

## How Music Shaped Me

Every day I hopped into my mom's silver Nissan Pathfinder to go to my ballet class when I was six or seven years old. Every time, I'd ask my mom to play the Kidz Bop 6 CD. But for as long as I could remember when "My Immortal" by Evanescence would play, I would sing my lungs out. Of course, I would do it for fun but as soon as my mom saw my ability to sing she threatened to put me in singing classes, but for some reason, the thought of me singing in public was a complete taboo so I would feel embarrassed and I would immediately stop. Singing every song on the radio or making up songs about the food I was eating was more like a game to me, however, my family thought otherwise.

As the years went by, whenever I was home alone, it was an opportunity for me to sing Christina Aguilera, Whitney Houston, Ariana Grande, and Mariah Carey songs, yet whenever I would hear the alarm of a car locking in my driveway my time to practice my runs were over. Nonetheless, music was nothing new in my family. On my dad's side, my uncles had their own band and had their own recording studio, and on my mom's side, my grandma sang and learned to play the guitar by ear. To this day, I'm not really sure why I was so private about my ability to sing, I believe it was more of a confidence thing.

My first time singing in front of people was actually last summer, in Mexico. My family and I were coming back from a day at the beach and my parents actually noticed a blue flyer in the elevator informing people that were staying at the hotel that there was going to be a karaoke night. Of course, my parents encouraged me to go. The sun was starting to set and we left our room and followed an echo of people singing. Eventually, we lined up for my turn and I picked a song I knew by heart since I always sang it in the shower: "Who's Crying Now" by Journey. One of the staff members called the name of the song and I looked at my parents for reassurance and they both smiled and gave me a thumbs up. I grabbed the microphone from the staff member and before I knew it, I was already almost done singing. While I was singing, I noticed people walking out of the restaurants, staring from the pools, and walking from the bars. By the time it was over, about forty people cheered for me and a bunch of strangers from around the world had complimented me. It was after that night that I realized that there was nothing to be embarrassed about and that I should share my voice with the public.

As a vocalist, I have taken classes with vocal coaches and started to upload videos and files of me singing not only because it's fun but because it simply makes me happy. It seems that in my situation my biggest enemy was *myself* and I was the only person standing in the way. I am still learning more and more about myself, musically, however, in the end, if you share your talent and truly enjoy doing so, it will take you far.

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