

## Remembers Patsy Cline

By: Steven Wong

Do you remember when country music didn't sound like the rock and roll of the 1980's or 1990's? Country music has evolved quite a bit over time. While country music began in the 19th and 20th centuries as the folk music of poor immigrants, it assimilated elements from peoples of diverse backgrounds and became part of the mainstream musical scene. Today, country singers such as Carrie Underwood or Taylor Swift dominate not only country but popular musical genres.

Today's popular acts owe much and could learn much from the legends of yesterday. One such legend is Patsy Cline (given name: Virginia Patterson Hensley). Even though nearly forty eight years have passed since her untimely death, her music continues to please audiences.



"They are timeless songs with timeless arrangements sung in a timeless voice," said country singer Bill Anderson, a friend of Cline's at the Grand Ole Opry. "They sound as new and as fresh as when they first came out." Although she considered herself just a good

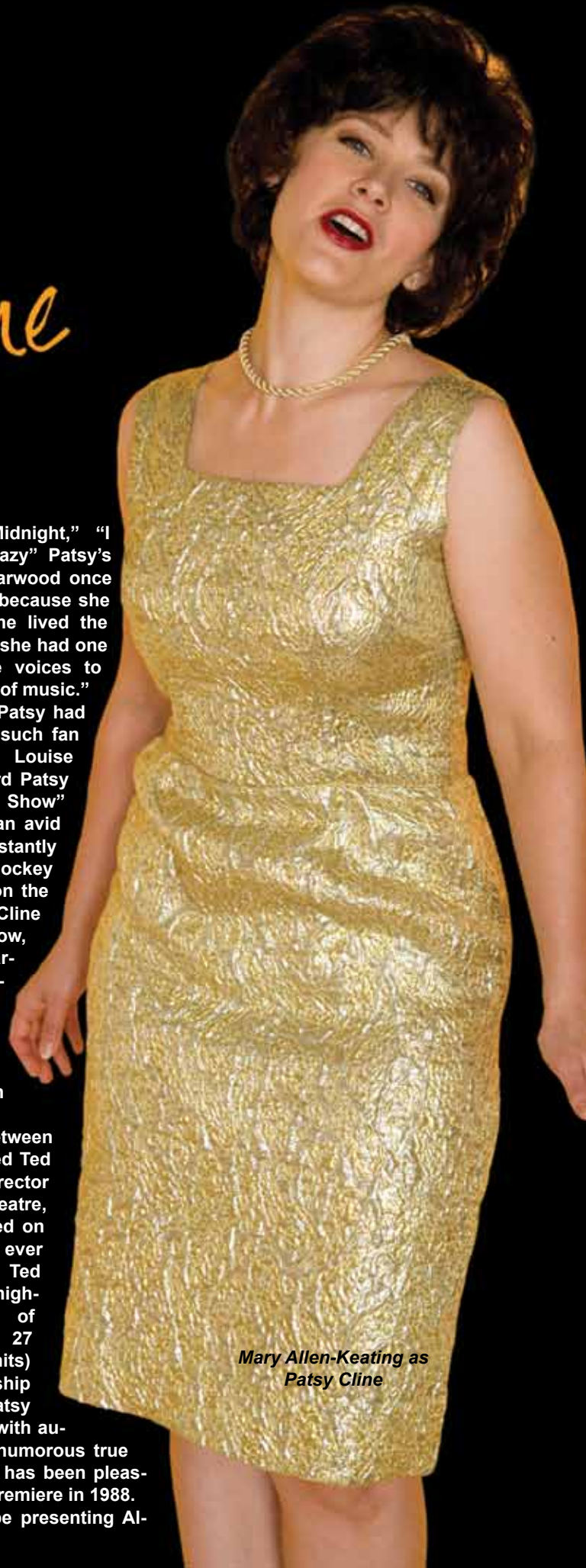
ole' country gal from Virginia and always preferred to sing 'country,' Patsy's powerful voice and intense delivery of a lyric garnered her a legion of fans of country music as well as pop. With

hits like "Walkin' After Midnight," "I Fall to Pieces" and "Crazy" Patsy's music will, as Trisha Yearwood once expressed, "live forever because she sang from the heart, she lived the words of her songs, and she had one of the most passionate voices to come along in any genre of music."

Like all great stars, Patsy had her devoted fans. One such fan was Houston resident Louise Seger. Louise first heard Patsy on the "Arthur Godfrey Show" in 1957. She became an avid fan of Cline's and constantly hounded the local disc jockey to play Cline's records on the radio. In 1961 when Cline went to Houston for a show, Louise and her buddies arrived early and, by coincidence, met Cline. The two women struck up a friendship that lasted until Cline's untimely death in a plane crash in 1963.

