



Liem Nguyen, Associate of Science-Transfer and Music Studies

Liem Nguyen was in a bind last fall quarter. The 18-year-old from Seattle's Mount Baker neighborhood had dropped a class and needed another course to round out his schedule.

He wanted to sign up for Beginning Music Theory 101, but the class was already full. Fortunately, music instructor Brian Kirk signed an overload form.

Students in this class need only learn theory and are not required to play a musical instrument. But Kirk's passion for music and piano was a great inspiration to Liem.

So, along with his music theory assignments, Liem decided to apply what he was learning by practicing piano for three hours per day for two months. Liem had never played the piano—or any musical instrument—prior.

"He played for the class and blew us all away," said Kirk. "He was calm, self-assured and made no mistakes in the performance. It is an extraordinary accomplishment to be this good, in only two months after signing up for a class on a whim."

Liem plans to earn an Associate of Science-Transfer and major in chemistry or biotechnology in pursuit of an eventual career in medicine.

"Since both of my parents were doctors, they created in me a desire to help other people," Liem said. "However, since I love music and piano so much, right now I am in a situation in which I have to decide which way I should go!"

"I am grateful to my music teacher, Brian Kirk. Being able to play piano has changed my life. I have become obsessive about it," Liem laughed. "I have to ask my friends to remind me that I have to get out of the piano practice room and do my homework; otherwise, I would stay there all day long."

This fall quarter, Liem will share his newfound talent and passion with classmates as a music theory and piano tutor.

<[Marriage D'Amour](#)> <[Winter Sonata](#)>

Liem on the grand piano performs "Marriage D'Amour" a beautiful and difficult composition for anyone, let alone a pianist of two months.