

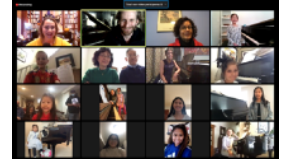
**A few highlights this month:**



**ALEX ZHANG**  
STUDENT PAGE



**MISSION STATEMENT**  
DEI COMMITTEE NEWS



**MAY 16TH**  
VIRTUAL MUSICALE



# LYRICS

Join DAMTA for our final Business Meeting on May 12th 9:30am to honor our departing Board Members: ([Join Zoom Meeting](#))



**Vince Madison, President 2013-2021**

Learn more about Vince:

<http://www.teachertales.net/vince-madison.html>

**Evelyn Billberg, 3rd VP 2013-2021**

Learn more about Evelyn:

<http://www.teachertales.net/evelyn-billberg.html>



**Allyson Koplen, Treasurer 2018-2021**

Learn more about Allyson:

<http://allysonkoplen.com>



**May Dates to Remember:**

**May 5**

10:30am - DEI Committee Meet & Greet with MTNA's Ann Arbor Anti-Racism Taskforce

**May 6, 13, 20**

2pm - DEI Committee Meeting

**May 12**

9:30am - Business Meeting & Honoring Ceremony

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

**May 16**

2pm - Virtual Musicale

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Member Information

**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
Kristin Jordheim	Parliamentarian

**Congratulations to our Board Members Elect!**

Sonya Clark

David House

Carolyn Angelier





## May 2021 President's Message

Hello DAMTA:

Vince Madison your president here, for the last time as president! I just want to thank you all for the opportunity to serve as your president for the last 8 years.

We've gone through quite a few changes. We moved our meeting space from Schmidt to Classic Pianos. We got an A/V system for our live presentations. We've updated our website. And we've had a number of informative presentations, both during our fall course and spring programs. And we've survived a pandemic!

I want to thank everyone on the board both currently and in the past for all the great work you have all done. I hope I've left DAMTA in a better place, but if I have, I couldn't have done it without all the hundreds of hours of work by all the other board members.

I'll still be around. I will keep doing the website, and as past president I'll still be at board meetings. But I am looking forward to the new leadership that Ben Raznick will be providing. I hope everyone can give him the same support that you have all given me. DAMTA is forging a path to the future and I feel confident you are in good hands with Ben.

In conclusion let me thank you all one more time. I've had a wonderful time interacting with you all, and look forward to hopefully seeing you all in person in the fall!

Vince Madison  
DAMTA President

# Editor's Note

Dear DAMTA,

May 12th will be very special! On this morning, during our final Business Meeting of the year, we will hold an Honoring Ceremony to celebrate the service of three of our outstanding Board Members: our President Vince Madison, our 3rd VP Evelyn Billberg and our Treasurer Allyson Kopen. Vince and Evelyn have served for eight years, and Allyson for three years on our Board. Please join us for our Business Meeting beginning at 9:30am. [Join Zoom Meeting](#)

I have enjoyed a wonderful past three years serving as your Lyrics Newsletter Editor. Lyrics has allowed me to connect with you all in a unique way and get to know you better. Designing each month's layout of Lyrics also became my fun monthly creative outlet. I will be passing the metaphorical Newsletter torch, once handed down to me by Betsy Johnson, to our newly elected Newsletter VP, David House. David has joined me recently on Zoom meetings as we worked together to create these past couple of editions. I'm eager to enjoy Lyrics this next year coming from his Editor's desk.

Additionally, Sonya Clark and Carolyn Angelier will join our Board this upcoming year as Membership VP and Treasurer, respectively, and I am honored to transition into DAMTA's next President.

