

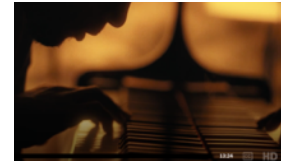
A few highlights this month:



WHY DIVERSITY PROGRAMS FAIL
DEBORAH DE LA TORRE



TANIA NELSON
THE LIFE & MUSIC OF MARY LOU WILLIAMS



MARCH 21
STUDENT MUSICALE



LYRICS

Celebrating the Life of DAMTA's Cornelia "Nellie" Vertenstein



Cornelia Vertenstein posed with her piano in Denver this month. She has been teaching piano since she was 14. Rachel Woolf for The New York Times

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March Dates to Remember:

March 10

9:30am - Membership Meeting
10:30am - Spring Program with Tania Nelson

March 21

2pm - Virtual Musicale

DATE CHANGE!

APRIL 7 (previously March 31)

9:30am - DAMTA Monthly DEI Conversation

2020/2021 Board Members:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Vince Madison | President |
| Marilyn Madsen | Vice President (Programs) |
| Ben Raznick | Vice President (Newsletter) |
| Evelyn Billberg | Vice President (Membership) |
| Megan Koegel | Vice President (Student Musicales) |
| Deborah De La Torre | Vice President (Diversity Equity & Inclusion) |
| Nazila Nekoerad | Secretary |
| Allyson Koplen | Treasurer |
| Jan Spitzer | Social Chair |
| Kristin Jordheim | Parliamentarian |



There are many reasons why diversity programs fail

by Deborah De La Torre, pianist/composer

DAMTA VP, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

This is an excerpt from a talk given to the Aurora Music Teachers Association on February 12, 2021

One only has to do an internet search on the phrase “why diversity programs fail” and many pages of results will appear. This is only a partial list synthesizing what has appeared in published academic research, business articles, on blogs and through honest conversations. While “diversity programs” have been a way for groups to take some early steps toward racial and ethnic inclusivity, using the word “diversity” - apart from its simple meaning of “variety” – has also been a term people use to play a game of hide-and-seek with the truth from their place of private opposition. From the onset, many diversity programs fail because of the energetic “dance” people engage in - as a form of “challenge” - to test the limits of this definition. These are framed as “what about” challenges, which serve to deflect from having to deal with deep-seated resistance.

- The individual mindset isn't ready
- The group mindset isn't ready
- It's too uncomfortable and awkward
- It is seen as a temporary activity, not permanent and necessary
- Real change is difficult and requires real transformation
- Complaints are made about focusing too much on one group instead of a “balanced” program
- Certain members believe they have nothing left to learn about Diversity
- The burden is on “Diverse professionals” to prove, demonstrate, teach, guide
- It's up to the “Diverse members of the group” to invite their friends
- The goal was to hire a Diversity Officer and nothing more
- It's up to the Diversity Officer to make all the changes
- The committee or business disregards the Diversity Officer's advice
- The Diversity Officer (appears to be) moving too fast, so the business holds off on any more changes
- The problem feels too big and overwhelming, so things go back to the way they were
- The Diversity Officer moves to another position and is not replaced.

As the private music teaching community begins to acknowledge white supremacy’s historic role in what has been commonly identified as “classical music,”¹ we can anticipate how these challenges, when left unaddressed, can lead to a failed diversity program. Likewise, our preparations should also include asking ourselves these questions:

- What does a successful diversity program do?
- What tools (resources, study & conversation groups, paid BIPOC instructors) are needed?
- How does a successful diversity program establish accountability with communities of color?

¹ The Possessive Investment in Classical Music: Confronting Legacies of White Supremacy in U.S. Schools and Departments of Music by Loren Kajikawa. *Seeing Race Again: Countering Colorblindness Across the Disciplines* by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Luke Charles Harris, Daniel Martinez HoSang, and George Lipsitz (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 155-174.

DAMTA Spring Program 2021



January 13 -- Kristin Jordheim – “Music, Culture and Society - a Look at Community Music”

This program will introduce and overview music’s role in the health of a community for music educators and therapists. How does a teaching studio make a difference? What about the actions of a local or state association? How do we live the MTNA theme “Music is for Everyone”?

Bio: Kristin Jordheim couldn’t have known that singing at the hospital bed of her grandfather at age four would lead to a career in music therapy and teaching. She holds music therapy and therapeutic recreation degrees from New York University. She is a Music Therapist-Board Certified (MT-BC) who owns a private practice, Advantage Music Therapy, and a teaching studio in Denver. Kristin is active in DAMTA , currently serving as DAMTA Past President, and a member of the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA)



February 10 -- Solomon Chapman -- “Gifts of Gospel Music”

Pianist Solomon Chapman examines how his trial-by-fire training in Gospel music shaped his philosophy, informed his pedagogy, and equipped him with a skill set that has served him well in other professional music settings. Chapman reflects on pleasant, uncomfortable, and even embarrassing musical experiences in church, experiences that he now considers “gifts” and is eternally grateful. In addition to shedding light on a community and culture that

may not be widely discussed in music education circles, Chapman hopes to challenge music instructors to investigate how elements of the Gospel music learning tradition can be integrated into their own teaching methodology.

