

[Back to Samples](#)

Violinist

I WISH I COULD describe the feeling of playing my violin. It is a sensation beyond words, but I have only words to describe it: transcendent, meditative, magical. It is the instrument that shaped my life in every way, leading me on a spiritual and intellectual journey that propelled me to overcome every obstacle. On its back, I flew to more countries than I can count and met the most wonderful people that the world of art can produce. It cleaved my life into two distinct chapters, and I am grateful for each one. How do you become great at something? You must first fall in love with it, and then it becomes your passion.

I first fell in love with the violin when I was just three years old. My parents, avid music lovers, often took me to concerts at the Teatro Pérez Galdós in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, an exquisite concert hall in the central district of my hometown in the Canary Islands. It was like walking into an enchanted palace. The majestic white and gray exterior, the marbled entranceway with its stained glass and arched passages, and the exquisitely decorated concert hall, never failed to create a shiver of anticipation for the musical fervor to come.

From our seats in the balcony, I watched the well-dressed people as they greeted one another and took their places in red velvet seats before I turned my gaze to the coffered ceiling and the beautiful paintings above the stage: a series of panels in the classical style, depicting artists from every calling, and created by local artist, Nestor Martin Fernandez de la Torre. Looking at them, I felt like they were returning my gaze and inviting me to be one of them. Then the violins started, and the music became a part of my very soul.

Until the age of thirteen, I had an idyllic childhood in the perpetually warm, turquoise sea and pastel paradise of the Canary Islands. My house was always filled with relatives, and music and love abounded. These same relatives are fond of relating how I loved to perform even before I began violin lessons: singing and dancing and dressing up. My parents always

encouraged this free expressionism, and I think that is why, until this day, I have never experienced stage fright. I simply love to perform.

My first music lesson was when I was seven years old. It was like tugging the first bit of an endless spool of golden thread. While I continued to enjoy a wonderful, happy childhood with friends, family, and my four siblings, this golden thread of music began to weave itself into a sunny veil that let in only the best light to fill my childhood.

Then, at the age of twelve, I attended a summer music camp in Torroella de Montgi, near Barcelona, run by the acclaimed American violinist, Yehudi Menuhin. He recognized my talent and proposed to my parents that I move to Barcelona to study with his esteemed colleague, Xavier Turull.

Today, as the mother of a young child, I can better understand the emotions behind the symphony of tears and measured words of caution and reassurance from my own mother as she agreed to this arrangement. But at the time, I could only peek behind her shoulder to see where the golden thread was leading me: to a life of joy, independence, hard work, and unimaginable rewards.

And so, the chapter of my childhood ended, and a new one began. My father found a family in Barcelona that would take me in and, at the age of thirteen, I moved to mainland Spain, where I lived out my adolescence.

“Weren't you lonely?”

This is a question that I hear from everyone when I tell them that I left home at thirteen. But no, I was not lonely. Even though my family was not with me physically, I always felt surrounded by their love.

Xavier was my teacher and mentor for the next several years. He was also the most elegant man I have ever met. Tall and handsome with a thick head of white hair, he dressed meticulously, usually in a suit and tie, and employed the most gracious manners to everyone he met. Outside of lessons, he introduced me to the greatest artists, composers, and poets in Spain. I had no understanding of how unique my life was at that time. As a teenager, these amazing people were my friends, and Xavier was like family. I loved them and often performed in their homes. If it was a composer's home, I played his music.

Outside this enchanted circle, I lived a comparatively normal life. I went to school where I made a friend, Ivón; the only friend of my age I had during that time, and we are still best friends today. I studied hard, got good grades, and spent summers at music camps at various locations all over Europe.

Then, at the age of fifteen, I began my professional career as a performer at festivals and concerts around Spain. This odyssey included winning the National Award of String Players at eighteen and culminated in my debut at Palau de la Música in Barcelona when I was twenty.

At this time, the golden thread began to spin and spiral recklessly out of control. While recording and performing as a soloist with orchestras all over the world, my love for the violin never wavered. But our relationship was becoming simultaneously frenetic and stolid. When I arrived back in the Canary Islands to perform the Max Bruch violin concerto with the orchestra at the age of twenty-one, my mother told me I had to stop performing for a while and work on my technique. I knew she was right. I said goodbye to the second chapter of my life, the chapter of my teens and early twenties, and moved to Warsaw to study with the maestro Krzysztof Jakowicz.

This was the mid-90s, and Eastern Europe was still transforming itself from an oppressed, suspicious society to one that understood and embraced its freedom. Nevertheless, the people were genuinely kind and hospitable. I was greeted with flowers, delicious food, and warmth everywhere I visited.

The mentality in Warsaw was so different, so unique! I was amazed to see how revered teachers are there. Wherever we went, Krzysztof was greeted with bows and deference. He gave a concert and the response he got—it was as if he was a rock star! Krzysztof Was a different sort of teacher from Xavier. Although somewhat dry and tough, he was also very kind, and I learned a lot from him during the two-and-a-half years I spent studying there.

I then returned to Barcelona and resumed my career as a performer but travelled to London once a month to study with the concert master, García Asensio. he was the most gracious of men, welcoming me to stay in his home while he helped me prepare for my next performance or recording.

One day in January 2000, the morning after I arrived back in Barcelona from London, I was contacted by a mutual friend who told me that my old teacher, Xavier, had passed away from a heart attack at the age of seventy-eight. The sadness of that moment was followed by an overwhelming sense that I had to leave Spain. I saw my life before my eyes. It would be more of the same. I had done everything, and it was time to leave; to follow the golden thread wherever it led me. It led me to New York.

The New York chapter of my life is still unfolding. What can I say about this city? You meet amazing characters; do anything to make it, to survive. It forces you to dig deeper than you ever had to dig, and it rewards you with an audience that, more than anywhere in the world, has ears to listen and eyes to see. That is what I love about this place. People are not looking to enforce their old ideas on you. They want to hear new ones! They are looking for fresh concepts, and when you have them, they do not resent you for it. Instead, they are grateful and reward you.

In New York, I found what I want professionally. Since being here, I earned a master's degree and DMA (Doctorate in Musical Arts), got married, had a little girl, and still continue to perform and record music. Whenever I think I can't do it, I look at my daughter's face and then I know that I can.

Because that is where the golden thread has led me, after all. My journey is not over. My violin and I will continue to fly the skies and sail the seas, but my daughter's journey is just beginning. At some point she will find her passion, and then I will find the start of that long, golden spool and hand it to her. I know she will understand that it is a magical thread, and she must just believe; not only in it, but in herself.

[Back to Samples](#)