

## LIVE AND LOCAL: One of the world's best stride piano players lives in Missouri. And she's only 23

By John Hansen

2010-06-02 18:03:32



Stephanie Trick didn't intend to become one of the best-known players in the world at a specific kind of music. She laughs when asked if she ever thought she'd be touring beyond her hometown of St. Louis.

"No, it really just developed on its own," the 23-year-old said in a Tuesday phone interview about her sudden stardom in the world of stride piano.

"I wasn't sure I was going to do it (as a career) until a festival in Switzerland (in 2008). That was a life-changing experience. Those musicians taught me about this music and emphasized how important it

was to listen to it, play it authentically and learn from the recordings. They did it at such a high level. After that, I didn't want to do anything else."

Likewise, many music fans didn't want her to do anything else. Trick's popularity revved up from 0 to 60 after her performance at the 2007 West Coast Ragtime Festival.

"A couple weeks later, a video someone posted of me on YouTube had 15,000 hits," Trick said. "I didn't even know I was on YouTube. Because of that video, more videos were posted, and people all across the globe started watching it. That's how I got the invitation to Switzerland. A lot of other invitations came because of that."

Trick learned stride piano when she was a high schooler taking lessons from her longtime teacher, Diane Ceccarini. Trick wanted a fresh challenge, so Ceccarini handed her the sheet music for "The Carolina Shout."

Today — although she is branching into boogie-woogie, blues and jazz — Trick still loves the genre. She aims to master all of the major compositions (in her own arrangements), and she is starting to write her own pieces.

"A lot of (my success) has to do with practice," she said. "But I also think it comes naturally to me because I love it. I love that full sound of using all of the piano. After awhile, you can relax when you play it. It feels good when you play it. It becomes second nature after awhile."

She likes to share a bit of stride history with her audience before each song.

"I think it was a fascinating time in the '20s with James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, Teddy Wilson. A lot of people recognize the songs but may not know anything about the culture. Audiences enjoy knowing what they're listening to. I also go to schools and do educational sessions about ragtime and stride. They really like this music. It's important to expose them to it while they're young. It really is about preserving it."

Stride is the style that bridged the gap between ragtime and jazz. A skilled stride player sounds like a one-person band, as is the case with ragtime. But there are key differences.

"It developed in Harlem, whereas ragtime developed in the Midwest," Trick said. "Pianists used a lot more of the keyboards, would really go into the lower registers and would do things that are more flashy. In stride you can improvise. Ragtime is more of a written form — at least at its roots."

Trick will be making her first Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival appearances this week (she had been in school at the University of Chicago during recent years' festivals). Trick, who will be peddling a new CD at the festival, provides a welcome infusion of youth into this celebration of old music, which continues through Sunday.

"There are a few guys and some girls my age, then a group in their late high school years, and a group in their 30s," Trick said of the worldwide stride piano scene. "That's great, because these pianists have good technique and respect for the music and its continuation."

#### **If you go**

**Who:** Stephanie Trick, stride pianist

#### **When and where:**

- 10:20 to 10:40 a.m. Thursday, John Stark Pavilion, Second Street and Ohio Avenue, free.
- 2 to 4 p.m. Thursday, First United Methodist Church, Fourth Street and Osage Avenue, \$20.
- 9 to 10 a.m. Friday, Maple Leaf Club Site, First Street and Lamine Avenue, free.
- 11:30 a.m. to noon Friday, Ragtime Store in Hotel Bothwell, 321 S. Ohio Ave., free (CDs for sale).
- 2:40 to 3 p.m. Friday, Katy Depot, 600 E. Third St., free.
- 3 to 3:20 p.m. Saturday, John Stark Pavilion, Second Street and Ohio Avenue, free.

#### **On the web**

For more on Stephanie Trick, including links to videos, visit [stephanietrick.com](http://stephanietrick.com).

For a printable schedule of Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival concerts, click [here](#).

Biographies of the musicians, and details on who is playing at what concert, can be found at [scottjoplin.org](http://scottjoplin.org).

© Copyright 2010 Freedom Communications. All Rights Reserved.  
[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Site Map](#)

<http://www.sedaliademocrat.com/articles/stride-24388-missouri-best.html>