



MUSIC FROM THE LIFE OF

EUGENE IVINS

SEMINAR IN COMPOSITION EDITION

## CAST

- 1929 Eugene Joseph Ivins (II)  
1930 + Margaret Pallister  
1950 Catherine Susan Ivins  
1947 + Edward Mahoney  
1986 Edward Mahoney  
1989 Devin Mahoney  
1952 Joseph Stephen Ivins  
1954 + April Anne Newswander  
1975 Heather Ivins  
1974 + John Ciambriello  
1954 Kenneth Stephen Ivins  
1952 + Karen Gaddis  
1956 Timothy James Ivins  
1957 + Karen Anderson  
1988 Melissa Ivins  
1990 Matthew Ivins  
1958 Susan Francis Ivins  
1951 + Jeffrey Howard Purchon  
1983 Lyndsey Purchon  
1984 Courtney Purchon  
1988 Gabrielle Purchon  
1960 William Patrick Ivins  
1961 + Beth Ann Marasco  
1989 Christopher Ivins  
1990 Sarah Kate Ivins

## PLAYLIST

- TRACK 1 Young-at-Heart
- TRACK 2 Chop Sticks
- TRACK 3 So In Love
- TRACK 4 Peg of My Heart
- TRACK 5 When Irish Eyes Are Smiling
- TRACK 6 Memory
- TRACK 7 Young-at-Heart (Reprise)

TRACK ONE • YOUNG-AT-HEART

*“If you should survive to 105  
Look at all you’ll derive out of being alive  
Then here is the best part  
You have a head start  
If you are among the very young at heart”*



Eugene Joseph Ivins II was born January 5th, 1929, to Eugene Ivins I and Emma Newton. He grew up a New Yorker, playing stickball and curb ball, marbles and baseball cards. His first job was working in a tailor shop, making deliveries and cleaning pant cuffs—he was fourteen at the time. When he was only sixteen, Gene, as he was called, graduated high school. He entered Fordham University in January of 1945 and because of World War II and the resultant lack of students to fill classes, he was able to graduate at the age of 19. While living in the Bronx,

## TRACK ONE • YOUNG-AT-HEART

New York, Gene went on a double date where he met a woman by the name of Margaret “Peg” Pallister. They went roller-skating and, after two years of dating, they were married on February 4th, 1950.

Gene is a piano player. He’s the type of man that you read about in romantic novels. One of those old world charmers who makes music for his love, serenading her with that classic nonchalance and grace of the Cole Porter ballad he plays. He plays the forgotten pieces of this modern world: “Peg of My Heart” and “Irish Eyes are Smiling”.

Eugene Joseph Ivins is my Grandfather—my Pop-pop (as my cousins and I call him)—and he is among the very young at heart.



## TRACK TWO • CHOP STICKS

### *“Chop Sticks”*



The last time I visited Pop-pop in New Jersey, my father and I stayed in Pop-pop’s empty house. He was in a rehabilitation center. A few months before our trip Pop-pop had gone into diabetic shock and fallen, breaking his hip and striking his head—all this in addition to his worsening dementia. His house felt empty, though Dad and I filled its seats. We were both all too aware that Pop-pop was somewhere else. In a hospital bed, surrounded by curtains that gave him ‘privacy.’

I sat at his piano bench and read his music, thinking sentimentally of how different it once felt to sit there. In my childhood, I often found Pop-pop sitting at the piano. The living room was always bright and filled with that glorious warmth that only grandparents’ homes possess. I would join him on the piano bench, though my own repertoire was small at the time. He taught me how to play “Chop Sticks.” I knew

## TRACK TWO • CHOP STICKS

the beginning (the part that all children learn), but he taught me the rest of the song: the second and third verse, even the left hand part (though I've since forgotten it). We must have played "Chop Sticks" a hundred times that afternoon, as my small, inexperienced hands familiarized themselves with the black and white keys. Those first clashing notes were suddenly beautiful to my ears. I'd heard them before, but prior to that day with my Pop-pop the notes were only notes.

When I hear it now, I think of that afternoon, sitting with my Pop-pop. The noise of my parents and Grandma sitting around the dining room table where the remains of Pop-pop's famous oh-so-lovingly-made-breakfast of eggs, bacon, toast and fruit still sat.

That weekend in New Jersey, Dad and I ate breakfast out. The living room was painfully dark and I wanted more than anything to play "Chop Sticks" with my Pop-pop once more.

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"Music from the Life of Eugene Ivins" by Sarah Ivins received an Honorable Mention in the University of Pittsburgh's 2008-09 Composition Program Writing Contest. The sample above is an excerpt from the essay.

Judges' Commentary on "Music from the Life of Eugene Ivins"