

Natural talent and hard work pays off

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approached by somebody about a tour and so asked Ormonde and Cara about the possibility.



Cara Butler Sr.

Greg and Cara were about 13 and 15 at the time. The Butlers decided against it. Cara explains she and her husband felt a tour would mean the children were committed to music and that would consume their lives at a young age.

"It turned out that was their life, but you didn't want it at that age," she says. Still, they had recitals in Cobourg, Kingston and Toronto and they always sold out. At one such event Cara received 37 bouquets of flowers. It was something she'd become used to but Cara Sr. says, "From the first time she'd ever held a bouquet she held them like she'd been born holding roses."

While most parents dream of having gifted children, the Butlers understood the sacrifices necessary for such a life and feared it might rob them of their childhood.

On another occasion the children were offered their own weekly radio program but declined because Mona Bates frowned on the idea — "She didn't want them rattling off anything," says Cara Sr. —

and with the added rehearsals it would require. a radio show would be too much work. Both children were playing so they could become serious musicians later in life., says Cara Sr.

She notes her children were very close, arguing only when they were practising together. One child felt a piece of music should be played one way, the other thought it should be played another way. It was a matter of artistic interpretation among adolescents. Cara Sr. acted as the "referee."

As an extreme example of how their lives were, Cara Sr. recalls the time the two taped a radio program Thursday evening, performed a Christmas concert duet the following morning at Belleville Collegiate Institute and then boarded a train for Toronto where they did a two piano recital at Bates' house.

The daily routine for Cara meant rising at 6:30 a.m. and practising, then again at noon and after dinner. Still, Cara found time for skating and ten-

nis and both youngsters did well in school.

At 13, when many musically inclined people begin playing an instrument, Cara started teaching piano to other students.

Despite these hours of hard work and great praise, Cara Sr. says her children were very ordinary outside their natural gifts. "They never took themselves seriously."

Greg pursued a career in music, getting his doctorate in the field from Eastman's School of Music in Rochester.

He later played at the White House and on Feb. 26 he returned to Belleville for a concert at Centennial Secondary School with the Eastern Ontario Concert Orchestra. He is now head of the music department at Windsor University.

Cara married and stopped playing professionally. She still resides in Belleville. Although her days of playing for large audiences are past, many Ontario residents, and certainly those in Belleville, have wonderful recollections of she and her brother's magnificent performances.

*Hotel Hampshire,
Remember to them,
Apr. 18, 1994.*

*Butler,
Cara
and Greg*

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