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Poet Charlene Evans'
CD thanks God for
her blessings



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Ode to the Master

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Staff

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Poet's debut CD reveals she isn't at a loss for words when thanking God for blessings

Kathy Spencer-Mention

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Columnist

Charlene Evans was a sophomore in college in 1996 when, like many teens, she felt she really needed a car.

Her mother and father, being typically cautious parents, suggested she wait. But realizing they'd birthed a daughter who possessed a strong sense of independence, they told her if she got one, she'd have to pay for it herself.

"My mom and dad didn't think it was time for me to have a car, but my argument was, 'How am I going to get an internship if I don't have a car?'"

"My dad was telling me, 'Well, based on what you're making, you're not going to be able to afford it,'" said Evans, who at the time was working part time at a fast-food restaurant.

Now a 27-year-old associate project control specialist at Fluor Daniel, she said she took his comment as a challenge to show the kind of stuff she's made of.

"My first car, which is now paid for, was bought by me," she said. "I stepped out on faith. And I actually surprised my dad on his birthday (Aug. 13, 1996). I drove it to the house. I handled the whole deal by myself."

On her debut CD, "Next in Line," Evans, whose passion is poetry, reveals the source of her strength, the foundation of that independent spirit.

In one cut, "My Gift," she rhythmically lays it all out: "I have no need unmet, because The Master never fails."

The energetic feel of the project brings to the poetry circuit a much needed voice: a soothing, inspirational explosion of words, from a Christian perspective.

Several members of the local Christian choir, Chosen Generation, provide the background vocals.

Evans is executive producer of the CD. On the advice of her co-producer, Kerry McBroom of CMax Productions Co. in Greenville, she included the vocalists and jazzy instrumentalists, lending a classy, cozy, "coffeehouse" feel to her poetry.

The CD is an artistically conceived, taped rendition of a modern poetry set that is free of foul language, just the way Evans wanted it.

"I think you can get a message across without using foul language and be just as powerful," said Evans, a native of Columbia who has an electrical engineering degree from the University of South Carolina.

"The message that I'm trying to send is that real fulfillment, real peace and real happiness come from having a relationship with God and knowing who God is," she said.

Known as "Chiccy Baritone" on the poetry circuit for her strong, authoritative yet feminine voice, Evans started putting her thoughts on paper as a college freshman in 1995.

"I guess it was such a huge turning point for me, going from high school, and then mom and daddy dropping me off in the dorm room,"

she said.

During those early years, her poetry focused "on my struggles at college, being caught up in the college life. And then, realizing that if I continued to go in the direction I was going, I couldn't make it, with the drinking, the smoking, hanging out, partying. I left college saved because of all that I'd gone through," she said.

She shares those struggles on the CD's title cut, "Next in Line."

When she isn't working, Evans now spends much of her time traveling to Columbia, Charleston, Atlanta and Jacksonville, sharing her gift.

The idea to put her work on CD evolved after hearing a sermon by her pastor, Renea Glenn, at Life Center Ministries in Greenville.

The work has been well received, she said, by folks from all walks of life. "They totally did not expect the band and the vocalists. They just expected me to get up to the mike and read what I've done and record it."

She hopes to begin traveling around the country, exposing more people to her work and sharing a message that has enriched her own life.

As she says in "The Gift": "Can't keep this gift to myself, because sharing the gift can uplift someone else."

TO LEARN MORE

+For more information about "Next in Line," call 675-5121, or write chiccy_baritone@yahoo.com.

Outline: ALAN DEVORSEY/Staff

Portrait of an artist: Charlene Evans got the idea to record her poetry after hearing a sermon by her pastor. Her debut CD is titled "Next in Line."

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