Musical Memories

Monthly Musical Joy

THERE WAS always a lot of wonderful music in our home while I was growing up, in the 1940s and ’50s.

Dad, a Methodist minister, played the cornet; Mother studied the piano and later learned the pipe organ to help out at church; my brother also played piano and then the organ; and I played the violin and piano, but enjoyed singing most of all and still do.

The arrival of The Etude music magazine each month was greatly anticipated. The outside covers were varied, attractive and sometimes fun. The inside articles were very interesting, and music to play or sing was also included. What a joy!

—Kay Huffman, Williamsport, Pennsylvania

Not Exactly a Natural

FOR SOME REASON, in the late ’30s, my dad determined that my older brother and I should develop music appreciation through piano lessons.

I must have been quite talented, because while my brother kept going from book to book, I stayed in the same one. In fact, I was so good, I played the same piece at every recital.

For some reason, when we had lessons, on Wednesday nights, Dad would stay late at the seminary where he was a teacher. One Wednesday, however, after we’d been taking lessons for 4 years, he was home when Mrs. Thompson came to give us our lessons.

Dad must have been impressed, because after our lesson was finished, he came into the living room and said he didn't think we'd need any more lessons. Mrs. Thompson almost shouted, "They won't? Praise the Lord!" It was the first time I'd ever seen her smile.

A couple of weeks later, Dad sold the piano and replaced it with a radio. He also started coming home a lot earlier on Wednesdays.

—Lilburn Wesche, Boise, Idaho

Playing by Lamplight

IN 1934, when I was a kid of 14, an elderly fiddle player named Coley Munson asked my father if I could play our old guitar with him at a community dance in the Morse Town Hall.

It was a night of firsts for me. We lived outside of Deer River, Minnesota, about 5 miles from the hall. I had driven our new International pickup before, but never alone. It was my first real dance job and the first time accompanying Coley, who played with his eyes shut and his fiddle on his forearm instead of under the chin.

With no electricity in the hall, a gas lantern was used for light. Coley and I got a break only when the lamp got dim enough and had to be pumped up again.

A collection was taken up for our efforts, and my share amounted to 35¢. It only figured out to be 12¢ an hour, but it bought a gallon and a half of gas for our pickup. And I got to drive a whole 10 miles that night by myself—half of it after dark, with the lights on!

—Myron Truempler, Grand Rapids, Minnesota