

MY FAITHFUL COMPANION FOR 62 YEARS

When my piano teacher, Jean Broadfoot, insisted that I needed a grand piano in 1953, my mother, Evelyn Morrow, went to the T. Eaton Co. Ltd. on Portage Avenue to look at pianos. There was a brand new Steinway baby grand for \$2000.00 but my mother could not afford that much. There was also a Nordheimer baby grand, built in Toronto in 1921, and fully reconditioned with new hammers and new strings in 1953. She had Miss Broadfoot come down to Eaton's to try out the piano and she gave her approval. Eaton's took in my mother's 1912 Heintzman upright in trade for \$400 credit towards purchase. She had to pay \$1100 more in cash, which she was able to do, borrowing some of the money from her mother. It took Mom two years to pay back Grandma the full amount! Around Christmas time 1953, I came home from school one day and was greeted by my mother who had been moving furniture around and asked if I would come and see what she had done. Can you imagine my reaction when I spotted the grand piano in the living room? I immediately burst into tears, and Mom said, "Are you pleased with the new piano?" My reply, through tears came, "Oh no! I didn't have a chance to say good-bye to my Heintzman!" The tears soon dried up as I dashed to the piano to tickle the ivories!

The next month in early January, while playing on a Junior Musical Club radio program, the announcer asked each performer what they got for Christmas. When I announced I got a baby grand piano, the announcer asked me how Santa Claus got it down the chimney. I paused for a few second and said, "I think he had to take the legs off." Imagine . . . I still believed in Santa Claus! Ah, the innocence of youth!

For the last 62 years, the Nordheimer has been my faithful companion as I practiced music of the masters of the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionistic and Contemporary periods. As accompanist of the Winnipeg Girls Choir for nine years, the Vivace Singers and on occasion the Winnipeg Boys Choir, and as accompanist of school choirs in the Winnipeg Music Festival, I honed more skills learning how to listen to the singers and breathe with them, so the accompaniment would always be matched to their singing. When I started teaching in the public school system in the fall of 1963, the piano rehearsals included music of special seasons like Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Christmas, Valentines, Saint Patrick's, Easter, Mother's Day and Father's Day. School operettas and festival competitions always demanded more practice at home. After I retired, my classical upbringing delved into broader areas of music-making when I became the keyboard player for Westworth United Church Big Band. At first I felt totally out of place, never having explored such areas as swing, jazz, blues, ballads, country, rock 'n' roll etc. So the piano experienced the music of The Beatles, Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Louis Armstrong and many more.

When I retired in 1998, I had always planned on returning to private piano teaching in my home which I did until 2008. Nowadays, I only use the piano to go over handbell music or perhaps practice a vocal part for a church anthem or oratorio.

When I heard from Dr. Edmund Dawe, Dean of the Marcel A. Desautels Faculty of Music would require many more pianos once the renovations were completed at Taché Hall, I immediately offered to donate my piano. As the first graduate of the Bachelor of Music program in 1967, I have always been so grateful for my education there which led to a remarkable career in music education. I know my Nordheimer will be in good hands as future music students rehearse on my *faithful companion*. **ENJOY!**

Morna-June Cecile Morrow

M. Ed. (1977), B.Ed. (1969), B. Mus. (1967), Orff Teacher's Certificate (1982), AMM (1965), ARCT (1963)

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