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GWU Music Professor Contributes to Christmas CD by Southern Songwriters Association

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GWU Music Professor Contributes to Christmas CD by Southern Songwriters Association

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON NOVEMBER 30, 2020



Dr. Patricia Sparti Writes and Performs Her First Song, ‘Mary Delivered a Baby and That Baby Delivered Me’

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Dr. Patricia Sparti, a professor in the Department of Music at Gardner-Webb University, has written and recorded her first song on a CD produced by the Southern Songwriters Association (SSA). Sparti, a founding member of SSA, is one of 15 members who contributed original music to the project, “Songs of Christmas.”

Sparti became affiliated with the group through award-winning singer and songwriter, Steve Simpson. She met Simpson at the Don Gibson Theatre in Shelby, N.C., and he has conducted songwriting workshops at Gardner-Webb. The SSA began meeting in May 2019, and Simpson will be leading his fourth workshop at GWU on Jan. 30, 2021.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, SSA moved its weekly meetings to Zoom. “Many of us have remained active with a weekly song challenge, and everyone performs,” Sparti offered. “We have been a family since March 2020, when we began meeting online instead of in person.”

The idea to produce a Christmas CD came from a post made by John Krizan to SSA’s Facebook page. “Because of COVID-19 the album almost didn’t happen,” Sparti acknowledged. “The 15 singer/songwriters are mostly from the Charlotte area. The only requirement for being on the album was to record an original song of the season. Eleven recording studios were involved in the CD’s creation along with multiple background musicians and singers.”

