



DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

November 2022

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



DA CAPO

Hello Music Alumni. I hope this newsletter finds you all doing well. The Department of Music is a flurry of activity as we near the end of the fall semester. Our fall 2022 enrollment numbers are strong and our concert performance season is in full swing. As you will see below, our students and faculty have had a very successful summer and start to the fall semester as we have several individuals and groups who have been accepted to perform at state, national and international conferences. For example, as I write this letter our percussionists, led by Dr. Brian Zator, are en route to the Percussive Arts Society International Conference (PASIC) to perform, present and participate in competitions. We also have a team of vocalists at the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) conference.

Our faculty also have newly published books, CDs, arrangements, articles and numerous additional achievements. In short, we're very proud of our students and faculty, and all their accomplishments.

In this new newsletter, I hope to keep you all informed of recent, current and upcoming events. I want to share the successes of our students and faculty. I also want to hear from you so that we can share your successes with other alumni. There is a section below with a link where you can let us know what you're up to. Finally, I want to let you know how you can stay involved in the incredible future of this department.

Please share this newsletter with other Music Alumni that you may know so we can make sure everyone stays connected.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Our alumni have been very busy and have accumulated a lot of accolades since the last news letter. See below. If you have information or announcements you would like to share with us, or to update your contact information, [click here](#).

- Adam Cope was recently awarded a GTA Position at Louisiana State University working with Dr. Cecilia Kang to pursue a graduate degree in clarinet performance.
- Oshadhee Satarasinghe, who is currently pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of Calgary, recently co-authored a chapter in the book *Commercial and Popular Music in Higher Education*, ed. by Jonathan Kladder (Routledge).
- Courtney Helms accepted an offer for the role of Grants Administrator with Lyda Hill Philanthropies.



- Anthony Robinson was recently announced as a recipient of the Percussive Arts Society "Lifetime Achievement in Education Award." The announcement can be found at the PAS [website](#).

- TAMUC Music alum Kathryn To'afa was named Teacher of the Year in Royse City ISD.

- David Estrada was named Teacher of the Year and Fine Arts Teacher of the Year for Highland Park I.S.D.

- Kasi Justice was named First Class Teacher of the Year at Achziger Elementary in Mesquite ISD.

- Benjamin Daniel was named Teacher of the Year at Ruben Johnson Elementary School. [Click here](#) to see a brief video interview with Mr. Daniel.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Our students are in the spotlight in the classroom, in the rehearsal hall, on stage and at some of the most prestigious professional conferences in the industry.

- The TAMUC Flute Studio under the direction of Dr. Julee Kim Walker has been invited to perform at the Texas Music Educators Association conference in February.

- The Low Brass studio under the direction of Dr. Jeffrey Baker was invited to perform at the International Tuba Euphonium conference in Arizona.

- The Saxophone studio directed by Dr. Chris Beaty was invited to perform at the National Biennial Conference of the North American Saxophone Alliance.

- The Piano Studio (Dr. Luis Sanchez and Ms. Libby Vanatta) was invited to present a clinic at the national Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) conference in March.

- The Chamber Singers, directed by Dr. Randy Hooper, were invited to perform at a joint conference of the International Music Festival at Campina Grande and the Brazilian branch of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA).

- The Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensemble I and Panimation Steel Drum Band recently performed at the Greenville Municipal Auditorium for roughly 2,000 children from Northeast Texas Schools.

