From Finland:
Robert's Music Story
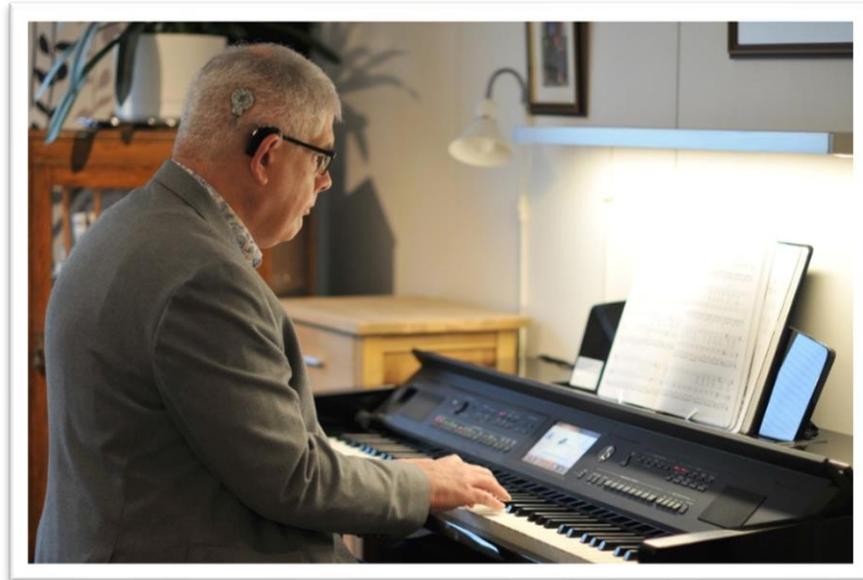
Onset of hearing loss: born with hereditary deafness, hearing aids from age four.

Device use: Bilateral implants, implanted in 2014, age 46, and 2016; bimodal for two years.

Musical Interests: Listening to music – especially ABBA, 80s pop, John Denver, Glen Campbell, Jean-Michel Jarre - and playing piano for fun. "I can't get enough of live music these days!"

Initial experiences with music after hookup: "With CI alone, the piano sounded awful. I could not differentiate pitch or volume, so every note sounded the same "plink!", and the volume did not change, no matter how hard I struck the keys. This did not cause me to lose heart but made me appreciate the hill I needed to climb. I could make out words in familiar music quite quickly but the warmth of melodies was lost."

What, if anything, has helped you to improve music listening? "Determination! Repeatedly listening to familiar music, the brain gradually makes sense of it. Similarly, playing and practicing the piano, the sound gradually became clearer over time. Although music sounds good and natural to me now, I cannot tell the difference between notes that are a tone or semi-tone apart, so playing anything by ear is impossible for me."

What is the most frustrating music experience for you? "Thanks to CI, I hear lyrics better than ever these days, but I notice that I'm more frustrated at the remaining lyrics that I still cannot understand. Is it reasonable to expect to understand them? I don't know how well people with normal hearing can hear lyrics, so have nothing to compare to."

What is something you wish were available from your audiology appointments? "At the moment, there is no focus on music in my appointments. I would like to see routine and systematic testing of music. This does not need to be complicated to be informative. Simply playing short melodies and asking the patients to hum them back, or to identify the tunes they hear, would probably give a lot more insight into how well, or not, we are hearing music."