Bio: A native of Denver, Solomon J. Chapman is a sought-after musician within the Gospel and Jazz communities of Colorado. At age nine, he began formal lessons with pianist Marie Clark. In the same year, he also began serving as lead pianist of his church, St. John Church of God in Christ, under the musical direction of his mother, Christeen Chapman. Through countless performances in concert and liturgical settings as a teenager, Solomon became an active gospel accompanist and collaborator in music-ministry projects in Colorado. He graduated from Overland High School in 2011, gaining such honors as the George Eastman Young Leaders Award and the John Philip Sousa Band.

Solomon received both academic and music talent scholarships to study at the Metropolitan State University of Denver. As a student at MSU Denver, he performed in many areas of the music

program, including the MSU Denver BigBand, JazzCombo, Vocal Accompanying, Classical Chamber Music, and Wind Ensemble. In the Spring of 2016, he graduated Magna Cum Laude from MSU Denver, earning a Bachelor Degree in Music Composition.

Currently, Solomon is active as a composer, arranger, and educator. His works have been featured in local ensembles like The Rhythm of Life Community Chorus and the MSU Denver Wind Ensemble as well as in Colombia, South America through ColomboAmerican Medellín’s 2015 Jazz Camp and Festival. Passionate about music education, Solomon is also the owner of MD Music LLC, a company dedicated to cultivating gospel musicians within the State of Colorado.



March 10 -- Tenia Nelson -- “Exploring the Life and Music of Mary Lou Williams”

Mary Lou Williams was an American jazz pianist, arranger, and composer. She wrote hundreds of compositions and arrangements and recorded more than one hundred records.

Williams wrote and arranged for Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman, and she was friend, mentor, and teacher

to Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Tadd Dameron, Bud Powell, and Dizzy Gillespie.

Bio: Tenia Nelson is a pianist, percussionist, composer, arranger, and educator. She currently

teaches music at Denver Language School, Neighborhood Music at Stanley Marketplace, and privately in her music studio.

She holds a Bachelor Degree in Music Education Degree from Metropolitan State University of Denver and a Masters of Music Degree (Jazz Studies) from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

In addition to teaching she performs regularly at jazz venues in the Denver. She leads a group called Tenia Nelson Trio (Tenia Nelson, keys; Brendan O' Donoghue, bass; Alex Tripp, drums).



April 14 - Deborah De La Torre & Ben Raznick -- “Action Steps Toward Becoming Anti-Racist in the Private Music Studio”

We are witnessing protests across the world fighting for systemic changes and accountability for the way people of color are disenfranchised in our communities.

We see this too in our music communities, whether we take a look at the amount of students of color each teacher has, the

diversity we have within the membership and leadership of our organization, or the amount of

composers of color we include in our curriculum. We don't realize how our private music teaching contributes to systemic racism. Repertoire lists without pieces by composers of color means students will lack awareness of them. This is how "cultural erasure" works. Composers and their works that are continuously absent from catalogues and competitions lead to the assumption that such music simply does not exist. We believe this important work can be addressed through intentional action steps.

Bio: Deborah De La Torre has an award-winning music career as a pianist, composer/arranger, educator, Latina/o art festival founder, documentary film producer and recording artist/producer. She received her Bachelor's degree in Music from the University of Miami, Florida, and her MBA in Business Administration from Regis University in Denver. She is passionate about Caribbean, Latin American and Spanish/Iberian musicology, performing as "La Cocodrila" (the lady crocodile) on account of her fierce playing style.

Bio: Ben Raznick is a pianist, composer, recording artist and teacher from Colorado. He has trained with piano professors in the US, Argentina, Brazil and Spain. Raznick was selected as a 2x semi-finalist of The American Prize in 2019. He is a recipient of Steinway & Sons prestigious Top Music Teacher Award in 2017, 2018 & 2019, and affiliate faculty at MSU. Raznick's solo piano classical album, Birds of a Feather, features a professionally edited video performance of each work.

May 12 -- DAMTA Teacher's Musicale

Join DAMTA teachers as they showcase their talents in this awesome Musicale.



