

About Shenandoah/Sunshine

Mom and Dad bestowed upon me a remarkable musical heritage. Mom's love of songs--especially sad ones--represented a great gift. She loved to have the house filled with beautiful music, and she was quite vocal about what she liked and how much she liked it. Strauss waltzes, soundtracks to musicals (*The Sound Of Music* and *Dr. Zhivago* were great favorites), and even folk and country tunes really touched her deeply. It was at my brother's wedding after-party, surrounded by family and Mike's hip friends, that she asked me to play John Prine's *Sam Stone* (she always referred to it as *The Hole in Daddy's Arm*). Mike's pal Brian looked at me and said, "Dude...you're family's got some strange taste in celebration music." True enough...but Mom loved songs..the sadder the better, sometimes. Maybe listening to sad songs just helped her more fully appreciate how happy she was.

However, despite her love of music, she recognized she "couldn't carry a tune in a bucket" (her words, not mine). There's a story told in our family of her rocking me when I was a young child, and singing *You Are My Sunshine* to me, and me saying, "Oh, Mom...it's fine if you want to rock me, but please don't sing." I doubt the truth of this story as I would never have been rude or disrespectful to my parents, but we all remember things differently, I suppose.

Dad loved music, too, but he was maybe a little less demonstrative with his passion. He'd occasionally fire up a Camel after one of Mom's excellent suppers and sing a little bit of *Red River Valley* or *Shenandoah* or something, and he had an absolutely beautiful singing voice. When he and Mom were young, Dad used to sing to her--and she loved it! As an octogenarian she told me that's what made her fall in love with him.

I inherited Mom's love of songs and Dad's great musical ear. Unfortunately, I also got Mom's pitchy voice, so my greatest challenge in recoding this album has been to painstakingly pitch-shift all the wobbly notes my great ear could tell were out of tune.

Nice thing about this song--I didn't have to adjust the pitch on a single note I sang since it has no lyrics. Another nice thing about this song is that the sound software I used to record this album is so good and so easy to use it can take this horribly cut-and-pasted-from-several-takes sound file and make it sound like it was played in one smooth take. I owe somebody big time for that...

This one is dedicated to Mom and Dad with deep loss and longing and deep appreciation for all the music they shared, for all the times they must have wished I'd put down the guitar or turn off the stereo and let the house be silent for a while but never said a word because they knew it was good for me to do what I was doing. Thanks for everything, you two. I love you and I miss you.