



Spiritual Singer | Songwriter | Sacred Prayer Practitioner

# MARY VERDI

*“Where words fail, music speaks.”* —HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSON

*Interview by Harryet Candee*

*Photographs by Tricia McCormack Photography*

**Opening question to Mary Verdi:** *Hi Mary! Nice to meet up again, it's been a few years! Mary, I enjoyed your singing and guitar playing in the video "Vision in the Sky" on your website. What inspires your music, and how do you turn an idea like this into a finished video, especially with the children featured?*

Hi Harryet, thank you for chatting today. What inspires me? Huh... well, I think I would say every little moment that makes up a day. When the birds chirp, when I feel gratitude for the beauty around me, and often when I hear a moving homily in church. Making music videos is probably one of my favorite things to do. Watching my lyrics take shape in a video is so fun. And working with kids? Well, it's the best! They bring the JOY. I begin with a storyboard to give us an idea of the overall concept. Often, kids show us a better, more joyful idea that makes the project even better. Oh, and I work with my favorite Video Producer, Ryan Cowdrey/Clayson Creative!

**And now!.... Your long-awaited tour, featuring your beloved healing songs and "The Illumination of**  
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**Angels" experience, opens on May 8th, 2026, at the Barrington Stage Company's Blatt Center. What are you most excited to share with audiences during this upcoming event, and how does it represent the next chapter in your artistic journey?**

I knew it was time in my career to create a healing experience with all of my beloved songs I've written over the years. When I began to select the originals that touch me the deepest, I noticed a thread of Angelic love and guidance. I've been very aware of their presence when songwriting, but now I feel it's time to try to express their enormous love for all of us and their heartfelt messages.

**There are other talented artists performing and exhibiting with you on May 8th. Could you introduce them, share their roles in the show, and describe the unique qualities each brings to this collaborative experience?**

First, the gorgeous Art Installation is a co-creation by Calista/Calista Ascension® from Scotland and a world peace activist/visual artist, Marie Fourzali from Lebanon.

My fellow fLIGHT Trio bandmates include Eileen Markland (Violin/Viola/Penney Whistle), a popular musician in the Berkshires and New York. Her music resume includes traveling to Niger with Project Troubador and Benin as an 'American Cultural Specialist'. We have been making music together for over 15 years. Brian Melick is our new hand percussionist from New York. He has an extensive touring resume, including travels to Ghana and across this country with Cathie Ryan and Kevin McKrell.

**What inspired the concept behind 'The Illumination of Angels' concert and its accompanying art installation?**

God created a very clear path for me in this life: to express love through music, prayer, and motherhood. As long as I stay focused on love through words and actions, life stays in balance.

That thread of angelic messages with my songwriting kept tugging at my heart. Given the times we are living in now, I wanted to offer an experience that surrounds the audience with love, acceptance, and peace, with the feeling of being held. Hopefully, we

can give the listener that very feeling.

I've come to learn, as we all have, that a show really needs to contain visuals to enhance the experience. We first began this project thinking we wanted a projection-type visual element, even exploring holograms, but that proved beyond our budget. My music producer, Mark Thayer of Signature Sounds, suggested we create an Art Installation. So, I began figuring out how to build an installation we can travel with from theatre to theatre.

I should stop right now and say thank you to my dear husband/roadie/builder, Jim Culliton. I love you, sweetheart! This tour only works because Jim understands my passion for creating music and travels with us.

***What inspired you to pursue certifications in Sacred Prayer and Angel Healing®, and how have these influenced your music?***

I have been a Music Minister for over 15 years. This has been such a gift to me, allowing me to surround others with love and compassion, and hopefully help them connect more deeply with the Divine. Learning to become a Sacred Prayer Practitioner/Angel Healer was a very natural step for me. Spending time in prayer with another person and assisting them to hear their messages and guidance from Spirit is a gift. Life can be so challenging, so if I can help at all, that brings me great joy! From an early age, I have always had a strong connection to Spirit. My intuition has never failed me. I don't think we realize just how powerful our intuition is at times.

***How do you hope to deepen your audience's connection to angels and create an atmosphere of peace and love through your work?***

Honestly, I deliver the music, and the Angels need no assistance. They are simply magnificent and loving. We each have our own Guardian Angel and perhaps many more angels around us. I've learned that if I show up, give them space to heal, and communicate their messages,

I begin to see faces in the audience relax, smile, and know they are in communion with sacred beings. Communication with angels is by free will. If we wish to connect, it is instant.

***How does the fLIGHT Trio's blend of instruments and voices contribute to the healing experience of your concerts?***

Well, creating space for the music to breathe is crucial. I like to play enough piano or guitar to support the vocals without getting too busy. Then, layering Violin and Viola with Eileen's intuitive awareness of what is needed in the moment creates an opening in hearts. Then, of course, the power of percussion! Wow. I remember during the first fLIGHT Tour, I had closed my eyes during a particular song that is heavy on percussion. When I opened my eyes, the entire audience was up and dancing in the aisles. There is something so deeply ignited in our beings with drums from various countries and cultures.

***How does "The Illumination of Angels Art Installation" convey spiritual inclusivity and what message does this send about the universality of angels? Is this a religious concert?***

No. Angels are universal. For everyone. Regardless



*Archeia Joy reminds us to celebrate life!* CALISTA AND MARIE FOURZALI

of our beliefs, each and every one of us has our very own Guardian Angel. They are not religious, but very sacred, pure, and holy. Their only desire is to help us along our path in this lifetime.

***How does the fLIGHT Trio's diverse musical experience, including Brian Melick's work in Ghana, contribute to the overall atmosphere and cultural depth of the concert?***

We each have our own musical influences. Together, we offer diverse ideas and collaborate to ensure the concert offers a range of energy and sound to touch all hearts.

