

In loving memory of

*Jane Smison Bastien*



January 15, 1936 - March 27, 2018

*“Teach each and every student as if  
he or she were your very best one.”*

June 3, 2018 • 4:00 p.m.  
La Jolla Presbyterian Church



Organ Prelude	Chelsea Chen, <i>student</i>
Opening Prayer	Tanya Chen, <i>family friend</i>
Hymn #387: We Gather Together	<i>Please stand and sing</i>
Bright Red, <i>Jane Smisor Bastien</i> Sonata, K. 570, <i>Andante</i> , Mozart	Abby Vickers, <i>granddaughter</i>
Memories of Mom	Lisa & Lori Bastien, <i>daughters</i>
Tumbling, <i>Jane Smisor Bastien</i>	Alexa Ramirez, <i>student</i>
Summer Memories, <i>Jane Smisor Bastien</i>	Sanaz Rezai, <i>student</i>
Memories of Jane	Mark Kjos, <i>Jane's publisher</i>
Witches' Ride, <i>Jane Smisor Bastien</i>	Dan Yu, <i>student</i>
Memories of Grandma	Katie Hanss, <i>granddaughter</i>
Water Colors, <i>Jane Smisor Bastien</i>	Taka Ariga, <i>student</i>
Presentation of Leadership Award from Music Teacher's National Association	Gary Ingle, <i>CEO of MTNA</i>
Jane's Favorite Encore	Chelsea Chen, <i>student</i>
Prayer	Lee Etheridge, <i>family friend</i>
La Plus que Lente, <i>Debussy</i>	Elan McMahan, <i>student</i>
Jane's Favorite Broadway Tune	Nicki Elledge, <i>student</i>
Postlude	Elan McMahan, <i>student</i>

## *Jane's Life*

Mary Jane Smisor (Jane) was born in Hutchinson, Kansas, on January 15, 1936. Her father Herbert worked at the First National Bank in Hutchinson, and her mother Gladys was a piano teacher. As Jane recalled in an interview, her life in music began at the age of three:

“I can never remember not playing the piano. When I was about three years old, my mother got a piano for her birthday. It was very exciting when my parents could finally afford to buy a piano. My mother played for school and church events, and later joined a piano ensemble group. She used to put me to bed, leave the bedroom door open, and then play the piano until I fell asleep.


Leota Steele (we called her *Anderson* after she remarried) from Colorado moved in across the street from us in Hutchinson, Kansas, started teaching piano lessons, and formed the piano ensemble group that my mother joined.

The story I've heard is that my mother received a phone call one day from Anderson when I was three and a half years old. She told Mom that I had crossed the street alone and appeared at her front door with a piano book, announcing that I wanted to play *Little Orphan Annie*. Anderson said that she would like to try to teach me even though I was so young. I began lessons, and my mother helped me practice every day.” 🌸 Tarchalski, Helen S., *Views: An Interview with the Bastiens, Keyboard Companion*, Autumn 2004


When Jane was seven years old, her father became terminally ill with cancer. She rode her bike every day after school to visit her father in the hospital. Jane later reflected on the changes his death brought about in her family:

“My father died when I was seven years old. Of course we were devastated, but seemingly right away my mother started looking for something she could do to earn money. Before I was born, she had worked in a fabric store and she was a wonderful seamstress, but she wanted to work at home and take care of me. Anderson approached Mother about supervising the practice of some of her younger students. Mother loved helping Anderson, and she soon started teaching many beginning students of her own.” 🌸 *Keyboard Companion* 2004

Jane described a number of performance opportunities she was fortunate to have had growing up, thanks to Anderson's careful planning:

“My first recital was at the Women's Civic Center where I performed from John Thompson's *Teaching Little Fingers to Play*. After that, Mrs. Anderson asked me to play everywhere. When guest pianists came to town, they would listen to me perform. I played at the State Fair, I played for the Rotary Club, and I played for literally anyone who would listen. By the time I was nine, I had my own local radio show. Every Saturday morning for 15 minutes, Mary Jane Smisor was featured at the piano.”  *Composer Profile: Jane Smisor Bastien, The Kjos Piano News, Winter 1996*

Throughout her formative years, Jane benefitted from excellent teachers and many valuable music education opportunities. She recalled an instructional journey that took her from Hutchinson all the way to New York City:

“When I was nine years old, Mother, Anderson, and I began attending teacher workshops on a regular basis. We planned our summer vacations around a Guy Maier workshop every year. Mother and Anderson would attend the pedagogy sessions, and I would perform in the master classes. I started lessons with David Milliken (who along with his duo-partner, Richard Johnson, had coached with Dr. Maier) at these two-week summer workshops. After studying with Mr. Milliken for several summers, I began studying with him more regularly throughout the year. When I was in the seventh grade, Mother, Anderson, and I began driving eight hours every other month to Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri (where Milliken was on the faculty). Milliken and Johnson later took me to New York to audition with their former teacher, Madame Isabelle Vengerova. I was fortunate to study with her for a year and a half before she died. Anderson, Mr. Milliken, and Madame Vengerova were all exceptionally inspiring and supportive teachers and role models.”  *Kjos Piano News 1996*

