

2022 VMTA Fall Conference

October 22, 2022

Location: Richmond Free Library, 201 Bridge Street, Richmond, VT 05477

10:00-11:00 Building a Bridge: Curriculum Development Through the Elementary Levels Kathryn Sherman

Navigating the shift from method books to repertoire often poses significant curricular challenges to teachers. This workshop will explore ways to seamlessly transition through elementary stages while building core technical, analytical, and stylistic competencies necessary for immediate and future success at the piano. The workshop will build on important pedagogical principles and a strong conceptual framework to provide practical and readily applicable instructional strategies, literature recommendations, and helpful resources that will assist teachers as they move students successfully through the early stages of instruction.

11:15-12:15 Masterclass

Dr. Sherman will work with several young students of VMTA member teachers, modeling pedagogical techniques and strategies across a range of levels and repertoire that will provide valuable insights to all who observe her experienced and deeply grounded work with young pianists.

12:15-1:00 Lunch

1:00-2:00 Movement and Music, Abby Halpin, Physical Therapist

Music teachers have been teaching posture to students for as long as there have been music lessons. We usually talk about posture as a static description of good and bad body positions. Common phrases included "shoulders back and down" and "sit on the edge of your seat". What if we permitted students to find a broad vocabulary of comfortable positions to play in? They could change it up as either their bodies or their performances require. Let's discuss new ways to encourage engaged bodies and, in doing so, also avoid common pitfalls that "perfect posture" can present. These pitfalls include the three things musicians complain of most: shoulder and neck tension, forearm overuse injury, and back pain. So let's break all the rules!

You will leave this discussion with:

1. New, effective ways to talk with your students about body positions while practicing.
2. Strategies to improve your students' comfort, longevity, and health as a musician.
3. Exercises to use during lessons if posture is a problem.

2:00-2:30 VMTA General Membership Meeting

About Our Clinicians:

Kathryn Sherman:

Dr. Kathryn Sherman directs undergraduate and graduate programs in piano pedagogy at SUNY Potsdam's Crane School of Music, where she also teaches keyboard skills courses. She is an MTNA Nationally Certified Teacher of Music and co-directs the biennial Crane Piano Pedagogy Conference. Engaged with regional, state, and national piano teaching organizations, she frequently presents workshops and masterclasses nationwide, and is a very active performer. Kathryn earned her BM and BA degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, her MM from the University of Kansas, and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Oklahoma. Prior to her work at The Crane School, Kathryn served on the faculty of Oklahoma City University.

Abby Halpin:

Abby Halpin has spent much of her life trying to smash together her love for music and sports, including singing the national anthem at many of her own soccer games. She finally succeeded through her physical therapy practice, Forte Performance & Physical Therapy. Abby provides mobile and virtual sessions for Vermont musicians, singers, and performing artists. Her mission is to ensure that performers have healthcare resources who understand the requirements of their instrument and the training involved in being a musician.

Abby earned her doctorate in physical therapy from Ithaca College. She has practiced in Seattle since 2010 and recently moved to her home state of Vermont. She enjoys playing piano, singing, weightlifting, and enjoying the outdoors with her dog, Sherman.