

Marvin's Song

By Judith Clurman - November 8, 2012

About one year ago, I received a call from Marvin Hamlisch. He told me that he was coming over to my apartment because he had a project for me. I had never seen Marvin so excited. He had written a song for his forthcoming book, *Marvin Makes Music* about his childhood audition for the Juilliard School. Marvin and I might have attended Juilliard at very different times, but we laughed and cried together when we talked about a few Juilliard teachers whom we both had known. We remembered how demanding some of the classes were, but how they molded us into the musicians we became. We even shared stories about practicing and preparing Bach chorales in clefs!!



Recording Session: May 21, 2012, © EVUSA, used with permission

He played through the song, gave me the sheet music without words and told me that Rupert Holmes would be writing the lyrics. My job was to organize a chorus of public school students along with some young adults, find a young soloist, and record the song with him during the spring of 2012.

Fast forward to the spring of 2012.

The recording session was held on May 21, 2012, at Manhattan Sound Recording on West 48th Street. I arrived at the session early and had some precious quiet time with Marvin. Larry Hochman who orchestrated the piece, joined our talk. . Our soloist, eight-year old Jonah Kernis, a student at the Special Music School in New York City, sang the part of young Marvin. The meeting between Jonah Kernis and Marvin was adorable but it also had another special personal meaning for me. I had collaborated with Jonah's Dad, Aaron, a Pulitzer Prize Winning Classical Composer, when I conducted a few New York Premieres of his music, and recorded some of his music. I took great pride in introducing Aaron, a "Classical Music" Pulitzer Prize Winner to Marvin, a "Musical Theater" Pulitzer Prize Winner. My two musical passions met together - the worlds of classical and musical theater. We were all working together under the same roof.

Jonah was joined by a small chorus of high school student members of Essential Voices USA from the Edward R. Murrow High School in Brooklyn (Beth Prather, Chorus Director) and the Celia Cruz High School in the Bronx (Lisa Gwasda, Chorus Director), and some young adult singers. Anna Olswanger, Marvin's literary agent, and Steve Meltzer, his editor, from Penguin Books, were in attendance. The sessions were great fun. Marvin and I edited the printed music as we moved through the children's song.

Marvin called me the next morning and thanked me for my work. I received the recording from the engineer, asked for some edits, and as per Marvin's request, finished the assignment.

No one realized that this was Marvin's final recording session. How honored I am to have had him as my friend, to make music with him on many occasions, and to work with him on this book about his childhood and a pivotal moment in his life - his admission to The Juilliard School.

