

Welcome to Kaila Rochelle's Artist Profile

The following pages are a brief biography of Kaila Rochelle's life in music.

To hear over 100 audio downloads visit her home page at:

<http://specialneedsinmusic.com>

and click on the sketches that are the same as those shown below. The piano web page features masterpieces of the piano repertoire. The song web page features beautiful songs. You can also access hundreds of work sheets and lyric sheets for music students with a wide array of abilities, challenges and talents.



mp3 audio file
downloads from
Kaila's

Piano Music



mp3 audio file
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Kaila's

Instructional CDs

Read more about the inspiring life of this unusual artist and special needs music teacher on the following pages by scrolling down.

Artist Profile of Kaila Rochelle



Kaila at Age Seven

Childhood and Teenage Years

Kaila Rochelle surprised her parents by singing Mozart at eight months of age. At the age of five she played piano for her extended family, but ran out of the room crying because she started on the wrong register of the piano. However, at the age of six, she gave her debut at the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, playing the Sonata No.16 in C Major by Mozart. She learned about new pieces on the piano from her older sister Esther. They frequently played duets together and their mother would play a music game by asking each one of them to make up their own improvisation of a familiar melody in the style of different composers. Kaila greatly enjoyed making her mother guess which composer she was imitating. This game went on for years. Kaila pursued her piano studies, while also enjoying a well rounded childhood.

In Junior High School her guidance counselor suggested she apply to different specialized high schools. She chose to attend The High School of Performing Arts and greatly enjoyed her music theory classes. Kaila began attending Greenwich House Music School where she had the great fortune to study piano with the composer/pianist Joan Tower and German Diez.



German Diez

Mr. Diez was a former student of the great pianist Maestro Claudio Arrau. He taught Kaila to pay attention to great details in the score.

Between the ages of 14 and 17, Kaila performed solo piano recitals, concerti with orchestras and on New York Classical Radio Stations. She also pursued her academic studies with great interest. One month before her graduation, symptoms of a rare spinal birth defect (which was then misdiagnosed for four and a half years) surfaced. Ironically, she had had the opportunity to play for Maestro Arrau two weeks before her symptoms started. His words of encouragement became a source of strength for her 16 years later when she returned to playing.

Kaila's Parents Come to the Rescue

Kaila went through many hospitalizations, procedures and surgeries of various natures in her attempts to get well from the various problems that occurred in her life. Her mother, in an attempt to deal with the emotional fall out from the constant pain her daughter experienced, served as president of the mental health organization The Association of Parents for Rehabilitation and Independent Living (APRIL). Her father, a prominent lawyer, served as legal advisor for this organization. Her parents did much to help the community. In doing so they set the stage for a wonderful future for their daughter. Someone in

APRIL suggested to Kaila's mother, that Kaila become a special education teacher for students with developmental disabilities. When Kaila was given this suggestion, she suddenly was given the gift of having a meaningful direction for her life. This inspired a wonderful career choice.

Life as a Special Education Teacher

For the past twenty three years, Kaila has taught music to developmentally disabled students, ages 14-21 within the New York City Public School System. She worked very hard to establish her program within this challenging system and speaks often about the guidance and support she has received from people at all levels. Her program has included chorus, piano, percussion band, violin, guitar, improvisation, music appreciation, theory and history. In addition, her program now includes incorporating the use of computer skills, since the creation of the web site <http://www.specialneedsinmusic.com>.

Relearning Piano with a Great Teacher

At the age of 32, Kaila's serious pursuit of piano performance was inspired by the needs of her students. Her former teacher German Diez helped her to pick up the pieces of her shattered career as a pianist. He gave her many opportunities to play publicly at Greenwich House Music School, and helped her retrace the paths to interpretive playing. German Diez chose fantastic pieces for her to study, such as the Liszt-Paganini Etude¹. In essence, he helped her recover her musical and technical instincts.

¹ 1. An audio download of Kaila's Greenwich House Music School performance of the Liszt-Paganini 'Etude in a minor' recorded in June of 1988, can be heard on Kaila's piano web page.

Kaila's Anti Stigma Piano Recitals

Kaila began giving benefit recitals to raise money for classroom pianos and to help organizations raise funds for people overcoming various challenges. Kaila named these concerts "anti stigma concerts". She also raised money for music scholarships for people with disabilities. Her 1992 Carnegie Weill Hall debut was a benefit recital for the Narcolepsy Project at Montefiore Hospital. She has also given many recitals for APRIL/NAMI (The National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) as well as NARSAD (The National Association for Research into Schizophrenia and Depression). The funds from her CAMI Hall Recital were raised for research into medications to help ease the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In recent years, Kaila has also frequently performed to raise funds for animal rescue groups.

Studying with a Special Voice Teacher



David Pasquale Marchese

The great tenor David Pasquale Marchese discovered Kaila's classroom work when he was combing the New York City schools during a talent search for a Knights of Pythias show. He convinced her to take voice lessons. For Kaila, studying voice was a secret dream, however, due to stamina issues, she was doubtful about her ability to study voice. Maestro Marchese's approach to singing for beginners focused in on yawning for breath control more than on breathing techniques.

This was perfect for Kaila and for her students, especially those with cerebral palsy, autism, spinal defects, paralysis and other multiple handicaps. Maestro Marchese also provided many opportunities for solo piano performances. He also introduced Kaila to singers and she accompanied many of them. These were wonderful opportunities to learn more about singing and accompaniment. While Kaila rarely sings in public, the experience of having studied voice with Maestro Marchese, greatly benefited her students. The idea for major projects such as the instructional CDs and the voice lessons on her web site was inspired by the master classes that Maestro Marchese held for her students. Her choice of vocal repertoire, consisting of short lyrical pieces, was always welcomed at lessons.

Kaila's Advice

Kaila's advice to singers is "Take piano lessons". Her advice to pianists is "Take singing lessons". Her advice to those who are interested in learning about music is " Take a music appreciation class".

Overcoming Invisible Challenges to Play the Piano

Jose Aldaz, another former student of Maestro Arrau, also began teaching Kaila a few years into her comeback. She practiced with greater use of her arm weight and strength so that she could play more into the keys. She also began to understand how to play with even greater flexibility of the hands. Maestro Aldaz gave her greater insights into playing legato (connected notes) something that helps Kaila keep her weight onto the keys, thereby alleviating some of her many sitting challenges.

Conclusion

Among the many halls Kaila has been fortunate to have given piano recitals in are Bargemusic, Carnegie Weill Hall, the Donnell Library, President Theodore Roosevelt's birthplace, Blythewald Mansion, the Brooklyn Museum and Pratt Institute Memorial Hall. She performs frequently in hospitals, nursing homes, school auditoriums and other community centers. Her work has been seen many times on local television stations.

Kaila Rochelle holds degrees in history, education, special education and piano performance. Empire State College of the State University of New York (S.U.N.Y.) through their unique policy of granting credits based on life experience, independent study and various academic achievements granted Kaila's piano degree. This led to her being given a second chance to attain more qualifications in her field.

Kaila was granted a Trailblazer Award by Administrative Women in Education. She was also awarded a Significant Achievement Award by the Institute for Community Living.



Kaila Performing the Grieg Concerto