

We Will Shine

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BIRMINGHAM KEYBOARD ARTS CENTER FALL NEWS 2020

FALL SCHEDULE

August 31 - September 4: Fall Lessons Begin.
Tuition Installment #1 Due

September 7: Labor Day Holiday. No Lessons.
Makeup day is November 16.

October 1 - 7. Tuition Installment #2 Due.

October 12 - 16: Fall Break. No Lessons.

November 1 - 7: Tuition Installment #3 Due.

November 9 - 13: Last Week of Fall Lessons.

November 16: Makeup Day for Labor Day absence.

November 17 - 23: Fall Makeup Week.

REOPENING PLANS

I'm optimistic that our local school administrators' tireless efforts will be effective in mitigating student exposure to COVID-19. However, since my students are coming into my home from different school systems across the city, I want to ask that we wait until October before considering returning for in-person lessons. We will have a full month to see if our schools can successfully stay open. If all is going reasonably well, I will invite students to choose between in-person and online at that time. I'm prepared to toggle between the two lesson formats at a moment's notice. I will be sending detailed information about safety protocols at the end of September.

OUR STUNNING SENIORS

We will be showcasing and celebrating our three seniors throughout the year. This will be a first for me, graduating three at once in the same year as my daughter Anabel's graduation. There will be tears. I've no doubt. In spite of quarantines and social distancing, each one of these students found a way to shine this summer.

Knowing these kids as well as I do, I'm not the least bit surprised by their clever industry. This generation is the very reason I feel hopeful for our future. They have their heads on straight and their hearts in the right place. We all know they are incredibly accomplished pianists. Read on to learn what else they've been up to.

Roshni Datta: Roshni has finished six years of piano lessons and has bragging rights to numerous statewide piano awards at AMTA. She is a formidable student at Oak Mountain High School, where she is on the Math Team and a member of Beta Club. She dances in the extraordinary Notinee Indian Dance Group where she is preparing for her Senior Dance Recital on June 19. She is assisting with Leukemia research at UAB. For her Girl Scout Gold Award, she created a YouTube channel spotlighting common mental health issues. You simply must check it out. All of the drawings and animations are her own, and her voice-over work is flawless.

YouTube Channel: [Hope for Mental Health](#)



Theo Simonton: After nine and a half years of piano lessons in my studio, Theo feels like he's one of my own. His vast classical repertoire is complimented nicely by his eclectic taste in popular music ranging from vintage to modern. He is teaching himself to play guitar and speak German. His impressive resume includes a starring role on Debate Team, Interact Club, Mu Alpha Theta, medal winning performance in Latin, Latin and National Honor Societies, and tutoring for the STAIR program. He is also a member of the chamber choir and president of his *a cappella* men's group. Somehow, he finds time to hang out with friends and even go skateboarding. Although, now that I know about the skateboarding, I'm tempted to chase after him shrieking all sorts of alarm about not injuring his hands. During the summer, Theo established a personal website offering tutoring in both academics and music.

Theo's Tutoring Website: [Theo Simonton Academic and Tutoring Services](#)



Anusha Mukherjee: Anusha has been playing piano for ten+ years. At Oak Mountain High School, she is a stellar student on the math team, a member of their choral program, and a school ambassador. She is a high achieving Girl Scout and a talented performer in the Notinee Indian Dance Group. She is preparing for her senior dance recital in August. Anusha is always smiling, eager, and positive. She responsibly helped care for her little sister while her mother pursued an advanced degree, a role she managed with willingness and expertise. She speaks with me often about wanting her parents to be proud of her and her desire to honor the sacrifices they made for her. They are, Anusha. They are so very proud and so am I!



NEW STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

I want you to know how much I am missing having my students in the room with me. I cherish the camaraderie of our special and unique community. Rest assured our network is still intact even as this pandemic drags on and on. Please take a moment to get to know our newest students.



ANNALEE LOTT

Age 6

It's official. I have grandstudents! Annalee's mother, Madelaine, was in my very first group of students post graduate school. Her parents rummaged through their archives and found this photo of me awarding Madelaine at a piano recital. With my deep investment in my students, it is a joyous honor to have a family return. Six-year-old Annalee is just as precocious as her mother was, and I expect that she will be equally quick and successful in piano. I'm delighted to help foster a cross-generational love of music in their household.



CHARITY AND McCARTNEY BYARS

Age 6

Charity is married to my husband's nephew, making the adorable six-year-old McCartney my great-niece. They currently reside in Nashville. McCartney has music in her DNA, with both of her parents being professional musicians. Our nephew Brett is a talented and versatile percussionist with a lengthy education that culminated in a degree from Berklee College of Music. After gracing the stage at the Grand Ole Opry and touring the world, I think Brett would say his most favorite gig is that of husband and Dad. His wife Charity is a talented singer with a rich, soulful voice and a commanding stage preference. She is looking forward to expanding her musical skill set by learning piano alongside her daughter. Our necessary move online certainly facilitated this arrangement. I'm elated to have a regular connection with our nephew's family. I gave Brett his first piano lessons when he was in elementary school, and I was in my second year of my undergraduate degree. That makes McCartney my 2nd grandstudent this year. Score!!!

