



BROOKLYN_BORN

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How did the 2 of us create HER?

Monday, June 27, 2016

That was DH's comment at the conclusion of DD's semi-final performance at the Cliburn International Piano Competition on Thursday. We watched the live stream broadcast of the field of 12, down from the original 68 competitors invited to Fort Worth by recorded audition.

Thank you sparkers who followed and supported her journey (and me).

I hinted that there was a backstory to all this and I've been asked to tell it.

Subtitles to this blog could be:

"How much talent goes undiscovered?"

"How much potential is never developed because the opportunities or resources are not there?"

Early one Saturday morning in 1975 DH & I were awakened by the sound of someone playing the piano.

It was Jingle Bells - complete with left hand chords. A ghost? A musical burglar?

There was our 5 1/2 year old daughter Jeanne sitting at the piano and playing from the music.

Me: HOW ARE YOU DOING THAT??

Jeanne: You showed me where the notes were.

A few weeks earlier I bought a book "How to Enjoy Music with Your Child"

The songs were simple. I was very good at playing "Pop Goes the Weasel"

Jeanne asked me how I knew what keys to play.

I drew a music staff on a piece of cardboard from a package of nylons.

I filled in notes starting with middle C and played the corresponding keys on the piano.

Suddenly she's playing from the BACK of the book?

There's more of a backstory - the circumstances that led to our having a piano in the first place when neither DH nor I played.

For that we have to go back 20 years further in time to Brooklyn, NY in 1954. I was 7 and I wanted to learn to play the piano. We didn't have one and no one I knew had one either, but there was one at school.

We always sang around the house, in the car, in church. No training, no music, just sang "how it goes."

We lived in a 3 family walk-up apartment (3 rooms on the 2nd floor) in a neighborhood where everybody's

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grandparents or parents had immigrated from somewhere in the world.

The only piano that could be hauled up those narrow stairs and hallways was a "spinet." The cheapest we could find was several hundred dollars. Dad opened a savings account for me. I used to collect bottles for the "deposit" and newspapers for the "junkie." The big additions to my account came in the summers when I was sent to live with my grandmother in small town in northeast PA.

Grandma lived as she did in the old country - heating and cooking on a coal stove with an "ice box" on the front porch. Nearby was "Blueberry Hill" - miles and miles of endless wild berries.

Not only did this city kid find it fun to pick them but there was a location where you could sell your berries to a "man from the city" for 25 cents a quart. I picked hundreds and hundreds of quarts of berries.

Finally 1958 - I bought my piano and Dad arranged for a lady to come to the house to teach me. I was so happy. He also had a friend who worked as a printer in a music publishing house. He used to bring me the music that had not printed correctly and could not be sold. I still have some of it.

Suddenly the post-war economic boom sputtered. My Dad, a welder, had his hours cut to only 4 days a week. So much for piano lessons. I continued to play on my own and sing. I had learned as much as I needed to know for my minimal expectations.

My parents kept the piano, but no one played it. When DH & I settled in Columbus, Ohio in 1972 they sent it along with us where it was waiting for Jeanne to discover it.

As for her story, I fortunately found a piano teacher, a Chinese lady, who believed early music training is not only possible but essential. Jeannie loved to play, perform and compete.

She made her debut with the Cincinnati Symphony at age 12 and had a very successful career through college. After graduation she married her wonderful husband, taught music in the public schools, raised 3 kids and became part-time church music minister. Recently a friend and competitor from her youth suggested she enter the Cliburn Amateur Competition - those musicians who had studied music but whose life followed a different path.

She has had a wonderful time.

As she posted from Texas:

"Hey everyone, I'm totally pooped and crawling into bed, but I wanted to say thank you for being such a great audience and support system. I had a good run here and got to play three times for a jury of world-class pianists. I got bravos and a standing ovation and I'm cool with that! Goodnight and see you soon!"

If you have read this far, thank you.

It was my daughter (Hayburner1969) who introduced me to Spark 7 years ago.

In so many areas of life, how much talent and potential is out there and goes unnoticed and undiscovered?

