

**This issue is dedicated to *Richard Sim*, a former concertmaster of the  
SJYS Philharmonic who passed away two years ago.**



***Richard Sim***

***December 29, 1988 - June 28, 2008***

It is a great honor to be appointed concertmaster of SJYS. There have been many great ones like Kay Yang, Ceron Rhee, Emma Heffernan, and Lizzie Choi who all epitomized the position. They worked hard and played great and brought joy to many people through their musical talents. Rich was among the few who were given this honor and it came with great work. He practiced everyday and went to lessons every week and even ended up teaching in-between. He had a way of taking a piece and making it his own which is really pretty hard to do with classical music. Within the confines of the notes, he put his own spin on the phrasing and feeling to make a piece alive with his own touch.

He was born Dec. 29, 1988. I don't remember that night, but I do remember the next 19 years of his life. When we were growing up we were inseparable. We did everything together.

He had to be the best at everything he did and would do anything to make that happen. Even at this young age he was developing into the man that he would become. As we grew in the church he also grew in his compassion for others. Instead of going out with friends on Fridays and Saturdays, he would go to church to baby-sit the kids of the choir members for free. He played with them and mentored them at a young age and gave them someone to play with and talk to. He was able to reach many people's lives through this and quickly became a favorite kid in the church. Parents would always compliment him and were impressed by his aptitude for leadership even at such a young age.

Basketball was another thing that we had together. We both played at the YMCA. He excelled at basketball until his sophomore year when the doctor didn't clear him for his physical because of the heart problem that would later cut his life so short of what it should have been. When the doctor told him that he couldn't play basketball anymore he was devastated. It was his passion for so long that the first months were really hard on him. He tried not to let it show but it did to those closest to him.

That's when his musical talent started to blossom. He took the same passion and love for basketball and used it in his music. He would practice every day, sometimes for 4 hours a day, sometimes more. He had to be the best. He studied from a past concertmaster in the San Jose Symphony and from there it was on. He grew so much musically playing pieces that kids 4 years older than him were playing. We would do duets for recitals and even then I knew that he was better than me at violin than I was at cello. He continued to impress his teacher so much that he gave Rich students of his own to teach. His love for music and his love for kids made him the perfect teacher. He was able to somehow reach the kids who hated playing and were only playing for their parents. He was able to relate to them as that was how we both felt when we first began as our mom forced us to start. However he was also able to tell them that even though they hated it now that someday they would grow into it and would one day even like playing. He was the kind of guy that everyone was lucky to have in their life.

His music wasn't the only thing that made him great. He was one of the most compassionate and loving people I have ever known. He always helped out our mom with laundry and dishes and cleaning the house. He always helped our dad with whatever work he needed done and was always there to watch a Warriors game. He made life so much easier for our parents. There's no truer thing that I've heard than "you don't know what you have until it's gone." In this case it was you don't know who you had until they're gone. It is so easy to be mad about everything that has happened because of the severity of it. It's just not right for such an amazing person at 19 years old to be taken from this world. Rich wouldn't want people to still be grieving over him. Instead in his loving memory, he would want us all to move on and to make our lives better with everyday. It won't be easy. Life never is. His life has shown us that tomorrow is never promised no matter how invincible we think we are. So remember to live everyday as if it's your last. It sounds cliché but it is so true. Before you go to sleep at night you should ask yourself if you did everything you could today to the best of your abilities so that you would have no regrets tomorrow.

When I get sad over his passing I think of what he would do. He would do a stupid dance or make an outrageous face to make me laugh and smile. And that's what he would want. He would want us to smile in his memory and to love others everyday as he did. There are so many things in life that can go wrong, but the only thing that you can control is you. Make sure that you live, laugh, and love everyday and you can't go wrong. I love my brother very much and I miss him every day, and I hope it doesn't take you a loss like this to recognize that those in your life mean the world to you.

To those aspiring to be amazing musicians, go for it! It won't be easy. In fact sometimes it will be hard. But nothing good comes easy. Whatever you do in life, make sure that you do it with everything that you have. It will be much easier to sleep at night. I hope that all of your dreams come true and with your hard work and Rich looking over you, anything is possible.

***~ Steve Sim***