

Cochlear implants and the piano – Sunday, March 18

Mar 18	10:30 AM
Wendy C.	has entered the room
Wendy C.	changed the room's topic to <i>March 18 text chat for pianists with cochlear implants</i>
Wendy C.	turned on guest access
	10:50 AM
Wendy C.	has left the room
	7:45 PM
K	has entered the room
K	has left the room
	7:50 PM
Wendy C.	has entered the room
KathleenM	has entered the room
Wendy C.	Hi Kathleen, glad you made it in!
	Hope some other show up.
	We'll see!
	7:55 PM
KathleenM	me too. I almost forgot. I went to a great concert today, was really excited about it, chatting away with husband and suddenly realized i needed to get logged in for this chat.
Wendy C.	That's fine! We'll wait to see if anyone else shows up
	If not, I want to talk to you about the HLAA convention
KathleenM	sounds good
Wendy C.	Actually, I'll open up another chat room to cover that
KathleenM	ok
	8:05 PM
Wendy C.	Check your email
	I just sent you the link to the convention chat room
	8:20 PM
Wendy C.	Hi Kathleen
	How is your new CI coming along?
KathleenM	I hear conversation exceptionally well. much better than expected for only 3 months activation. At above 90%.
Wendy C.	Wow
	what about the piano?
KathleenM	Still working on hearing music. I hear several notes on pitch, but many others have a buzzing quality to them, kinda like a snare drum
Wendy C.	Oops.
	8:25 PM
KathleenM	i cant hear violin yet, some viola, much of the cello, some flute, a lot of the guitar and harp
Wendy C.	So sorry to hear that. I think David Holzmann has reported similar problems with some pitches reporting a a buzzy sound.
	That's good you can hear the viola and cello!
	8:30 PM

KathleenM	I'm hoping that with more time, I'll get better quality sound. I'm still new to listening with a CI. I have another mapping in April. Today at the concert, I listened for part of it with my implant and then took it off for part, just listened with my other ear with hearing aid, especially during the string quartet
Wendy C.	Ok!
Launa F.	has entered the room
Wendy C.	Hi Launa
	Glad you made it here
	I was beginning to wonder who else would show up
Launa F.	Hi
	Sorry I am late
KathleenM	Hi Launa
Wendy C.	Kathleen, Launa grew up playing piano before she lost her hearing. Launa, are you think about getting an implant or not?
	Just curious
	8:35 PM
Launa F.	I'm looking
KathleenM	Can you still hear to play?
Wendy C.	Well, you've come to the right place
	Both Kathleen and I have CIs
	we can probably answer any questions you have
	And Launa, mark your calendar for October 5-7.
Launa F.	I'm looking into it. Having trouble typing into this.
Wendy C.	That's the next AAMHL meet up
	Launa, this interface works best if you use a laptop
Launa F.	I will Makr my calendar :)
Wendy C.	it's not very good on iphone and Ipad.
Launa F.	*mark
	I will try to switch to computer
Wendy C.	I often tell folks who are thinking about getting a CI, you will know when you are ready for one.
	Kathleen, which version of the Med-EL implant do you have?
	The EAS one?
Launa	has entered the room
KathleenM	I have the EAS
Launa	Hi, I switched to my computer
	8:40 PM
Wendy C.	Great, Launa. I think I'm going to have to say something about using a laptop for this interface for future text chats
KathleenM	I can hear up to a little above 1 octave above middle C with the acoustic part of the CI, then the rest is electronic
Launa	I am researching CIs. I am totally deaf now, so EAS wouldn't work for me. Kathleen, what instrument do you play?
Wendy C.	Kathleen plays piano
	Kathleen recently got the EAS system from Med-El
KathleenM	I'm still in the learning phase
Launa	With the CI, can you accurately discern the pitch above the middle C?
Wendy C.	So with the acoustic part of the CI, Kathleen the pitches accurate, but with the electronic / portion, the pitch is not as clear?
	*the pitch is accurate

KathleenM	some of them are on pitch.
	There are often several notes that sound the same
Wendy C.	yes, I remember when I first got my CI, all pitches sounds identical.
KathleenM	I'm also just starting to get some correct timbre
Wendy C.	I don't think I touched my violin for six months.
KathleenM	I play piano often, but am hearing it with my other ear as well
Wendy C.	I just played scales on the piano once a week just waiting for musical pitch to return
	so Kathleen, your other ear is normal?
KathleenM	no, severe hearing loss, but still functional with hearing aids. I'm losing hearing in that ear due to radiation for acoustic neuroma
Wendy C.	oh , ok
	8:45 PM
Wendy C.	Launa, with the current implants I have, pitch is almost 90% the way it was.
Launa	I have been totally deaf now for many years, but I've been playing since I was 5 years old and I have an accurate memory of pitch and "hear" the music in my head. So I'm afraid of getting a CI and not hearing what I expect to hear.
Wendy C.	Your brain can fill in the memories
Launa	Wow, Wendy, 90% is very good.
KathleenM	Thats good news, something to look forward to
Wendy C.	I would say that I can look at a piece of music and sightsing the melody
	and then when I play it on piano, it's almost how I envision it to be
Launa	It's good that you can discern the timbre too
KathleenM	Launa, I was told that as adults, the way we accommodate to a CI is with our memories of the way things sound. So you may be in very good shape for a CI
Launa	That's great, Wendy
Wendy C.	Yes Launa, I agree with Kathleen – you might be in good shape
Launa	That's good to hear
Wendy C.	You just have to give your brain time to adjust to bionic hearing
	Kathleen has Med-EL EAS system and I have Advanced Bionics cochlear implants
Launa	I would love to hear music again...It's been a very long time though. I became totally deaf many years ago. Would that make it more difficult for me to adjust to a CI?
KathleenM	and the ability to communicate is fantastic! I can hear speech in noise and hardly have to ask for repeats
Launa	That's great, Kathleen
KathleenM	How many years Launa?
	8:50 PM
Wendy C.	No, I think because you have a good auditory memory for both speech and music, it should come back to you sooner rather than later.
Launa	20+
Launa F.	has left the room
Wendy C.	Launa, I think if your auditory memory is as sharp as mine was, eventually, I think you'll be able to distinguish pitches
KathleenM	That is a long time. Ask your audi. Many say that the best time to implant is within 5 years. However, they have also told me that people have been successful after 20 years deafness
Wendy C.	What I can't predict is how long the adjustment period will be for you
Launa	I never stopped playing music though. I stopped playing seriously when I became totally deaf, but music "plays" on in my head constantly, consciously and unconsciously. I can never shut it off
Wendy C.	My right ear did not hear sound for 35 years
	So for me, adjustment to sound in that ear look longer.

