



"What's Your Favorite Song?": The Life, Family and Music of George and Emma Kelly

G. Ross Kelly

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"If you enjoyed reading about "The Lady of 6,000 Songs" in the best seller "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," you will love going behind the scenes to learn more about how the remarkable entertainer and her husband successfully juggled their marriage, her Hall of Fame music career, his sign business, and at the same time, raise ten children.

Though Emma Kelly was mostly known as the piano player who could seemingly play any song ever written, the close friend and collaborator of songwriter Johnny Mercer is revealed in "What's Your Favorite Song?" to have achieved even greater accomplishments as a wife and mother.

Learn how she and her husband overcame challenges and hardships through the Great Depression, a World War, and through the baby boom years to raise ten children who would become an integral part of her musical performances and, later, successful college-educated adults.

Author Ross Kelly chronicles a firsthand account of a nonstop, whirlwind family music fest that will border on feeling out of control, only in the end to reveal a loving, close-knit family guided by their commitment to one another, their love of music, and a foundation of principles employed by his parents to guide and shape his life and the lives of his nine brothers and sisters.

Far beyond being about a large musical family growing up in South Georgia in the 1960s, "What's Your Favorite Song?" could almost serve as a guide for how families of any size, anywhere, can successfully manage their own challenges of juggling relationships, careers, and children.

"Emma Kelly was known as 'The Lady of Six Thousand Songs,' but she could also have been called the Lady of Six Million Fans, among whom I enthusiastically include myself. Read this affectionate tribute by her son Ross, and you will understand why."

John Berendt, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*.

What makes the Kellys such an intriguing family?

On the surface, it was thought that it was simply the musical genius and celebrity of Emma Kelly, the famed 'Lady of 6,000 Songs.'

But there seemed to be more, much more.

Was it the added dimension of how she and her husband together raised ten children, each of whom was an active participant in the Kelly family music shows performed around south Georgia during the 1950's, 60's and 70's? Or was it the unusual, but seemingly highly effective formula George and Emma Kelly employed to balance their two careers, their marriage, and raise each of their children to become college educated and successful adults, and instill an almost unheard of closeness between each of them that continues to this day? Or is it that the family legacy that George and Emma Kelly left, today now numbers close to 100 members,

all of whom carry on that same tradition of a devotion to music and family that began almost eighty years ago.

Perhaps it is all of those factors... and even more."

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