



## ARTS & CULTURE

# Four-year-old Girl Became Piano Player in One Year

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At just four years of age, Brigitte Xie has already won a place to perform **piano** at New York City's Carnegie Hall. The young girl also can read music. She can even play a piece of classical music from Beethoven. It is called "Sonatina in F Major."

Brigitte's feet hang above the floor when the small girl sits on the piano seat. Her hands move spiritedly across the piano keys.

She **shyly** looked down when her mother, Nicole Sun, asked if she likes piano and if it is fun. "Yeah, fun," Brigitte replied. The young girl wears her long brown hair tied back.

Brigitte's father, Tao Xie of Ridgefield, Connecticut, signed her up for online piano classes on Zoom about a year ago. The video conferencing program became a popular way to attend all kinds of classes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tao bought the lessons to give his daughter something to do after officials ordered people to stay at home. "At the beginning, I never expected that she's going to be a **prodigy** or anything," he said. But he was happily surprised that it happened.

Brigitte is the youngest winner of the well-respected Elite International Music Competition. That win earned her the chance to perform at Carnegie Hall. In November 2020, she was supposed to play there as part of a competition called the American Protégé International Music Talent Competition. But it got delayed to this November and now to November 2022 because of the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Brigitte's mother gives credit to her piano teacher, Felicia Feng Zhang.

"Brigitte came to me when she was just two months after three years old," her teacher said. "From the lessons, I observed she has a **curious** mind and she loves to learn. We call that passion."

She added that, during the lessons, the girl's "big eyes really, really watch me and how I demonstrate." She says Brigitte's concentration level is really high and continues to improve. And, she follows directions very well.

Nicole Sun says her daughter may have more skill and interest in music than other children. But the most important thing is that they found Felicia. "Yeah, we are really lucky to have met her and have her as Brigitte's first piano teacher," she said.

I'm Alice Bryant.

*Reuters news agency reported this story. Alice Bryant adapted it for Learning English. Hai Do was the editor.*

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## Words in This Story

**piano** - n. a large musical instrument with a keyboard that you play by pressing black and white keys and that produces sound when small hammers inside the piano hit steel wires

**shyly** - adv. done in a way that shows you are nervous and uncomfortable about meeting and talking to people

**prodigy** - n. a young person who is unusually talented in some way

**curious** - adj. having a desire to learn or know more about something