This relationship between Patsy and Louise inspired Ted Swindley, the artistic director of Stages Repertory Theatre, to create a musical based on the premise "Did Patsy ever perform in Houston?" Ted created a musical that highlights both the songs of Patsy Cline (including 27 of her all time favorite hits) and her special relationship with Louise. Always...Patsy Cline was an instant hit with audiences. The touching humorous true story and Patsy's music has been pleasing audiences since its premiere in 1988.

STAGE RIGHT will be presenting Al-



Mary Allen-Keating as  
Patsy Cline





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Patsy Cline**

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ways...Patsy Cline from February 18 to March 6, 2011 at the historic Crighton Theatre. To create a memorable show that consists of only two characters and one live band, director Jim Bingham as employed the services of two of the Crighton Theatre's favorite performers: Patsy will be portrayed by Conroe's own Mary Allen-Keating and Louise will be played by STAGE RIGHT Artistic Director Carolyn Corsano Wong.

**Patsy Cline**

Mary Allen-Keating was born in Conroe, TX and raised in Huntsville. Her family divided their time between Huntsville and Conroe where they owned two skating rinks (Rainbow Roller Rink).

Her early years were spent listening to the Top 40 music from the Pop and Country charts that was played at the roller rinks, as well as having a good dose of Bluegrass, Blues, and Western Swing from her dad,



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and Folk/60's/70's music from her mom. As a child she became entranced with musicals, and would sing along to every word of the soundtracks from Annie and The Sound of Music. She actually learned how to yodel listening to "The Lonely Goatherd"!

Mary attended Texas A&M and graduated class of 2000 with a BFA in Theatre Arts. While there she also had the opportunity to be the lead singer in a cover band, Invisible Cindy. This was another fantastic opportunity for her to gain performance experience on a different level and has greatly inspired her Patsy Cline interpretation.

While completing her Masters Degree in Theatre at the University of Houston, Mary saw Always...Patsy Cline for the first time. After smiling and laughing through the entire first act, she knew that the role of Patsy Cline was one she wanted on her resume! That first chance to play Patsy Cline at the College of the Main Land in Texas City was an eye-opening experience. Mary has prided herself in keeping the songs as close to Patsy's original tone and quality as possible. It is quite a compliment if the audience thinks she's lip syncing, and what a surprise to them when they find out differently! Since this first encounter she has travelled as far away as Ireland to share her talent as Patsy Cline.

After returning from Ireland she focused her attentions on her country music career. A recent highlight was finally recording "Darlin', What Do You Care?" - A song that was written by her Grandfather, Dan Allen, and copyrighted in New Waverly, TX in 1945. The title track on her CD recently won the Academy of Western Artists Award for Best Western Swing Song of 2009. She was also nominated as Best Western Swing Female Singer of 2009. Her thanks go out to all the radio stations and fans that have supported her music!

To find out more about Mary's music, as well as purchase CD's, please go to [maryallenkeating.com](http://maryallenkeating.com) or pick up a CD at your local Hasting's Music & Books.

## Louise Seger

Carolyn Corsano Wong is another Aggie - Class of 1985. She hails from Belle Mead, NJ but once she came to Texas she's never left. After earning a degree in Biochemistry and a Masters in Nutrition, Carolyn worked for many years as an analytical chemist in the food industry yet all the while pursued her love of theatre in study and in performance. In her

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30 years of theatre experience she has had a variety of opportunities including front and backstage roles, radio and TV appearances, producing, directing and teaching.

Carolyn's love of live performance came at an early age when a neighbor took her to see *The Nutcracker* performed at the McCarter Theatre in Princeton, NJ. The beauty of the theatre, the set, the costumes, the lights, and the grace of the dancers captivated her: she was hooked. She hopes that others will take young people to live performances. Carolyn says that "theatre, like no other art form, has the ability to touch people's lives so strongly: by watching a living breathing human being go through a situation one might be inspired to call an old friend, repair a relationship or laugh and be uplifted."

When Carolyn isn't acting, directing, writing press releases, editing sound, or finding props for shows, she can be found at a rehabilitation hospital or nursing home with her canine partner Harley. She jokes that Harley has an easier time getting into the newspaper or grabbing a headline than anyone she knows. If you don't know Harley's story, read some of the previous Dock Line articles available at [www.stage-right.org](http://www.stage-right.org). Carolyn never misses a chance to get her partner on stage!

### Montgomery County Women's Center

With every production STAGE RIGHT focuses on a need in the community then throws a spotlight on a local non-profit organization that is helping with that need. Sadly, oftentimes Patsy Cline had to use heavy makeup and long sleeves to hide bruises she may have gotten from domestic disputes. She was known to 'dish out as good as she got' but it is sad to think that someone who could sing so beautifully about love endured abuse. During the run of *Always...Patsy Cline* we request patrons bring gift and phone cards (\$5-\$25 value) to benefit the clients of the Montgomery County Women's Center. Representatives from the Women's Center will be on hand at each performance to answer questions and accept card donations. So bring your gift card and enjoy *Always...Patsy Cline!* ♦



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