



Dear Friends,

A few weeks ago I had a refreshing and down-to-earth catch up with colleague Liz Parker, promoter of music and stylist. There's no fluffing around when it comes to conversing with Liz, she gets right to the heart of the matter, and has an incredible sense of humour. Liz has a wealth of experience in world of PR and working with musicians to make classical music more accessible. It especially warms my heart when I see her funny videos pop up in my Facebook news feed as she inspires the love of music in a few young piano students she's kept on the side.

Liz expressed her appreciation for the questions I pose in the Artist's Journey interviews, allowing artists to raise important topics and share in our experiences. As artists we are greatly blessed with the talents we've been born with and with that blessing comes a big responsibility - to share, comfort, awaken feelings in others, and to inspire others to reach for their own greatness. Though our path can sometimes be painful and challenging, feeling and expressing the impact of these experiences makes us better artists, capable of reaching the depths of our audience's souls as we share our gifts.

Thank you Liz, for reminding us that as much as we sometimes need to cry it out, it also helps to laugh it out, and to never hesitate in sharing with others what we are going through. You just never know who you will positively impact. Enjoy!

Journeying with you always,

Tonia Cianciulli
Creator of Wish Arts

LIZ PARKER

Promoter of Music & Stylist



Wish Arts: What legacy do you wish to create within your industry and your life?

Liz Parker: I've always wanted to be known for making classical music more approachable. That mandate was always in the back of mind in my jobs as publicist, piano teacher, and stylist for classical musicians' photo shoots. I also hope to be remembered for the sense of fun I brought to those things. In my life, my legacy will definitely be that I enabled people to do better. I mentor my students (I still teach a few kids piano), and I'm strong support system to my friends.

WA: Was there an event or time in your life that caused you to doubt your dreams? How did you empower yourself to pursue them anyway?

LIZ: I think we all have those moments where we second guess ourselves and wonder what the hell we're doing. Nothing major happened to me specifically, but I've had those peaks and valleys, generally. I empowered myself with defiance: "THIS WILL NOT GET ME DOWN" and knowing that eventually, things will look up again. Honestly, I go out and buy new lipstick when I'm low. It always perks me up, literally.

WA: What was your 'big break', your turning point that changed everything?

LIZ: When then-Director of Marketing Diane Robinson, of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, hired me to be the publicist for the orchestra. I was 26 - a bit of a late bloomer, career-wise. Something just "clicked" between Diane and me, professionally and personally. She was amazing - she admitted her weaknesses, and said she'd rely on me for certain things (like how to pronounce "Shostakovich") and mentored me a lot. How many bosses can you say that about? We're friends to this day.

WA: What inspires you?

LIZ: Bravery, kindness, mindfulness of others, as well as nature, friendships, and aging. Yes, aging. I love feeling more secure about things, calmer, with far more perspective than I had in my younger years. I think aging is incredibly underrated and I resent all the hysteria beauty ads propagate with their "anti-aging" messages. "Anti-aging" is oxymoronic, let alone just moronic.

WA: Is there a person in your life who has been like a mentor for you, someone who encouraged your talents?

LIZ: Along with Diane, my former boss at the Vancouver Symphony, I'd have to say my parents. My mom is from Japan and for me, growing up, she was your stereotypical "Tiger Mom" who made sure we practised piano OR ELSE. Because of that, we got the message we were worth the effort, and I learned about discipline from her. My father was very supportive, offered all kinds of advice, and taught us how to love music by taking us to concerts. We had so many discussions in the car about music, art, whatever. He also bribed me monetarily to practise.

WA: Can you explain one of the happiest moments of your life?

LIZ: Honestly, it was when I visited JS Bach's grave, in Leipzig, Germany in the early 90s. It was a pilgrimage, and when I left my flowers there I kneeled down and wept. To be in the presence of incomprehensible genius was beyond humbling. Also, the first time I tried on a pair of Gap jeans in "Ankle" length - I'm short, and this was the first time I didn't have to cuff my jeans or take them to a tailor, which I couldn't afford as a student. I nearly cried in the fitting room at the Gap on Robson Street in Vancouver.

