

'Goings On' in the County

by Ed Simmons, Jr.

A radiant new CD by Patsy and the Country Classics

Local music professionals Patsy and the Country Classics have struck gold again.

Their third CD "The Promise" was just released and will thrill those who love Country Gospel. For those still sitting on the fence, this'll knock them off.

Their previous CDs, "Now Appearing Patsy and the Country Classics" and "Living the Dream," had touches of Gospel, including three sterling original songs by drummer Michael Hockaday. But this newest CD is straight-up powerful Gospel.

All are cover songs freshly minted in the Country Classics' style.

"That's what I love about this band," said Patsy. "We're doing cover songs but we make it our own."

There are ten tracks featuring nine songs and a medley.

The first song, "I've Got Jesus on My Mind," by Gaithers' singer Lynda Randle is in the manner of an African-American spiritual. "But we 'Countryfy' it," said Patsy. This primarily means applying Bobby Edenton's wailing steel guitar and Jeff Wadford's exuberant honky-tonk electric guitar, as the band does throughout a good part of the album.

A great way to kick off the CD, it's a show-stopper tune sung in spiritual style by Patsy, backed up by warmly blended harmonies and powered by Donald Hockaday's driving bass.

"It's a really uplifting song," said Patsy.

Next, the beauty of Patsy's voice is stunning on the second track, "Heaven Help Me."

"We heard it one morning driving to church listening to Stained Glass Reflections on Thunder 104.5," she said.

The lyrics are divinely sorrowful: "I have wounded those who love me. Heaven help me, Heaven help me, 'cause I can't help myself."

Michael sings the third song, Tom T. Hall's "Jesus and Me." Michael's rich voice is both striking and memorable.

"Jesus, Jesus! Got a good thing going! Jesus brought me out of all my troubles, got it all worked out."

The old classic "Family Bible" comes next.

Sung by Bobby in a handsome tenor and showcasing his plaintive steel guitar licks, it tells of "a family Bible on the table, its pages torn and hard to read."

"I can see us sitting 'round the table. I can hear my mother softly singing, 'Rock of Ages, Rock of Ages cleft for me.'"

Jeff belts out lightning electric guitar riffs for the fifth song, "Let's Make a Baby King."

"He's the best guitar player ever," said Patsy who sings it backed by harmonies from Jeff, Michael and Donald.

About making the baby of Bethlehem our king, "It's our most Rock and 'Rolly' song," she said.

The old hymn "Precious Memories" follows, sung by Michael in his astonishingly honey-warm bass voice.

The song features fresh, melodic piano by Stephanie Randall sitting in for Country Classic keyboard player Billy Rupprecht.

"I think it was a real God-thing that she could just step in there and do it for Billy," said Patsy.

"I Found Jesus on the Jailhouse Floor" comes next, starting up and carried by Jeff's terrific electric guitar. Sung by Michael, the song tells of desperate circumstances and redemption.

"Just when I thought the Devil won, I found Jesus on the jailhouse floor. I'm right where my mama prayed I'd be."

The next is "Jesus, It's Me Again," a touching tune, with Michael singing and laced through and through with Bobby's weeping steel guitar.

"Jesus, it's me again. Back on my knees again. I'm asking you please again. To reach out your hand."

"It's another one we heard when driving to church," said Patsy.

The ninth cut is a rousing medley of "Uncloudy Day," "I'll Fly Away" and "I Saw the Light."

"Michael has a knack for hearing songs that transition into each other," said Patsy.

The bridges between the songs are laid out by Bobby's wonderfully flashy steel guitar.

The last song is "The Promise." It opens with a beautiful introduction played on Jeff's acoustic guitar, along with Donald's nicely stated sonorous bass and highlights by Bobby's steel guitar.

Patsy sings it in a gentle, exquisite voice... Don't miss it.

A great way to get their newest CD is to go to one of their shows and purchase it in person. Their next public show is a dance Saturday, Feb. 10, at the Ashland Moose Lodge, 11299 S. Washington Highway, Ashland VA 23005. Doors open at 7, with heavy hors d'oeuvres and drinks. The dance begins at 8:00. Admission is \$10 or \$15 per couple.

Or order their CD online at www.PatsyCountryClassics.com.



To get the CD, go to www.PatsyCountryClassics.com or go to their next public show, a dance Sat., Feb. 10, at the Ashland Moose Lodge. See details below. (Contributed photo)



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