

A SEED OF LIGHT

(Poem and essay by Lindy J Taylor)

A seed of light
Planted and nourished
Not squashed out by vain ambition
But loved,
Tenderly encouraged,
And invited to grow again-
Into Joy
And Wonder.
An endless gift
To share

This poem is how I view my time at BYU-- A gift. An endless gift to share!

I came to BYU feeling musically dehydrated. I had crippled my spirit with three years of intense, year-round practice, often spending six to ten hours a day in the practice room while minimizing all other demands on my time.

Not that I regretted dedicating so much time to my craft, but I had forgotten why I fell in love with music in the first place.

I had previously studied under a brilliant but demanding professor at another university. The “why” had become competitions, and I, like a dried-up raisin, no longer felt joy in the journey.

At BYU, I studied with Paul C. Pollei, a Doctor of Music, and the founder of the famed Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition. I did not know what to expect, having been with my last teacher for over eight years.

His approach changed my life. He surprised me with opportunities instead of competitions. He set up meaningful, exciting performances that reignited my passion. One of them was

an hour-long solo recital for the Gina Bachauer Festival held on Temple Square—a tremendous opportunity that changed my life.

My desire to practice started to come back, little by little. Small trickles of interest and joy in the music began creeping back in.

When Dr. Pollei assigned me a new piece, he did not high handedly dictate what I should learn. Instead, he gave me a list of works to listen to. If I felt drawn to them, I could choose them. He welcomed my own suggestions, complimenting me on my choices. He treated me less as a subordinate and more as a collaborator.

I remember Christmas. He beautifully wrapped an individual gift for each of us in his studio—complete with ribbons! It was a piece of music thoughtfully chosen, accompanied by a signed personal note.

Beyond that, after every major performance, he would type up a personal letter, telling me how proud he was, how bright my future looked, and how much he enjoyed teaching me.

In short, he fed my soul.

He gave me a fresh start.

And he nurtured the light in me until it sputtered back into a flame of delight!

BYU was not just about piano lessons, though. Somehow my newfound freedom also gave me permission to “play” with music again.

I took song writing courses with Mr. Ron Simpson, which I adored! I also took courses in studio recording work, which I also loved, and which eventually led to helping me reunite with a dear friend, who then became my wonderful husband!

My time at BYU was a gift. It rekindled a light inside of me that had been quenched. It gave me the freedom to be myself, but still to grow. Ever since, I have tried to give that same gift to each person I interact with, but most especially to my piano students.

I try to nurture, not crush, the unique spirit of creativity and love that each person brings with them into the music studio. I credit much of that love, freedom, and fierce respect for personal expression to my time at BYU.

My time there was positive, spiritually uplifting, and fun; but more than that, it rejuvenated my wilting soul.

That light continues to shine brightly within me, and I hope to kindle that same light in every soul I encounter.

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