found that Peyton is easy to work with, professional, and just plain happy to be part of our organization and working with students. You can’t beat innate passion!

Finally, all new TMA instructors must be insured and pass State, Federal, and National Sex Offender Registry background checks in order to be welcomed onto the team. It is my priority to ensure your student’s safety and wellbeing as they pursue their musicmaking journey with TMA.

If you are interested in voice lessons with Peyton, please reach out to me via (336) 497-1136 or [alek@triadmusicacademy.com](mailto:alek@triadmusicacademy.com) and we’ll be more than happy to get you on her schedule!



**-Alek Wasserman**  
Founder & Lead Piano Instructor





# Lesson Openings

Teacher	Location	Instrument	Day	Time
<a href="#"><u>Natalie Barela</u></a>	Main Studio	Piano	Monday	3:00-4:00 PM
<a href="#"><u>Daniel Bukin</u></a>	Raleigh In-Home	Piano	Sunday	12:00-2:00 PM
<a href="#"><u>Mark Fields</u></a>	Main Studio	Guitar	Wednesday	4:00-4:30 PM
<a href="#"><u>Hayley Mullins</u></a>	Main Studio	Piano	Tuesday	5:30-6:00 PM & 7:30-8:00 PM
<a href="#"><u>Han Vu</u></a>	Main Studio	Piano	Thursday	3:00-4:30 PM

## Fully Booked Instructors:

Austin Caldie,  
 Laura Carisa Gardea, PG Hazard,  
 Shannon Lindegren, Eric Schwartz,  
 Alek Wasserman & Peyton Wheeler

# Upcoming Events!

## Allison Gagnon Masterclass

Saturday, November 2nd @ 11:00 AM  
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](mailto:alek@triadmusicacademy.com) if you would like to watch!

## Fall Recitals

Sunday, November 24th (Times TBD)  
[Temple Emanuel Winston-Salem](#)

Recitals open to all Triad Music Academy students. Email [alek@triadmusicacademy.com](mailto:alek@triadmusicacademy.com) with any questions!