

January 15, 2013

Dear Charlie,

This letter is long overdue; a little over three years ago you performed at San Francisco's Marsh Theater. I was in the audience, near the tail end of chemotherapy to treat Hodgkin lymphoma. I should have spoken to you after your performance but I was so blown away, so inspired and revved up by your show that I was afraid I would blabber incoherently for a minute or two. I regret it now because emotions were genuine and seldom evoked. I hope this letter will stand in for it.

At the time of your performance I was attending graduate school to get my MFA in Creative Writing. When I saw your play I had just begun to write a memoir to capture the cancer journey I was going through. It was so important for me to see your play — to hear your story, your truth, and I want to tell you how much your performance meant to me.

I want to profoundly thank you for your work, for the love and inspiration and beauty you have given back to our world. Watching your performance, hearing you express your story through music was beyond wonderful. It helped to provide me with the confidence to continue writing my memoir which, three years later, I have finally finished. You will always be a deep inspiration for me.

I've enclosed a chapter from my memoir which is about your performance. I hope you will enjoy reading it! And I am doing my darndest to publish it so that other folks can see what your performance and charitable work has meant to me.

I hope this letter finds you in spiffy spirits. I hope you and your loved ones are well. And I hope we both will have many more joyous years to come!

Take good care of yourself, Charlie.

With much love,
Juan Alvarado Valdivia

P.S. Last year I just so happened to visit the Silent Movie Theatre you used to own! My dear friend of mine — who is also a writer and Hodgkin lymphoma survivor — was with me to watch a midnight screening of Dr. Giggles. It's a neat little theater! I treasure that memory since it was on the first night of our first annual Cancerversary celebration (we were diagnosed on the same day, just one year apart; strange world, huh? We were looking for something peculiar to do in LA and that screening just so happened to be held at your old theater. Cool, huh?)