

MEET BOARD MEMBERS OF THE ADAMANT MUSIC SCHOOL (AMS) 2025



May 24, 2025

We are pleased to present a slate of nominees for the three Board Director terms that conclude in 2025. Our board has collaborated exceptionally well and is continuing its forward momentum toward an outstanding summer season. Assembling and maintaining this talented group, which continues to be the largest board in AMS's history, is an achievement in itself (profiles of board members not currently up for election can be found starting on page 3).

This slate of three individuals contribute a wide range of skills in areas crucial to the school's operation. We invite you to get to know them; please see below for a brief introduction for each nominee.

Jeremy Klein, Treasurer

Wendy Laubach, 2nd Vice President

Roger Ward, Board Director

Jeremy Klein, Treasurer

Born and raised in Ottawa, Jeremy is an institutional investor with 27 years of global experience in finance. He holds a Bachelor of Mathematics degree from the University of Waterloo and later worked at Salomon Smith Barney as a quantitative equity analyst. He later moved to Switzerland where he served as head of asset allocation at AXA, one of Switzerland's largest insurance companies, leading a team of four investment professionals who were responsible for the day-to-day management of an asset pool worth more than \$100 billion. He then moved back to Canada and managed a portfolio of Canadian equities for a retail fund, following which he managed the Green Municipal Fund's \$1.5 billion endowment. His most recent position was Director of Investments at the University of Ottawa, managing its pension and endowment funds. He attended a masterclass session at Adamant Music School and was so inspired by its inclusive mission and history that he soon offered to share his financial acumen with the school. Following his appointment to Don Allen's Treasurer seat, Jeremy has deftly managed the school's assets and financial records in support of informed decision-making.

Wendy Laubach, Board Director

Wendy is a retired partner from the law firm of Weil, Gotshal & Manges, where she specialized in debt restructuring. Wendy was introduced to Adamant Music School last fall by her long-time friend Lisa Hardaway and was elected by the membership at the 2024 Annual Meeting.

Wendy's non-profit and public service include chairmanship of a pro bono legal clinic for Covenant House, a Houston shelter for homeless teenagers. She also served as president of her

Houston homeowners association and helped homeowners fight foreclosure actions. She was appointed to a state legislative subcommittee to draft reforms to the HomeOwner Association laws. After moving to Texas, she was elected to the office of Aransas County Commissioner for four years.

Wendy is impressed by the board's progress and strategic direction. This spring, she applied her considerable experience to the school's bylaws, drafting a complete and comprehensive draft with member input, and saving the school substantial amount of legal fees. In her board service, she draws on her experience with nonprofits and her service as a county commissioner to emphasize transparency, clear communication with members, and fair and consistent governance.

Wendy lives in a home that she and her husband built near Corpus Christi, Texas. She has chaired an Aransas county committee addressing problems at the local animal shelter, and has continued in dog rescue work, including fostering 3-4 dogs at a time. She shares an interest with board member Andy Christiansen in shape note singing.

Roger Ward, Board Director

Roger attended Adamant Music School for two weeks during the summer of 2024 and became passionate about its capacity to bring out the best in people. He subsequently donated funds to the school and assisted one of the Board's committees to help the school continue its positive growth and development.

When Roger was 12 years old, his musical adventures began when he was strongly encouraged by his farmer-pilot-uncle and mathematician-actress-aunt to add a keyboard to his interests. They helped him manipulate his parents into purchasing a Baldwin-Model L grand piano and a Hammond B3 organ. Because the organ could play loud, he continued playing it until he left home for college. Practical life happened and his musical aspirations ceased for 30-odd years.

Roger was initially trained as a mental health therapist and he practiced for 15 years. He then transitioned to the field of data science. He has an extensive history of analyzing complex situations while working for state governments and corporations. He enjoys analyzing data to illuminate issues and provide insights to all types of users. He thrives in assisting leaders in understanding data and using the results from complex statistical analyses (e.g., logistic regression, forecasting, event history analysis, clustering, and text analytics) to achieve success. His philosophy is that leaders need to know how to use data to direct their programs rather than understanding the statistical assumptions supporting the analytic procedures. He specializes in creating analytic tools to guide leaders toward proactive tasks for incremental goal attainment.

For the last 16 years, he has taught an array of behavioral science classes (e.g., Introduction to Psychology, Interpersonal Communication, Psychology of Adjustment) at the University of Cincinnati. Now living a quieter life without massive travel requirements, Roger has been taking piano lessons and he can't stop.

