

December 2022 Newsletter



Renew your membership in our local chapter for only \$15 a year! Ways to renew: pay at our website on the “Donate” button in the upper right-hand corner; mail your renewal with your name, address, phone number, and e-mail to: East Bay Chapter, HLAA, P.O. Box

12484, Oakland, CA 94604-2484. See the back page to sign up and support National HLAA.

NO DECEMBER GENERAL MEETING! We wish you a wonderful holiday season!

On January 14 our speaker will be: Attorney David Grey who will be talking about his experience representing deaf and hard of hearing students in asserting their rights to services and accommodations in school. **Social time: 9:30 a.m. Meeting begins: 10 a.m.**



Register for these free events [HERE](#). Or use this link if you are getting a hard copy of the newsletter: <https://www.hearinglosseb.org/monthly-meetings-1>. After you register, you’ll be sent the link to join the meeting. Consider staying after the meeting for AfterWords – a chance to ask more in-depth questions, as well as discuss anything you want with fellow members!

HLAA-EB posts our newsletters to the California State Association webpage and a link on our website. **VOLUNTEER! Contact us to let us know you are available!** Check out our website at: <http://www.hearinglosseb.org/> Contact us at: info@hearinglosseb.org



HLAA2023 Convention will be in New Orleans, Louisiana!!! Any interest in attending? More information at hearingloss.org. Our chapter is accepting applications for a chance to subsidize your trip!

MEETING NOTES: “*Appreciating and Making Music: Strategies for Individuals with Hearing Loss*”

At our November 12, 2022 HLAA-EB Chapter meeting, our guest speaker was Ms. Wendy Cheng. Initially, Wendy reminded us that as we embark on our hearing loss journey, many of us may discover, as she did, that our relationship with aural music has changed. Wendy is a bilateral cochlear implant recipient and also a passionate amateur musician who founded the nonprofit Association of Adult Musicians with Hearing Loss. After first relaying her own journey with hearing loss, Wendy proceeded to share several strategies and practical tips, as well as resources, on how to appreciate and make music, even if someone is experiencing a hearing loss.



Wendy's Personal Story: Wendy commenced her presentation by telling her personal story with hearing loss: Noting that the onset of her hearing loss was in her early childhood, Wendy said that she was formally diagnosed with a hearing loss at age 9. Nevertheless, she started piano lessons at age 7, continuing until age 14. She then started violin lessons as a college sophomore.

By age 35, Wendy had lost the remainder of her hearing, and obtained cochlear implants (CI's) after another 7 months. It was 2 years later that Wendy switched to the viola. She subsequently picked up handbells 5 years ago and currently directs a handbell choir.

In describing her own hearing loss journey, Wendy compared her loss to Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' well-known *Stages of Grief* as follows: *Denial* – denying that hearing loss is in the picture; *Anger* – getting mad that this is happening to me; *Bargaining* – trying this or that audiologist or a new hearing device; *Depression* – becoming sad about my hearing loss; *Acceptance* – finally, accepting the loss of my hearing and seeking help in treating it.

Poll #1 asked our online audience members: "When did you start losing your hearing?" The onset of hearing loss of audience members seemed to most often occur in the age range of 41 – 75.

Physical Elements of Aural Music: Wendy identified the physical elements of music, including:

- *Rhythm* (patterned recurring alternations of sound).
- *Duration* (the period in time in which sound occurs).
- *Timbre* (the distinctive tone of a specific sound).
- *Melody* (a pleasing succession or arrangement of sounds).
- *Pitch* (the subjective quality of a complex sound, depending on frequency, intensity & loudness).
- *Volume* (how loud the pitch is).

Poll #2 asked our online audience members: "Which element of music appeals to you the most?" The results of Poll #2 were as follows: Rhythm = 33%; Timbre = 17%; Melody/Pitch = 77%.

How Hearing Loss Affects Our Ability to Receive & Undertake Music:

Rhythm is the element most likely to stay intact through all stages of sensorineural hearing loss. Pitch and timbre are the two elements most likely to be impacted the most by cochlear dead regions and sensorineural hearing loss.

Individuals with hearing loss may have found that their hearing devices have certain limitations when used for music. For example, the "best" speech programs are often not the "best" for music. In fact, pre-set music programs are normally set for music listening, but not music performances. Furthermore, most hearing aids (HA's) will amplify sound only up to a specific loudness level (100 dbS SPL).

Strategies for Music Appreciation: Here are some specific strategies for music appreciation suggested by Wendy:

- ✓ Listen to music with fewer instruments.
- ✓ Listen to music that works best with the kind of hearing loss that you have.
- ✓ For live concerts, listen to the music prior to the actual performance.
- ✓ Check out the many apps available for music appreciation, including *Shzami*, *Soundhoud*, & *Spotify*.

Workarounds for Hearing Aid (HA) Users:

- Most current HA's are capable of not distorting when you are listening to music.
- HA's that are "less bad" for music may need audiologist assistance to turn off compression.
- Apps exist that allow adjustments in bass, mid & treble ranges.

- HA's will typically amplify sounds greater than 110 db.
- HA's are now available that allow greater user control, including *Oticon* (OPNs & later models); *Phonak* (*Marvel* & later models); *Resound* (*Linx Quatro* & later models); *Signia* (NX has 3 music settings); *Widex* (*Unique* & later models).

Workarounds for Cochlear Implant (CI) Users:

- Many CI settings used to create good speech programs need to be turned off to create good music programs.
- The main issue for CI users is to turn off compression.
- The Input Dynamic Range (IDR) has to be widened for music programs.

