

Merry Christmas

NEW YORK CITY!

Lynn Geyer brings a rebirth of Christ to New York City's Christmas

by Susan Bailey

A few years ago, Lynn Geyer, a Catholic recording artist, found herself becoming more and more concerned about the omission of the word "Christmas" from Christmastime. "Even cashiers were forbidden to speak it to customers, etc., etc., etc!" she says. "It's as if 'they,' (whoever 'they' are) wanted to completely kick Jesus out of his own birthday!" Christmas shoppers have noticed over the past several years that "Merry Christmas" has been replaced with "Happy Holidays" in their favorite stores. Ironically, much of this was coming from businesses which derive approximately 20% of their annual sales from Christmas shopping!

Lynn began to feel that she was supposed to do something about it, hearing a phrase over and over in her head: "A big Catholic thing in a big public place." As she prayed for guidance in all this Christmas frustration, an idea was coming into focus.

"Music is what I know," she said. "Singing, songwriting and promoting Catholic music is my life's work." So it seemed natural to try and do a musical event. "The thought of doing a Christian music thing in any kind of public place was daunting to say the least!" she quipped. She knew it would be a leap of faith but it had to be done. Lynn felt that God's hand was guiding her thoughts.

And so in 2006, "Merry Christmas, New York City," a concert to celebrate Christmas, was born. There was only one open Saturday matinee time in December in a "big" NY theatre and she was able to get it (the Alice Tully Hall in the Lincoln Center), which of course, to Lynn, was another sign that God was instigating the whole thing. The rest as they say, is history.

In the 2006 event, Fr. Charles and Laurie Mangano, a popular duo from Long Island, and OneVoice, a choir of singers from community and professional theatre in lower Westchester County, volunteered to perform. Also on board as the 'headliner' was Tony Melendez, a celebrated Catholic recording artist, born in Nicaragua without arms. Tony amazes everyone by playing guitar with his toes and was a favorite of Pope John Paul II. Jon Kelley, from the Prayer Channel in Queens, was the emcee.



At the first "Merry Christmas, NYC!", producer Lynn Geyer (second from left) poses with her niece and, L to R, performers Tony Melendez, Laurie Mangano and brother, Fr. Charles Mangano.

"It was an awe-inspiring afternoon of beautiful music and witness [meant] to do nothing but honor the One whose birthday we celebrate on Christmas Day," Lynn enthused. "There were about 900 of the 1082 seats filled!"

A wonderful team of truly committed volunteers emerged and because of their efforts, \$10,000 from the concert (and an additional corporate mini fundraiser) was donated to Little Flower Children and Family Services of New York. Donations also went to The Sisters of Life, Good Counsel Homes, the Prayer Channel and St. Mary's Church, as well as to all the artists' ministries and to others who tirelessly gave of themselves. It was one of the last concerts in the Alice Tully Hall of Lincoln Center due to renovations being made to the theatre (which will re-open late in 2008).

Determined to make this an annual event, Lynn began a search for a theatre for Christmas 2007, specifically at Carnegie Hall, but was too late in sending in her formal request. There simply were no viable dates available there or anywhere. However, her fortunes changed in mid September when the booking agent called from Carnegie Hall and said they had a cancellation date available in one of their smaller theatres, Zankel Hall. To Lynn, this was another clear sign

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Lynn Geyer

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of God moving things around and providing an opportunity with the expectation that she would accept it, which of course, she did, despite the lateness in time.

This year, concert goers will be blessed by the wonderful Mark Forrest, internationally acclaimed

Irish Tenor. He has performed in filled concert halls and cathedrals world-wide and has sung for Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa. He has also entertained the likes of Charlton Heston and Maureen O'Hara.

Also on the ticket are Kara Klein, Michael Zabrocki and The Young Disciples Ensemble.

Michael hails from Howard Beach, NY and is celebrating his 30th year in Catholic music. He is known in the NY metropolitan area as the host of IcthusEQ!, has hosted the Proud2BCatholic youth festival, the Catholic Underground, and has been seen nationwide on multiple Catholic/Christian networks. He is also very active in the Polish community.

Kara began singing and writing as a young child and has since written over 100 songs dedicated to Jesus Christ. She is best known for her stirring and inspiring song/video "Beautiful Still" dedicated to the terrible struggle of Terry Schiavo and her family. She recently took home four Unity Awards honoring her work from the United Catholic Music and Video Association.

The Young Disciples Ensemble, a group of dedicated and gifted teens from Holy Rosary Church in the Bronx under the direction of Rasaan Bourke, will also perform. Rich Berretta will accompany them on piano.

Raymond Arroyo of EWTN's "The World Over" will host the affair and he is bringing special surprise guest: Andrew T. Miller, the brilliant composer of "The Birth of

Christ." They will add their voices to the concert and Mr. Miller will be debuting part of his latest composition at the concert!

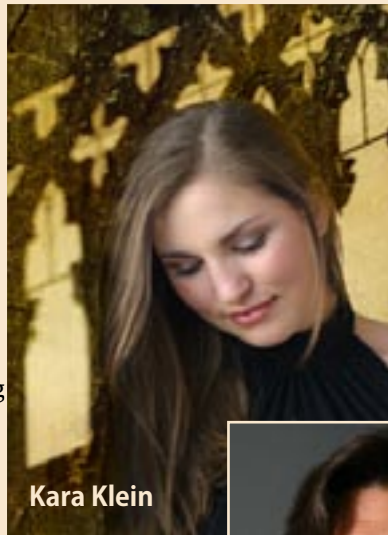
The charity benefiting from the concert is the Faith and Family Foundation, founded by Mark Forrest, to assist families and children with disabilities and special needs. HeartBeat Records is generously sponsoring Mark Forrest and Kara Klein in their travels to New York.

The concert is titled "Merry Christmas, New York City!" and it takes place on December 23rd, 2007, a 3:00 pm matinee, at Zankel Hall in Carnegie Hall in New York City. Tickets will be on sale Oct. 23, 2007 and range in price from \$60 to \$70 to \$80. Amazingly, this will be the very first Christmas

concert at Zankel Hall at Carnegie since it opened 4 years ago.

Lynn Geyer took a simple frustration about Christmas, entrusted it to God, and is now helping to celebrate the birthday of Jesus in a big way in one of the largest and most exciting cities in the world! As the scriptures say, "Nothing is impossible with God." †

(see the back cover full page ad for ordering information.)



Kara Klein



Mark Forrest



Michael Zabrocki

A leap of faith that turned into an annual event - promoter Lynn Geyer prayed for guidance which led to "Merry Christmas New York City!"

Headliner for this year's concert is International Tenor Mark Forrest. Other performers include Kara Klein and Michael Zabrocki.



Performers at the first "Merry Christmas New York City!" concert at the Alice Tully Hall in the Lincoln Center included, left to right, Laurie and Fr. Charles Mangano from Long Island, international Catholic artist Tony Melendez, and OneVoice, a choir of singers from community and professional theatre in lower Westchester county (with Fr. Charles, Tony Melendez and Laurie during the finale).