

Hi my name is Catherine Stay. I am 26 years old and I was born with cerebral palsy. I got off rather lucky as far as this disease goes. I suppose my story really begins about 18 years ago when I was eight years old before that I had just been noodling around on my grandparents' portable keyboard. When I was eight years old I took piano lessons for about six months, and then the teacher just kind of gave up on me because I wasn't able to use my feet for the pedals.

Shortly after that I began playing the piano on my own before school started everyday I'd sneak into the living room before the bus came. This continued from when I was 8 until I was about 16. In between that, there came the sixth grade orchestra orientation in which I wanted to play the cello(that didn't work out), and about a year of choir in eighth grade. I didn't take choir again until I was about 18, my senior year of high school. I guess my not being able to play the cello in sixth grade led me to play the violin eight years later.

About six months after I graduated from high school, I picked up the violin. I have to use a left-handed violin instead of the regular right-handed violin because of my cerebral palsy.(thanks to a friend who had recommended it to me). This friend even helped me determine the correct size for my violin(which is three quarters instead of the normal full-size). After I acquired my violin the next step was to find a teacher I looked for teacher for about three months until I finally found one that looked promising. However, this teacher would prove to be exactly like my piano teacher. she gave up on the after one day.

So as far as the violin went, I taught myself using various methods for about four years(Suzuki, Applebaum, Galamian and others). I have to be honest, I'm not a big fan of the Suzuki method (but to each their own I guess).

So finally when I did acquire a violin teacher, we just had to up and move away from the suburbs(that was really annoying). There's no violin teachers up where I live at least none that I can easily get to. However teaching myself again has gone very well.