

Hello and welcome to As It Is! I'm June Simms in Washington.

Today, we take a trip to the imaginary planet Krypton to witness the historic birth of Superman and to hear about how he came to Earth.

Also, the music business in Nigeria is one of the fastest growing industries in Africa. But sales of Nigerian CDs may not be paying off.

First, we tell about musical prodigy Emily Bear.

Musical Prodigy Emily Bear Shines on "Diversity"

A child prodigy is someone who at a very early age shows extraordinary skill in one or more areas. Emily Bear is such a child. She has performed at Carnegie Hall, the White House, world-class shows, and on an album produced by Quincy Jones -- all before the age of 11.

Most children Emily Bear's age are playing video games or getting together with friends for a weekend of movies and fun. But the young performer is instead directing her attention to her music. You can find her preparing for her next television appearance, writing songs, performing in public or sharing the recording studio with famous musicians.

Among them is Quincy Jones, who worked with Emily on her new album "Diversity." Emily says working with Quincy Jones was one of the most exciting events in her life.

"It was great. He's such a nice guy. He's like a walking encyclopedia of jazz music and history. I learned so much from him."

Emily Bear was born and raised in Rockford, Illinois. She was already singing and playing piano when she was two years old. At the age of six, she was invited to play piano on the Ellen DeGeneres television show. Her performance was such a hit that she was invited back to the show five more times.

Emily Bear is in high demand to play at performing arts centers around the world and has become quite a world traveler.

“I love traveling. I’ve seen China and Italy and France and London and Switzerland and Vienna. Actually, we’re going with Quincy this summer to Switzerland for the Montreux Jazz Festival which is going to be a blast, and Korea and Japan.”

The young musician composed all of the songs on her new album “Diversity.” This includes the song “Q,” which she wrote in honor of Quincy Jones.

Although her life is very busy, she still enjoys getting together with friends, watching movies and answering fan mail.

“I love when they get inspired and they start playing piano again or they start doing an instrument. I love these few e-mails that I got from patients who have cancer, that use my music to relax during chemo treatments. I’m so glad that it inspires people to do things.”

Emily is currently studying film scoring and classical piano. She will perform at the 2013 Montreux Jazz Festival on July 21, playing music in recognition of Quincy Jones' 80th birthday. From there she travels to Tokyo to take part in another birthday celebration for him on July 28. Thanks to VOA's Doug Levine for his reporting on this story.

You are listening to As It Is, from VOA Learning English. I'm June Simms.

Nigerian Artists Seek New Ways to Fight Music Piracy

Music piracy is so widespread in Nigeria that most people do not consider buying original copies of the recordings they want.

Nigerian music artists say the reproduction of their work without their approval is destroying what could be a successful industry.

Now some musicians are taking steps to fight back. Mario Ritter has our report.

Nigeria has copyright laws, but you would not know that by visiting its markets. There, newly-released Hollywood movies sell for less than \$3. Compact discs cost only about 95 cents.

Ranking Deezed is the president of the Performing Musicians and Employers Association of Nigeria. His organization currently has about 100,000 members.

“Artists are increasing. Talents are increasing. In fact, studios are ever increasing. We have a few producers who have studios in their homes. But then the market is what is the problem.”

Ranking Deezed says what is happening in the market hurts any chance the artists have of making a profit from their music. Original CDs are released and sell for a little over three dollars. But if the music is really good, he says, the market is quickly flooded with copies selling for less than 25 cents.

“We learned of even some companies, or let me say some pirates, in Lagos that can duplicate almost like 10-million copies in almost like a week or so. So that is really very bad.”

He says his organization is launching a task force to catch music pirates and turn them in to Nigerian officials.

Jerry Marshall has recorded seven albums. But, he says his music has been illegally produced more times than he can count. He hopes the new group will change that.

At the same time, he notes that outside of the arts community, most people in Nigeria do not care about music piracy.

And in this Abuja market, like markets all over the country, young men sell CDs and DVDs openly. Many offer money-back guarantees if the copy does not work. I'm Mario Ritter

Superman Comes to Life

Seventy-five years ago, on June first, 1938, the American superhero "Superman" first appeared in a comic book.

The book told the story of Superman's birth on his home planet, Krypton. His father, a scientist, sent the boy to Earth in a rocket to save his life when Krypton exploded. On Earth, Superman was able to fly. He had super-strength and X-ray eyesight. He was untouchable.

"Faster than a speeding bullet! More powerful than a locomotive! Able to leap tall buildings in a single bound! 'Look, up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! - it's Superman!' Yes, it's Superman..."

Over the years, Superman became as much a part of Americana as many real-life folk heroes.

And that's all for As It Is. I'm June Simms in Washington. Enjoy the rest of your weekend!