

## WALKING WITH DAD

by Virginia Foley

I went for a walk with my father today. Conversation was non-existent, though I did listen to him. He was tucked into my jacket pocket, the one that holds my CD Walkman. Through my earphones I listened to his voice raised in song.

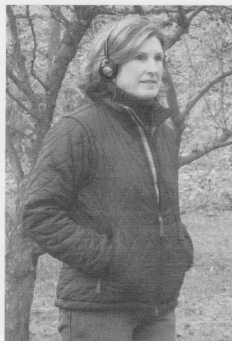
Dad passed away suddenly when I was 17, but he unwittingly left a gift behind. On an antiquated reel-to-reel tape deck, he recorded himself singing dozens of old songs, from vaudeville to Sinatra.

When I was growing up, music filled our home. Cole Porter and the Gershwin brothers were like family to me. Some of the first songs my siblings and I sang were by Rodgers and Hammerstein. While other kids listened to Alvin and the Chipmunks, our turntables spun with the likes of Irving Berlin and Duke Ellington.

Dad could sing with the velvety likeness of Ol' Blue Eyes and write with a sarcastic (though often corny) wit. But his artistic endeavours were limited by his need to care for a large family. After spending four years of active service overseas during WWII, he returned home to Canada, craving stability. Marrying soon after his return, fertility came far too easily and within a few short years he had five extra mouths to feed.

Our family became the audience he sought. Dad would break into song at the most unexpected moments, which made it feel like we were all living in the midst of a musical! Once, the night before my mother went into hospital for surgery, Dad sang her that inspirational song, "You'll Never Walk Alone." He would spin my sister and me round and around, singing "Shall We Dance?" or substitute our names in songs like "Maria."

When I was about twelve, Dad borrowed a tape recorder and spent night after night in the "studio" he had built in the basement, microphone in hand, perfecting his own little repertoire. (This was well before the days of karaoke machines!) And several years ago these quarter-inch tapes were transferred to cassette but pops and crackles were plentiful, making it difficult to hear any song clearly. Then, recently, my husband cleaned up the tapes and, making them almost completely distortion-free, transferred them to CD.



On an April morning thirty-two years ago my father woke me in his usual fashion. He grabbed my blanket-covered feet and gave them a gentle shake. He was leaving on a business trip. "Keep things lively while I'm gone!" he called to me as I wiped the sleep from my eyes. Those were the last words I heard him utter.

He's been one tough act to follow. But today, time was erased and we walked together through the woods, in perfect harmony.

*Virginia Foley, a Canadian-born freelance writer, was raised on Broadway musicals. She now lives in Wisconsin.*

## OVERSEAS WORKSHOPS AND HOLIDAYS

An overseas workshop or musical holiday is an opportunity to immerse yourself in an unfamiliar environment. Its unfamiliarity can be stimulating, but it can also be daunting when things go badly, as they did for Jennifer Adrian-Ponce in Siena last summer (IN BOX, October 2004). It is prudent to plan a little more carefully than you might for a trip closer to home.

Here are some tips:

- Be clear about your own objectives. How much of the time do you want to spend making music, versus sightseeing or relaxing with friends? Are you willing to work with musicians who are considerably more or less skilled than yourself? How much physical exertion can you handle? Do you want to sleep in luxury, or in spartan accommodations? How much help do you want in negotiating the geography, languages and customs of your host country?
- Get to know the culture of the workshop before signing up. Talk with the director and if possible with at least one person who has attended before. Ask specifically about each of your objectives. If you are not comfortable with these people or with their answers, find another workshop!
- Understand what is included in your fees, and insist on written confirmation. Unless specifically covered by the sponsor you may have to make your own arrangements for air or ground travel, lodging, health, casualty and liability insurance.
- Make sure to receive valid written copies of all schedules and itineraries. But be aware that enforcing these agreements may be difficult on foreign soil. First and last, be sure you have confidence in the people who stand behind them.

*All events we list are open to adult amateurs. The following listings are for spring, summer and fall, 2005. Winter events*

*were included in the October issue. We apologise for our inability to reproduce some diacritical marks.*

### AUSTRALIA

#### Chamber Music Holidays and Festivals

*Sydney, 10 days in late October 2005*

Chamber Music Holidays and Festivals offer unique possibilities to music lovers, both players (mostly strings) and listeners, from all over the world, to spend vacations with people with similar interests. Held in English, they offer daily music-making sessions, organized tours, concerts, opera, gourmet meals, and social activities. Many include professional coaching. Cello rental is possible. Accommodations are in high quality hotels. Approximately £800-£1500 generally covers lodging, lunch or dinner, music program and local entertainment. Contact: Vivienne Pittendrig, San Cecilia, Poulades, Corfu, 49083, Greece. Telephone: +30 26610 90820. [info@chambermusic holidays.com](mailto:info@chambermusic holidays.com) [www.chambermusic holidays.com](http://www.chambermusic holidays.com)

### AUSTRIA

#### Austrian Master Classes for Singers

*Castle Zell an der Pram in Upper Austria*

*August 28-September 3, 2005*

The master classes for singers offer existing piano-voice ensembles as well as individual participants time to prepare for concert recitals, contests, auditions or exams or just to prepare a program of free choice. Individual technical and musical coaching for singers and pianists and ensembles are also emphasized. Each week-long master class culminates in a public concert. Faculty: Ulrike Sych, Andreas Strunkel, Ingrid Ammerer. Workshop fees (2004): Registration, €49; participant, €269, non-playing attendee, €149. Fee for meals and lodging: €38-€49 per day (2004). Contact: Georg Steinschaden, President & Artistic Director of the AMC, Grossbergweg 11, A-5300 Hallwang bei Salzburg, Austria. [georg.steinschaden@salzburg.co](mailto:georg.steinschaden@salzburg.co) [www.austrian-master-classes.com](http://www.austrian-master-classes.com)

#### Austrian Master Classes for Strings and Piano

*Castle Zell an der Pram, Austria,*

*July 24-30, 2005 September 4-10, 2005*

The Master Class for Strings and Piano offers music students, professional musicians, instrumental teachers, ensembles, soloists and ambitious amateurs the

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