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With a singing and teaching career that spans the globe, Jennifer Rico has become somewhat of an international celebrity. Not only has she performed in Amsterdam and given voice lessons to orphans in Thailand, but she's also been featured in movies and on popular television shows, such as the soap opera, "All My Children," MTV's "That's Life," NBC's "Law and Order" and "Swedish National Television," which is similar to "Good Morning America." She even sang the national anthem for President Bush during one of his visits to the Arizona Diamondbacks' stadium. And she did all of this in the past six years. However, while Rico's worldly success as a singer and vocal coach may appear to be a recent phenomenon, it actually began over 30 years ago.

"When the movie 'Grease' came out, that was it. That's when I was hopelessly devoted to music," says Rico, who was six at the time. "I memorized all the songs."

With the help of a tape player, she started recording songs for her grandfather. The songs were a combination of guitar, vocals and clarinet, which was the first instrument she learned how to play. However, it would still be a long time before she set foot on a stage.

"I was really, really shy. I could not sing in front of anybody," she recalls.

While she avoided the spotlight throughout her early teen years, she eventually joined the jazz and concert bands in high school. When she wasn't rehearsing or attending classes, she would write lyrics and music in her spare time. Shortly after high school, Rico started studying vocals under the guidance of Greg Enriquez, an associate of Seth Riggs, who has instructed the likes of Madonna and Natalie Cole.

"I felt like I could open up a little bit," she says.

With renewed confidence in her vocal abilities, she moved to Belgium, where her ex-husband played professional soccer. But 4 1/2 years later she was back in the United States, divorced, and

faced with the prospect of having to leave her singing career behind in exchange for a regular job. Nonetheless, she decided to take a chance.

“It was kind of sink or swim and I went for what I wanted to do. I had a dream and I followed it. That helped me overcome my fear; when you love something so much,” she remembers.

During that time, she continued to take voice lessons – even teaching a few students in the process – before joining a Christian rock group called Sure Foundation as their lead singer.

“It was exciting for me because it was the first band that I was in. It helped me spread my wings a little bit and get the feel of performing,” she says. She also says it helped her grow as a singer because she was exposed to rock music.

Then she auditioned for and joined a Pink Floyd cover band called the Great Gig in the Sky, which was established by one of the lighting guys for the original Pink Floyd. They toured around Arizona and even played shows in Las Vegas. However, the band eventually broke up because club owners weren’t willing to pay for the extravagant shows. While Rico says she is grateful for being able to sing in both bands, her career was just getting started.

By the turn of the century, she was singing for Barrio Latino, a Latin crossover group, which catapulted her to the forefront of the Arizona music scene. Two years later, she received the prestigious Arizona Infusion of Music Award and was nominated again the following two years. The group gave her the opportunity to become proficient in many other genres of music, including rhythm and blues, salsa and dance.

Although she no longer performs with the band, her voice can still be heard in her Scottsdale studio, guiding students of all ages on the art and science of singing, which she learned from her travels around the world.

“They come to me and they say, ‘We learn so much more from you,’ and that’s because I have all of these things under my belt,” she added.