

## Bio for Media

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*Cherry Sisters Music City* – A book by Diane Vanette that tells a story of serendipity, synchronicity and song. It is a Music City memoir of three women confronting the highs and lows of the music business during the good ‘ole boys’ era, standing for the common good and creating harmony that has lasted a lifetime.

So many things have changed over 50 years. That is especially true in the music business. Music as a universal language is a constant, however, where we hear music, how it gets recorded or shared, what is the current popular trend, and who is sharing, buying, stealing, or imitating music changes quickly and has many times over the last half a century.

One person can now use a phone to record themselves playing or singing alone at home and with the use of technology, become known and liked by many. Another can share their love of music performing with an orchestra and never become known to anyone except the other performers in the group. Some creators of a musical sound will live on long after they are no longer on earth. The sound others have created may live on but not many will know the creator. They are invaluable to the creation but mostly invisible to the public.

Still, when creating music becomes a passion, making music becomes the goal and being recognized or not pales in comparison to having the opportunity to create what you love. The true gift of a lifetime is when those who have created the sound with you stay close and those relationships sustain each other.

50 years ago, three women were destined to meet because of their passion for creating music. They met in Nashville or Music City, in 1974 as young, gifted singers and musicians hoping to make a living in the recording industry. Sheri Huffman moved to Nashville from Ohio. Lisa Silver moved to Nashville from Detroit, Michigan. Diane Shupe had moved to Nashville when her family arrived from Pennsylvania in 1960.

It is now time to tell the story of their time together in Music City and beyond.

Sheri, Lisa and Diane were already singing with local bands at live performances or in the studios on commercials or on recording projects with up-and-coming artists. By this time, there were three quartets of background singers working regularly in the studios; the Anita Kerr Singers, The Jordanaires, and the Nashville Edition. The Jordanaires were men and can be heard on most of Elvis Presley’s records. The other two groups had two women and two men. The sound was popular on many country records at a time before multi track machines or digital recording existed and everything was recorded live with the musicians and artist present.

As the sound of music being recorded in Nashville began to shift away from the traditional country projects to a more pop sound, hiring three women as background singers became a very popular sound with record producers and artists. It was on a gospel session with Tommy Dougherty, hired by Pat Patrick, where Sheri, Lisa and Diane first projected their unique blend. The ease at which the sound they created filled the air was a shock even to them. What began was a quest for creating more of that sound whenever possible and the invitation to become recording artists as The Cherry Sisters.

Not long after deciding to work as a trio they were jokingly given the name “The Cherry Sisters” by a renowned arranger, Bill Justis, known for his sense of humor. The name stuck. Over the next 10 years, the Cherry Sisters became some of the busiest singers in town and traveled the world with Charlie Rich and Jerry Reed. They also performed live with many artists on the multiple television shows recorded in Nashville and continued to sing with other wonderful studio singers in town, Bergen White being their favorite.

As busy as they were, they did record an album produced by Clayton Ivey in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, in the early 80s. Reaching celebrity status is hard work. There are many people and moving parts that must come together. Talent is an important ingredient. But all the other moving parts are in the hands of many others, and particularly in those days, out of the hands of the artist. Unbeknownst to the Cherry Sisters, Monument Records – the label that would have been their home – went bankrupt. This loss was a blow to their egos and forced them to reassess who they were individually and together.

This is their story, and Dianne decided it was time to tell it. The best part of the story is about how the women built on their relationship even after they felt defeated. They made choices that separated them by distance but made other choices that only made them stronger together. 50 years after they first met, they were back in the studio with one of their favorite producers, Kyle Lehning, as the Cherry Sisters. They still sound great, and they believe they are better women for knowing and loving each other. They have survived and thrived.

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