

Jeff Around Town – August 30th, 2024

**Otis:** Well, it's a Friday and that means Jeff Around Town. There's Jeff now.

**Jeff:** And there's Otis now. Good morning, Otis. Well, you know, you never know how you might touch a stranger's life by simply sharing a smile or a kind word.

**Otis:** Yep.

**Jeff:** Or you know a few beautiful notes on a piano. So, you'll recall a few weeks ago on Jeff around town we shared some stories about Katrina Narine playing at Von Maur.

**Otis:** One of our very own announcers for lack of a better word, but a great musician in her own right, playing at Von Maur.

**Jeff:** Playing at Von Maur. And you can... you can hear her there when she's playing but so I was out there of course to listen to the music and to talk to some of the folks who were passing by and stopping to listen and... and then they'd go on do their shopping with newly formed smile on their faces, you might say. If you want to go back and listen that was the July 19th episode of Jeff Around Town and then we have a blog post on the 21st of July that features Katrina playing so you can go back and listen. So, there was one person Otis that I didn't mention that time around. So, as Katrina was playing Debussy there was this woman going up the escalator who had this really wide smile as she's going up. So, what do you think I did?

**Otis:** Well, of course you interrupted her...

**Jeff:** Actually, I ran after her, up the elevator.

**Otis:** Why are you smiling?

**Jeff:** Yeah, up the escalator? Yeah, I get elevator escalator.... Ran up and her name is Gloria Groves. Everyone calls her Gigi and it turns out that Gigi plays piano, and you could tell that Katrina's music touched Gigi in a very deep way, and she specifically said that Katrina's playing was fluid and gentle and Gigi smiling as she's talking about Katrina's playing and Katrina has no idea this is going on. She's a floor below and playing, but it turns out that when Gigi was younger, she studied music at the University of Iowa, and she was an up-and-coming Opera singer, and she had the kind of voice that you don't hear every day. I think it's lyrico spinto soprano and in a very non-technical way, you can it means you sort of push through the larger sounds.

**Otis:** Okay...

**Jeff:** ...Rare.

**Otis:** I know, I know about Mezzo. I know about, what... coloratura?

**Jeff:** Yeah, yeah. So very rare. As she was telling me and so... and at the time when she was an up-and-coming opera singer she was working with some very prominent mentors and she was about to go to Europe to set up auditions in the hopes of landing a position with the

major opera in Europe. And then sadly she was driving and was hit by a drunk driver, and the accident was so bad that she wasn't even sure she'd walk again but she did. And she's convinced that her long brown hair helped pad her head against the window at the moment of impact, but her dreams of becoming an opera singer ended with an accident. But she's telling the story in such a positive uplifting way, and she plays piano and she still does sing all the while Katrina on the floor below is playing this beautiful stunning music sort of providing a soundtrack to the story. And Gigi would eventually go on to become an interior designer. So, I felt Otis, I felt really you know touched...

**Otis:** Yeah.

**Jeff:** ...that Gigi would share, you know, here we are in Von Maur.

**Otis:** But that's... that's how music works.

**Jeff:** That's how... exactly.

**Otis:** ...that's how music works.

**Jeff:** Exactly. Yeah, that's how music works and when you stop and talk to... talk to someone. So, and I just love that also Gigi and it's in Katrina. I don't think they ever actually met but they actually were wearing very similar styles and shirts and they had the same blue and so, you know, I think of Gigi as one person going up the elevator and the other one playing elevating music. And...

**Otis:** Very touching. Very touching.

**Jeff:** Yeah, and so it's so Katrina's music touched Gigi and Gigi's story touched me and now I'm hoping it touches you and inspires you to share a smile or a kind word or a few notes of music. Even if you don't play music to share your gifts to talk with others and mostly to listen.

**Otis:** Music is a great bridge. What a great way to communicate and touch someone else without ever meeting.

**Jeff:** Mhm.

**Otis:** Katrina and Gigi. Mmm, great story.

**Jeff:** Thanks Otis. That's another Jeff Around Town