This past year has been one we will never forget. Between a global pandemic and a global civil rights movement, it's hard to even believe 2020/2021 has been our reality. However, DAMTA stepped up to the plate like I couldn't have ever imagined. In response to the Black Lives Matter movement, our Board & Membership approved and appointed our first-ever Diversity Equity and Inclusion VP Position. From here a DEI Committee formed, now five members strong, and began hosting a monthly DEI Conversation. Meanwhile, amidst a global health crisis, DAMTA ensured our teachers', students' and families' safety were an absolute priority, adapting to new technology by hosting virtual musicales, virtual fall and spring programs, and virtual membership and board meetings. To think we have accomplished this all in one academic year is truly humbling. I want to take a moment and acknowledge every Board Member for your support as we embraced each and every challenge: Our President Vince along with Allyson, Deborah, Evelyn, Kristin, Marilyn, Megan, Nazila, THANK YOU! And to all of you Members who have remained loyal to DAMTA through these difficult times, THANK YOU!

DAMTA, I hope you have a fantastic summer, and I look forward to sharing with you my many ideas for this upcoming year in leadership. I can't wait to get to work and continue DAMTA's brilliant mission.

Sincerely,  
Ben Raznick  
President Elect

# Student Page



Submitted by Deborah De La Torre

## **Alex Zhang, age 11, composer of a six movement piece on the global pandemic**

The accomplished junior composer and advanced-level high school math competitor has won many previous awards for his musical creations from the Colorado Federation of Music Clubs and the Western Region Competitive level of the National Federation of Music Clubs. Alex is in sixth grade and participates in advanced high-school math competitions. His 2020 work about the global pandemic titled “Riding Out of the Darkness,” was so well-written that his composition teacher, Deborah De La Torre, encouraged his parents to copyright it. Alex prepared an Artist Statement which he gave prior to his performance of the work at DAMTA’s Student Musicale held online on March 21, 2021.

The work begins with “a vision of what I have seen, of what I’ve experienced, and what I’ve felt in the past year.” His first movement, “Peaceful and Happy,” starts with “a peaceful melody reflecting the happiness right before the pandemic outbreaks.” The second movement, “Chaotic and Dark,” startles the listener with “left hand melodies and some clashing chords to describe the chaos in the past year.” The third movement, “Sad,” slows the tempo dramatically, and is “a slow and sad expression in a minor key, describing how I feel for the loss of so many lives in the world because of the coronavirus.” The “Heroic” fourth movement, uses “an ascending and descending pattern, [which] expresses my gratitude to our doctors, nurses, and front line workers who worked so hard for such a long time. Next is, “Light of Humanity,” which is “an uplifting melody... showing the glory of humanity in this pandemic, the people who donated masks, gloves, and other equipment to those who are in need, and the people donated food to the hungry.” Finally, the sixth movement signals joy. “Happy Once Again,” you will hear that Alex’s music “reflects my own hope. I hope we can have a normal and happy life soon. My grandparents got vaccinated just like many of the other seniors in this country. We have seen the light at the end of the tunnel.”

Submitted by Valerie Mishek

## Recitals & Honors

video games, programming and improvisation. He and his family enjoy hiking, traveling, and visiting family in Canada. He is an extremely talented, highly motivated, outstanding and gifted young musician. He is now in his senior year at Western Tech and working toward the Regular High School Diploma for 2021 auditions. He is a joy, an honor and a privilege to teach.

### Mishek Piano Studio Honors

The Valerie Mishek Piano Studio, of Littleton, CO, honored four students who presented National programs in 2018, 2019 and 2020 auditions. Elliott and Samantha Ng presented their fifth National programs in 2020. Helen Zhu presented her sixth National program in 2019, and Kaylie Pieper presented a State program in 2019 after presenting her fifth National program in 2018.

