

Art Music Specialist & Academic

“I was always a teacher - literally - from 'playing' teacher as a child - to teaching piano to children when I was still in high school - to lecturing in music to undergraduate university music students in my mid 20s. My own obsession with learning and qualification interwove my teaching - associate and licentiate performance diplomas - undergraduate Bachelors with Honours degrees in music and languages - and finally with Masters and *Docteur en musique* across several universities and music institutes abroad. Learning and teaching interwove my numerous performances and recording projects both as a soloist and *ensemblist* in Canada, Europe, & Mexico while research underpinned my seminars, conferences and masterclasses on the breadth of contemporary musical language on the verge of the 21st century. These experiences were crucial to modelling the purpose and meaning of music education for my students.”

Special Parent

“The joy of planned motherhood and continuing my research through a postdoctoral project, were turned upside down when I faced the reality of being a special parent. Alongside grovelling in the muck of a precarious future, I refitted my previous life experience as backdrops to re-visioning conventional motherhood, so that I could model new purpose and new meaning for my special son. Coping and survival mechanisms emerged into separate roles of mothering, caring, teaching, therapeutic healing and advocacy, while the persistence and resilience required to achieve artistic and academic excellence, meant that the vision and mission was my responsibility. As my new colleagues emerged as medical experts and other special parents, I coined and embraced the identity of ‘professional special parent’, where I re-examined and expanded my combined ‘ordinary-special’ parenting plan for an ‘extraordinary’ future. Luckily my son found ‘special’ ways to lead the procession with his strengths, and luckily I was good at listening. We became co-modellers for each other.”

Special Educator-Practitioner

“As my son gained independence and a more intense desire to ‘be out in the world’, I too began to dream about what ‘going out into the world beyond professional parenting’ might look like. Picking up the remnants of my now-distant music career on another continent, beckoned, but my new-found identity reality-checked my actual options of needing to share my 5 roles now reduced to 3 roles (mothering, caring and advocating) and finding a much-needed source of gainful employment. After thwarted attempts in my old suit of armour, I found a new suit by teaching piano part-time in a local private school. I simultaneously went to the qualification trail in ‘education’ which led to becoming registered as a general, music, languages (LOTE) and special needs teacher. My metamorphosis occurred when I merged my earlier music teaching framework, with my experiences as a special parent, to provide sound communication options for children and adolescents living within profound and complex bodies.”