Information for Professional Musicians:

In 2001, Wendy founded the Association of Adult Musicians with Hearing Loss (AAMHL) and incorporated it as a nonprofit in 2004. More information about the nonprofit is available on the website stated below, as well as on the *Facebook* public page & group page and also *Groups.io*. Through her nonprofit, Wendy has published a CD and one book in addition to producing virtual concerts & virtual conferences to help professional musicians.

Practical Tips for Musicians & Others Who Are Coping with Hearing Loss:

- ❖ Use your sight reading skills to compensate for not hearing new music.
- ❖ Transpose music into a lower register or higher register to figure out the melodic contour.
- ❖ Count a lot so that even if you can't hear your part for 1 or 2 measures, you can still keep going.
- ❖ Bring your instrument to the audiology office to refine a program for playing music.
- ❖ Acoustic Piano: If you hear distortion, close lid; move piano away from walls; place carpet under piano.
- ❖ Acoustic Wind & String Instruments: Decrease playing volume; add absorptive material to playing space.
- ❖ Electronic Instruments: Reduce output volume on amplifiers.
- ❖ When interacting with other musicians or students, use some form of assistive hearing device (ALD) to participate in ensembles or private studio situations, such as *Companion Mic System* or *Roger ON*.

Wrap-Up: After wrapping up her excellent presentation, speaker Wendy Cheng opened up a Q & A discussion with audience members. She also referred us to her website below for a detailed list of **Mobile & Web Resources for Music Listeners**, which includes apps for music appreciation, music streaming services, web-based resources, & apps for musicians, music students & music professionals.

For More Information & Questions: Visit: info@musicianswithhearingloss.org
 Email: ldwendy@gmail.com Website: musicianswithhearingloss.org

~ **Kathy Fairbanks**

Hearing Loss Do's and Don'ts (from a Hearing Loss Live presentation)

Both parties can be proactive in the hearing loss journey by doing their part.

Do:

- Honor and live your hearing loss truth together by getting in the KNOW.
- Express your communication needs. You can't do your part if they don't do theirs.
- Practice the three golden rules with everyone:

- Have them get your attention first.
- Tell them to face you.
- Let them know you hear best within 6 feet.
- Know your environment and take planned hearing breaks.
- Know all your accommodations as needed:
 - Use your hearing aid/cochlear extra tools.
 - Know when you are able to use lipreading.
 - Use CART (live captioning) in certain settings.
 - Use ASR (automatic speech recognition) apps.

Don't:

- Bluff, or fake it.
- Say never mind/I'll tell you later.
- Say "what"; rather, ask for clarification of what you didn't understand.
- Repeat; try instead to rephrase.
- Depend on lipreading alone when it really matters.
- Expect lipreading to work in all situations.

***Personal Bill of Rights for the Hard of Hearing
(from a Hearing Loss Life presentation)***

I didn't ask for hearing loss, it chose me, and I will make the best of it by being fair to myself.

- I have the right to have my wants and needs respected by others. (EB)
- The right to be treated with dignity and addressed with respect and courtesy. (ASHA)
- I have the right to interact socially, maintain social closeness, and build relationships. (ASHA)
- I have the right to be addressed directly and not be spoken for or talked about in the third person while present. (ASHA)
- I have the right to communication access. (ASHA)
- I have the right to express my communication needs.
- I have the right to determine my own accommodations.
- I have the right to change my accommodations as needed.
- I have the right to say "No, that isn't going to work for me."
- I have the right to say no to events that aren't accessible.
- I have the right to take hearing breaks as needed.
- I have the right to say no when I am too tired to hear.
- I have the right to make mistakes and do not have to be perfect. (EB)
- I have the right to be happy. (EB)

The Personal Bill of Rights comes from Edmund Bourne's, "The Anxiety and Phobia Workbook". We marked the rights we kept original with his initials (EB). We have adapted others and added our own.

We also found the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) has a Communication Bill of Rights and shared a few here.

JOKE CORNER



6-1
© 1999 King Features Synd.,
familytrous.com
No, you'll have to whisper on my
OTHER side — I'm left-eared."



East Bay Leadership Team

The chapter is run by a Steering Committee, Leader Dale Davis, ddavis94605@gmail.com

Outreach, National Chapter Coordinator/Liaison: Susan Jeffries Fitzgerald, susanlj29@gmail.com

Treasurer: Len Bridges, lenbridges3993-hlaa@outlook.com

Programs: Robin Miller, robin@robinmillerlaw.com

Technology and AfterWords Small Group: George Chin, Sr., (510) 352-1569, georgechinsr@gmail.com

Membership: Connie Gee, cbgee2014@yahoo.com; Marlene Muir, muircmc@comcast.net; Derek Daniels, d.c.daniels262@gmail.com

Newsletter Editors: Nancy Asmundson, nasmundson@comcast.net; Kathy Fairbanks, mkathyfairbanks@att.net

Publicity: Andrea Doehrman, andreadoehrman@gmail.com; George Chin, Sr., georgechinsr@gmail.com

Refreshments: Marie Rhein, Coordinator

Technical/Audio Loop: Peter G. Townsend, peterg.townsend@gmail.com, Steven Ulrich

JOIN HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (HLAA) – THEY ADVOCATE FOR YOU!

Go to this URL to join: <https://www.hearingloss.org/make-an-impact/become-a-memberrenew/>

OR, if you prefer to pay by check or card thru the mail, Nancy Asmundson has membership forms to send to you, or contact HLAA at 301-657-2248 or e-mail membership@hearingloss.org. Your membership form & payment go to HLAA, 6116 Executive Blvd., Suite 320, Rockville, MD 20852.

COSTS: Regular Membership/year (will receive *Hearing Life* magazine in print and digital format): Individual - \$45; Couple/Family - \$55; Professional - \$80; Nonprofit - \$80;

Veteran Membership: Complimentary 1-Year Regular Membership & Lifetime Online Membership.