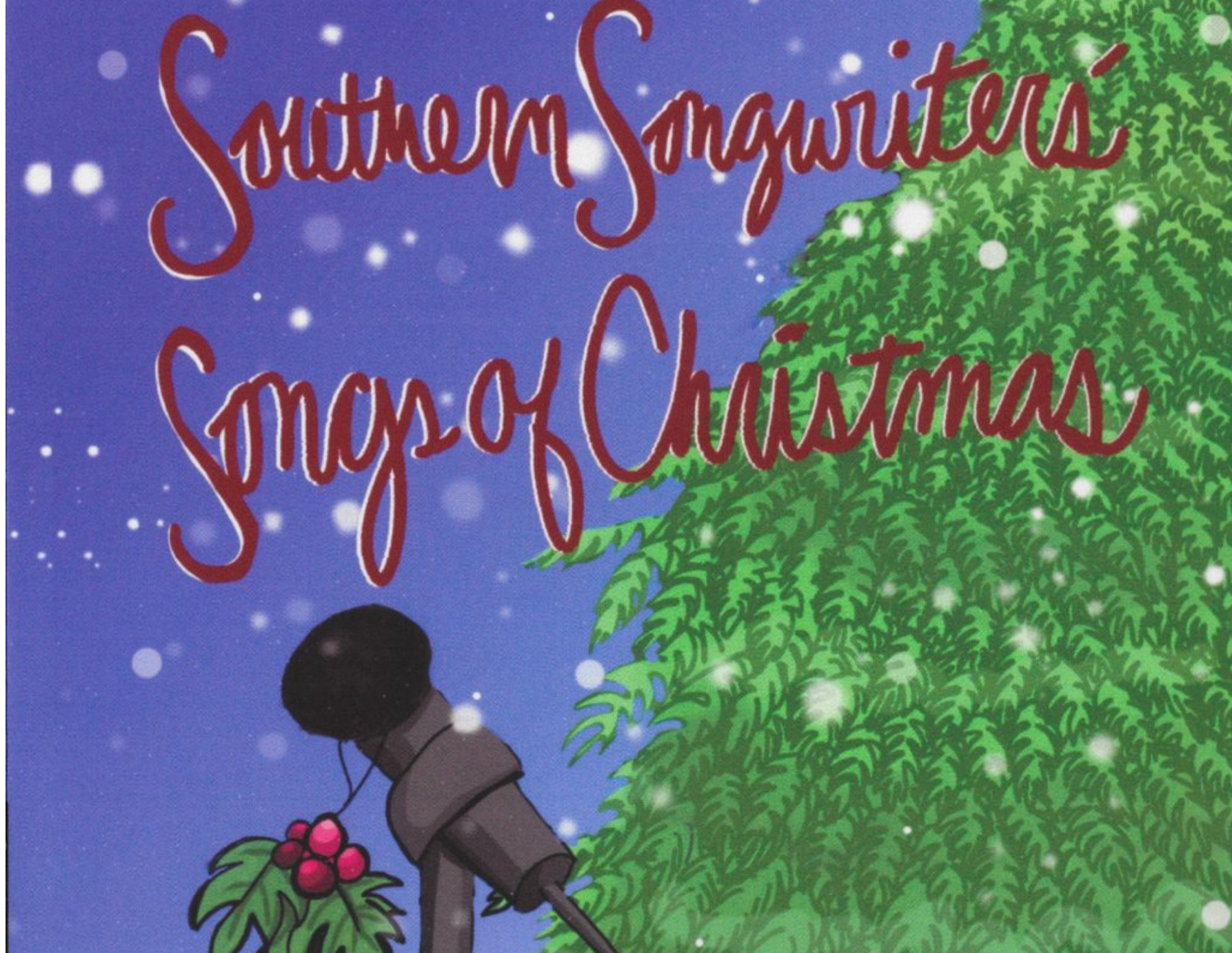


▲ Dr. Patricia Sparti is the director of orchestral activities at Gardner-Webb. She has conducted large choirs and orchestras for CD recordings, but the recent Songs of Christmas CD is the first time she has recorded an original song on a CD.

Each songwriter brings a unique style to the project. “Almost 11 months after the original posting on Facebook, ‘Southern Songwriters’ Songs of Christmas’ became a reality and is now available on hundreds of download sites worldwide, including iTunes, Amazon, Spotify, and others,” she said.

The artwork for the CD was created by GWU student Hannah Smith, who was chosen from various submissions. The recording is dedicated to the memory of Steven Gray. “Steve was killed in a car accident in October 2020, after recording his fabulous, funny, and brilliant song for the album, ‘Ho, Ho, Ho,’ which his wife, Kathy Eoute, says came to him as he woke up one morning,” Sparti related. “We all loved Steve and his music very much.”

The song Sparti wrote for the album is “Mary Delivered a Baby and That Baby Delivered Me.” The upbeat tune opens with the piano playing “We Wish you a Merry Christmas.” Sparti sings the verses in a jazzy, somewhat Southern gospel style. “The first bridge is rap, and tells the Christmas story,” she describes. “The pianist on my song is the great Phillip Howe, who was a music student at GWU for a time. I have sung tributes to Frank Sinatra, and World War II Jazz at the Don Gibson Theatre with Phillip as part of the Joseph Webb Jazz Revue ensemble.”



▲ The artwork for the CD was created by GWU student Hannah Smith, who was chosen from various submissions.

Sparti’s experience includes conducting large choirs and orchestras for CD recordings. She’s also served as a judge for various competitions, including the Don Gibson Singer/Songwriter Competition. At Gardner-Webb, she is director of orchestral activities and chair of the GWU Distinguished Artist Series. The CD is available by contacting Sparti at 704-466-4710.

Free Songwriting Workshop

The Fourth Annual GWU/SSA Songwriting Workshop, Song Circle and Concert will be held at Gardner-Webb on Jan. 30, 2021. The event will be from noon until 9:30 p.m. in Stewart Hall, Tucker Student Center, and will be limited to 30 participants plus songwriting faculty because of COVID-19 safety measures. Gardner-Webb students, faculty, staff and SSA members will have first priority. Talented singer/songwriters and studio producers will teach such subjects as studio production, writing memorable melodies, song distribution and copyright, song forms, making songs interesting, song Imagery, to bridge or not to bridge, song editing, co-writing, etc. The song circle will allow all participants to perform and receive comments, criticism, etc. from the songwriting faculty, and the final concert will feature the songwriting faculty, as well as GWU students. Reservations are required and can be made by contacting Sparti at 704-466-4710 or emailing psparti@gardner-webb.edu.

Auxiliary aids will be made available to persons with disabilities upon request 10 working days prior to the event. Please call (704) 406-4270 or email disabilitieservices@gardner-webb.edu with your request.

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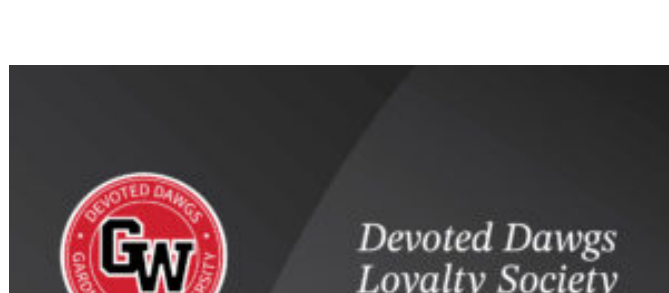


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