1977



2016



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PRNCSCUP1-2FULL

Oh, what a wonderful story! Thank you for sharing it with us! I often wonder about the untapped potential when I go to shows at the beach or other places and the singers, dancers, performers are all so wonderful but alas! Not on Broadway or on TV, etc.
1774 days ago



TERI-RIFIC

What a great story. How amazing that you worked so hard for that piano!! -and what that piano led to. That could be a children's book.
The opposite experience is not as exciting. 5 years - piano lessons-thousands of dollars-ability to play Michael Row the Boat Ashore-priceless.
1802 days ago



NUMD97

Always enjoy reading your blogs, B_B. More often than not, it gives me something to ponder. Years ago, we discovered a similar inclination in my older niece: Her father and I used to enjoy singing old, classic pop tunes. By the third go-round, my niece surprised (shocked more like it) me and was able to sing along with us. Third time hearing the piece. Wow! Years later, she had piano lessons. When my mother would hear the playing waft into the kitchen from the living room, she thought it was the piano teacher. I corrected her, and told her that it was her granddaughter who was playing. And she was already developing an ear for creating her own pieces. I often told my sister that this child had "talent oozing from her pores" and it still holds true today.



What I found fascinating is how early musical ability, like your daughter's piano teacher noted, develops. Even before my younger nephew was speaking (he was a late bloomer there anyway), he clearly had a preference for the music he liked and that which he did not like. When his older brother, being the older brother who enjoyed teasing his siblings, discovered that the little guy hated "Barbara Ann", my older nephew would sing it in his face, and off key, I might add. Until the little fellow cried. At first I did not believe it was because of the music and not just because his brother was teasing him. But when we broke out into "The Lion Sleeps Tonight", it calmed him. We repeated a few rounds of each with the same results. Fascinating experiment.

I'm glad that your daughter had the opportunity to explore her full potential at the Cliburn Competition. Learning an instrument, as you well know, is an important endeavor. I'm glad she got to carry her early knowledge and enjoyment to this prestigious competition.

Needless to say, you must be very proud. Congrats!
1803 days ago

Comment edited on: 7/2/2016 9:12:00 PM



MJZHERE

Thank you for sharing such a beautiful story.
1803 days ago



ALICIA363

THANK YOU!

What a delightful backstory!
Indeed, HOW ARE YOU DOING THAT???
Way to go, mom, showing her the notes, and getting her the resources she needed to grow that



talent!



1803 days ago



YELLOW09RED



Wonderful! She is beautiful &
1805 days ago



PGBACK

Wonderful heartwarming story. Thank you for sharing.
1807 days ago



TUTUNAN

Thanks for sharing this marvelous history!
1807 days ago



PHEBESS

What a wonderful story, and such a legacy of love that you've passed along, from your parents to you to your daughter!
1808 days ago



DOVESEYES

Wonderful
1808 days ago



PEGGYO

thanks for sharing your story
1808 days ago



WOOFERCOALBOY

Wonderful!!!
1808 days ago



MARYJEANSL

This is a beautiful story - it gives me chills! And, I found another connection between us - lots of coincidences - I too used to live in Columbus, OH. :-)) In addition, I had a sister like your daughter who was amazing on the piano, but whose life took other turns. Once again, congratulations to your talented daughter, and kudos to your parents and to you and your husband, for supporting your children's love of music!
1808 days ago



GINIEMIE

Love your story, it shows love and support of parents and families and some determined

young ladies! YOU and your daughter. God continue to bless you both.



1808 days ago



LIVEDAILY

That is a wonderful back story! I hope your daughter has shared that story with her kids!! It's truly a story worth passing down the generations!

Both of my parents were from Glen Lyon, PA which is slightly southwest of Wilkes Barre. My Dad had a love affair with blueberries. I wonder if he knew Blueberry Hill??
1808 days ago



SMILINGEYES2

Love your backstory. What a serendipitous and fortuitous journey. You are right. There is a gold mine of human potential that goes untapped due to lack of opportunity.
1808 days ago



CGMLH01

Wow - thanks for sharing your story!
1808 days ago





KRISZTA11

Congrats to your entire family, starting with grandpa who opened the savings account for you!



1808 days ago



CD12068097

Loved your wonderful story. Thanks for sharing.