Adamant Music School Board of Directors

(not up for election in 2025)

Martin Heikel, President

Andy Christiansen, 2nd Vice President

Noah Hardaway, Secretary

Dan Nimetz, Board Director

Mark Jaffe, Board Director

Vickie von Arx, Board Director

Martin Heikel, President of the Board

Martin was asked to lead the Adamant Music School Board (AMS) in the summer of 2023, a time when the school was at risk of closure after 81 years. He brings extensive experience in organizational leadership and strategic growth. Since then, Martin has been deeply engaged in all aspects of the school, leading efforts with the board and the volunteers he recruited to work towards the school's financial viability and lasting success.

With his diverse business background, Martin has consulted for both nonprofits and private companies, some of which were in distress. He successfully helped them avoid closure with his business acumen. He has held corporate executive roles, founded his own company securing millions in funding, and built high-performing teams that consistently delivered results. Martin also serves on the board of a regional symphony orchestra, where his marketing and development expertise have helped elevate the organization's success.

Having visited the Adamant Music School for the past decade while his wife, Sandra, attended Master Classes, Martin believes that "Adamant is a gem that must be preserved! With its rich history and unique community of pianists it is a treasure that deserves to continue. Achieving sustainability for the first time in decades is not merely a challenge — it's an urgent necessity. The school has been operating at a deficit, and without immediate, expert intervention, its future is at grave risk. Sustainability doesn't come by chance or wishful thinking; it requires expertise, careful planning, and an extraordinary amount of work."

"The school needs the skilled board members on this slate, as well as key staff to be hired, who possess the knowledge and ability to deliver results. Time is running out and the school urgently requires a comprehensive plan paired with strong board leadership to execute it. Given my experience in similar situations, I accepted the role because places like the Adamant Music School are invaluable, and I want to help lay the foundation that ensures its legacy for generations to come."

Andy Christiansen, 2nd Second Vice President

Nearly 60 years ago Andy attended his first piano concert at the Adamant Community Club. Three years later, he was a student. In the 1970's he became close friends of founders Edwine Behre and Alice Mary Kimball. Andy traded buckets of raspberries from his nearby family dairy farm for their life stories. In the 80's and 90's he became the school archivist and wrote widely-cited history articles in the Adamanter newsletter.

Inspired by the financial struggles of dairy farmers, Andy was elected Vermont State Representative in 1986 and served for ten years in the legislature where he became Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee. In 1998 he began his own business designing websites and digitizing historic archives. When the non-profit Twin Valley Senior Center was facing dissolution, Andy, as Board President, helped put it on stable financial ground.

Early this year, Andy was asked to join the Adamant Music School board. He was impressed with the composition of the board, under the leadership of its president, and especially their determination to create a strategic plan for the school. Knowing that AMS had been facing difficult challenges he recalled Edwine's fear that the school would face a future crisis and she made Andy promise to do all he could to save the school when that time came. In 2011, when Frank Suchomel warned that money was running out with the possibility of closing the school, Andy spent many hours calling donors and friends of the school.

He discovered there was a reluctance for individuals to donate money unless there was a strategic business plan. Therefore being a part of creating a blueprint for sustainability is his main priority. All the other aspects of the school will be rendered moot if the school doesn't exist.

Andy sees no contradiction in pursuing sound business principles while preserving the school's artistic vision, the same marriage of skills embodied by the work of the school's founders: Edwine the artist and Alice Mary the business mind and procurer of donations.

Noah Hardaway, Secretary of the Board

Noah fell in love with Adamant Music School as a teenager when he took part in every session offered in the summer of 2012. He deepened his involvement in 2019-2021 by heading Adamant's Project Committee, collaborating with the prior board to host online concerts and assist with communications. A prizewinning pianist, Noah met John O'Connor at Adamant and recently completed a master's degree and doctorate as his student.

Noah was invited to join the board in late 2023, bringing with him hands-on expertise in festival management and an acute awareness of developing trends in the broader piano community.

Noah serves as Assistant to the Director and Chairman at Pianofest in the Hamptons, and has worked in all areas of the organization, including donor relations, maintaining financial records, reviewing student auditions, coordinating concerts, and managing residential students.

In his capacity as Assistant Head of Piano at tonebase, a global leader in online classical music education, Noah co-directs multiple festivals annually, including in Manhattan and Los Angeles. At Adamant, he serves as Chair of the Program Development Committee which makes recommendations regarding artistic planning and program design. Noah's proposals for the 2025 Traditional Session have increased applications by over 30%.

This past summer, Noah spearheaded a partnership between the Adamant School and tonebase, in which they advertised our Adamant Music School program to their subscriber base. Adamant managed all aspects of two one-week summer sessions, similar to our Traditional Session and masterclasses. The benefit of coordinating piano summer sessions with tonebase was evident as both our sessions sold out quickly and we introduced forty-five enthusiastic piano lovers to our school. This session will take place again in 2025, generating approximately \$50,000 in revenue.