Launa	It might be that it would take me a longer period of time to adjust and I would have to work at it.
Wendy C.	My left ear has heard sound because I had been using hearing aids in that ear all my life until the hearing suddenly disappeared in that ear.
	So that left ear adjusted faster
	Yes, Launa, it might take you a bit longer to adjust
KathleenM	The brain shifts pathways when we can no longer hear. So those parts of the brain that used to deal with speech and music get co-opted by other parts of the brain. it takes time after implantation to retrain the brain
Wendy C.	Launa, you live in Massachusetts?
Launa	Kathleen, you said your audi told you people have been successful after 20 years of deafness...are any of them musicians?
KathleenM	i dont know. She didnt say
Launa	Yes, I live in Massachusetts.
Wendy C.	Kathleen is from Minneapolis (site of this year's HLAA convention). and I am from Maryland
KathleenM	I was raised in MD
	8:55 PM
Wendy C.	What part of MD, Kathleen, and how did you end up in the Twin Cities?
Launa	I wonder if musicians in general make better candidates for CIs because of our training and knowledge of music...?
KathleenM	Silver Spring and Wheaton. Then moved to Ohio, Iowa, Costa Rica and then to Minnesota for my husband's job
Wendy C.	Ahh. I work in Silver Spring now, Kathleen! And live in Gaithersburg
	Launa, that really depends on the individual person
KathleenM	I've been told by the MedEl rep that musicians are able to hear music after implantation better than nonmusicians
Wendy C.	Mostly because folks with musical training know how to listen for melodic contour and rhythm
	The first recording my husband had me listening to after activation in the right ear didn't sound right at first.
	Timbre was like a garbage truck going by
KathleenM	Launa, I've found the process of adapting to the CI to be challenging and rewarding. Again, I'm new to this
Wendy C.	Pitch was non existent. BUT RHYTHM was there.
KathleenM	I agree with everything you just said
Launa	If I got a CI, I could train myself and "program" my brain using my own piano, right? That would be an advantage over someone who isn't a musician, right?
Wendy C.	Rhythm helped me figure out that the piece I was looking to was the Overture to the Barber of Seville
	Yes, Launa, you can try that
KathleenM	MedEl has a Spotify program for relearning to hear music
	9:00 PM
Wendy C.	*the piece I was listening too
	Yes, Johanna Patzold created that
	she is a researcher at Med-El who also has a cochlear implant herself
KathleenM	Also, I can hear my piano better than any other instrument, Launa
Wendy C.	Launa, you can just do what I did. Play scales on the piano each day after activations and record your impressions. It might be fun to note how your brain adjusts each day . . . each month . . . three month . . .
KathleenM	Another person in the group also suggested that to me
Launa	It is one thing to try to hear the music that comes from your own mind/hands, but to hear it on something like Spotify with all the different instruments playing together must be challenging. Are you able to discern the different instruments that are playing?

Wendy C.	but also I also would emphasize trying to find an CI audiologist that understands music
Launa	This is very helpful what you both are telling me
	Wendy, yes, that is what I intend to do if I go through with it.
Wendy C.	I was very lucky that my audiologist at Hopkins who programed my CI understand my affinity for music
KathleenM	i havnet tried the Spotify list yet. I do better with 1 instrument at a time and with live music
Wendy C.	Yeah, I would advise creating your own spotify list with solo instruments first.
Launa	What kind of music is on the Spotify list?
KathleenM	Wendy, what special things were done in your programming?
Wendy C.	Well, CI audiologists like to talk about 2 things
	There is something called IDR – input dynamic range.
	the IDR has to be expanded for music.
	9:05 PM
Wendy C.	The other thing they did was to turn compression off.
	you need compression for speech (in both HA and CIs) but not for music
	Well, it's after 9
KathleenM	great to know. I will take this to my current audi. I just had to switch due to insurance.
Wendy C.	We'll have to continue this chat next week!
	not next week, next month
	watch the FB page for the date and time
KathleenM	thanks
Wendy C.	Thank you Launa, for joining us
Launa	I want to thank you both for what you've shared with me tonight. Thanks, Wendy, for setting up this group chat!
Wendy C.	you are welcome!
	Just click on the sign out link at the upper right corner to sign out
KathleenM	has left the room
Launa	has left the room
	9:30 PM
Wendy C.	has left the room