1808 days ago



HELEN_BRU

What great talent - I listened to her semi-final video - and a wonderful story to go along with it.

1808 days ago



Comment edited on: 6/27/2016 11:19:04 AM



CHAYOR73



1808 days ago



SUBMOM2



What a great story!

1808 days ago



WUMPASTAR

Thank you so much for sharing. What an awesome start to my week to read this!!! Both you and your daughter are very inspiring.

1808 days ago



MISCHAKEO

That was a lovely story.

1809 days ago



SYLPHINPROGRESS

Thank you so much for the perfect back story. Now I'm crazy about your father, too.

You and Joe are naturals to have gotten Jeanne in the baby lottery, as she was for having drawn you as her parents. It's the old sowing and reaping thing.

Last week's photo of Jeanne is thrilling -- a woman who is one with the music that was composed so that it would one day come to her hands.

P.S. We spent some of my childhood summers at a Catskills bungalow colony. Nearby was a sizeable field of blueberry bushes to which we had access. I loved berry-picking and can still hear the "plink-plunk-thump" of the first layer of berries hitting the bottom of the aluminum pot which I used to hold them. Heaven.

1809 days ago



Comment edited on: 6/27/2016 9:44:03 AM



PHOENIX1949

Great story. Couldn't help but think about how many children today would roll their ideas at the thought of being industrious and earning money to make a desired purchase. I saved babysitting and housework money for years and paid cash for my first car when I was a senior in high school. I can still summon up that feeling of pride.

You and your daughter make quite the pair and I appreciate getting to meet y'all virtually.

1809 days ago



POINDEXTRA

Thanks for sharing this wonderful story. I so enjoyed listening to Jeanne's semi-final performance last week - this week I'll listen to her quarterfinal performance. She's amazing!

1809 days ago



SWEDE_SU

wonderful story! just loved it all the way to the end, and feeling a bit teary-eyed now:-) you must be so proud!!!

1809 days ago



CD8113065

What a great story. Thank you for sharing. That photo of Jeanne in 2016 is outstanding.

1809 days ago





HOLLYM48

Your story brought tears to my eyes for some reason. It is very touching and very moving. Where there is a will, there is a way and your story of your childhood and how you got that piano was so moving as well. Thanks for sharing this beautiful story with us. Congratulations to your daughter. It is one thing to play in church or schools or for small crowds, but what she did was beyond amazing. You and your hubby are to be commended for encouraging her and teaching her that anything is possible, as she proved. Hats off to all of you!
1809 days ago



WILSONWR

Great story! It's always nice to hear stories of people succeeding in the things that they love. We all have some potential in ourselves - it's nice when that potential is realized!
1809 days ago



DEBVNE

Such a beautiful tale, simply amazing! Your love, pride, and admiration shine through your words. Thank you for sharing...you sent this to your daughter, right?
1809 days ago



ONEKIDSMOM

LOVE it! Got tingles reading it. So glad THIS talent was discovered and nurtured!
1809 days ago

THANK YOU!



CARBMONSTERII

So many "might not have beens" to make such a wonderful story! Thank you so much for sharing the story that is equally yours and your daughter's!
1809 days ago



HEALTHYANDFIT27

What a wonderful story! Love the persistence and resilience of you and your daughter! Thanks for sharing!
1809 days ago



50YEARSAWIFE

What a wonderful story. Thanks for sharing. Congrats to you and your daughter.
1809 days ago

AWESOME



B-LESS-ED

Congratulations to you and your gifted daughter!
1809 days ago



WATERMELLEN

Well, it's absolutely evident how the 2 of you created HER!!

What a marvellous story -- of both musical talent and resiliency.

As my dad used to say, "Genius is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration": and you transmitted both!!
1809 days ago



SCHNOOTIE

What a great story to share with us! And it brings me to an equally important question...how many stories go untold? Glad you decided to tell us about it! Have a great day!
1809 days ago



NELLJONES

Congrats to you both!
1809 days ago



BBEAGAN

Wonderful story - thanks!
1809 days ago



HMBROWN1

Beautiful story! Congrats to your daughter!
1809 days ago



SEAMUNKI

#proudmom





1809 days ago

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