

Come to the Holy Banquet - CD

The Artist - Annmarie

Annmarie (Smallwood) Pickering was born in Willoughby, Ohio, and graduated from St Augustine Academy in Lakewood in 1986. In 1990 she earned her B.A. in Music Education from Alderson-Broaddus College in Philippi, West Virginia. After college, she had the privilege of singing at Canterbury Cathedral in England and Notre Dame Cathedral in France. In 1992, she met Pope John Paul II at the Vatican in Rome. Annmarie lives in Shiloh Illinois with her husband Jim and their children Erion and Anavera.

The Writer - Evelyn Davis

Evelyn Davis was born in 1930 in Harlem Hospital on Lenox Avenue in New York City. Her mother used to spend her time taking Evelyn to "storefront" churches in Harlem just so she could sing and pray. Later on, Evelyn and her mother joined the Methodist church (Mother Zion), then the Abyssinian Baptist Church (Adam Clayton Powell's church). Evelyn was exposed to gospel and other kinds of music at these various churches. She often frequented the Apollo Theater in Harlem where she saw Nat King Cole, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, Moms Mabely, and Lionel Hampton. Evelyn met her true love, Dunstan Haettenschwiller, at Friendship House, and they married in 1954. Their seven children were the main inspiration for the 100-plus songs Evelyn wrote in her lifetime.

Annmarie and Evelyn met in 1984 at a church in Cleveland when Annmarie was 16, and sang in Evelyn's Sing and Praise choir. During the next 16 years, Evelyn nurtured her while infusing her love of God and music and her soulful singing style into her. She was Annmarie's mentor and friend.

Annmarie recalls Evelyn referring to herself as a "kitchen composer," but her music is comparable to many successful composers. Glenn R. Hufnagel, who lives in Buffalo, New York, arranged most of this music when Evelyn lived there in the 1970s and early 1980s. Glenn is a gifted pianist and church musician who loved Evelyn's music and wanted it to touch the masses.

When Evelyn fell ill, Annmarie promised her on her deathbed she'd get her music "out to the world." Evelyn died in 2000 at age 69.

The Music

After Evelyn's death, Annmarie didn't have any contact with the Haettenschwiller Family until a chance meeting in 2006. Annmarie had since moved to Shiloh, Illinois, but came back to Cleveland for a family visit. She went back to her old church where she happened to meet up with Evelyn's daughter, who lives in Cincinnati. Her daughter said, "I have something for you," and mailed Annmarie all of Evelyn's music and the Haettenschwiller Family's permission to publish it. Annmarie then assembled a nice litany of songs, and pianist Warren Gilmore added his own touch to many of them. Now Annmarie was able to fulfill her promise to Evelyn.

Evelyn's mother said, "The Lord works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform." So, today's the day! May you feel the music in your hands and feet, and may your hearts and souls be touched by the glory of God.