Noah reflects, "It takes only a few minutes at the Adamant School to fall in love with it for a lifetime. Few other places on earth offer this kind of opportunity for true communion in music. However, without a dynamic and multi-talented board, consistent strategic leadership, and a farsighted financial plan, AMS's unique culture and community could vanish forever – and that would break my heart."

Daniel Nimetz, Board Director

Although his primary instrument is the French horn, Dan has audited Adamant Music School's piano master classes for over 20 years, including those led by renowned artists such as the late Menahem Pressler, John O'Connor, and Christopher Elton. He joined the board of directors in the fall of 2023.

Dan has a PhD in Musicology and has had several music-related careers before retiring in 2016. As a Professor of Music History, he taught at the Eastman School of Music and SUNY-Albany. He was Music Director and record producer at the Musical Heritage Society. He also served as a product manager at Vanguard and Moss Music.

In the non-profit sector, Dan served as the Executive Director for Early Music America and the Associated Chamber Music Players (ACMP). His dedication to supporting and promoting chamber music played a key role in the growth and administration of these organizations. During his tenure at ACMP, a bequest of \$6 million led to the formation of the ACMP Foundation, where Dan also served as Executive Director.

With his extensive non-profit experience, Dan brings the Adamant Music School valuable insights into governance, fundraising, and strategic planning.

Mark Jaffe, MD, Board Director

Mark, a retired ophthalmologist, dedicated his career to performing eye surgeries, teaching advanced cataract surgery techniques to other physicians, and sharing his expertise through

lectures across the US and internationally, including in China, Sweden, Japan, and Canada. He also co-authored books on eye surgery and hosted a weekly call-in radio program.

While medicine was his professional life, music has always been his passion. He began studying piano at age 50 and discovered the Adamant Music School while spending summers in Vermont. Over the past five years, he has participated in master classes as an auditor and has performed in the auditor recitals. Mark envisions the essential restoration of campus buildings and further establishing the school as an internationally recognized destination—a place where pianists and music lovers can gather to share their love for piano music in a nonjudgmental, noncompetitive environment.

He firmly believes in the transformative power of music, especially for children. When AMS generates sufficient revenue to cover operating costs, is no longer at risk of insolvency, Mark hopes to establish a program at the Adamant Music School that would support underprivileged children to visit the school, experience its beauty and music, and foster connections that could profoundly impact their lives.

Mark recently joined the AMS board after serving as an advisor on the Development Task Group. He has taken on the role of co-chair for a benefit concert in New York City, scheduled for March 2025. The concert will feature John O'Connor, Alvin Chow, Angela Cheng, and two of John's protégés. Dedicated to honoring the late Menahem Pressler, the event will raise funds for AMS through donations and celebrate the enduring legacy of classical music.

Since joining the board, Mark has been impressed by its diverse skills, camaraderie, and strong work ethic, as well as its strategic approach to addressing the ongoing financial crisis. He has connected the school with a significant new masterclass faculty member, Kevin Kenner, and assisted substantially in launching this new session. He is passionate about helping the school achieve new heights as a place of artistic growth, inspiration, and connection.

Victoria von Arx, PhD, Board Director

Vickie holds a Master of Music degree in piano performance from Syracuse University and a PhD degree in musicology from the City University of New York. She taught piano at the Third Street Music School Settlement in NYC from 1978 through 1997 and is the founder of the Third Street's chamber music program.

Later, she served for 17 years on the music faculty at the University at Albany in Albany, NY, where she taught music theory, history, piano, and chamber music. She was, and continues to be, an active performer of piano and chamber music. She worked for several years as an editor for MUSA Editions, based at the University of Michigan, and is the author of Piano Lessons with Claudio Arrau, published by Oxford University Press. Her articles appear in the Society for American Music Journal and the International Dictionary of Black Composers.

Vickie first came to the Adamant Music School to perform a solo recital in 1988. She has served as secretary on its board of directors and for two summers as a faculty member. She introduced AMS director Mary Lou Francis to Menahem Pressler and worked together to estab-

lish Mr. Pressler's masterclass at the Adamant Music School. She attended all of Mr. Pressler's masterclasses as a performer.

In September of 2023, Vickie started working in a volunteer task group, one of many organized by Martin Heikel, to boost the school's enrollment. This effort, on the part of the task group, contributed to a 28% increase in enrollment in summer 2024.

Vickie is interested in all aspects of the school's management, but especially in helping to promote enrollment, fund raising, and program development.