

Rachel Delevoryas

7Jan2017

There is a song by Randy Stonehill out there in the searchisphere called Rachel Delevoryas that I hope you'll look up and give a listen to. It's all about a girl who didn't fit in and was ostracized by her classmates, particularly boys, but who kept true to her inner voice and went on to become a concert musician.

I knew Randy, sort of – I think he was (a year?) ahead of me in high school but I knew Rachel better. She was a wonderful person with whom to share high school band and orchestra rehearsals and a killer French horn player. More than that, she was a friend to everyone around her.

It is not enough to say that I never heard an unkind word from Rachel. I'll get closer to the truth in telling you that she consistently went out of her way to be kind and welcoming to everyone around her. And she had a wicked sense of humor, the kind that lays in wait until the perfect, unexpected moment and then springs forth to totally detour the conversation and then pulls back, so you're left laughing but wondering why.

Rachel was a wonderful musician. That was a class in which we happened to have a great horn section and even among those four, she was a standout.

But competence and kindness aren't always enough at that age. She wasn't often invited to our reindeer games, as I recall. Or it may have been that she just wasn't allowed to go. I think I recall that her parents were pretty strict.

Listening to Randy's song, I have to admit I probably wasn't a very good friend to Rachel. Not that I recall specific incidents of being less than charming (although, let's face it – my high school career was a long series of other-than-charitable encounters so it would be difficult to identify my most egregious missteps) but I recall thinking of her as somewhat outside the perimeter of the in crowd, even among band geeks. Which is odd to realize now because I do recall being somewhat jealous of her. I wanted so badly to be accepted as a good musician and Rachel was one of the best.

Anyway, this morning her picture popped up on a Facebook reunion site so after my umpteenth listening to Randy's song about Rachel I finally Googled her. I am overjoyed to note that like the girl in the song, the real Rachel has continued and excelled in her musical journey. And whatever we did during high school and however we made her feel, she seems to have gone on to define her life by her own lights.

I am proud to have known Rachel. I wish I could say with confidence that I'm proud of my contribution to her life. Truth is, I just don't remember.

Memories can inform but you can't change them. All we have is today and perhaps tomorrow.

Rachel, in case you ever read this, please know that you taught me something. And I'm applying your lessons to today and to those pieces of tomorrow that come my way.