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Shreveport native's CD offers new sounds for the holiday season

October 9, 2006

By Jane Bokun

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If you're tired of the endless repetitions of "White Christmas" that will be sure to come your way this holiday season, something new and fresh just came on the market.

Shreveport native and singer/songwriter Beverly Egan Houston has executive produced "Greater Than That: The Best Christmas Songs You Never Heard." The CD features 14 new or little-known Christmas songs sung exclusively by artists from Texas and Louisiana.

"I'm someone who is sick of the same old songs," Houston said. "I wanted to work on something that was uplifting to work on."

Indeed, poignant and bluesy tunes such as "Holiday Love" and "Give Myself Away" set the tone for a unique, yet unforgettable holiday album. The song "Christmastime in Texas" mixes a Cajun beat with upbeat vocals that can be hummed for years to come.

Houston said she was primed for the project because she comes from a local musical family.

Her brother David Egan is a musician and songwriter living in Lafayette. Her mother, Jasmine Egan of Shreveport, was a nationally acclaimed opera singer. Both contributed songs to the CD.

Her mother wrote "I'm Going to Love Christmas" and her brother penned "Holiday Love" years ago along with John Howe and country superstar Kix Brooks.

Houston's brother also has written songs recorded by popular musicians Joe Cocker, Solomon Burke, Etta James, Percy Sledge and John Mayall. Houston wrote six of the Christmas songs and is the publisher of most of



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them.

"We gathered together holiday songs that are new or little known," Houston said. "I grew up surrounded with music in Louisiana and I have lived my adult life in Texas. I simply used the resources familiar to me to create the best Christmas album possible."

Along the way she also gathered a bevy of talented artists to perform on the CD. They include country singer Sonny Burgess; "Oprah" pop finalist Annagrey LaBasse; gospel singer Benita Arterberry Burns; singers Warren Storm, W.T. Greer and Jeanie Perkins; Elvis Presley contemporary Joe Auenson; and Grammy winner Steve Archer.

Shreveporter Miki Honeycutt also can be found on the Christmas CD, singing "Peace on Earth."

"I've known Beverly for about 30 years so the album was a joy to do," Honeycutt said. The local singer, a nurse at Brentwood Hospital in Shreveport, is known in the area for her performances with the Miki Honeycutt Band and with A Train, a popular band in the 1980s that featured Houston's brother David Egan, John Howe and Paul Griffith, as well as Buddy Flett and Bruce Flett, currently members of The Bluebirds.

"I was so happy I was asked to perform on this album "" it's got some great songs," she said.

It was the freshness of those songs that appealed to singer Perkins.

"I love the old Christmas standards, but I was ready for some new stuff," said Perkins, who was nominated for a Grammy for "Songs To Grow By." "It was a blast to work on this album with a lot of the people I knew and Beverly is so easy to work with."

As a bonus, some of the album's songs are creatively unusual with titles like "Christmas Time Again at Neiman Marcus" and "Elvis Has Been Sighted At the North Pole."

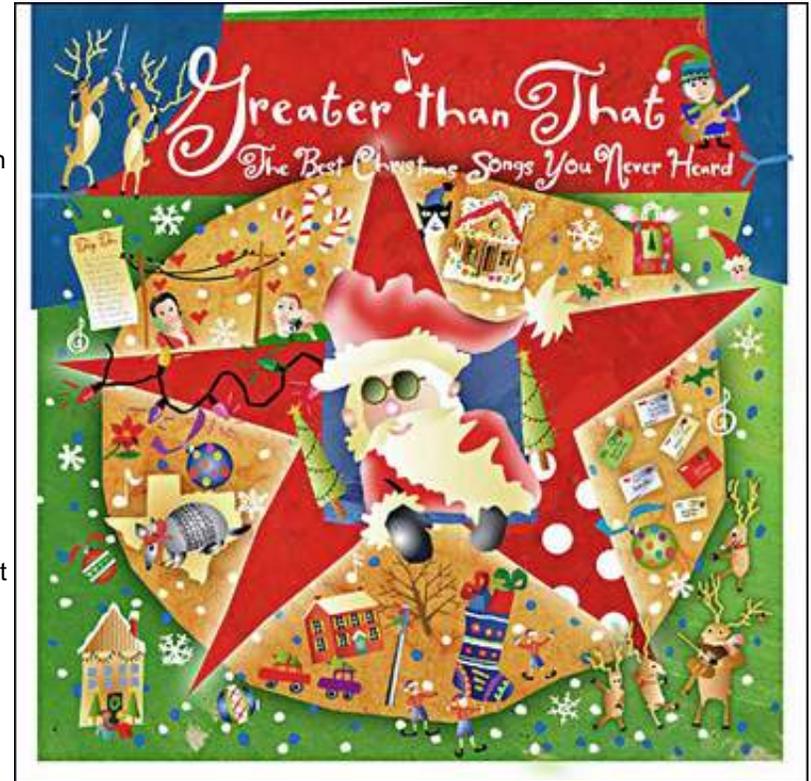
"Most CDs have only 10 songs, I wanted to give people more," Houston said. "People ask me how in the world I was able to get the talent for the CD and I say, it was fun and easy."

Houston is not new to the music business. She collaborated on two musicals: "Rainbow of Promise: Noah and the Promises of God" in tandem with the illustrated book "Noah's Ark," and also conceived the musical "When I Was a Dinosaur," which has been sung by the group Trout Fishing in America.

In the '90s, Houston was president of Remarkable Records and worked on the staff of the Dallas Repertory Theater and Dallas Theater Center.

Article Comments

Shreveport native and singer/songwriter Beverly Egan Houston with a copy of her CD "Greater Than That: The Best Christmas Songs You Never Heard," on which she was executive producer. (Special to The Times)



TO GET THE CD: "Greater Than That: The Best Christmas Songs You Never Heard" sells for \$15.98 and can be purchased from Texola Records at www.texolamusic.com and through www.CDBaby.com. In Shreveport, the CD is for sale at the Christmas store at Splash, L'Oasis in Pierremont Mall and Lewis Gifts. Or you can download the form on this page to order by mail or fax.

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