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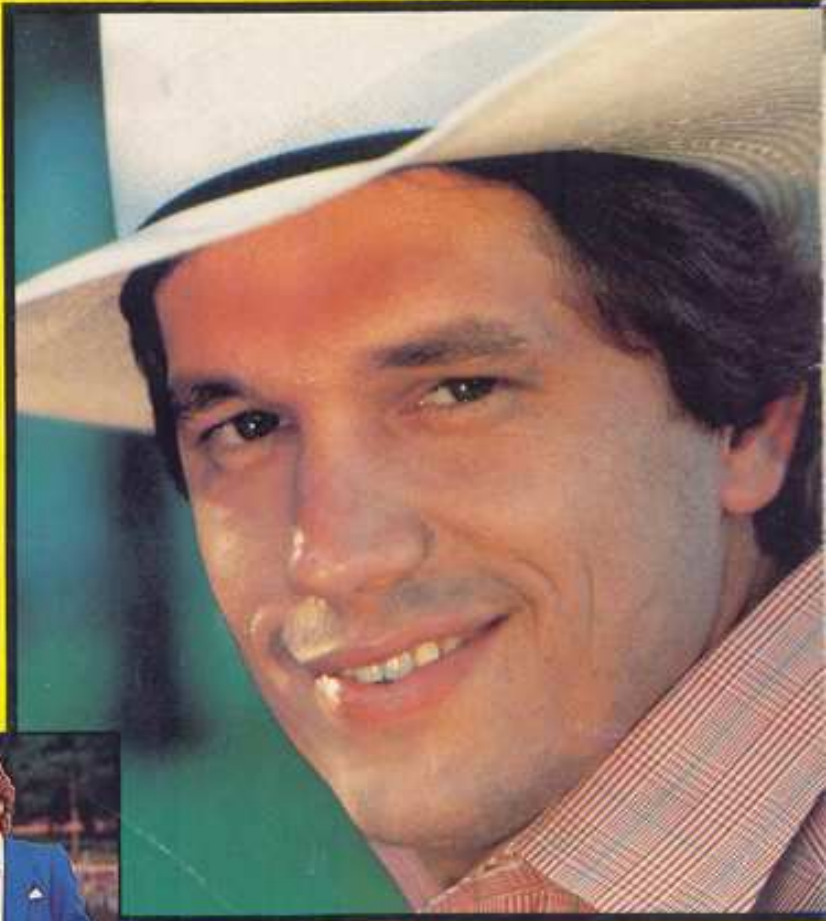
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CRYSTAL TALKS!

How The Beautiful Singer Copes With Motherhood And The Demands Of Her Skyrocketing Career

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Crystal Gayle

For This Beautiful Country Singer Children Are Very Special And Motherhood Is A Wonderful Experience

By EDA GALENO

"Please excuse my hands," apologizes Crystal Gayle glancing down at red stains. Then continuing to mash potatoes for her daughter Catherine Claire's lunch she explains, "I was doing my fingernails, and I put the jar of nail polish down thinking I'd closed the lid real tight." Glancing at the bright blue eyed 10 month (July) addition to her life she laughs again, "She grabbed it, and then I grabbed her hand and then..." Her voice was drowned out by laughter, and you could tell she was more amused than annoyed at the situation.

Crystal adjusts well to her new role as a mother, although life is a lot different for her and manager/husband Bill Gatzimos on and off the road. Judging from their glowing faces when Catherine Claire is around, they are clearly overwhelmed with her. And rightfully so, since Catherine can charm just about anyone with her outgoing, bubbly personality. She is obviously a very happy baby and one can't help but to be fascinated by her. Crystal's band doesn't seem to mind the youngest addition to the traveling family either. Earlier, at a soundcheck, Catherine Claire was in the audience watching her mother sing. When she called out to Crystal who was on stage, the band immediately began playing an improvised version of "Rock-A-Bye-Baby" which Catherine Clair seemed to enjoy immensely.

