



RYAN PHILLIPS PHOTOGRAPHY

# MUSIC TO OUR EARS

BY EMILY WARD

*Wise beyond her years, Danielle Victoria began helping others when she was only 16-years-old in a way most won't in their entire lives: she founded her own nonprofit. Recognizing a decline in arts education in Arizona schools, she set out to find a solution and, thus, the **Danielle Victoria Music Foundation** was born.*

**L**AST SCHOOL YEAR, PIANO PRODIGY DANIELLE VICTORIA STARTED a simple school project. To raise awareness of the decline in arts education, Danielle Victoria traveled to Jim Henson Company at Henson Recording Studios to record her own piano renditions. But she couldn't stop there, and a desire to help the young music community of Arizona soon took hold.

"Originally, I was working on a school project that required something creative in action and something that gave back to the community... I recorded some of my favorite classics and, afterward, I realized that I could expand the project in a way where I could give back to the kids who love music but who couldn't really afford to pursue that passion financially," she says.

Today, the Danielle Victoria Music Foundation (DVMF) exists to offer scholarships to Arizona students between the ages of 7 and 12 who lack the necessary funds to pay for the cost of music lessons. The DVMF children learn to play a musical instrument and, in the process, enrich their lives. Since its launch in March, DVMF has already been hard at work.

This June, DVMF funded seven scholarships for Valley kids to attend the Musical Instrument Museum's (MIM) summer camp. Danielle Victoria was even able to visit the campers over the course of the four-week program to discuss their mutual love for music, playing instruments and how they all got started in music in the first place. "I had the opportunity to interact with the kids, and it was really a lot of fun," says Danielle Victoria, who also conducted mini concerts with the children and talked of the importance of music and inspirations.

The now 17-year-old credits her love of music to her parents. "Music has always been a really huge part of my life... I began the piano when I was 5-years-old, and I love playing the piano," Danielle Victoria says. On the DVMF Web site, you can purchase Danielle Victoria's full CD of piano recordings or single songs, including "Clair de Lune" by Claude Debussy, one of her favorite pieces to play.

The DVMF is also working closely with the MIM on exciting new projects for the fall, including the resident artist programs starting in October. The foundation is grateful to be partners with the Valley Youth Theatre as well. Though in its early stages, DVMF and the Valley Youth Theatre are working together on supporting various music and performing arts education programs that support Title 1 school children.

"It's an exciting time to see my vision for the foundation becoming a reality," says Danielle Victoria. "I'm hoping that with donations and proceeds from my recording album, we will be able to offer music scholarships for years to come."



DANIELLE VICTORIA  
MUSIC FOUNDATION  
[dvmusicfoundation.com](http://dvmusicfoundation.com)