

# Mei Kato, piano



Mei Kato was born and raised in Japan to a musical family, and has been playing piano since her childhood. Her first public performance was Ludwig van Beethoven's *Bagatelle No. 25 in A minor* when she was 6 years old. She took private piano lessons for 13 years. Most of the music she studied were the works of Bach, Mozart and Chopin. Due to her instructor moving to France and other life situations, Mei took a 10 year break from the piano. During this break, she graduated from a

dental hygienist technical college. After working in a dental office for 3 years, she decided to move to California on her own to find a new life in 2007.

Mei resumed her piano studies at Los Angeles City College in the Fall 2013 semester. During her time at LACC, she has been heavily influenced by Ms. Christine Park. Mei is currently finishing her first semester in Applied Music, studying under Dr. Jackie Petitto, who has been giving her lessons on technicality. Since coming to Los Angeles City College, she has performed the following works: *Song without Words in A-flat major* and *Rondo Capriccioso* by Felix Mendelssohn, *Sonata in E minor* by Joseph Haydn, *Children's Corner* by Claude Debussy, *Eugene Onegin (8 hands)* by Pyotr Tchaikovsky, *Piano Concerto in E-flat major (2 pianos)* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and *Symphony No. 7, 2nd movement (8 hands)* by Ludwig van Beethoven.

Some of Mei's short term and long term goals are to transfer to a piano conservatory, to make an ambient and experimental music album, to make music for music therapy, specifically for insomnia patients and to play *Piano Concerto in E-flat major* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and *Piano Concerto No. 3* by Sergei Rachmaninoff with an orchestra.

# Marza Panther, cello

Marza began playing the cello in second grade. Her favorite song was Jingle Bells, followed closely by the theme to Kojak. After attending NC School of the Arts for high school, she wandered away from the instrument to sing in some punk bands, write novels, and train as a flyweight boxer in Spanish Harlem. After a few decades, Marza picked up the cello again nine months ago and decided to complete her music degree. She had no idea that LACC would turn out to be the ultimate Smile Factory, or that it would become a second home filled with classmates and teachers who genuinely make her heart expand a little more every day. Her cello teacher is the tough-loving, relentlessly inspiring Alisha Bauer who constantly pushes Marza to the next level. Marza is also deeply grateful for Ms. Park, who taught her to dance the Gigue. Soon after, Marza turned her studio apartment into a Baroque mosh pit and Bach has never been the same. Marza hopes to attend Cal Arts and pursue a career as an experimental, jazz, rock, pop and metal cellist who can also shred with the best of classical players. In the meantime, you can find her arguing with a metronome in practice room M.



# Ruby Vasquez, soprano



Ruby Vasquez has been a music major for four semesters and she is planning to transfer to Cal State Northridge to pursue a career in Music Therapy. Born in Los Angeles, California, on July 11th, 1990, she grew up in Santa Ana, El Salvador.

Listening to her father's records, she fell in love with music as a young girl. Unfortunately, in El Salvador, she did not have the opportunity to pursue a career in music, so in 2009, Ruby moved back to Los Angeles and started her education at Los Angeles City College. She wants to pursue music therapy to help children and veterans get through tough situations in their lives, the same way music helped her to get through difficult times.

Ruby is graduating from the Applied Music program this semester with her talented and dedicated classmates, Abigail Hernandez, Becky Rodriguez and Lyndraice Papa. She thinks that they are also part of her growth because they all have learned from each other's mistakes and successes.

Ruby has received Classical Voice instruction from Professors Wesley Abbott and Diana Tash. Both have given her the encouragement and knowledge to further prepare her for her career. She believes the Applied Music program has been a beautiful opportunity to grow as a musician and human being by allowing her to create emotions and connect with people in a way only music can. She has always thought that music is not just about playing the notes on a page; even more than that, it is about the way those notes are played that will make the audience get the message.

LACC Music department is not only an academic department but a family as well. Ruby thinks that all teachers and classmates have been part of the most important events in her life. They were witnesses of the moment in which she got proposed to by her boyfriend in the Chamber Chorale performance. And on that day she also performed her first solo piece with choir. Both events will always be unforgettable.

“Thank you so much, my musical family. Thanks for being my audience all these semesters. I promise I will improve. You all have been a special part of my life. Pursue what you want and do not let it go. Keep the humble heart even if you are one of those people who have an extraordinary talent. That is what makes a musician better every day besides knowledge of your instrument.” – Ruby