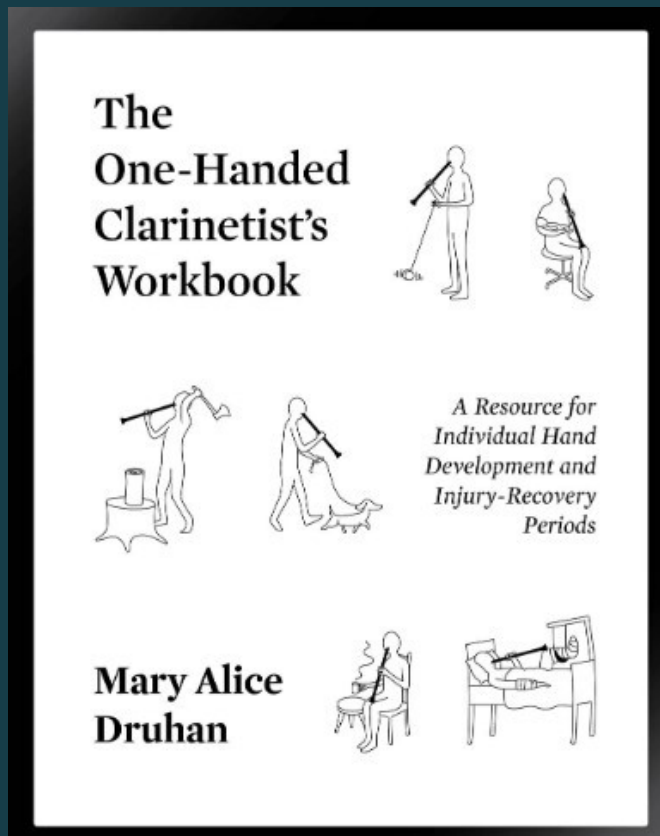
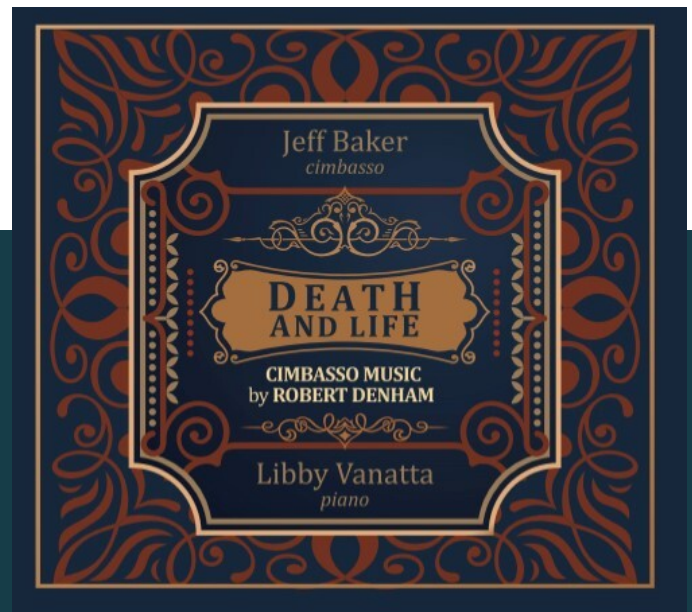
- Finally, as of this writing, the Percussion studio, directed by Dr. Brian Zator is in Indianapolis performing and competing at the Percussive Arts Society International Conference.

Stay tuned for more information!

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

- Congratulations to Dr. Jeffrey Baker who just released a new CD of cimbasso music with Libby Vanatta at the piano. [Click here](#) to see *Death...and Life for Cimbasso and Piano* by Robert Denham.
- Dr. Brian Zator (percussion) will have a very busy year as a guest clinician and performer at three notable conferences. He will be the sole clinician for the Marimba Masterclass at the PASIC Conference in November. In December, he will lead a session entitled "Discover the New Gems of Percussion Solo Literature" at the Midwest Conference in Chicago. Finally, he will be one of four marimba instructors/guest artists at the International Katarzyna Mycka Marimba Academy (IKMMA) conference in July.
- Dr. Mary Druhan (clarinet) is celebrating the publication of her newest book, "The One-Handed Clarinetist's Workbook: A Resource for Individual Hand Development and Injury-Recovery Periods." From CAMco publications.

