

*I was suspended in this surreal moment of white-hot terror...I could barely hear the notes of the concert grand I was playing over the deafening buzz in my ears. After leaving the stage, I had nothing but a mental "blank spot" to commemorate my first piano recital.*

This is how Mona Lim describes the first public performance she gave at the age of 8. A few years later, as a guest artist with the Tri-City Symphony, Mona almost dropped her violin bow, executing what she now refers to as the "screech heard round the world". She was playing in a trio with her older brother and younger sister. This momentous occasion was witnessed by a live audience of thousands. Call it masochism or sheer luck, but by the time she hit her teens, Mona had overcome her debilitating stage fright and cast off any notion of ever preserving her dignity.

Mona has performed as a pianist, violinist, vocalist, actress, and dancer. She has worked with five different orchestras and fifteen different choirs. At 18, she sang the role of Princess Iole in the American premiere of Handel's *Heracles* and then went on to sing in *La Traviata* with the New York Light Opera Company under the direction of Franco Iglesias. Mona also sang in a cappella groups before groups like Pentatonix made a cappella cool. She was in the Fidelio Society at Phillips Andover Academy. While at Yale, she was invited to sing with the Red, Hot and Blue and then the New Blue.

In an 180-degree about face, Mona abandoned her studies at Yale and any dream of becoming a doctor to pursue a BFA in Theatre at the University of Iowa. Later, in between gigs of "real jobs" and being a wife and mother, she appeared in many professional and non-professional productions.

Mona began working with children and young adults over 30 years ago, conducting workshops in drama and musical theatre at the Delphian School and at the Gallery Players of Oregon, where she also served on the Board of Directors. In 1999, she joined Clearwater Academy International as the Director of Student Activities and later became the Performing Arts Director where her classes were in great demand and her productions received rave reviews. Most recently, Mona directed the 2022 summer theatre camp program at Central Park Performing Arts Center where their two productions, *High School Musical Jr* and *Frozen Jr*, received highest accolades.

As an educator, Mona strives to present each subject in its most interesting light. She uses her abilities as a performer to entertain and engage her students so that they not only learn new skills and gain confidence, but have a fantastic time doing so. As a performance coach and director, Mona has a knack for zeroing in on the areas that will most improve a performance and give her students the greatest wins. Her "superpower" is not just that she can find the genius in any child, but that she can make even the most tedious and repetitious activities fun.

Having been a child performer herself, she is particularly sensitive to the needs of children and to the parents of those children. Mona believes, as Picasso has stated, that "all children are artists". She has developed unparalleled skill in not only drawing each child's unique talents to the surface, but in encouraging creative exploration that goes far beyond just "performing". She encourages her students to imagine, originate and author their own work, and ultimately to see the relevance of their abilities in creating a valuable life and a better world. As she states: "A child's ability to create artistically is a form of genius that will empower that child no matter what career path they choose to pursue in life."