

8/6/20 CI Music Hour Recap

Dear all,

Yesterday, we had a fun and educational session with our guest Page Hamilton, a guitarist, vocalist, composer and music producer. Page introduced the electric guitar, shared his musical journey and how he transformed from a failing med student to an inspired musician following his passion for music. He played [Beautiful Love](#), [And Your Bird Can Sing](#) by the Beatles and [Lullaby in Birdland](#) by George Shearing. He sang also for the last two songs. The links are reference only not his. I am adding a recording of his playing jazz guitar in Cry Me a River. <https://soundcloud.com/page-hamilton-music/cry-me-a-river>

While the acoustic guitar uses its hollow body to amplify sounds, the electric guitar is connected to a guitar amp to create sound. It is the guitar amp that makes the different sounds between jazz guitar and hard rock guitar, modifying the instrument's tone through its characteristics and equalizer. Pedals are used in similar ways to create specially designed sounds effects. Page showed how he makes unique sound using the pedals giving us a glimpse of his creative process creating special sound effects for films.

We learned that there are three different body types of electric guitars: solid, semi hollow and hollow, which are different in weight and sound quality. Page gave us a tour of different sounding guitars with different bodies including a 12 string guitar. In one of the highlights of the session, he brought out a guitar named '[Birdfish](#)' from his closet. Not only the guitar was a stunning piece of art with its futuristic look and engineering and, as Sandy pointed out, the guitar sounded very pleasurable with the most bright and clear sound of all the guitars we heard. Page explained Birdfish has single coil, and hand wound pickups and he used the middle pickup which is usually brighter..

Some of our group shared their impression: even though they missed the details of Page playing, it was possible to enjoy his guitar performance and clearly distinguish the signature jazz guitar sound from the distortions of hard rock guitar sounds.

Rob asked an interesting question about how cochlear implants encode music into electrical stimulation. Ray explained that the limited number of electrodes of a CI makes it difficult to recreate how the normal auditory nerve responds to music seamlessly across the frequency range from low to high. On the other hand, the timing precision of CI stimulation is better than normal hearing. All implants in use today are able to control stimulation with sub-microsecond precision. Ray and the lab are trying to reverse engineer the optimal stimulation strategy by carefully considering how music is normally represented in the auditory nerve and we are hopeful that stimulation timing can be used to provide pitch and timbre cues more effectively.

Our next quest is someone very dear to us. Sandy Blake, a professional singer, dancer, and actress will join us as a guest speaker and share her music journey with us. She is a devoted member of our CI Music group and has been dedicating her time and effort to research in our lab since a while. I am grateful that she agreed to join us as our guest. Her photo and bio are included at the bottom.

I will follow up with a survey and listening materials in preparation for Sandy's session.

Have a great weekend, everyone!

Juri

Sandy Blake



Bio of Sandy

Sandy Blake, a.k.a. Sandy Laufer is a professional singer, dancer, and actress.

Sandy graduated from the Conservatory of Music at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. She received a Bachelor of Music Education and taught General Music in the Boston suburb of Waltham for two years. Subsequently, Sandy moved to New York City where she enrolled in the American Music and Dramatic Academy, beginning her pursuit of a career in musical theater. Her first audition was for a summer stock company in Barnesville, Pennsylvania called Lakewood Musical Playhouse. She was cast in this company with the intention of maybe doing two or three lead roles in the season. As it turned out, Sandy ended up playing leads in six of the ten shows and receiving the best actress award. The schedule was indeed grueling as one show was rehearsed during the day and a different show was performed at night. It was constant nonstop immersion in musical theater. Returning to New York City she was cast in a production of Oklahoma at a dinner theater in North Carolina, a summer stock season with the Green Mountain guild in Vermont during which she performed the two character musical I do I do. This led to a season at the Stage Door Dinner Theater in Fort Lauderdale Florida where she and her colleague, Michael Young repeated their roles in I do I do, as well as Neil Simon's Come Blow Your Horn.

Again returning to New York this time she received her Actor's Equity card and filmed her first on camera television commercial for Mrs. Smith's apple pie earning her Screen Actors Guild card. Sandy was cast as April the flight attendant in the first production of Company to be done off Broadway in New York City. Auditioning for TV commercials and plays while working day day jobs were constant. She was then cast in the Equity Library Theater production of Allegro by Rogers and Hammerstein and was thrilled when Richard Rogers visited backstage. Sandy was hired for the summer season at the Barter Theater in Abingdon Virginia where she performed I do I do, The Owl and the Pussycat, and The Apple Tree. These shows were followed by The Unsinkable Molly Brown, an off-Broadway production of Dylan as well as numerous original plays, revues, and musicals all over the tri-state area.

Her break came when a director friend of hers referred her to be the understudy for Chita Rivera in the new Doug Henning Broadway musical, Merlin. She was cast as a member of the ensemble and as the understudy for Chita which meant she was in the show every evening and had understudy rehearsal twice a week. The show opened in December and in May the stage manager came to her dressing room and said "change your shoes you're going on". Sandy went on in the middle of a matinee on a Wednesday for Chita and then did the evening performance as well.

When the show closed Sandy moved to Los Angeles to join her husband and begin their family. Over the years Sandy has taught Voice, vocal directed high school musicals, and performed in skits and reviews and fundraisers for schools. Her most recent professional work was in a five season production tour of The Forgotten Carols in which she sang, did some comedic work, and rehearsed the onstage volunteer choir in each town.