Knowing Crystal arrived in town just hours ago from a show last night; having watched her do a soundcheck; and now watching her feed and care for her child exhausts me, but doesn't seem to phase her. "It's more hectic in different ways" she explains. "You know of course we travel with so many suitcases, now all of her things come

with us also, her walker and everything a baby needs." She motions around the room we were in, at the surrounding baby accessories. "Also, you're thinking of someone else. It used to be when I was out traveling I just thought of getting myself ready for the show. Now..." she pauses and smiles. "It's...has she eaten, has she

able to commit to finding someone. It's very hard," she explains. "That person has got to be the right person. They'll be with me as well as with Catherine. I'm very lucky in the sense that I've a couple of sisters that help me when I'm home or recording. It's just finding that right person. I'm looking, it's just going to take me awhile.

For now Catherine Claire will be a traveling baby, but that will end when she's school age. "She'll definitely go to school," affirms Crystal. "I think she needs that. At this time my mind is thinking I don't really want a tutor. At certain points, if it is an interesting travel maybe I'll take her along...but I think she needs school. I enjoyed school." And what if she wants to follow in mom's footsteps? "If she has the talent...definitely. Oh, she's gonna be something else I tell you," smiles the proud mother.

With all this talk of children and motherhood, Crystal's voice lowers as she reflects on her own mother. "Mom was very special. I was the last one out of the house, so we were real close. She traveled with me and lived with us the last year of her life. She was pretty sick at the time, only having one lung, from cancer. It was caused by smoking. That's why I'm an anti-smoker. There's only one thing I wish. I wish my mother could have seen Catherine. I see a lot of mom in her. You know, through little things," Crystal continues to explain. "She's as spunky as mom. So out going! In most ways I feel as though mom's showing me that she's still there. Having the closeness I had with my mom, then having Catherine makes motherhood pretty special."

Thinking back to her own childhood and ambitions to be a singer she adds, "You know, I think all children dream of what they want to be. No, let



Crystal Gayle "My roots are in country, but I consider myself just a singer."

done this or that, and then maybe an hour before the show when I get a second I say, I should get ready!"

The Right Person

Although Crystal likes attending to the baby's needs herself, she does have someone who comes with her for times when she and Bill can't be with Catherine, due to their hectic scheduling. "I don't have anyone who comes with me regularly. I've just not been

me rephrase that, you dream of things you think are a lot different than what they really are. I always thought, even later on in life that this business was a lot easier than it is. But you know you can't second guess the public for what they want to hear. It's just not all a bed of roses, although I'm sure it looks that way. You get there and wow...sometimes you wish you were back. But I've had a good career. I look at so many singers everywhere and entertainers in Nashville who haven't made it yet and are really good and I'm thankful. I guess I was lucky. I've had a lot of good people behind me."

One Good Person

One of the "good people" behind Crystal, since the beginning is her high-school sweetheart, now husband

Bill Gatzimos. A combination that might not go over so well for many others is the working relationship they share. "We work well together," says Crystal of her business association with her husband. "In my career, I do all of my own decision making, where I play and concert dates. He does a lot of the business end." That is something Bill is more than qualified to do considering his law degree. He is as comfortable with his side of the business as Crystal is singing to an audience. "He gives me all the information, the pros and cons and helps with legal matters."

Bill agrees with Crystal on their successful working combination. "Oh, it has its ups and downs," he jests smiling at Crystal. "But it does allow us to travel together which is great." Crystal agrees, adding,

Crystal's new album, *Tonight, Tonight* is scheduled for release this Fall.



"When we have off days on the road it's nice that we can take those times and make something of them."

Sister Loretta

One might think that having Loretta Lynn as a sister made life a lot easier for Crystal when she decided to break into the music business. But Crystal had many drawbacks from that situation which her talent fortunately overcame. "Although there were drawbacks, I'm sure it opened a lot of doors that would have been closed otherwise. I never really look at it as having been hard on me since I was Loretta's sister. Of course, I've done well within the music business on my own so I have a different look and a different attitude." In all honesty she admits, "I don't know what I would think if I hadn't made it. She got my foot in the door and I took it from there. I really feel that having different backgrounds had something to do with my success."