DAMTA's 2020 Teachers Performance Group

"Not only a chance to perform but a chance to learn and an opportunity for feedback"

Cornelia “Nellie” Vertenstein

Sun, Feb 14, 2021

Hello Everyone,

Just as a way of clarification, my colleague Dr. Diana Dumlavwalla, Prof of Pedagogy at Florida State University, had contacted me several weeks back about interviewing me for a research project she was doing for the MTNA national conference on teachers who have adapted to technology during the pandemic. Diana mentioned that it would be very inspiring for teachers to hear from Nellie Vertenstein because she had adapted to doing all her teaching online at the age of 93, as noted by the article in the New York Times. I was able to get Nellie's contact from Gabriela and was fortunate to be able touch base with Nellie to OK this. Nellie and I were going to get together to talk more about her teaching and life.

Nellie was extremely excited about sharing her experiences this past year for Diana's project and was scheduled to do the interview with her when she suddenly got admitted to the hospital. Nellie had communicated back and forth with Diana right up to the time she was being admitted. It is possible that Diana might have been the last one outside the family to have communications with Nellie because of this. She was the one that alerted me to Nellie's passing and I shared this with Gabriela yesterday.

Due to the MTNA conference deadline, Diana was not able to include Nellie in her presentation for MTNA, but she and I thought that it would be inspiring and appropriate for teachers to still hear and learn from Nellie posthumously in a separate project. It is very sad that Nellie's work and stories in the world of piano teaching could not be preserved for posterity in time. Diana was so close to doing it!

I realize that the CSMTA conference program may already be set. However, since Nellie Vertenstein was one of Colorado's own with graduate and doctoral degrees in Performance and Pedagogy from CU Boulder (who were her teachers? Duckworth?), as well as a Holocaust survivor, if CSMTA wishes to highlight her contributions as a piano teacher in Colorado, this might be a good time. Otherwise, I'm sure that there will be other opportunities.

I thought you would appreciate the backstory for the e-mail thread. Please feel free to share this email with whoever necessary.

Warm wishes,
Chee-Hwa Tan
Piano- educator- composer

Full article at:

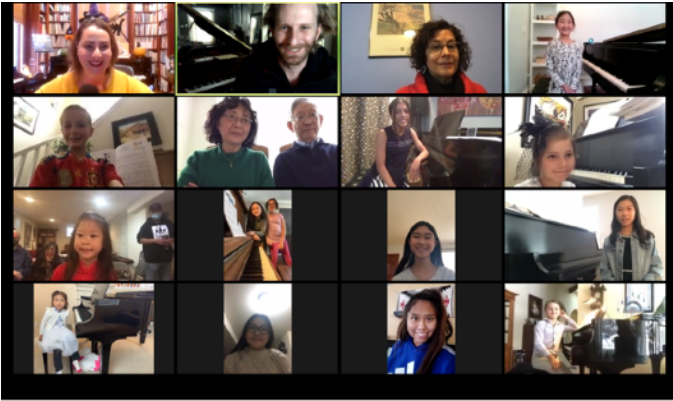
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/15/us/virus-piano-lessons.html?smid=url-share>

A 92-Year-Old Piano Teacher Won't Let Students Miss Bach in the Pandemic

Cornelia Vertenstein, a Holocaust survivor, is still teaching piano lessons over FaceTime from her Denver home.



Virtual Musicales 2021



Even though we can't get together for the time being, musicales will still take place every month on Zoom for the time being! Please note the following changes for musicales this year:

- * Online musicales will be limited to 45 minutes.
- * There will be no fee to perform in musicales, however donations to our scholarship fund will be encouraged.

* Some musicales will have designated themes, but any performer is encouraged to participate even if their piece is not related to the theme.

- * As long as musicales are online, more creativity can be encouraged for performances; this can include staging, including family members in the performance or whatever the students can come up with!

Save these upcoming dates!

March 21 at 2:00

April 18 at 2:00 (feature duets and ensemble music)

May 16 at 12:00

If you have a student(s) who would like to participate, please send our March host with the following information: performer's name, musical selection and approximate length of performance.

March Host: Allyson Koplen allysonkoplen@gmail.com

If you have any questions about this year's changes or anything else about musicales, you may contact the musicale chair Megan Koegel at missmeganpiano@gmail.com.

DAMTA-Passalongs

DAMTA's closed Google group for members

- Notices in addition to official DAMTA business.
- Announcements and passalong emails that may be of interest to DAMTA members.
- News of teachers workshops, competitions, special sales, instruments for sale privately, auditions, concerts, recitals etc.

All current year DAMTA members have access. The default option is to receive emails as they come in. You change your setting to receive a digest email or no emails at all. If you choose no emails you can view DAMTA-Passalongs at <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/damta-passalongs>

Newsletter Submissions

- Submit all Flyers/Announcements as an email attachment to benraznickmusic@gmail.com no later than the 20th of each month.
- DAMTA issues the Lyrics Newsletter as a monthly edition from September-May, with a double edition in December/January.