- Dr. Barrett Radziun (voice) recently presented his research at the University of North Texas, in addition to preparing for the upcoming performance season with Orpheus Chamber Singers, a Dallas-based premiere professional chamber choir.
- Dr. Brock Johnson (voice), along with Ms. Libby Vanatta (piano) recently completed a recital tour through several states, extending to the east coast.
- Dr. Luis Sanchez (piano) recently coordinated the Latin American Piano Festival featuring guest speakers and performers from Argentina, Columbia and Brazil.



CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

LATIN AMERICAN PIANO FESTIVAL

		
ALEJANDRO CREMASCHI ARGENTINA	ANDRES JARAMILLO COLOMBIA	ALESSANDRA FERIS BRAZIL
SEPTEMBER 21, 2022 7:30 PM	SEPTEMBER 22, 2022 5:00 PM	SEPTEMBER 22, 2022 7:30 PM

MUSIC BUILDING - FINNEY CONCERT HALL
FREE ADMISSION

 **TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
COMMERCE**

UPCOMING EVENTS

- We hope you will join us on December 9 and 10 at 7:30 p.m. for our **Annual Holiday Gala**. Visit our [website](#) for tickets and information.

- We invite you to all of our upcoming concerts, recitals and events. All events (except the Holiday Gala) are free and we hope you can join us. Visit [the main department website](#) for a full list of upcoming concerts and recitals.

- We are also hard at work preparing for our annual summer camps. For additional information, dates, and registration information, visit our camps [webpage](#)



Save the Date

We hope you will join us Friday night, February 10 for the Alumni Reception at the TMEA Conference. This year, we will be in the Bonham E and Bonham Foyer of the Grand Hyatt San Antonio River Walk Hotel. More information to come!

IN MEMORY OF

James F. Keene (1949-2022)



Mr. Keene served as Director of Bands at East Texas State University from 1975 to 1980. He went on to serve as Director of Bands at the University of Arizona (1980-1985) and the University of Illinois (1985-2008). You can learn more about his legacy by visiting the newly-established Facebook Group: East Texas State University Band-the Keene Years. To see Mr. Keene's obituary, [click here](#).

George Jones (1955-2022)



Mr. Jones served as an adjunct instructor for the music department, supervising music student teachers. He was a former Director of Visual and Performing Arts for Garland ISD, and band director across the metroplex. He passed away on October 17, 2022.



SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS (SOS Campaign)

I thank you for your continued support of our students and all they do. As part of our new formal “support our students” campaign, we invite you to continue supporting the department by committing to:

1. **Talk:** In your communities, wherever you are, share your great experiences as a student in the music department. Just about everyone you know either has a high school student who is making college/career decisions, or knows someone who has a college student. Spread the great reputation of the TAMUC Music Department in your community.

2. **Send:** We have a lot of camps, honor bands, honor choirs, piano festivals and other events for junior high and high school students. We also have the piano academy and other activities for younger audiences. Send your students to campus for any of these life-changing events.

3. **Come:** You are always welcome to attend any of our concerts and events. We mostly perform on campus but our large and chamber ensembles are regularly on tour. We invite you to attend any of our events. All events except the Holiday Gala are free and open to the public. When you come, invite your friends and introduce them to our wonderful department and its students.



4. **Give:** Many of you came to college through the generosity of somebody who donated to the department. Donations come in large or small amounts and contribute toward facilities, instruments, instructional resources, scholarships and other endowments. We are currently completing our seat-naming campaign where, for a donation of \$1,500, you can have a seat in the Finney Concert Hall named after you or someone you choose. Larger donations can lead to classroom naming, practice rooms, and other parts of the facility. Smaller donations, in any amount are always welcome. It's always amazing how much the university can do through contributions, regardless of amount.

To make a financial contribution:

- Visit www.tamuc.edu/Support
- After selecting or typing in your preferred donation amount, make sure you select “**College of Humanities, Social Sciences, & Arts**” in the designation drop down.
- Note that you would like to direct this gift to the Music Department in the **comment section** at the bottom of the form.



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