Elliott, age 14, son of Dr. Perry Ng and Dr. Lay-Leng Chan, is a ninth grade honor student at D'Evelyn Jr-Sr High School. He has performed the National Piano Guild ten-piece program for five years from 2016 to 2020. He has also won both Honorable Mention and Winner at the Foothill Music Teachers Association Sonatina Festival in the past several years, and was the winner of Class Three in March of 2020. Elliott has also been a winner at the Fall Festival of the Music Teachers Association Suburban Northwest. For his performances at the Festival of the Creative Pianist, he received the Best Pianist Studying with a Teacher from the Denver Area Music Teachers Association and the Best Performance of an Etude. As a performer at the Broomfield Piano Festival of the Broomfield Music Teachers Association, he received third place in Division three in March of 2020. He also received a third-place award for the Great Composers Competition Series—Master of Sonata Competition in 2020. He received an Award of Merit from the Bay Area 2020 Piano Competition. In addition to his piano studies, Elliott enjoys playing the saxophone in the D'Evelyn High School Marching Band, and likes playing tennis and was on the D'Evelyn High School Boys' Tennis Team. He also finds time to perform the piano at local nursing homes and enjoys bringing music to the residents there.



Elliott Ng

Samantha, age 16, Elliott's sister, is junior honor roll student at D'Evelyn Jr-Sr High School. She has performed in the National Piano Guild auditions since 2016, and is a 5-Year National winner (performing ten-piece National programs) following 2020 auditions. She also won First Place in the highest division at the Foothills Music Teachers Association's Sonatina Festival in March 2020 with her performance of Beethoven's Tempest Sonata. She received third place in Division IV at the Broomfield Piano Festival of the Broomfield Music Teachers Association in February of 2020 as well as in 2019. For her performance at the Great Composers Competition Series—Master of Sonata Competition, she was honored with a second-place award in Division four. She was also a top winner in the Festival of the Creative Pianist and has won four awards. In addition to her piano studies, she enjoys playing clarinet in the D'Evelyn High School Marching Band as a section leader. She also has performed as part of the pit orchestra for the school musical. Along with her brother, she has volunteered to perform the piano in local nursing homes and assisted living centers, where she enjoys making the lives of seniors more pleasant and enjoyable. Samantha also loves arts and crafts. She regularly makes handmade cards for family and friends, and donates cards to be sent to disadvantaged groups. She also enjoys travel and was fortunate to go on a mission trip through her church to Africa during the summer of 2019.



Samantha Ng

Helen, age 14, daughter of Van Lu and Kai Zhu, is in ninth grade at D'Evelyn Jr-Sr High School. She performed in the National Piano Guild auditions for seven years (2013-2019). During the last six years, she performed ten-piece National programs. She has also received top placements at the Foothills Music Teachers Association Sonatina Festival (Lakewood, CO) and at the Music Teachers Association Suburban Northwest Fall Festivals (Arvada, CO). Helen also received an Honorable Mention for her performances in the Festival of the Creative Pianist. She received third place for her performance of Debussy in the Great Composers Competition Series—Best Debussy in division three in the summer of 2020. She is also a member of the Advanced Orchestra at her school where she plays violin and is a member of the D'Evelyn High School Marching Band where she plays the flute. She also participates in the Winter Color Guard at her school. She is fluent in Chinese and is an honor student at her school. Helen also likes to play tennis, to ski and to travel.



Helen Zhu

Kaylie, age 15, daughter of Krista and Steve Pieper, is a sophomore at Thunder-Ridge High School where she is an honor student. She performed in the National Guild auditions for seven years (2013-2019). For five years (2014-2018), she performed ten-piece National programs. She has also been a winner at the Music Teachers Association Suburban Northwest Fall Festival numerous times, has been a winner of the Foothills Music Teachers Association Sonatina festival several times, and has been chosen a finalist at the Broomfield Music Teachers Association Piano Festival. In addition to her music studies, Kaylie enjoys horseback riding (Jumpers), helping younger riders with their technique on horseback, CrossFit and competitive swim team events. She plans to join the International Baccalaureate program during her junior and senior years to earn an IB diploma.



Kaylie Pieper

### Wu Presents Fifth National Program

Deborah Wu, student of Eunsil Yun, of Collierville, TN, successfully completed her fifth National program during 2020 Guild auditions. She is preparing for her sixth year of National programs in 2021.

