

We all know that music has charms. This would be a sad old world without it, but how would one describe this elusive charm or even music itself? It seems that music must be a sort of comportment necessary for whoever thinks it and makes it. It is an individual realization. Music is a catalyst. Its mere presence permits internal psychic or mental transformations. It is mystical and consequently may express sadness, joy, love and dramatic or comic situations.

Whatever music may be, it has always made my world go 'round. It has been an integral part of my life for as far back as I can remember. My parents, especially my father, instilled in me a love of music of many kinds. He was especially fond of some melodies that I might never have come to know without him. Such pieces such as the *Barcarolle* from the *Tales of Hoffman*, the *Intermezzo* from *Cavalleria Rusticana*, the *Lullaby* from *Jocelyn* and *Meditations* from *Thais*. His family hailed from County Donegal and he loved all kinds of Irish music, as do I. His genealogy search told him he was a descendant of a 13th century Spanish king. Maybe that is why he was so fond of music with a Hispanic flavor. Perhaps my addiction to music was just a special gift.

I can recall hearing my first opera when I was in the sixth grade. It was Carmen. I have heard many since then and have come to love special favorites, especially those by Verdi and Puccini. I was blessed with a fair soprano voice and studied through high school and college. I was fortunate enough to be invited to enter a music festival at Loretto Heights College during my senior year in high school, which I attended. I sang *Musetta's Valse Song* from Puccini's *La Boheme* and won a four year scholarship to Loretto--my ONLY claim to musical fame!

I spent the intervening years singing at many weddings, funerals and different events. I was lucky enough to marry a musician, my drummer boy, and we have had some wonderful times with music. His tastes do not run so much to opera and the classics, but to music that he knew from all of his gigs through the years with different combos. He is especially fond of songs from what we call the "big band era." He even used to play with a group for the dances at Windsor Gardens. Some of the twinkle toes here might even remember him--the ladies always loved him.

I have sung lullabies to three generations now, and I have to keep the pipes tuned up for two new great grandsons. I don't know if any of my progeny will ever remember, but I can always dream about the days when they used to say: " Grandma can really sing."