

Recording Artist Cyndi Garber Describes Herself As Farm Wife, Mother

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff
MOUNT JOY (Lancaster Co.)

— When Cyndi Garber performs on stage, she tells the audience, "I'm a wife and a mom who loves to sing."

And when this farm wife sings a blend of contemporary sacred music, she communicates what music critics call a very warm personality with good stage presence. Her flexible and agile voice ranges from alto and to high soprano.

Cyndi said that her life as wife, mom, and singer blend together. In fact, while she packed eggs in the family's chicken operation, she wrote one of the five original songs now released on tape.

Recently, Cyndi was asked to sing on a tape with such well-known persons as Evangelist Billy Graham, and solists Sandi Patti and Twila Paris. On it, Cyndi sang "I Love To Tell The Story." Forty thousand copies of that tape were distributed to troops in Saudi Arabia.

With the war in the Middle East, Cyndi said that at many of her concerts, the audience participates in

her rendition of "God Bless the USA." Often, the audience stand to their feet and shed tears.

Although Cyndi did not grow up on the farm, she said it was the next best thing. Her parents, former Amish, had horses, sheep and a few other animals at their Rawlinsville home.

"I can't remember a time when I did not sing," Cyndi said, "but I can't say that professional singing was part of my plans."

In junior high school, she was asked to sing at churches. After that, appearances at banquets, weddings, and special functions became part of her life.

"I always felt comfortable in front of a crowd," Cyndi said.

She credits her success in part to her participation in county, district, and state chorus at Solanco High School and to playing the lead in the King and I and played in the Sound of Music. After graduation, she played Leisa in the Sound of Music at the Fulton Opera House.

Cyndi draws a firm line between performing and her own singing. She said, "I do not perform. I consider my singing a ministry. I share from the heart and from the home,

and people can identify with me."

The summer after high school graduation, Cyndi traveled to India with a singing team. Later, she attended Word Of Life Bible Institute for one year and toured with a singing group.

After her year at the Institute, Cyndi married Phil Garber.

Phil, his dad, James Garber, and brother Roger do partnership farming on 1,000 acres on their Mount Joy farms. They have 125,000 layers; 125,000 pullets, 150 steers, 600 hogs, several grain trucks for Garber Farms, Inc. Trucking, and three combines for custom combining.

The Garbers also have an on-farm feed mill in which they make about 200 tons of feed a week. Roger is in charge of the feed mill, chickens, and the book work.

Phil oversees the field work and the custom combining. Phil said all the corn, soybeans, and barley they grow on the 1,000 acres are used for their own livestock.

Despite the large farm operation, Phil runs the sound for his wife's concerts, which average six every month.

"I couldn't do it if my father and my brother didn't pick up my load. They get a lot of behind the scenes work for which they don't get credit," Phil said.

"Farming is in my blood. I can't think of a better life," Phil said. "But I do like to run the sound for Cyndi. It's a nice switch from farm work. I really can't say which job I like best."

The Garbers have three sons, Ryan, 9; Rodney, 7; and Scott, 18 months. Although the boys sing around the house, they do not like to be on stage.

Cyndi has a lot of natural singing ability, but she has worked hard in recent years to develop her voice. She takes voice lessons weekly and is supposed to set aside time each day for vocal exercises and for singing practice, but Cyndi said, "There just isn't time for me to stop everything and concentrate on my music. It is quite easy for me to sing while I'm working around the house. I can sing for one and a half hours and really get lost in it."

Cyndi sings with an ensemble of

six ladies from her church, but regrets that lack of time prevents her from singing in the choir.

Most of the Garbers' itinerary is near home, but sometimes she does travel to New York and the New England area. They have a 28-year-old friend who cares for the children during the singing engagements.

Cyndi takes an active interest in her children's schools. For three years, she has been homeroom mother. This past year, she started a chapter of Moms In Touch, an international group designed for mothers to meet weekly to pray for their children, the schools and the faculty.

Before the birth of the baby, Cyndi packed eggs on a regular basis. Like many farm families, accidents happen. Last year, Rodney's hand was caught in an egg roller and required three surgeries. On the eve of his second surgery, Cyndi went into labor with their third child. After all three returned home, Rodney needed to be kept as still as possible so the skin graft would take effect. Then Cyndi had to take him to therapy every day for three weeks.

"I love being a wife and mother," Cyndi said. I know the hectic schedules that families have. I think that is why so many people

(Turn to Page B9)

I Love What I Do

As a mother at home, I love what I do.
Even though it would be hard to explain it to you.

To get ahead of my day, I should be up at dawn,
But when the alarm rings, I roll over and yawn.

It's breakfast for school kids, and brush your teeth please,
Oh here comes the bus, your pants have holes in the knees.

I rush to have my quiet time, but I hear the baby cry.
The phone rings, the prayer chain, "I'm so sorry," I sigh.

I've started the washing, dishes to do,
What will I make for lunch? Must go — beef stew.

Is it that time already? Car pooling is a treat.
They all pile in, now there's mud on the seat.

May I have a friend over to play for a while?
Oh sure, what's one more, I say with a smile.

It's a great way to share Jesus with others, I know.
With His love in our lives, I trust it will show.

The baby is fed, bathed, dressed and down for his nap.
Lunch is over, need to start supper, it seems to overlap.

The neighbor left, our 2nd grader is home from school.
It's homework, drum lessons, and chores as a rule.

It's mealtime again, dishes, baths, devotions, and prayers.
They are all tucked in and free from all cares.

Now for some adult conversation just my husband and me,
But when I crawled into bed, I was too tired, you see.

My mind wandered back to what went on all that day.
I smiled as I remembered it went something this way...

Mom, I can't find my shoes, will you come play with me?
It's a little bit hectic to take care of three.

Honey, is lunch ready? as he came through the door.
It's even more crazy to take care of four.

I walked past the mirror, I looked like a dive.
It's next to impossible to take care of five.

But wait, a small voice reminded me, isn't that odd?
There's nothing impossible with our Almighty God.

Cyndi Garber
March 1990

Cyndi's first album, "Wings Of Dawn" is available for \$9 a tape. A second tape is planned for release before Christmas. Pre-orders of \$10 will cover cost of tape, handling, and mailing.

For booking information or tapes, write to Cyndi Garber, 876 Milton Grove Road, Mount Joy, PA 17552, or call (717) 653-1229.



"This baby is going to be a singer," said Cyndi Garber. With his mother's talent, he is sure to pick up her love for singing.



The Garber family at their Mount Joy farm: From left: Ryan, Scott, Phil, Cyndi, and Rodney.

Homestead Notes