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I feel like I should be interviewing you, since that's usually my job,” **Lisa Glasberg** says in her Long Island accent as we sit in the bright tiled dressing room at the Lucy Moses School of Music in Manhattan.

— lisa g.

BY JASON BORISOFF

a side from the photo shoot and interview for her *Making Music* piece, Glasberg, better known as Lisa G., had had a normal day—up at four in the morning to be on air, ready to read the news. As a member of the Howard 100 news team, however, you won't hear her reporting on worldly unrest or local politics—the only newsworthy events are those that apply to the iconic shock jock's extra-terrestrial dimension of show business.

Working for *The Howard Stern Show* is about as good as it gets for a radio personality, even if it means taking the occasional on-air jab from the show's often ruthless cast. “They tease me all the time that I play the violin,” says Glasberg. “I do get a laugh out of it, because I keep thinking, ‘If they only knew what it really means to me.’”

While Glasberg's many years of relentless focus have manifested her career dreams into solid reality, about 10 years ago, while reflecting on her life and accomplishments, she realized that something was missing. “I woke up, and said, ‘What am I doing?’” she explains. “I don't have

a life, all I know how to do is work. How come I'm not doing the things I love? I used to love to play the violin.”

Glasberg was first drawn to the instrument in elementary school, and even found evidence of her early fascination with music in an old report card, which urged her parents to pursue private lessons. Her love of the violin only grew from there, spurred on by her grandmother's talent as a concert pianist, her mother's love of Broadway shows and live music, her two sisters' instrument studies, and the excellent orchestra and band program in her school. “I feel so blessed that my school had music, and that we had a choice of what instrument to play,” says Glasberg. “We had band and orchestra. You don't find that anymore, rarely; the arts are struggling.”

Glasberg continued to play in the orchestra and small chamber ensembles offered at Hofstra University, where she graduated early at age 20 with a degree in communications and history. Then, suddenly, the violin vanished from her life altogether. “I must have been crazy! I don't know what I was thinking,” says

Glasberg. “I think career mode took over, and I felt that I couldn't do both: focus on having a career and play music, even as a hobby on the side.”

For the next 20 years, Glasberg dove into the world of radio, eventually carving out a place in the profession as the quick-witted co-host of America's first hip hop morning show on Manhattan's Hot 97 FM, alongside genre luminaries Dr. Dre and Ed Lover. Though an unlikely undertaking for a classical violinist, Glasberg credits her eclectic taste to her early musical experiences. “It just makes you so much more of a well-rounded person, if you have things in your life other than just your work,” she explains. “Having a love of music I know has helped me. I worked in hip hop for 10 years, and I love all kinds of music.” But while her work was centered around music, she never picked up the violin.

That is, until 10 years ago, when she gingerly eased herself back into regular playing. She took a trip to a local violin shop, Strings and Things, rented a violin, and enrolled in the most basic



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violin course that the New School had to offer. “Mind you, I hadn’t played in over 20 years,” says Glasberg. “I didn’t know if it was going to come back, I didn’t know what was going to happen.”

Despite her apprehension, everything came back in five minutes. Glasberg was elated. “I kept thinking, ‘Oh my god, the brain is an amazing thing!’” she says. Unfortunately, she got back more than she bargained for: fear. “Fear was never

in the equation,” she says. “I didn’t have fear when I was a kid. I didn’t think about not hitting the notes, or not getting them in tune, I just played.” Somewhere along the way, she outgrew the fearlessness that enables the developing mind to tackle difficult cognitive tasks without hesitation.

Glasberg finished up the course, and went on to pursue private lessons. But something was still missing. “I missed the camaraderie of people, and playing in a group situation,” says Glasberg. “Someone recommended the Lucy Moses School of Music, where I’ve been playing now for seven years. I play in Chamber Group, and it’s been fantastic.”

The Lucy Moses School of Music, located near Lincoln Center in Manhattan, is a community school for music, theater, and dance. Here, Glasberg finds the perfect outlet for getting back to her musical roots, where she can regularly rehearse and perform with other dedicated hobbyists. The structured rehearsals, however, were a little disconcerting at first. “They shut the door, and there’s no e-mail, no iPhone, no computer, no telephone; it’s you, your music, and friends you make in class,” says Glasberg. “When that first happened, there was a lot of anxiety, because here you have someone who has been a workaholic her whole life, and suddenly you slam the door, and it’s just you and your violin.” Now, she looks forward to rehearsal every Monday night. “It’s the greatest thing, I can shut it off for two hours,” she adds.

