



HEART TO HEART WITH TARA LYN HART

Tara Lyn has been singing since she was five years old. In early childhood she decided she was going to be a doctor so that she could help people. But her love of singing and entertaining won out and her career was soon well on its way. Marriage and children changed her. Today Tara Lyn is living in St. Catharines, Ontario, while her husband Perry attends Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary.

The following interview by Anne Taylor is a follow-up to a story by the same name in the magazine, *Tapestry*, published by Lutheran Women’s Missionary League–Canada. In the magazine interview Tara Lyn focuses on family relationships. In this follow-up interview she talks more about her music.

PERFECT HOLIDAY CD

AT: You wrote or co-wrote four of the six songs on the CD—what was your inspiration?

Tara Lyn: I’ve always loved Christmas music, and I was so excited to write for this project because I knew it would be a challenge. I wanted to write music that was new, but that felt familiar and nostalgic. The two songs I co-wrote were most certainly inspired by the music. Peter (Lesperance) and David (Quilico) gave me really amazing music, so writing the lyrics came easily. It was wonderful to collaborate with such talented musicians! The two songs I wrote myself also came quite easily. I wrote “The Very First Christmas Gift” after a particularly interesting conversation with my son Ashton—which is why I wrote a verse in it for him to sing.



AT: What is more difficult—the writing or the recording process?

Tara Lyn: None of it was difficult! It was an absolute pleasure—every single step of it! The studio work can be repetitive and a bit tedious, but it afforded me lots of time with my friends doing what we love to do, which is making music. I love each step of creating, from the first idea to the finishing touches. It can be frustrating when you are missing a line, or you just can’t find the

right word to say what you want to say, but I feel like God blessed me with good ideas, which allowed me to work as quickly as I needed to.

AT: Describe a typical day at the recording studio

Tara Lyn: Well, since I live a good two-and-a-half-hour drive from the studio where we recorded, my visits were few and far between! It was a challenge just to get things at home arranged so I could leave to work on the CD. I usually left around noon and would get home in the wee hours of the morning, around 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. This made for the least amount of disruption in everyday life. Since the producer, Pete Lesperance, is one of my best friends, I looked even more forward to our sessions! After my lead vocals, we would spend time on the background vocals. Sometimes I would stay while he recorded the instrumentation, but usually he would do that without me, so that I didn't have to spend more time away from home. It was such a blessing to be able to record again after so many years!

AT: How does a project like this involve the entire family?

Tara Lyn: It was a huge undertaking. Perry organized all the business surrounding the project, including hiring a graphic design artist and CD manufacturer. He organized all the radio promotion and media as well. Teal held down the fort by taking care of her brothers while I was in the city, which was such a huge help. The kids were all very understanding and encouraging. I think they could tell it was really important to me.

AT: Ashton was involved in singing "The Very First Christmas Gift." How much prodding (bribing) did you have to do



to enlist his involvement?
Tara Lyn: None! He is a performer through and through!

AT: What was his experience in the recording studio?

Tara Lyn: He loved recording, and did a wonderful job! He can't wait to get back in there! Maybe next time he will play violin, as well! It was a great learning experience, too, for him, to see how things are done.

SEMINARY CHOIR

AT: You are the director of the choir at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary. As we so often ask in "good Lutheran theology," – What does this mean?

Tara Lyn: I don't really know the answer to that yet, and it is my third year! ☺ I work with the men to prepare them for leading the liturgies, and we prepare special music for services such as Harvest Day and Guild Day, and the Advent service.

AT: Do you choose the music for the choir?

Tara Lyn: I do choose the music, however I like to have input from the choir so that we can perform songs/hymns that are special to them.

AT: What is the purpose of a seminary choir?

Tara Lyn: I suppose it is to teach the students confidence, especially when it comes to chanting the liturgies. Many of them are quite nervous to sing at first, but by the end of their time in choir they are much more comfortable.

AT: What are the challenges in directing a seminary choir?

Tara Lyn: Choir is mandatory for at least one year. All of the men come with different abilities—some read music, some do not. Some like to sing and are confident—some do not, and are not singers. It can be a challenge to find pieces that do not bore those with more experience, but which are still basic enough that everyone sounds good.

AT: What are the joys?

Tara Lyn: It is always a joy to praise God, through music, and I love sharing that with others. It is wonderful to see the students grow in their abilities, and to get to know them all better than I would if I were not spending that time with them each Wednesday morning.

AT: Each year you have done a concert, the most recent being "Chocolate,

Wine & Roses" as a fund-raising project for CLTS. How has this been received?

Tara Lyn: The concert has been well received, I think!☺ I only say that because people keep coming back! I love doing it, as it is a nice evening out for Perry and I, AND I get to perform, which I miss doing, so I am always glad for an opportunity. The fact that it helps the seminary is icing on the cake!

HYMN-WRITING PROJECT

AT: You are undertaking a project of re-writing some of the hymns into a more contemporary arrangement. Why?

Tara Lyn: I am a hymnal girl, no question. I grew up in a church where, if it wasn't in the hymnal, you didn't sing it at church. Period. Old habits die hard, I guess, and although I enjoy some contemporary Christian music, I find a lot of it empty compared to the hymns I grew up singing. I started rearranging some of my favourite hymns and writing more modern music to go with them, so they sounded newer, but still had a strong theological message.

AT: What are you hoping to accomplish?

Tara Lyn: I am not sure, really. I started writing these for myself, just so that I could sing them, with not really any other intention. I get interesting feedback when I play them though, and I think

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Use this link (www.taralynhart) to hear samples from Tara Lyn's Christmas CD and watch videos of her at work.

there may actually be an opportunity to reach some of our younger congregants with a stronger message than they are often getting with some of the praise music out there. I will just wait and see where God leads me with it, I guess.

AT: Why do you say that some should never be changed?

Tara Lyn: There are some songs that, to me, are perfect just the way they are. Maybe in entirety, or maybe just lyrically.

AT: Does this include your favourite hymn, “Just As I Am”?

Tara Lyn; That is a funny question, because yes, I love this song exactly the way it is written in the hymnal. However, I have made a different arrangement of it. The verse lyrics remain untouched, because I couldn’t make them better if I tried, but I did add a short refrain and rewrite the melody, so it sounds more like a song, and less like a hymn. I still prefer the original. 😊

AT: Why is “Just as I Am” one of your favourite hymns?

Tara Lyn: This hymn has **HUGE** sentimentality for me. We sang this song at least once a month at the church I grew up in, and it is one of my Dad’s favourites as well. I remember him singing extra loud when we did that one. It also has such a strong message.

Tara Lyn’s Christmas CD can be purchased from her website: www.taralynhart.com or by ordering from Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 470 Glenridge Avenue, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2T 4C3 or by calling Linda Lantz at 905-688-2362 ext. 22; or by fax at 905-688-9744. The cost is \$14.99 which includes shipping. Proceeds support the seminary.



Tara Lyn sings with her daughter Teal.

A copy of *Tapestry*, Winter 2011, may be ordered from Gloria Meyer, Financial Secretary, Box 658, Virgil, Ontario L0S 1T0. The cost for a single issue is \$3. A one-year subscription (four issues) is \$11.50. Cheques should be made out to LWML–Canada.