

VIGNETTES MEDIA ANNOUNCES THE RELEASE OF MARIE-LYNN HAMMOND'S ALL-NEW FOURTH CD, THE LONG-AWAITED *PEGASUS*!

February 17, 2003 - *for immediate release*

The long-awaited release of Marie-Lynn Hammond's *Pegasus*, a gorgeous collection of mostly original songs, is a personal triumph for the singer-songwriter, known for her solo work in music and theatre as well as for being co-founder of Stringband, one of Canada's seminal folk groups. *Pegasus* almost didn't take flight. Half-way through the recording, Hammond abandoned the project, telling friends she didn't have the heart to continue.

Sad Times

They weren't surprised. In 1998 both Hammond's parents died, exactly eight weeks apart. Four weeks later, one of her two sisters was diagnosed with brain cancer, and died in the fall of 1999. As Hammond explains, "I was devastated by this triple loss, but especially by the loss of my wonderful sister, who was only in her 40s. Music became irrelevant and lost its power to move or comfort me." She stopped writing songs and working on *Pegasus*, and went into hiding.

Back on Track

Concerned, Hammond's friend and keyboardist, Tom Leighton, began to prod her out of her isolation. "He booked studio sessions, hired musicians, and got me out of the house," says Hammond. Still, in order to make sure she didn't give up, she hired multi-instrumentalist and producer David Woodhead to keep her on track. Gradually, she started writing again – powerful, moving songs that dealt with her emotional journey, and slowly, over two years, chipped away at *Pegasus*. "Writing those songs and recording them became a way for me to deal with my grief as well as to commemorate and celebrate those family relationships," she says.

***Pegasus* Soars**

The results were worth the wait. *Pegasus* is an extremely engaging and varied collection of beautifully crafted songs, artfully arranged and featuring inspired playing by some of Canada's finest musicians. Surprisingly, the overall mood of the CD is warm and compelling. "Yes, there are two or three sad songs," Hammond explains, "but there are also some that just tell good stories, some that are joyous, and one about cats and computers that's downright funny. At first I thought it might be disrespectful to include the lighter ones, but in the end I decided that life ranges from tragic to comic, and that my sister – who was making us laugh two weeks before her death – would have wanted me to include them."

Celebration at Last

Last fall, Stringband released *The Indispensable Stringband*, a two-CD "best-of" set, at an SRO show at Hugh's Room in Toronto. Now Marie-Lynn Hammond takes to the stage again at the same venue, on Sunday March 16 at 8 p.m., to celebrate the release of *Pegasus*. "I'm so grateful to the people who kept me going," she says. "I feel as though I've come through a long dark tunnel and can finally see light again."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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