

— Music Brings People Together —

As far back as I can remember, I have always been a music lover. Not just the simple act of listening to music, but actually playing it. When I was very young, my parents recognized my enthusiasm for playing the piano. So, to encourage me, they bought me an electric keyboard. I learned to play it so well, my parents decided to buy me a piano (with a little persuasion from me of course). From that day on, the rest, as they say, was history.

I began taking piano lessons and after about two years, I no longer needed them. Along with reading music, I had and still have the ability to "play-by-ear" as well. With a little practice, I can usually pick out and play a song without looking at sheet music or guitar tablature. I say tablature, because within the past five years, I've also taught myself how to play the guitar.

I had always had a passion for guitar, mainly because it was the instrument of choice for my older brother Patrick when he was about ten years old. While I was learning to play the piano, he was learning to play the guitar. Patrick

was and is an exceptional guitarist in my eyes. When we were younger, the two of us used to learn songs together, he on guitar and me on keyboard. I still have a recording of the two of us playing "Pipeline" by the Ventures. Every time I listen to it, it brings back happy memories of times when my brother and I actually got along. It wasn't that we despised each other, but as siblings will do, we often didn't see eye to eye. But through music we did, except when he would get mad at me for sneaking in his room and trying to play his guitars.

It wasn't until about five years ago that I actually decided to learn to play the guitar. A friend of mine owned a music store and I would often visit and pick out chords on the guitar strings by looking at the chord chart posters on the wall. Amazed at my ability to play them quite easily, I was encouraged to continue learning. I got my guitar, a cream colored Fender Stratocoustic (acoustic-electric) for a birthday present and fell in love with playing music all over again. I affectionately named her "Fendy."

Since Fendy came into my life, I have learned all types of songs, from hard rock to country and everything in between. I'm still a little rusty when it comes to playing the fast finger-picking stuff, but as I have learned all to well, practice makes perfect and with time it will come. A few months ago I went to visit my brother and his family and I brought Fendy along with me. Patrick and I fell right into the groove once again playing music together, except this time both of us on guitar. You can imagine my reaction when Patrick asked, "When did you learn to play better than me?" All I could do was smile. I could tell he was proud of his little sister.

Recently, I had the opportunity to pass along my musical skills to my boyfriend's son, Timmy Jones. This was the first time I had met Timmy and I was a little nervous in doing so. I don't have much in common with thirteen year old boys. Or so I thought.

Like many young men his age, Timmy loves to play video games, in particular... Guitar Hero. Having known this, I asked him if he had

ever played a real guitar. He said, "Once, when I was four or five my uncle let me play his, but that was the only time." I took this as my opportunity to "break the ice" and proceeded to grab Fendy and hand her to him. The nervousness I felt disappeared in doing so. I said, "Here ya go.. have at it." He strummed a little and said, "I don't know how to play." So I began to teach him some basics.

Timmy's ability to learn and remember very quickly what I taught him astonished me. I began with a few chords, then melody's of a couple of songs he knew, one he heard playing Guitar Hero, the intro to Metallica's song "One," the other was the theme song from watching King of the Hill. I could tell the finger coordination he had learned from Guitar Hero helped him play a real guitar. As I



By Tonya Brantley

taught him note by note, he soon had them "down-pat." I also taught him how to remember the names of the strings, how to read tablature and how to tune a guitar to itself by ear. The next day, I tested him and drop tuned the strings except for the top one and told him I was going to quiz him on what he learned the day before. To my amazement, he remembered how to tune the guitar to itself. More amazing than that, it was perfectly in tune. Knowing that what I taught Timmy would stay with him his whole life, I felt the same pride I'm sure my brother had felt months earlier when I played guitar with him.

Timmy has since ac-

quired a real guitar of his own and continues to add more to his repertoire. I look forward to future visits so that I can someday ask him, "When did you learn to play better than me?"

"Music does bring people together. It allows us to experience the same emotions. People everywhere are the same in heart and spirit. No matter what language we speak, what color we are, the form of our politics or the expression of our love and our faith, music proves: We are the same." - John Denver

Questions or comments about Tonya's Tales? If so, e-mail Tonya at: people4news@aol.com.

Support your local merchant
www.ClevelandBradleyBusiness.com
A free service sponsored by The People News

NEW HOPE
 PREGNANCY CARE CENTER

has opened a second center to serve you

New Hope East

1075 Blythe Avenue, Suite 10
 (Family Support Center)

Get the facts you need to make an informed choice!

Free & Confidential

- Free Pregnancy Test
- 24-hour Hotline - 479-6683
- Options Counseling
- Learning opportunities to earn baby and maternity items.
- Parenting Classes
- Opportunities to earn baby and maternity items.

For more details please call 479-7960

Hours: Monday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
 Thursday 10:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

For an appointment call 479-7960 or 479-6683

You're not alone!

We Rent Band Instruments!



Tooter's Music

\$5.00 Gift Certificate

Towards \$10 Purchase or More

310 INMAN STREET, CLEVELAND 423-559-8994