

Sunday, September 28, 2014

Singing

I was just singing a hymn in Church in my normal loud singing voice and I started to think about my singing. I do sing in the Church Choir and I am the solo bass... well, I am the only bass... well, I am the only male in the choir. Therefore, I end up doing a lot of solos. That is because there are sections in the choir music where all the Tenors, and/or basses are suppose to be the only ones singing. Therefore, I have a solo again. When I do a solo I receive many compliments about my voice. I don't know if it is because I am the only male or because I can project without really trying and I my voice can carry over fifteen to twenty ladies and the organ.

I do really love to sing and also enjoy receiving the compliments. However, I do not consider myself a singer. When there is a choice between singing and playing one of my instruments, I will always pick to play one of the instruments, especially my string bass. However, to deny that I can sing would be a lie as well as insulting so many that have helped me to develop my voice to what it is today.

The First one that I will have to thank is God for giving me the voice, talent and the love of music. Music is a large part of my soul. If I am not making music I really get very down and start to develop a lot of anger. I am told that when I am playing my bass people love to watch my face. They say I get all kinds of expressions on my face. I tell them that I am not aware of that or anything else except the music at that point. I really do get into the music because, you see, that is my way of praying. When I am playing like that, nothing else exists. To me Vocal music is like public prayer where you read the words with everyone else. Instrumental music, especially jazz, is private prayer where it is just you and God.

Well now, that's enough of that. I will talk about that another time. What I am talking about today is singing. Therefore, let's look at the people that have had so much effect on my voice. The first would be my Freshman Choir Director, from High School, who also later became my Choir Director at Church. Ted Kiefer was/is a wonderful choir director who leads his choirs to do music that is technically rated well over their abilities. Ted has God given ability to inspire singers to perform higher than their skills. He gently pushed me on to be better and to keep me going. Ted use to say that I had a voice that came from the bottom of the vodka barrel.

The Second person was not a choir director, but he sang next to me in the Church Choir. Dan Miller was a wonderful teacher and singer. When I sang next to him he would help me stay on pitch and lead me through the more difficult sections of the music. I miss Dan a lot and think of him often. I still hear him next to me telling me not to slur the notes when I go from one note to another.

The third person was someone who was not a choir director, but a choir member as well as a minister in the United Methodist Church and my oldest and dearest friend. Rev. Warren Light

was a bass singer like me and also like me a double bass player. We would talk and sing together and compete (in a friendly way) as to who could sing the lowest notes. I think that I will always miss Warren until I join him in the heavenly choir.

The fourth person was a wonderful music teacher and choir director and was in the same level as Ted Kiefer. Ken Steele had a love for music that was contagious. He was a true Sothern Gentleman who, like Ted, could inspire singers to do things far above their abilities. Ken would work with me before choir practice and Church service and made me feel like I could do whatever he asked me to do musically. Again I miss Ken and think of him often.

Now that I am the only male in the Choir, I thank each and every one of those who have gently pushed me, encouraged me and helped me to become the singer that I am now. As I sing I hear each and every one of them with their kind words, gentle smiles and wonderful voices, showing me how to sing the piece that I am singing at the time. Someday I look forward to being in a choir with them all again.

Until next time

Jim