***With over 1.6 million YouTube views, how do you feel about your music's reach and connection with listeners?***

I've always been touched when someone knows my music and cares enough to speak about it with me. Communicating with others who live across the globe, someone I would never meet otherwise, is extra special to my heart. YouTube viewers have also taught me the power of music combined with visual content to reach others' senses.

***How do your albums reflect different stages of your life and artistic growth?***

Oh my goodness, the album covers alone are a rude awakening to how fast life is going! I think, at first, I was more influenced by the rules of recording and

allowed more experienced people to overrule me in the studio. But as I grew and found my voice (which isn't always easy as a woman surrounded by men), I began to explore what mattered most to me, an honesty that hopefully rings through my music. My Precious Love CD was written when I was alone, a single mother of 4, and seeking love. Then, with my Flight CD, I combined my love of music with yoga and meditation. That is when I began working with a hand percussionist and the amazing instruments from various countries. This tour brings back songs from all of my CDs. My kids have always influenced what I place on each CD as well. They have been such teachers in this life, keeping it real!

***What did you learn from working as Reba McEntire's assistant, and how did that shape your approach to the music industry?***

When I first went to college at Belmont University in Nashville, I had one goal: to get a record deal! The only problem was that my voice sounded more like Olivia Newton-John than Dolly Parton! I didn't pursue the record deal because I realized I wasn't country. Right after college ended, I was lucky enough to be Reba's assistant. Honestly, I had to have been the worst one she experienced. God did not grant me secretarial skills.

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Photograph by Tricia McCormack



That position taught me what a difficult job it was to live on the road, record while you are home, and try to balance a normal life while everyone is watching you. Along with wanting a record deal, I had a deep desire to become a mother, and those two worlds just didn't seem to match.

I chose motherhood, but continued to hold a deep longing to write and record my own music. After my third child was born, my grandfather passed and left me enough money to record my first CD, *Ocean for Travel*. I have never taken the lessons I learned in Nashville for granted. They have helped me create projects that I am proud of.

***In what ways did touring with Kings Productions as a Singer/Dancer impact your artistic development?***

Touring with a professional production company allowed me to be trained by the best directors, choreographers, and writers, to use the absolute best equipment, to work with a technical crew as numerous as the talent on stage, and to literally learn from the writers who were writing the scripts and arranging the songs. It was invaluable as a performer to have this training. I spent my childhood on the theatrical stage performing in many musicals. The progression with Kings Island just grew on that foundation. It equipped me with the tools I needed to become the director of my 'Christmas in the Berkshires', now proudly in its 10th year.

***What is the personal significance of composing music from your grandmother's piano bench?***

Sitting on the very piano bench where my grandmother and my father played gives me the courage I need to enter the song. For me, songwriting is a very personal expression of my deepest thoughts and emotions, so feeling like I'm not alone in that moment helps.

***How has your focus on life after death shaped the themes and messages in your music and stage productions?***

Well, for me, I believe we are here to learn life's lessons and move on. I have always known that God, the Angels, and life everlasting are very real. It's hard to put into words. It's a deep feeling I've had even as a little girl.

***What was it like to perform at iconic venues such as the Pentagon and Fenway Stadium? Tell us about that.***

Fenway was a rush! Luckily, my kids were on the field with me, and I remember their eyes, as big as the baseballs, in awe of the enormous ocean of people. It intimidated me a little as I walked onto the field, but it's a great memory. My son was able to say 'Play ball'. What a great moment. The Pentagon was heartwarming. It was shortly after 9/11, so we were very aware of how tense it felt. I sang my song 'Here at Home' and felt it echo in the courtyard as service members and women from all branches and many countries walked toward the stage. What a video that would have been, but we

weren't allowed to record at that very delicate time in history. I feel very blessed to have those memories.

***Can you share what it was like collaborating with artists like Livingston Taylor and Larry Gaitlin?***

Both of these artists are amazing! They are so very talented. I grew up singing harmony with my brothers and dad, so getting to take the stage and harmonize with these greats felt like home.

***Looking back over your discography from Ocean for Travel (2004) through to your latest EPs Angels Calling, Just for A Moment, and We Are Here (2026), how do you feel your sound and artistic message have evolved, and what themes have remained most important to you throughout your journey?***

I feel my sound has become more me, if that makes sense. Somehow truer to my mission here on earth. I learned so much about life over the decades and feel my music conveys those lessons. Most important theme? Love. There really is nothing else. It truly is my deepest desire to help others know and understand how deeply loved and adored they are.

***As a final thought, when you reflect on your life-long journey with music and art, how has your creative expression shaped your perspective on life, and in what ways do you feel your artistry has transformed both yourself and those you touch through your work?***

I believe we are given our talents the moment we arrive. It's up to us to step onto the path that was created for us with courage and commitment. It is my hope that my music offers a place of love, acceptance, and compassion for others. Music has taught me to be patient with myself, to trust my instincts and intuition, and to create for the sake of love, not for money, likes, or recognition. Because in the end, we only have love. May we feel loved each and every day.

***I understand your latest release is a recording with AI. How was that process for you?***

My new EP releases were recorded with AI. It was an amazing experience, creating a very ethereal sound that perfectly matches the emotions of the songs. I sat on that old piano bench, wrote three songs, and recorded them onto my iPhone. I then sent the demo to my co-producer to see what he thought about the tunes. He sent back several full arrangements of the songs with an AI app. At first, I shut down and said no, that isn't creating music. But then, I began to listen with new ears and realized it captured the essence of my writing quite well. I then traveled to Connecticut to the recording studio and recorded the vocals over the AI arrangements. My latest releases in 2026 are *Angels Calling*, *Just for a Moment*, and *We Are Here* (the theme song of the tour).



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