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New York Sheet Music Society Presented Lyricist **MARTY PANZER** To Make Beautiful Music

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The last program of the season for the New York Sheet Music Society, was suggested by producer **Pat Addiss**.

Pat recommended the lyricist Marty Panzer. If you know Barry Manilow songs, then you know the songs of Marty Panzer.



Erich Bergen, Megan McGinnis, Marty Panzer,
Brian Green, Julie McBride, Kevin Earley

Marty started the program with "Before I Knew That I Was Blessed" and the rest of the lyrics of "Beautiful Music." The afternoon saw Marty raw and untamed, hysterically funny recalling his life through lyrics and recollections. "Jacque Brel" was the first musical Marty saw and he explained how it changed his life. Marty attended the taping of a Judy Garland TV Special while working at CBS, and also heard Garland sing the lyrics to "A Cottage for Sale." In hearing the emotions pouring through these lyrics, his life was forever changed... again. Seeing Judy in concert, and hearing these extraordinary lyrics, he realized that through music you could express the deepest depths of despair, as well as the greatest heights, of strength, and determination.

Marty met Barry in the mailroom at CBS. Marty was assigned to Barry and Barry brought him to the 49 building where a burgundy and gold Rolls Royce was always parked outside. It belonged to Arthur Godfrey. Barry brought him to the 2nd floor of CBS Radio, and to an enormous room which held just a large grand piano. They spent many joyful, and creative hours in that remarkable space.

Marty worked for CBS 16 years, but during that time, Barry left CBS and opened a studio where he coached, arranged and did musical direction, for dozens of up-and-coming artists. Barry was sleeping underneath his too big grand piano in his small apartment, and asked Marty to help him write commercials. Together they became successful with Columbia Diamonds, Cup-a-Soup, the theme song for the city of Cleveland, and a host of others. Next came a song for Jake Butcher, running for Governor of Tennessee at the time. Butcher's campaign, wanted a theme song to emphasize what an "honest man," he was. They wrote the song... and Butcher was elected. Several years later, Jake Butcher was sentenced to 14 years in prison for evading taxes, to run concurrently with a previous, 20-year sentence for bank fraud. Barry and Marty had been paid \$750.00 for the song. "We both got what we deserved," stated Marty.

"I Am Your Child," sung by Brian Lane Green, was used by Rob Reiner. Reiner had read a study that said a child's brain grows the most within the first 3 years, and therefore dictates the rest of the child's life. Carol Bayer Sager, an Academy-Award winning lyricist (and competitor), told Rob about Marty and Barry's "I Am Your Child," and Rob used that song to create his foundation. To this day, Marty is so very proud of the song, and its accomplishments.

Marty was Barry's lyricist until he moved to California. Collaborators were hard to find and Marty went on a search. The first person he met, had written a #1 song for Streisand... but he was stoned within half an hour. The next, was a country writer who collaborated like a revolving door. (A lyricist, an hour...) Then he met

Steve Dorff, and together they wrote "Through the Years," for Kenny Rodgers, the song that put food on their tables for the next 30 years. The lyrics (as written) were sung by a member of the LA, and Vegas "Jersey Boys," Eric Bergen, who is putting together an original show, including many of Marty's songs.

Next, Marty got a call - "You don't know me... but I am the biggest star in the world." It was Julio Iglesias who stated; "Your titles are better than most people's lyrics." He loved my favorite Panzer song "Who's Been Sleeping in my Bed." From that call, Panzer wrote "The Last Time," and spent 5 unforgettable years with Julio.

BMI introduced Marty to "My Three Sons" star, Don Grady, who was musical directing the biggest, most expensive musical ever, EFX starring Michael Crawford. Michael wasn't inclined to learn new songs (especially this close to opening...), but cried upon hearing their new song, and agreed to add "Tonight," to the score. The show ran for seven years.

Lorna Luft and Liza wanted Marty to write for them... and while he did... Marty got to meet his idol... Harold Arlen. Marty also got to meet his next collaborator, musical theatre's Larry Grossman, and began what became Marty's "Disney Years." After Marty wrote a song for "The Lion King II," (Disney's first ever "Direct-to DVD" release), Marty and Larry wrote the score for Pocahontas II. The Main Theme, "Where Do I Go From Here," was performed by Megan McGinnis, with true Disney Princess charm, and grace.

With his beloved friend Don Grady, Marty has written and produced, over a hundred songs for Walt Disney.

"This One's For You" was born of a hilarious meeting with Barry after his latest tour, and "All The Time" (which was just recorded by Producer/singer Jamie deRoy on her new album Wish on the Moon), remains Marty and Barry's most important song. Brian Lane Green gave "All The Time," a beautiful, and moving performance.

Channeling Marty's mom, Megan sang "Christmas With My Prince."

The show ended with a show stopping "Even Now," sung by the always show-stopping, Kevin Earley.

The life of Marty Panzer should be written as a book; he was so entertaining and prolific. I could listen to him for days.

The NY Sheet Music Society programs begin again in October. Linda Amiel Burns is President. You can attend all the monthly musical meetings, get the newsletter sent once a month for a yearly membership of \$50.
www.nysms.org

Let the "Beautiful Music" play on!

Photo by Rose Billings