Loretta Lynn is the Coal Miner's daughter, Crystal Gayle is not. Crystal explains, "My sister grew up in Kentucky and my dad worked in a coal mine then. When we moved to Indiana, my sister was already out of the house and had a couple of children before I was born. There's eight of us." Crystal refers to her own family of which she is the youngest. "Loretta's background was Kentucky but I was very young when we moved to Indiana so my background was totally different than hers. I really think that's one of the reasons I've been able to accomplish what I've done in the music industry, being related to someone else. I think it's difficult doing something in the business when you're related to someone else. It's not been easy on siblings."

Impressive Career

Crystal has had a very impressive career so far, including hit singles and awards. She won both the Country Music Association and the Academy of Country Music award for Outstanding Female Vocalist of the Year in 1977. She took home a Grammy award for Country Female Vocalist of the year in 1978, and both the Country Music Association and Academy of Country Music named her Outstanding Female Vocalist for a second year. In 1980 she received her third Academy of County Music award, for Outstanding Female vocalist. Crystal has also won two AMOA Jukebox Awards. One for "Don't It Make My

Brown Eyes Blue" in 1978, for the Most Played Record of the Year, and in 1979 she was honored by them for being the Most Played Country Female Artist of the Year. She has also been seen on many television specials with her ankle length brown hair as her trademark.

"I have a thing about people working with my hair," she says as she flips it over her legs. "It's very hard for me to let people work with it. Even combing my hair on TV shows or photos when someone is brushing it to make sure it's in the right place for pictures. I say to myself, just one more second then finally I take it back." Laughing she says, "Get out of my hair, you know?" Continuing she adds, "The worst thing about my hair is with Catherine. It's hard for me to work with her because if I put her on my hip to carry her, she's barefoot and her feet get caught up in it. It pulls and it's irritating. I just can't wait to wrap it up."

More Children

Right now Crystal is undecided on whether or not she wants more children. "It's really hard and takes a lot of your time. I'm not upset over that, but I've had to turn down things in my career that I would have liked to have done. I don't feel bad about doing it though. We turned down touring Europe this year. That I would liked to have done. It's mainly traveling things really, just not wanting to take her on a trip that would have been real hard because I want her with me."

One might say that Crystal has changed horses in the middle of the stream. She's recently changed producers from Allen Reynolds to Jimmy Bowen. "I wasn't looking to change my style. I went with Elektra records and Jimmy Bowen was head of Elektra. Actually, he just wanted to try some producing, so that's what we did. Since then, Elektra was taken over by Warner Brothers. That's funny." Laughing at the situation she adds, "I signed with Elektra and ended up with Warner Brothers."

Crystal has a very unique vocal style. She combines blues, country and pop which highlight her varied talents, encompassing a very wide audience. "My roots are country," she states. "But I consider myself just a singer. When I grew up I was singing pop, and rock, as well as country which is my background. I remember singing in the high school choir. When

I started recording I didn't think I had to limit that, and no one told me I couldn't record something a little bit different."

Crystal's next album should be out in the fall if all goes well in the recording studio. The working title is *Tonight, Tonight*. "All the songs on the new album are new except one tune by Billie Holliday called "God Bless The Child." I've done several of her things in the past. I've wanted to do an album of all old songs of that era but it seems other people are doing them now so I'll wait. I've always felt that if there was a past life I was probably a cabaret or a Broadway singer."

One thing is for sure, *Tonight, Tonight*, Crystal's eleventh LP, will be a little less eventful than the recording for her *Cage The Songbird* LP. "I actually went into labor when we were

mixing the last song. I didn't think it was labor. It was nothing like I had been reading about. We had gone to classes and planned on having natural childbirth. It would have been an easy birth but Catherine was a breech baby so she was taken by cesarean."

Although Crystal couldn't go through with the natural childbirth she had prepared for, she's been nursing Catherine since birth. "I'm just about ending that now. I can feel my energy level coming back. It's something knowing that you're giving to your child. Children are special. All my nieces and nephews are special but having one..." Crystal pauses and a beautiful smile comes over her face as Bill walks Catherine Clare into the room in full view. "Having one is something you've got to feel. It's something wonderful to experience."

With every strand of her beautiful ankle-length hair in place, Crystal appeared at this year's Fan Fair celebration in Nashville.



PHOTO: JOAN & GORDY GOODWIN