

Hello everyone!

It was wonderful to see so many new and familiar faces during our first music hour of the year last week! Please read the following for a recap and some announcements!

### **Music Hour Recap 1/20/22**

Last week, Richard Reed kicked us off with our first CI music hour of the year! Richard is an organist and pianist currently based in Providence, Rhode Island. Richard began playing the organ when he was 12 years old and continues to play today. He lost his hearing later in life and described to the group how he continued to train himself as a musician during this time. On his cochlear implant activation day, he described how he couldn't hear the exact words that the doctor was saying, but he could understand them. He mimicked this experience by playing some notes on the piano that represented the general melodic contour of a person's voice.

When it came to listening to and playing music, there were several challenges that Richard had to overcome. He described how at first it sounded like he was listening to music underwater. For example, a C scale on the piano sounded dissonant and distorted to him. He also found it difficult to listen to higher pitches, such as those between a C5 and C6 on the piano.

Over several years of practice, however, Richard discovered a variety of tricks that allowed him to better hear and enjoy music again. Here are some of his tricks listed below:

1. Richard noticed that since he was able to hear lower notes on the piano, he could train himself to hear higher notes by playing two scales simultaneously at an octave apart (e.g. a lower C scale from C3 to C4 and a higher scale from C4 to C5).
2. When listening to intervals, he found it easier to listen to notes that were further apart. For example, instead of listening to a major third on the piano (C4 to E4), he found it easier to listen to a major 10th (C4 to E5).
3. He also noticed that it was difficult to hear and play multiple notes that were suspended on top of one another. He found that playing the notes in a more staccato or percussive manner allowed him to more easily hear and enjoy the music.
4. When adjusting to the sound of the organ, he provided a strong aural contrast for himself by adjusting his keyboard to blast the pitches to the point of distortion. He would play like this for a few minutes and then return to the 'normal' organ sound, resulting in those notes suddenly sounding a lot cleaner in comparison.
5. Richard also discussed the differences between tremolo and vibrato. Vibrato is typically more difficult for CI users to perceive since it involves the fluctuation of pitch on a sustained note. However, tremolo fluctuates the sound by adjusting the volume (i.e. very quickly increasing and decreasing the volume of a certain pitch to create a wave effect). As a result, since the CI is more easily able to perceive volume than pitch, the tremolo tended to be easier to hear for Richard.
6. When learning to play in a band again, Richard also found it helpful to tune his instrument one or two cents out of tune from the rest of the band. This helped to create a slight sense of tension in the sound which allowed him to pick out his instrument from the rest of the group.

7. Richard encouraged the group to "embrace your inner distortion." By this he meant that not all pitches and sounds are going to sound exactly the way one might remember them or expect them to sound through the CI. As a result, Richard found it helpful to lean into genres like rock n' roll where improvisation and accuracy of pitch was not always the focus of music. In other words, he could learn to embrace some fluctuations in notes and sound while still maintaining appreciation for the music.

8. Richard encouraged the group to get together and try making music! While Richard originally felt musically shy after first being implanted, he regained confidence to make mistakes over time with practice. He suggested getting together with other CI users to make music or try singing or playing alongside someone who is able to sing/play in tune.

9. Certain genres of music such as blues rock (i.e. The Rolling Stones) may be more difficult to listen to at first than other genres such as pop rock (i.e. The Beatles). While it helps to practice listening to familiar songs when learning to listen to music with a CI, it may also be helpful to practice listening to unfamiliar songs of a familiar genre or band.

10. Lastly, Richard recommended playing around with running if you play an instrument. For example, it may help to tune your ukulele, guitar, or mandoline to a lower key and practice singing along.

For any one who is interested in asking Richard further questions, you can email him at [reedsongs@aol.com](mailto:reedsongs@aol.com). You can also check out a music listening program that he helped develop for Cochlear here:

<https://www.cochlear.com/us/communication-corner/program/adult-music.htm>.

### **Announcements: Zoom Sound Issues**

We apologize for the difficulties that people had in hearing the music and what was being said. We try to do our best to soundcheck before meetings but it is always helpful to have people chime in with feedback about sound quality during sessions so we can work to adjust sound to what is most comfortable for everyone!

### **Announcements: Message from CI Music Hour Co-Facilitator, Chrysa Kovach**

Hi everyone!

In December, I started a new job as Grants and Development Manager with Neighborhood Music School in LA. It's been a great move so far, but unfortunately we have staff meetings on Thursdays during the CI Music Hour. I hope to pop in to sessions when I can; in the meantime I'll be "backstage" helping Julianne with scheduling. As always, let us know if there's a guest or presentation you would really like to see, and we will do our best to make it happen!

On a somber note, one of our CI Music Hour guests, Beegie Adair, [passed away on Sunday](#). It was a privilege to have her join us and while we have countless recordings to remember her by, she will certainly be very missed.

**Tomorrow CI Music Hour 1/27/22**

Tomorrow we are thrilled to have Dr. Anne Palmer join us for the music hour to share her story as a musician, educator, and member of the hearing loss community.

Below is Anne's Bio and Photo:

Anne Palmer is a singer, coach, and educator. With a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Vocal Performance, most of her life had been focused on becoming a professional singer. Facing a progressive and profound hearing loss, however, dramatically shifted the course of her career. Anne has now undergone two cochlear implant surgeries and successfully retrained her musical process.

Dr. Palmer is currently the Career Development and Experiential Learning Program Manager at The University of Kansas, and specializes in working with students pursuing careers in healthcare. She also teaches voice and helps musicians with hearing loss who are facing major life transitions through her private studio in Kansas City, MO. You can read more about Anne's story through her [website](#).