

Sundry Strokes

By ROSALINDA L. OROSA

Stephanie Trick: The piano-stride wonder

The following essay is by Joseph R. Atilano, an authority on popular music.



A young, highly versatile and superior piano player who specializes and dominates in the piano-stride field. She is fundamentally backed up by her knowledge and mastery of classical jazz and swinging musical styles such as boogie woogie, blues from the late 20's era. She has been praised and applauded for her precise interpretations of the works of Fats Waller and Ralph Sutton. She has also been lauded by numerous greats of the piano-stride field and by celebrated musicians in the world. Hers is a name that we will sooner than later hear more about. She is Stephanie Trick. Her gift is not only her skill as a pianist, but also her use of it in educating and opening the minds of people who get to watch her performances and listen to her music while exploring other fields of music. As it was pointed out in her official website, to get her audience more interested in piano-stride, she even provides anecdotes about stride-masters of the past. She also gives presentations to students in special programs about the history of early jazz from ragtime to swing. The preceding information is derived straight from her website for purposes of accuracy as I feel it is important to have it told in its entirety.

Now, when it comes to piano-stride, I won't pretend to know everything about it — its history, its terms, and its greats. But who better than Stephanie Trick can introduce these to me and be their perfect example. She has the positive traits, the genuine characteristics of an artist and most of all, the heart, to back up. Her performances have been praised by numerous greats of the piano-stride field. To even get the nod of approval and the admiration of the greats speak volumes for her as an artist and as an individual. Upon listening to her music, doing my research and understanding where piano-stride comes from, I believe Stephanie Trick is well on her way to becoming one of the leading figures who perfectly embody everything about piano-stride. She is a perfect role-model for the youth. Why? Because for anyone to start at the very young age of five to learn a specific instrument and to study the history of piano-stride and to be dedicated to mastering it for years takes discipline and desire. Because learning to play the piano in its more innovative and complex style, is no easy task and calls for mastery. Stephanie Trick has achieved that and has earned the nod of approval and, most of all, the respect of the luminaries and the greats of the piano-stride field. I am not singing her praises. I am reporting what I have heard and seen and learned about her. I spent the better half of the day listening to her latest CD *Something More* which I was given, and to every available track of hers online, and doing research on her. I don't think I have enough adjectives or words to define how good she is in her chosen style of playing. Anytime, you can just listen intently in a quiet

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room and let the music do the talking and know that she is far superior to a mere artist. She has put herself in a higher order of what musicians can and could be if they had the same dedication of putting in years of mastering their craft and honing their skills. Stephanie Trick is a virtuoso...indeed, a 24-year old wonder in the piano-stride realm! A name we will hear more about. A virtuoso who has Filipino blood running in her veins. Someone who will continue to excel by leaps and bounds. But enough of me talking about her. For everyone to know more about her and to have a general idea of who Stephanie Trick is, I have listed some of the highlights of her flourishing young career, thus far, as seen from various websites:

- Stephanie Trick was inducted into the Phi Beta Kappa honors society in Chicago, being one of the youngest in its prestigious history.
 - She trained with and became understudy to some of the masters of the piano-stride field of music like Louis Mazetier, Rosanno Sportiello, Carl Sonny Leyland and Danny Coots.
 - She was awarded first place for three years in the St. Louis Friends of Scott Joplin ragtime competition.
 - She has performed since 2006 at the West Coast Ragtime Festival in Sacramento, California.
 - In 2008 she performed with five of the world's best musicians at the Stride and Swing Summit in Boswil, Switzerland.
 - Her first CD *Piano Tricks* was released in May 2005, followed by *Ragtime Tricks* in November 2006, *Hear that Rhythm!* in October 2008, *Stephanie Trick LIVE* in October 2010 and her latest, *Something More* in October 2011.
 - She is recognized as "the next rising star in the stride world" and one of the "only three or four people alive today" with the potential to recreate "the magic" of stride legend masters such as James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, Willie "The Lion" Smith, Art Tatum, and Jelly Roll Morton.
- A genuine artist. A gifted musician. A "wonder" who has finally been discovered in our shores! She is Stephanie Trick.

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