

An Eclectic Collection Of Catholic Music

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A tin whistle slides through a prayerful Irish melody while Latin drums beat a lively tune. Valerie Von Fange's sweet voice rises above the melodies.

Von Fange, a member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Front Royal, recently released her newest CD, "Steadfast Love," a compilation of eclectic Catholic music.

Von Fange's love of music began in church choir as a young girl. Her musical foundation began at age 12 with piano lessons.

"As a Catholic, my goal is to educate (through) the fullness of Christ's teachings," Von Fange said.

She worked for 15 years in a high-tech environment. Effectively climbing the corporate ladder, from sales support to sales engineering and marketing, she eventually decided she wanted something more out of life. She worked as a high school teacher for a while and then became a full-time musician.

Von Fange often performs at local community and parish events. Oct. 8 will mark her third year performing at the Festival of Leaves in Front Royal.

Her songs focus on Catholic teachings — Eucharist, purgatory and Mary — things that are not often sung about in "mainstream Christian music."

She recorded her first CD, "Thy Kingdom Come," in 1993 at her house. Von Fange waited until she could afford a recording session in Nashville before making her second CD.

"I'm happy I could have this opportunity to do it professionally," she said. Von Fange had been working on the vocals for months before they arrived in Tennessee. She wanted to be sure everything was planned so that they could do the recording in as short a time as possible.

When they arrived, she was amazed that the instrumentalists picked up the songs quickly after only a brief practice. The top-notch musicians were able to add dynamics and layer themselves instinctively.

When writing, her songs follow the path of what is going on in her life. When composing "Radiance," she was contemplating the souls in purgatory and how offering up suffering on earth can release them to heaven.

"Radiance is to see God's love and to see suffering used for good," she said. "Even people who aren't Catholic can hear the message in the song."

Her cellist in Nashville was not a Christian. He liked the song even though he didn't believe in what it was saying.

She was dating her husband when she wrote, "Till Trouble Do Us Part." This



STEADFAST LOVE — The newest CD by Valerie Von Fange, a member of St. John the Baptist Parish in Front Royal, boasts a variety of musical styles from Irish to Hispanic.

song speaks about the need to remain steadfast and not quit even when it's difficult. With divorce so prevalent in today's society, Von Fange wanted to promote marriage as a lifetime commitment. The rough times in marriage can often lead to something new and better.

"During those times, we're strengthened as a team," she said.

This CD also utilizes various styles of music. "O Sanctissima/Beautiful Savior" has an Irish feel while "Missionary of Charity" and "Follow the Son" have a Latin beat.

"There's such a positive, happy mood to the (Latin) music," she said, adding that she wanted to try some different styles.

"As a Catholic, my goal is to educate (through) the fullness of Christ's teachings," Von Fange said. "The Grace Within" tells the story of St. Augustine and his conversion from sinner to saint through God's grace and his mother's prayers. Von Fange hopes to have one saint song on each CD, "so people understand who the saints are," she said.

The CD has been selling well since its July release. Von Fange is now focusing her efforts on marketing. She would like to return to Nashville to record a third CD. "Steadfast Love" is available at several local Catholic and Christian bookstores and online through www.valvonfange.com.

Courtesy Photo