

Biography for Beth Ivey

I believe God gave me my musical talent to share His message with everyone. It is my desire that God speaks through my music in a way that touches the hearts of everyone who listens to my songs, whether it be on CD or in a live concert. God has called me to be more than a performer – He has called me into a ministry for His service, and that is what drives me to be the best that I can be because I know that He speaks through my songs.

My musical career began when I was four years old after my Sunday School teachers noticed that I could actually hold a tune. They asked my mother if I could sing for the church, and she was more than happy for me. I was supposed to sing “He’s Still Working on Me,” but when I stood in front of the congregation, I froze, and all I could do was smile at everyone looking at me. Fortunately, I was only four, and this was more “cute” than career-ruining! Anyway, time passed, and I began to sing more frequently in the youth choir in the church.

Around the same time, my papa (my grandfather) bought me a piano. He always wanted a musician in the family, and he paid for my piano lessons. I continued to take piano throughout my life, and, as I grew up, I found myself accompanying many performers at church and school on the piano. These many years on the piano gave me a deeper appreciation of music as an emotional art, and I became very familiar with how music (voice and instrumental) worked together.

I never quit singing, though, and I joined my high school chorus where I learned to sing in front of very large crowds all over the state. This is when I realized that I wanted to be a musician for the rest of my life. After I graduated from high school, I applied to the School of Music at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, which was not too far from home. I had to go through a rigorous musical audition before being accepted because East Carolina’s School of Music is recognized as being one of the region’s best music schools. I was accepted; however, unfortunately, a few weeks prior to getting my acceptance letter, my papa passed away. I know that he is smiling down from Heaven because I became the musician that he always wanted me to become.

I always loved to perform, and throughout the years, my confidence got higher and higher. While I was a student at East Carolina, I entered the Miss North Carolina Pageant as Miss Martin County, and I played the piano for my talent. I placed as a top-ten finalist. The next year, I entered the Miss North Carolina Pageant again as Miss Topsail where I, again, placed highly. I also went on a 17-state singing tour with the East Carolina University Chorus during this time, and all of these experiences gave me more poise, confidence, and stage presence. Looking back, I believe that this was God’s way of preparing me for my future ministry.

After graduating with a BS in Music Education, I began my career as a music teacher in the public school system where I have been for eighteen years now. I currently teach at E.J. Hayes Elementary School in Martin County, North Carolina, which is the elementary school that I attended as a child when I was just learning how to play the piano myself.

Teaching music to young children has been fulfilling, and I consider it one of the best privileges I have ever had. However, I always felt like God wanted me to do more with my talents. A few years ago, I was reading Matthew 25:14 where Jesus tells the parable about the man who called his servants together and gave them talents to use for the benefit of others. Two of the men doubled their talents, but the other hid his talent, and it was taken away. This “parable of talents” spoke to me, and it made me

realize that I could double my talents as a teacher of music and a servant to God through music. Needless to say, this verse changed my life.

My parents and papa always told me that I was a gift from God, and that my music is my gift back to Him. Music is a gift within itself, but when you go to church, and you listen to music with an open heart and an open mind, you can receive so much more. As I began to sing in church more and more, audience members would continuously come up to me and tell me that God spoke to them through my music, and I realized that my gift back to God was best served through a music ministry.

I started out singing in a group at my church, and after a while, I decided that God was leading me to go solo. This was when I learned to walk by faith and not by sight. My husband, Jeff, told me that I was trying to do the driving, but I needed to sit in the back seat and let the Lord do the driving. Since then, I have been letting Him open doors for me instead of trying to force them open myself. I have come to realize that many more opportunities have been given to me as a result.

I started my first CD in January 2007 with the intention of recording one song per month. During this time, I performed one of my songs, "The Cross Said it All" at my church. After I finished singing the song, I saw that the organist and pianist were both crying, and when I left the podium, the congregation were on their feet giving me a standing ovation. It took my breath away. Even after I took my seat, everyone was still standing! I knew that God was speaking through my music now, and it gave me the motivation to finish my first CD.

I finished the CD, *In His Own Time*, in October 2007. Things went slowly at first, but I started to get calls to perform by the end of January 2008. By March, I was booked to go to the National Quartet Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, being one of only 69 performers invited, and I placed 15th in the competition.

After that, Jeff took one of my CD's to Randy Stalls, a well-known music promoter, in Williamston. Randy asked Jeff if I was ready to go to Nashville because that was where I needed to be. I was elated with the news, and in September 2008, my second CD, *River of Mercy*, was released after recording at The Family Room Studios in Nashville, Tenn.

I have had the privilege of performing with notables such as Curtis Hylar and Jubilation, The Perrys, Greater Vision, and the Phifers. I am scheduled to perform in the showcase at *Singing in the Sun* in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in April 2009. It was just as Jeff said it would be – God will drive if I let Him!

I still call Williamston, North Carolina, home where I live with my husband, Jeff, and my daughter, Kaitlyn. Even though my music ministry is taking off, I continue to teach music in the public school system where I grew up, and I still use the piano that my papa bought me when I was a child to teach other children how to play the piano.