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Languages and lullabies

Montreal-pianist to perform trilingual children songs at Victoria Hall this Sunday

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From performing award-winning jazz/world-influenced songs to singing lullabies to local youth, one Montreal pianist is changing the landscape of children's music.

Alexandra Delgado is currently on tour in Montreal, performing her trilingual album, 'Kissy Kissy Time,' to children under the age of six – with the goal of exposing local youth to English, French, and Spanish.

"It's a way to have kids prepared in today's world of communications and to learn several languages," said the Nuns Island resident. "Being exposed to languages at an early age is a great advantage to have – a sort of head start."

In recent years, studies have shown how music is linked to language learning.

Neuroscientists at Northwestern University linked rhythmic ability to enhanced language skills in 2013. In essence, musical training sharpens the brain's response to language. Last August, University of London researchers found background music can aid second language learning.

Born in Quebec City, Delgado moved to Montreal when she was three, attending Roslyn, Sacred Heart, and Westmount High schools during her childhood. With a passion in music, the pianist perfected her musical ability and

knowledge at the Quebec Music Conservatory in Montreal; and subsequently in Paris.

The Montrealer would release the album 'Del Gado' and 'Lucky No. 7' in 2003 and 2007, respectively, before giving birth to her daughter Sabrina.

Cue the musical evolution –and her inspiration for 'Kissy Kissy Time' six years later.

The inspiration, said Delgado, was a product of the absence of lullabies in her musical arsenal.

"I had forgotten the songs from my early childhood. It had me panicking during my pregnancy. I was like she's going to be born and I don't know what to sing to her," she said.

So she did what any trilingual singer/songwriter would –write songs carefully tailored for her daughter.

"I wanted her to learn languages early. I wanted her to be exposed to the three languages," said Delgado.

After the pianist would perform songs at small gatherings, Delgado was incited to produce an album in 2013 and embark on a year-long tour.

"Kids totally change your life and your life perspective... And I'm having a lot of fun with it," said Delgado, who also teaches piano to children.

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She's also having success, too, as demand for her children's concert is growing. Delgado will be back in Westmount this Sunday at 2 p.m. after having performed songs from 'Kissy Kissy Time' in November.

According to Westmount's assistant coordinator of community events Virginia Elliott, Delgado's "appeal" and her ability to sing songs in three different languages was the primary reason in welcoming the musician back to Victoria Hall.

"Music is seen as something that develops a lot of aspects of a child so that playing and listening to music makes learning languages easier when you're young," said Elliott.

Tickets to the 'Ten Little Fingers' concert cost \$10 for adults; \$5 for children under 10 years old. For more information and to reserve tickets, call the community events department at 514-989-5226. For more information on Delgado, visit www.alexandradelgado.com.

Pianist Alexandra Delgado will perform songs from her children's album, 'Kissy Kissy Time,' to Westmount's toddlers on April 27, 2 p.m., at Victoria Hall. Photo courtesy Alexandra Delgado

