

Immaculate Conception - December 2021

I suppose most of you are familiar with the name of Itzhak Perlman. He is one of the great violinists of all time. He was stricken with polio when he was a small child, but it has not stopped him. He continues to play like an angel.

On November 18, 1995 Itzhak Perlman went on stage to give a concert at Lincoln Center in New York City. But that night something went wrong. Just as he finished the first few bars, there was a loud pop. One of the strings on his violin broke! You could hear it snap all across the concert hall. Everybody in the room realized what had happened and they wondered,

"What on earth is he going to do? Most thought he would put back on his braces and amble out for another violin or at least a new string."

But Perlman didn't do that. He sat there for a moment, closed his eyes, and then, amazingly, nodded to the conductor to begin again.

The orchestra began, and Itzhak Perlman re-composed the piece in his head and played the entire piece with incredible power, passion and purity on just three strings. Now, that would seem impossible. It simply can't be done. But that night Itzhak Perlman refused to believe that.

Re-thinking, re-modulating, he re-arranged in his mind the playing pattern and performed the piece perfectly on just three strings. When he finished there was an awesome silence in the room, and then a standing ovation unlike any other.

Itzhak Perlman smiled, wiped the sweat from his brow, raised his violin bow to quiet the crowd, and then, not boasting, but in a quiet, pensive, reverent tone, he said these words: "You know, sometimes it is our task to find out how much music we can still make with what we have left."

(Reimer, Jack; Chicken Soup for the Soul; Houston Chronicle; 2/17/01.)