At the end of each term at the Lucy Moses School, the chamber group that Glasberg



(Above) For the past seven years, the Lucy Moses School of Music has given Lisa G. the opportunity to play in a group setting. (Below) Lisa G. at her day job, seen here covering the 2009 Tony Awards for *The Howard Stern Show*.



is enrolled in plays a recital. You would think that performing is not a problem for a high profile radio personality, but interestingly, that is not the case. “On the show, I’m talking to millions of people. That doesn’t bother me for a second,” she says. “But 25 people watching me play the violin, that’s nerve-racking.”

Despite the challenges of coming back to the instrument after such a long absence, music is now, more than ever, a staple of her lifestyle. After many years of intense focus on her radio career, creating music provides the perfect relief for the tensions of her work life. “I feel very lucky that I can read music, and that I’m playing the music that I do, even though it might not be the most advanced,” she says. “I’m making up for lost time, but I’m enjoying every second of it.”

Did you play an instrument as a kid, even just for fun, and have always wanted to get back into it? “Don’t be afraid,” Glasberg urges. “You might not be as good as you once were, but you’ll get even more enjoyment out of it.”

JASON BORISOFF, AN AVID MUSICIAN AND NEWCOMER TO JOURNALISM, HAD A LOT OF FUN INTERVIEWING LISA G. AT THE LUCY MOSES SCHOOL OF MUSIC IN MANHATTAN.

Unlock Your Music

A HANDY GUIDE TO KEY SIGNATURES

It is essential to understand key signatures in order to read music properly; otherwise, you could end up playing a lot of incorrect notes! That’s because, in addition to a note’s placement on the staff, the key signature is a vital step to identifying the note.

For something so important, the key signature can be easy to miss at first glance. But take a closer look, and you’ll notice one or more small symbols on the staff at the very beginning of your music, after the clef. These symbols are either sharps (#) or flats (b). (See examples below.) Alternatively, if you do not find any sharps or flats, this means the key signature is “empty” and every note should be natural.

A major (F# minor)



E_b major (C minor)



A sharp raises the pitch of the note by a half-step, while a flat lowers the pitch of the note by a half-step. Simply look at the key signature and determine which line or space of the staff each sharp or flat symbol is placed on. The corresponding note will be played a half-step higher or lower accordingly, each time it occurs in the music. Any notes not indicated in the key signature are assumed to be natural.

Sometimes the key signature will change during the course of the piece. In this case, you will see a double bar line followed by a new set of sharps or flats. You also may see naturals (♮) that cancel out sharps or flats from the previous key signature. If you find any key signature changes in your music, it’s a good idea to circle them with a pencil so that you don’t forget to make the switch!

Each key signature corresponds to two possible keys, one major and one minor. For example, a key signature with two sharps may either indicate the key of D major or B minor. That is because both the D major scale and B minor scale use two sharps (F# and C#).

Empty Key Signature

Sharps and Flats	Key
None	C major or A minor

Sharp Key Signatures

Number of Sharps	Sharp Notes	Key
One	F	G major or E minor
Two	F, C	D major or B minor
Three	F, C, G	A major or F# minor
Four	F, C, G, D	E major or C# minor
Five	F, C, G, D, A	B major or G# minor
Six	F, C, G, D, A, E	F# major or D# minor
Seven	F, C, G, D, A, E, B	C# major or A# minor

Flat Key Signatures

Number of Flats	Flat Notes	Key
One	B	F major or D minor
Two	B, E	Bb major or G minor
Three	B, E, A	Eb major or C minor
Four	B, E, A, D	Ab major or F minor
Five	B, E, A, D, G	Db major or Bb minor
Six	B, E, A, D, G, C	Gb major or Eb minor
Seven	B, E, A, D, G, C, F	Cb major or Ab minor

A NOTE ABOUT ACCIDENTALS: Occasionally, you will find sharp, flat, and natural signs within the music, right next to individual notes. These are called “accidentals,” and they override what is indicated in the key signature. For example, even if C# is indicated in the key signature, a natural sign next to a C in the music tells you to play that particular note, and any other C’s in that same measure, natural rather than sharp.