

Catching up with Kate’s career

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Weekender loves a good musician, especially one as talented as local violinist Kate Allenger, who plays an array of music, including classical, country and Caribbean pop.

“I actually started learning the violin at about the age of seven or eight. I had a fantastic teacher at school called Miss Ebby. She had been quite a renowned violinist - she played in a trio with her two sisters and they were known as the Ebsworth Trio. She was my only violin teacher and she was the one that made me love playing so much,” says Allenger.

“With her kindness and encouragement and her obvious love of music, that was all I needed to want to be good and to make her proud.”

However, shortly after, Miss Ebby left her school. This, coupled with changing interests are what ultimately led Allenger to put down the violin for many years.

“I have lived in Cayman for just over 22 years. I came here, originally as a diving instructor and my violin was sitting at my parents’ home in London, untouched for a very long time! In fact, I had not played the violin since about the age of 13 or 14 - and without giving away any secrets - that’s a very long time ago,” says Allenger.

Ultimately her hiatus from the violin was not a permanent one. After a visit home to England, Allenger was inspired to pick up her violin once again, and as she tells Weekender, “The rest is history”.

“One summer when I went home to visit my parents, I found my violin and decided that I would take it back to Cayman with me and see if I could play it again. It is a beautiful violin. It was actually my Dad’s violin. He was a very talented musician and played lots of different instruments. He used to write music for my brother and I to play

with him – and, in his retirement, he even wrote an entire musical,” says Allenger.

“So, I got back to Cayman and tried to play. For the first week, it was a nightmare and then, all of a sudden, it all seemed to come flooding back to me. I was able to read music again, and in not too much time, I was back to playing to the standard I had reached when I gave it all up,” she continues.

Reconnecting musically

Since reconnecting with her musical beginnings, Allenger’s career in the Cayman Islands has taken off. She now plays regularly with her son Cory at Wine Down at Governor’s Square and every month performs at The Brasserie as well as playing with the Cayman Islands National Orchestra and for private functions such as weddings and receptions.

“Someone asked if I could play for a wedding one day and I did, and then before I knew it, I was getting hired on a regular basis for weddings, receptions and parties. I can’t believe that I actually get paid for something I love so much. I’m so, so happy that I have found the violin and found my music again as it is such a huge part of my life these days,” says Allenger.

All in the family

Allenger is not the only one in her family who has been bitten by the musical bug. Her husband, Shane Allenger, is a member of the popular local band Hi Tide. Their children are also following in their parents’ performing arts footsteps.

“In fact, really most of our family is musical. Of course, there’s Shane, who everyone knows and loves from Hi Tide. I have now started playing out with our 21 year-old son, Cory, who is a fantastic singer, songwriter and guitarist. And then there’s our little one, Melody, who I think was born to be on the stage – she has an amazing voice and she loves performing,” says Allenger.

It is safe to say that music has always been a huge part of Allenger’s life, and she feels that it is definitely something that young people should become involved with - should they want to.

“I think that it’s a good idea for youngsters to try out a few different instruments and then they can find out for themselves which one they really like. I don’t think that you can really force someone into music. When you love an instrument, it is so much easier to practice it and learn to play it well. The music teacher is also very, very im-

portant too. I was lucky, the violin was the first instrument I picked up and, probably because of my lovely Miss Ebby, it’s the one I fell in love with,” says Allenger.

“Music is good for you,” she says. “It is very therapeutic I believe. When I started playing the violin, it was just at the right time. I was coming out of a horrible relationship and I know that the music really helped me to find myself again.

“I have two loves of my life – my family and my music. Couldn’t live without either of them.”



Local violinist Kate Allenger plays a diverse array of music including classical, country and Caribbean pop. - PHOTO: SUBMITTED



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