

Jodi DiPiazza

Osvaldo Cairó Battistutti • Book excerpt • Original page 241

Jodi was born in the United States on October 3, 2001. She is an American singer, composer, musician, and an autistic savant. She was diagnosed with autism before her second birthday, so her parents were aware of the reasons for Jodi's behavior early on. Tom DiPiazza, her father has said "What they told us was there's no cure for it. It's a life-long disability and don't expect too much" (Murphy, 2012). Instead of panicking, however, the DiPizzas began to plan a complete education and stimulation program, full of learning experiences for Jodi. She started Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy at home as a toddler for a full school day, "with an additional two hours of tutoring in the evening" (Wallis and Goehner, 2006). Despite the impairments in her brain, Jodi is a musical genius. Once again, we are able to see the power of music for individuals on the autism spectrum disorder.

Jodi has perfect pitch and an extraordinary talent for music. She began playing the piano at the age of three, when she was barely able to form sentences. Jodi could listen to a song and reproduce it perfectly by listening to it only once. She is hyperlexic and taught herself to read at the age of two, long before she could speak. From that moment on, and with her parents' help in ensuring she had everything she needed to do so, Jodi has grown steadily.



Figure 5.117 • Jodi DiPiazza • Photo courtesy of Jodi and Thomas DiPiazza

Music, performance & advocacy

Book excerpt • Original page 242

Jodi likes to perform many different genres and is skilled at several instruments: piano, guitar, ukulele, voice, drums, and clarinet. In 2012, she had the opportunity to perform “Firework” with Katy Perry at an annual Comedy Central fundraiser for autism programs at the Beacon Theater in New York. Perry tweeted, “I will never forget last night. It was the most important moment thus far of what I do” (@katyperry). The concert raised more than four million dollars for autism education. Since then, Jodi has been featured on various TV shows and documentaries, including Good Morning America (2012), Fox News (2013), and El Tiempo (Colombian broadcast TV, 2013). In April 2016, she sang the American national anthem on autism awareness night at a New York Red Bulls soccer game. She has performed with Matt Savage, Laura Benanti, Jon Batiste, Stephanie Block, Cynthia Erivo, and “Weird Al” Yankovic at several events. Jodi has worked tirelessly to present another face for autistic children and youth and prove to them if that if the conditions are right, they too can achieve something important. Jodi has performed at over 200 fundraisers and community events to benefit individuals who are on the autism spectrum disorder and various disabilities.



Figure 5.118 • Jodi DiPiazza • Photo courtesy of Jodi and Thomas DiPiazza

Studies & further reading

Book excerpt • Original pages 243–244

According to her official website, Jodi is currently a student at the Mannes College of Music Preparatory Division where she studies voice, piano, conducting, music theory, and composition.

Impairments: Autism. As a child, she displayed typically autistic behaviors.

Skills: Musician, singer, conductor, composer. Jodi has perfect pitch and an extraordinary talent for music.

Below are references, links to some videos, and additional reading about Jodi DiPiazza.

[Jodi DiPiazza's official website](#)

[Jodi DiPiazza Facebook page](#)

[Jodi DiPiazza on Twitter](#)

Lewis, R. (2015). Weird Al Yankovic, young people with autism sing “Yoda” on telethon. *Los Angeles Times*, March 9.

Murphy, E. (2012). Autistic Girl, Jodi DiPiazza, Performs with Katy Perry. *ABC News*, October 19.

McQueeney, K. (2012). The heart-warming moment autistic girl performs Firework with her idol Katy Perry. *Daily Mail*, October 19.

Kaplan, R. (2012). Music Therapy for Individuals with Autism. *The Huffington Post*.

Wallis, C. and Goehner, A. (2006). A tale of two schools. *Time*, 20, 48–51.

[Jodi DiPiazza singing the Star Spangled Banner at the Red Bulls, 2016](#)

[Jodi DiPiazza performing live at Disney World](#)

[Weird Al Yankovic and Jodi DiPiazza sing “Yoda”](#)

[Queen Bohemian Rhapsody 2015 performed by Jodi DiPiazza](#)

[Katy Perry & Jodi DiPiazza — Firework 2012](#)

[Jodi playing Levon on her new Piano Elton John](#)