Charity's Bio: <https://www.dayonemusic.com/charity-byars>



LYNNE BRAGAN

Lynne is a medical assistant in a cardiologist's office. She is an accomplished harpist, a maker of exquisite jewelry, a ballroom dancer, and the groovy girlfriend of one of my lifelong friends. Lynne has two adult children and a grandson who inspired her vast collection of children's books. She has studied piano on and off throughout her life. After reviewing a little, I'm hoping to settle her into a groove of steady progress and create a learning environment that will be too much fun ever to consider straying. She recently paved the way for me to acquire one of her harps, giving me the unexpected opportunity of fulfilling a childhood dream of being a harpist. Even though I am a complete beginner, Chris and Anabel grant their approval and report that the harp makes our house sound like it is inhabited by fairies.



SACHI AND LEENA PATIL

Ages 6 & 8

Dr. Samiksha Raut (beloved Biology professor at UAB) and her husband Sarang Patil enrolled their son Parth in our studio a year and a half ago. Parth's twin sister Sachi and his big sister Leena continued to wait patiently for an opening. They were so eager to learn that they tried teaching themselves from Parth's books. The unexpected mayhem that COVID-19 reaped on our schedules created just enough leeway for his lovely sisters to begin lessons. I'm so thrilled to have the entire family now. I'm sorry you had to wait so long, Sachi and Leena. We'll make up for lost time, I promise.



BRENDA ARCHIBALD

Some of you may recognize this pretty lady from our recitals. Let me introduce you to my Mom, Brenda Archibald, who lives in Huntsville, AL. She recently confessed that she was unwilling to part with her unused acoustic and digital pianos, because she was still hoping to learn the piano herself. Even before the pandemic, her movement was restricted by mobility issues following a severe car wreck. My parents were badly injured after they were struck by a distracted driver who was using his cell phone, and their lives were forever altered. The idea seemed so obvious, I couldn't believe I didn't think of it sooner: If my students could take online lessons, so could she. We convinced her that there is no time like the present. We helped her select a tablet and a tripod for her cell phone and coached her through the Zoom installation. After a lifetime of sacrificing and devoting herself to supporting my music education and career, I am going to teach my mother how to play piano at age 76.

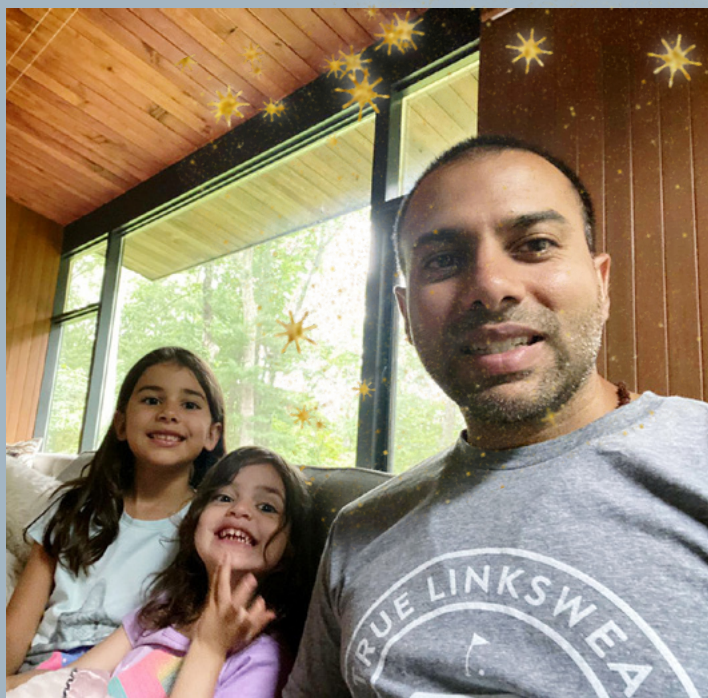


NEAL AND AVIA RAJDEV

Age 6

When Neal noticed that his high-achieving daughter Avia was soon going to outpace him in piano, he knew he needed to get back into lessons himself. Neal is a kind-hearted executive in an innovative organic agricultural company headquartered in Boston, Indigo Ag. While making time for piano lessons is a challenge, he is determined to commit and set a good example for his lovely six-year-old daughter, Avia.

This daddy-daughter duo is quite the pair. Avia has inherited her mother's aptitude for piano and shows up extremely well-prepared for her lessons. When I ask her how she achieves her flawless rhythm, she answers simply, "I count while I practice." She's going for a first-place practice trophy and daring her Dad to keep up. When Avia is not at the piano, she earns belts in karate, reads as much as possible, and is learning to play golf. I think I spy another little piano student waiting in the Rajdev wings.



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