

# Allison Woyiwada had no speech or memory after brain surgery but she had music

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A brain aneurysm nearly ended Allison Woyiwada's (right) lifelong relationship with music. But in the end, her husband Bob (left) and their daughter Maya say her remarkable recovery is being credited to music therapy.

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After complicated brain surgery, Allison Woyiwada's family was heartbroken to witness all that she'd lost. But then they realized she still had her music. The CBC's Julie Ireton brings us the moving story of one woman's remarkable comeback through the music she loved.



At the age of about nine, Allison Woyiwada was given a gift that would change her life... a piano. Soon she would be performing at church and for friends in her home town of Portage-La-Prairie, Manitoba.

Allison Woyiwada earned a Bachelor of Music... became an opera singer, a composer and for about 30 years, she taught music to thousands of students at Hopewell Public School in Ottawa. In fact, a wing at the school bears her name.

In May 2012 however, Ms. Woyiwada was suddenly threatened with the possibility of never playing music again. But one more time, music would return to change her life.

CBC's **Julie Ireton** brings us her story in this documentary, *Allison's Brain*.

"...the second she started playing everyone's heads turned"

After Allison had brain surgery to fix an aneurysm, she could not speak but much to her family's surprise, when wheeled up to the hospital's piano... the musician began to play. Watch the video below.

Meet Cheryl Jones, a neurologic music therapist who worked with Allison in her recovery.



Just a note too... A week from today, Allison will be back in hospital. The titanium mesh that replaced a patch of her skull following brain surgery - is causing headaches. She's having the mesh removed.

Allison and her husband Bob will be releasing their book today, *Allison's Brain*, in Gatineau, Quebec.

**Has music helped you or a loved one recover from surgery?**

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