

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 25, 2016

**"MERRY CHRISTMAS DARLING: CARPENTERS' CHRISTMAS"
THEATRICAL TOURING SHOW SUPERCEDES
"WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN: CARPENTERS REMEMBERED"
FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON**

**Starring Singer Michelle Berting Brett, Show Celebrates
the Music of the Top-Selling Band of the 1970's**

Merry Christmas Darling: Carpenters' Christmas, the special holiday version of *We've Only Just Begun: Carpenters Remembered*, the definitive celebration of the seminal brother and sister duo the Carpenters in words and music, is set for a number of performances during winter months. Based around the Carpenters' iconic Christmas albums, ***Merry Christmas Darling: Carpenters' Christmas*** begins its holiday run with a performance at Zwermann Arts Center Theater, Lincoln Trail College, Robinson, Illinois on November 17.

Led by singer Michelle Berting Brett and accompanied by a live, seven-piece Nashville band directed by Harry Sharpe, the show re-creates the Carpenters' original sound, presenting an intimate behind-the-scenes portrait of one of the most successful recording acts of all time.

Merry Christmas Darling: Carpenters' Christmas follows the format of its parent *We've Only Just Begun: Carpenters Remembered* in that the history of the Carpenters is told via their iconic songs. For the Christmas presentation, Berting Brett focuses attention on the duo's Christmas albums and television specials as well as talking about their Christmas experiences. The festive show includes holiday classics such as "Sleigh Ride," "The Christmas Song," "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," "Winter Wonderland," "Jingle Bells," "I'll Be Home for Christmas," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," "Do You Hear What I Hear," and of course, "Merry Christmas Darling."

The show's holiday music is culled from the Carpenters' *Christmas Portrait* (1978) and *An Old-Fashioned Christmas* (released in 1984 after the death of Karen Carpenter). A two-CD set of those two albums was released as the *Christmas Collection*, making Carpenters' holiday music an enduring staple of every holiday season. The holiday edition of the show also generously intersperses the Carpenters' well-known classics, among them "We've Only Just Begun," "Yesterday Once More" and a rousing medley of the Carpenters' greatest hits. The Carpenters have sold well over 100 million records worldwide.



Michelle Berting Brett in
"Merry Christmas
Darling: Carpenters'
Christmas" (photo by
Pierre Gautreau)

We've Only Just Begun: Carpenters Remembered, an intimate behind-the-scenes portrait of the pop music phenomenon that defined an era, has been playing in theatres and showrooms all over the U.S since 2013. It grew out of an idea Berting Brett, a farm girl from a musical family in Saskatchewan, conceived after being told repeatedly that she sounded like Karen Carpenter. Berting Brett, who studied opera and musical theatre and then toured the world in

show bands and in her own cabaret shows while based in Toronto, was encouraged by her now-husband, producer Mark Brett, to create a one-woman show based around the Carpenters' music. The show played a small club in Toronto with Berting Brett accompanied only by a pianist. That was 2009, and now with this husband and wife team at the helm, the little SRO cabaret show has evolved into a touring production that has played major showrooms in the U.S., including four sold-out performances in Las Vegas so far. In August, the show played to an SRO audience at the 800-seat Downey Theatre (near Los Angeles) where the Carpenters grew up.

The Carpenter family, including then 16-year-old Richard and 13-year-old Karen, moved to Downey from New Haven, Connecticut in 1963. Both siblings attended Downey High School where Richard, already an accomplished pianist, came to the attention of the school band's director, and Karen played glockenspiel in the marching band to get out of gym class. She later switched to the drums and began singing with a jazz trio formed with her brother and a school friend. By 1969, the Carpenters were signed to A&M Records and would become one of the most successful acts of the 1970's.

A CD of *We've Only Just Begun: Carpenters Remembered*, recorded in Nashville last year, includes performances of the Carpenters' most memorable songs, among them "Close to You," "Yesterday Once More," "Rainy Days & Mondays" and, of course, "We've Only Just Begun." It is available at shows as well as from CD Baby, iTunes and Amazon.



Michelle Berting Brett with 7-piece backing band led by musical director Harry Sharpe performing "Merry Christmas Darling: Carpenters' Christmas"
(photo by Michelle Morrisette)

"Merry Christmas Darling: Carpenters' Christmas" **2016 tour dates:**

November 17-Zwermann Arts Center Theater, Lincoln Trail College, Robinson, IL
December 2-Larcom Theatre, Beverly, MA
December 3-Norwood Theatre, Norwood, MA
December 4-Cedar Crest High School Auditorium, Lebanon, PA
December 8-Jabez Sanford Hardin Performing Arts Center, Evans, GA
December 11-Wolf Den, Mohegan Sun, Uncasville, CT
December 15-Jensen Grand Concert Hall, Stephens Performing Arts Center, Pocatello, ID
December 17-The Theater at North, Scranton, PA

December 18-- The Levoy Theatre, Millville, NJ
December 23-McAllen Convention Center Auditorium, McAllen, TX

**"We've Only Just Begun: Carpenters Remembered"
2016- 2017 tour dates:**

November 2-6-Don's Celebrity Theater at Don Laughlin's Riverside Resort, Laughlin, NV
December 10-Clayton Center, Clayton, NC

2017:

February 10-State Theatre Easton, PA
February 18-Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts, Franklin, NC
March 2-Arizona Musicfest, Highlands Church, Scottsdale, AZ
March 21-Private Event, Sun City Center, FL
March 24-Private Event, Delray Beach, FL
March 25-Private Event, Coral Lakes, FL
March 31-University Union, Slippery Rock University, Slippery Rock, PA

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