

Portrait

Borbála Zaborski

Bori. Borbála Béres. Mrs Andrew Zaborski. From my photos of her, a modest, smiling, 42-year-old woman looks at me with her warm, brown eyes. I recall her crystal clear soprano voice, the beautiful renditions of "Ave Maria" at the Christmas masses, the folk songs sung by her at the Match 15 and October 23 celebrations. This captivating voice and her charming personality must have caught the attention of the 5 years older, American born Hungarian engineer, Andrew Zaborski...

... because in 1997 he asked Bori to marry him. She was here from Hungary, studying music and voice in Bellingham at the Western Washington University.

By that time, Bori had an impressive musical education and skills. She attended a musical elementary school in Budapest, started her piano studies in 3rd grade. At age 10 she was accepted into the Hungarian State Opera's children chorus, where she performed in various operas almost weekly, while she also attended rehearsals and practice sessions twice weekly. In high school she had a private voice teacher, and after graduation she was accepted at the Béla Bartók Musical Conservatory. Her studies culminated in three years spent at the prestigious Franz Liszt Musical Academy. "I was 26 years old when I was accepted" she remembers. Only one more year was needed to earn her teaching degree when the opportunity arose to tour America with Laszlo Kenesei's chorus. Her dad, the father of four children, who was always supportive of developing Bori's talents, offered to pay her airfare to America. The artistic connection was made through the Hungarian Mary Terey-Smith, a conductor and university professor at Bellingham.

Bellingham made such a good impression on Bori that she returned there the same year in September with a student visa to study music and voice. Bori's father financed her studies and the family made the personal sacrifice to make this possible for her. She found a very good vocal teacher, Charles Peterson during this year. Bori's casual acquaintance with Andrew also developed into a deeper relationship, and they fell in love. For the next year Andrew arranged baby-sitting work for Bori, so she could continue her studies.

My first memory of Bori is from her wedding day in April, 1997. Lucy Fuerész organized a small reception to honor the newly weds at the Mercer Island Community Center. Bori is still grateful to Lucy and all those Hungarians who helped and partook in the event.



Out of the two of them, I met Andrew first. He was one of my students from way back, when I was teaching Hungarian language classes. He was a handsome, always polite, and respectful pupil, who once made palacsinta for the entire class for a Hungarian gastronomical experience, too.

Andrew has an endless need and desire for learning new skills including airplane mechanics, bee keeping, iron works, horseshoeing, fine carpentry, and folk dancing. He also earned a teaching degree and currently interns in Woodinville learning all the ins and outs of wine making. He plans to develop a new vineyard, also.

In the meantime, Bori is a faithful wife and mother who supports her husband in his endeavors. She remarked, "It is good that Andrew learns so many things. The teaching degree is useful for our children. He can help with their math and science homework."

After the wedding, the new couple moved into Andrew's tiny, 720 square feet house. Three years later Adam was born, followed by their daughter, Lili, another two years later. Hard times hit the young family, Andrew lost his job at Boeing in 2002 due to the 9/11 cut backs. Bori found out a week later that she was pregnant with their second child. This is when Andrew decided to get a teaching degree but the teaching did not work out after all. The income from a beginning teaching job was not enough to live on, so Andrew went back to Boeing.

While Andrew pursues his new skills and works full time as an engineer, Bori currently devotes all her attention and energies to the family and children. Two

and a half years ago the family moved into a beautiful, large, new home on the hills near Orting, in a gated community. "I like it here" says Bori, "this is a very friendly, small community, the only drawback is that we are too far from the city and the Hungarian events. The school is good, and in church everybody knows everybody, just as in a small village. The development consists of 35-36 homes only. The air is good, and we have our own water tower and well".

Now that the children are growing and are back in school, Bori's thoughts return to her unfinished musical carrier. "I miss the singing, I loved it so much in my childhood" she said, and secret longing came through her voice." I would like to audition with the Tacoma Opera in April. In 1996 I auditioned with them once. I would take an opera chorus position now. You have to start somewhere After I make some connections, perhaps there will be some solo role available, too. If I could sing on stage, it would make me happy, I loved it so much when I was in the children's chorus." Bori started to practice the arias to prepare for the audition. There is opportunity at church to sing, solo performances, too. She is very complimentary about their music director and the friendly, happy chorus members.

In closing, I asked her what else she would like me to convey about her to the readers. "You could add," was her surprising remark, "that I would be happy to sing". I promised that I would pass on her message, and here it is.

It is refreshing to find someone in our community who offers her talent and her artistic skills that she developed through the years. Bori's talent, however, would need to be further helped and promoted beyond the Hungarian community. The responsibility for that lies partly with Bori's own determination. She will also need her husband Andrew's support. In the meantime, we wish her the best of luck with the opera auditions.