



## Songbird roosts in valley

by *DANA DUGAN*

Helen Hudson is a woman of many words and worlds. Here in the Wood River Valley, where she resides, she's a mother and wife, a tennis player, a guitar, piano and voice teacher, an actress and a singer. She's also an occasional writer and a volunteer who literally burbles as she talks, grinning, mugging, laughing and loving.

Married to John Weaver, she has two daughters, who also are performers, Amy Joe, 8, and Grace, 12.

Hudson has recently released a new CD called "Your Phantom Lady." Recorded in New York, Nashville, Los Angeles and her Ketchum garage, it's for sale at Sunburst Gallery at 471 Leadville Ave. N. in Ketchum. Prior to this release, her recordings included a couple of albums recorded in Nashville, a single called "Nothing but Time" that was on the Billboard pop charts in the 1980s, and another album and a cassette tape made in the 1990s, both of which were reviewed in People magazine.



Helen Hudson. Express photo by Dana DuGan

People also followed her career as a singer of the national anthem in 1990 through 1991, when she gained a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records for having sung in every major league stadium in the country.

She wrote everything on the new CD over the course of 20 years. She plays the piano and guitar on each track. One of the cuts, "Children," "I wrote in New York City for a musical, and showcased it front of (playwrights) A.R. Gurney and Charles Strauss and (critic) Frank Rich," she said. "The most recent, I think, is "I Wanna Die Young (at a very old age)."

The music Hudson composes and sings in an effortless velvety style is classic singer/songwriter fare, with intelligent lyrics and an inkling of folk storytelling threaded through.

Variety said that "She's enough personality that Hudson would probably be able to make an impression strictly as a talker. As it happens, she's also a terrifically talented composer and singer."

One aspect that has re-established her desire to compose her own music and record again is the inspiration of her students. The youngest she works with is 8 while the eldest is 64.

"I realized that three-quarters of them have written their own songs. It just evolved," she said. "I saw that if they made it personal they worked harder. That's exciting."