

Testimonial: Leana Critchell (July 2014)

This time two years ago I had just completed my first semester as a jazz piano student at the Queensland Conservatorium. Upon meeting Dr Therese Milanovic after completing my first performance exam, she convinced me to defer my performance studies at the Conservatorium and begin retraining in the Taubman Approach under her guidance. After two intensive years of retraining with Therese and other faculty members of the Golandsky Institute, I am now re-enrolling into my performance studies with a technical facility greater than I could have thought possible but most of all, I now have the ability to play the piano without the pain that I had for almost 7 years.

I first experienced pain at the piano when I was 12 years old in my wrists and by the time I was 18 I could no longer play a note on the piano without experience sharp, shocking pains from my fingers up to my elbow. When my jazz teacher at the Conservatorium suggested I seek help from Therese – one of the classical piano tutors at the Conservatorium – I rolled my eyes thinking “but my technique has always been good: I know how to curl my fingers, I do all the independent finger lifting exercises and I stretch my small hands along table benches all the time to reach my octaves”. What a shock I received when Therese explained that these things were the direct cause of my injury along with a long list of other harmful technical problems I had developed into my playing (low seat height, heavy relaxation mixed with tension, twisting of my wrist etc...).

After one lesson with Therese, she presented me with un-biased, logical, scientific facts as to *why* I was in pain and the specific movements that caused my injury. More to this, she showed me a solution to these issues which made sense. For the first time in 5 years I gained some hope that maybe it was possible to play the piano without pain.

In 2013 I travelled to New York to attend the Golandsky Institute’s annual summer symposium where I worked with Edna Golandsky, John Bloomfield, Kendall Feeney, and also with Ron Stabinsky as my practice assistant. While it is a great honour to work with all of these extraordinary educators, Australia – in fact the Southern Hemisphere - is extremely lucky to have Therese as its only Associate Faculty member of the Golandsky Institute, and I feel even luckier that she lives just 10 minutes down the road from me!

Studying with Therese has ensured my future as a pianist. It has only been through Therese’s endless patience and support that I now feel confident enough to tackle anything the piano throws at me knowing that there will always be a practical and logical solution to enable the body/the hands to play with ease.

Thankyou Therese, you are a true gem and will always hold a place in my heart.