Having moved to New York to study privately with Isabella Vengerova, Jane attended Barnard College from which she graduated Phi Beta Kappa. She then earned her master's degree from Teachers College, Columbia University, where she studied piano pedagogy with Dr. Robert Pace. While attending Columbia, Jane met a fellow student, Neil A. Kjos Jr., who later became her publisher. Jane remembered that New York was where she first discovered her passion for teaching piano:



“The first week I was at Barnard College, Columbia University, a classmate asked if I would like to substitute teach in a Settlement House for three weekends. I agreed, but the regular teacher never returned. I had taught Anderson's and my mother's students during the summers back in Kansas, but it was at the Settlement House that I discovered I adored teaching piano. I found it so satisfying to be able to work with my own students on a weekly basis and watch them develop.” 🌸 *Keyboard Companion 2004*

After graduating from Columbia, Jane was hired by the head of the department, Dr. Peter Hansen, to establish a Preparatory Piano Department at Sophie Newcomb College, the women's undergraduate college at Tulane University in New Orleans. She taught there for 17 years before moving to La Jolla, California in 1975. It was in New Orleans that Jane first met her future husband James Bastien (Jim), who, as she recounts, shared a similar love of music:

“We were introduced by an old high school friend of mine, Burley Channer. He and Jim were both teaching at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond. Burley, who had also studied with Anderson, heard Jim play the Prokofiev 7th Piano Sonata at a faculty recital. He knew that I also played that piece, so he called and asked if I would like to meet Jim.

Jim and I met in September 1960 when he and Burley came to New Orleans to visit. After we met, Jim often drove over from Hammond (about 60 miles), and we spent a lot of time together on weekends. In December, we had dinner at the New Orleans airport before he left for Portland, Oregon for Christmas vacation. I was scheduled to play the Schumann Concerto with the New Orleans Symphony in January, so as Jim was leaving I said, ‘Why don't you come back early and hear my rehearsal?’ He replied as he was going down the escalator, ‘Well, actually, I'm supposed to get married in Portland!’ I yelled from the top of the escalator, ‘Well if you don't get married, come back early.’ (Jim really *was* engaged and had not told Jane!)

The morning of the first rehearsal arrived, and I was very excited because Jim called and said that he was back in New Orleans. We were both surprised because Aaron Copland stood in for the conductor, Alexander Hilsberg, who had had a heart attack. Mother and Anderson came to the concert and met Jim for the first time. We were married on March 31, 1961.” 🌸 *Keyboard Companion 2004*

During their time together in New Orleans, Jane and Jim performed extensively as soloists and as a duo-piano team. The New Orleans years were also the start of the *Bastien* piano series, as Jane and Jim began writing music to address the needs of their students.

“The first year that I was in New Orleans, I received a Ford Foundation grant to teach piano on educational television. I organized my very first book, *Wednesday at Seven*, for this course. I did not compose original music at this point, but used my own arrangements of folk songs and familiar tunes. This was the starting point for the Bastien books. I started writing a beginning book, *Pre-Reading Experiences*, the summer after Jim and I were married. Jim started by writing three *Magic Finger Technique* books for my first series, *Music Through the Piano*.” 🌸 *Keyboard Companion* 2004

In 1963 Jim and Jane Bastien entered into a lifelong, exclusive publishing partnership with the Neil A. Kjos Music Company, when Neil A. Kjos Jr. published Jane's beginning piano book, *Pre-Reading Experiences*. Their best-selling piano methods culminated in the *Bastien Piano Basics*, enjoyed by millions of students and teachers worldwide. With more than 500 publications to their credit, and books translated into 16 languages, Jane and Jim made the Bastien name synonymous with innovative piano pedagogy.

Jane conducted workshops, master classes and pedagogy sessions all over the world. Most recently, at the age of 80, she traveled throughout China, as well as to a number of piano conventions in the United States. Everywhere Jane went, her charisma, enthusiasm and deep love of people and the piano were contagious. Among the honors she received are the *Lifetime Achievement Award from the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA)*, awarded to both Jane and Jim in 1999, and the rarely awarded MTNA *Citation for Leadership*, awarded to Jane in 2018, in recognition of her significant leadership contributions as a teacher, pedagogue and author, to the music teaching profession throughout the world.

Known for her radiant smile and her love of life, Jane made a difference in countless lives with her composing, writing and performing. Her greatest passion, however, was teaching her students on a daily basis. They were her life and her inspiration up until the day she died. Her many accomplished students are the very best measure of the indelible impact Jane had on music education. She will live on forever in their hearts, as well as in the hearts of her devoted family and many cherished friends.







*Thank you for helping us celebrate the extraordinary life of a wonderful and kind woman. We would like to express our sincere gratitude for all your love, generosity, and support.*

❁ The Hanss and Vickers Families ❁