The piano has always been one of Deborah's favorite instruments. She has been studying the piano with Mrs. Eunsil Yun for over six years. She has participated in several piano festivals and competitions. Over time, she has learned many new compositions from different musical eras. Some were hard, and some were relatively easy. The piano has helped her grow in multiple ways; it helped her get through difficult times and concentrate on things. She took advanced music



## **DAMTA's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee News**

Submitted April 24, 2021 by Deborah De La Torre, VP, DEI

### **May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month**

DAMTA's DEI Committee has been very active this month! We have been working on our committee's mission statement, included here below. We invite DAMTA's members to courteously reply with any additional ideas. We will also send out the proposed mission statement via DAMTA's Passalongs. The DEI Committee intends to share this at the May Business Meeting, which will be our final meeting of the academic year, before we break for the summer.

#### **DAMTA's DEI Committee Mission Statement**

The DAMTA DEI Committee stands committed in united solidarity as an anti-racist professional music teaching committee. We pledge to value individual growth, education and examination of implicit bias in our own formative music education, and its impact in our music teaching & professional music teaching association work. We are dedicated to ensuring our anti-racism actions are reflected in the life and culture of our music teaching through policies, programs, and practices in our professional activities. We are devoted to the development and implementation of strategies and best-practices that dismantle oppression of BIPOC and historically marginalized communities through racism, cultural and ethnic erasure within all aspects of our music teaching profession in the greater Denver area and society at large.

Signed,

Deborah De La Torre, Marilyn Madsen, Nazila Nekooraad, Ben Raznick, Jan Romero  
(names appear in alphabetical order)

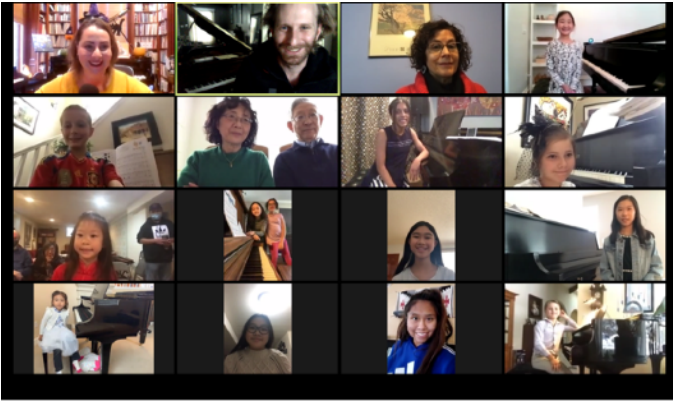
In other DEI news, the DAMTA presentation titled, "**Action Steps Toward Becoming Anti-Racist in the Music Teaching Studio**" given by Deborah De La Torre and Ben Raznick on Wednesday, April 14 achieved a record turnout of 23 attendees. In addition to our regular members, local piano university faculty, friends and family were attendance. Several music teachers from an anti-racism task force of Ann Arbor, Michigan joined in, as well as special invited VIP guest Martha Hilley, MTNA's national (outgoing) president. If you missed this powerful presentation, you can experience it at the [CSMTA Virtual Conference June 3-5](#). (It will not be recorded due to the sensitive nature of the topics involved).

The DEI Committee is currently exploring grant submission opportunities intended to increase DAMTA's awareness, musical education, participation and support of BIPOC performing artists, composers, teachers and students. We would like to partner with other MTNA chapters and/or even other musical groups in this endeavor and invite your support and ideas.

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The DEI Committee is a working group which meets weekly on Thursdays, 2-3 pm via Zoom. If you are interested in joining, please contact Deborah De La Torre ([DLTDenver@yahoo.com](mailto:DLTDenver@yahoo.com)) or Ben Raznick ([BenRaznickMusic@gmail.com](mailto:BenRaznickMusic@gmail.com)) to rsvp and receive the Zoom link.

## 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!**

May 16 at 2:00

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

May Host: Nazila Nekoerad [nekooradnazila@gmail.com](mailto:nekooradnazila@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](mailto: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 our incoming newsletter editor, David House [davidhouse1@comcast.net](mailto:davidhouse1@comcast.net) 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.