WA: How do you encourage and empower yourself through breakdown periods in your life?

LIZ: I'm way more philosophical about the dark times of life. I'm lucky I have a humorous disposition; that helps a lot. I remind myself that it won't be so bad in future, but for now, I'm going to have to wallow for a bit. I also love a terrific rantfest - that is my equivalent of singing an angry aria. There is something delicious about ranting your ass off and swearing vengeance, etc. etc. I always feel better after. I also reach out to family, friends, let them know what's going on. I treat myself to things - it could be as simple as an expensive fashion magazine to lose myself in. I invest in the best eye drops on the market for potential crying jags. Crying is emotional barfing - again, I always feel better after.

WA: Do you ever experience the negative voice inside your head that says: "You can't do that! Who do you think you are?"

LIZ: Not really. If the voice says, "that's not going to happen" it tends to be reality-based, not neurosis-based. So if I wanted to be a professional runway model, obviously that won't happen. My mind then turns to, "well - if you DID want to work in fashion - what CAN you do?" I just

develop the concept. If "Who do you think you are?" ever pops up in my head, my auto-response is, "who the hell are YOU to question ME?" and I carry on. That must be the half-Brit genes in my DNA.

WA: And how do you deal with this voice?

LIZ: I was raised to be confident, so I don't have major self-esteem issues. I simply think it over in my mind. If I do question myself, I want to know why, and where it came from. What I asked myself when I lost a job at a difficult and negative workplace, was this: "how do you define yourself? What is the difference between ego and esteem?" And I learned a lot from that. Ego is based on external validation; esteem is internal. And bottom line, nothing external validates you. Ultimately, what YOU think of yourself does. I've been quite spiritually centred from that day on. That was a few years ago now.

WA: Is there a well-known Canadian figure you've looked up to and inspired you along your journey?

LIZ: Okay. I never wanted to be a concert pianist, nor had that "big talent", but I did study classical piano really seriously for a long time. And normally, when you hear someone so extraordinary, you wonder if you should just give up now. Pianist Glenn Gould actually inspired me to keep going, and see if I could ever improve my Bach. I contemplated becoming a Bach specialist because of him. While it was not to be, I became a terrific page-turner, however.

WA: If you could give any advice to your past self, what would it be?

LIZ: Save as much money as possible!

WA: What's something that's been on your mind a lot lately?

LIZ: Well, as I write this in October 2017, it's the Harvey Weinstein scandal that broke recently - all these women coming forward with allegations of his sexual harassment and assaults. It has made me think about some of the stuff I dealt with over the years. It happened more in my younger years, but the last incident was, sadly, in March 2017. It's infuriating. However, there is some good coming out of this - both men and women are speaking up and dialogue is happening.

WA: What's something significant that you've had to overcome?

LIZ: Living in the shadow of my two older brothers, who are very successful concert pianists. One has the Order of Canada (Jon Kimura Parker), and the other, three Junos (Jamie Parker, of the Gryphon Trio). At the start of my career, it was hard, as I was less confident then, and always being introduced to people as so-and-so's sister. However, as I got older, I minded less and less - those introductions simply provide context to the person I'm meeting, and it makes sense as I move in classical music circles. It became less about me and more about providing an ice breaker. Now I am proud to be introduced that way - they're awesome brothers, and both very funny.

LIZ PARKER – BIO

While you concern yourself with hours of practising to ensure you sound good, Liz Parker of LIZPR concerns herself with the other stuff – how you come across via your image and presence, be it onstage or online. Liz has scrutinized and created media kits since 1996, and after PR jobs with the Vancouver and Toronto symphonies and at Roy Thomson & Massey Hall, she switched to image consulting in 2008 for performing artists. She styles musicians for their photo shoots, takes them shopping, edits their bios, and goes over their websites to ensure they work as a marketing tool.

In a past life, she earned her ARCT Gold Medal in piano performance, a Bachelor of Music at the UBC, and a diploma in Radio Broadcasting from BCIT. She is currently Communications Director at The New Classical FM and Zoomer Radio. Outside of work, Liz jogs, posts breakfast photos on Instagram (#breakfastmeditation) and feeds her cat, Jumbo.

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