

She blends business with song

By MARIE MCGEE

Harmony is a Max Davey trademark—publicly and privately. Much of it is obvious when the 35-voice Max Davey Singers perform in two major concerts each year plus innumerable hymn shows in churches throughout the metropolitan Detroit area.

Less obvious, but still a big factor in the harmonious arrangement is the work carried on behind-the-scenes by Davey's wife, Margaret.

A gutsy approach to show business and her business acumen have contributed as much to the success of the popular singing group as her husband's talent as a conductor/arranger.

It's a blend of talents that has endured 20 years of ups and downs in the precarious world of show business and prompted a minister-friend to observe: Max has the talent and Margaret has the vision.

It all began when the Farmington Hills couple gathered a group of about 16 singers and began singing at various churches. She helped out then by playing the piano.

But as the group got more popular came the decision to put on a major show.

"It was easier to let everyone come to us, instead of us going to them," she said.

By this time, her meager piano talents were no longer adequate to serve the group's needs, so she stepped aside.

But rather than bow out of the picture completely, she moved into the business end of the organization

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—Margaret Davey

because "that's where Max needed me the most."

Her biggest job was notifying the various groups who supported them of upcoming concerts and handling tickets, arranging for a concert hall—and in later years, arranging for a big name guest star.

"I had to make up a production budget and I even devised my own bookkeeping system," she recalled.

Money always has been a factor with the Daveys. Since they admittedly operate on a "shoestring" much depends on her ability to "recruit" the audience, many of whom have remained faithful to the Daveys since that first concert in Kresge Hall in Detroit.

In those days, her work as a business manager and promoter of Concert Series, Inc., the non-profit corporation they eventually formed, was in addition to a full-time job in the office of an accountant. In the last few years, however, she gave up that job to devote all her time to Concert Series.

It's been an interesting life, full of joys and frustrations, she said.

There have been the joys of meeting and getting to know on a personal basis such stardom greats as pianist Roger Williams, puppeteer-ventriloquist Shari Lewis, television commentator Frank Blair and Emmy-award winner Ed Asner.

But none of it would have happened without a bold approach that called for personal contact with the star, completely by passing the star's agent.

"I'd find out where they lived and I'd call them at home. I had to do it that way. It costs too much money to go through an agent," she said.

What she found out in many cases was that the star was willing to do the show for the "peanut" fee the Daveys offered for a variety of reasons.

"Some of them can't resist performing before a live audience," she said.

"Some want to help because they realize what it is like to be a struggl-

ing group and they just want to help you out. Sometimes it comes in a hula in a performer's career when he or she is looking for something to do and money isn't all that important," she added.

But never has her dedication to helping her husband been tested more than at the present time when serious financial difficulties threaten the future of Concert Series, Inc.

To pay off debts incurred by rising production costs, Mrs. Davey has had to return to work full-time again to help pay the bills, and allow her husband the flexibility of working with his music rather than having to hold a full-time job himself. (He owns a small tool design business and can pick and choose his jobs, depending on how busy he wants to be, she explained.)

But her return to the world of work has an ironic twist to it.

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It has all paid off with her recent appointment as one of few women directors in the management industry in the state of Michigan for Forest City-Dillon Management Co. She will have responsibilities involving five buildings that have been underwritten by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for persons on fixed incomes and managed by the Ohio-based Forest-Dillon firm.

It's something to crow about.



Margaret Davey says "It's been an interesting life, full of joys and frustrations." (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Auto reps need variety of skills

By SHERRY KAHAN

Michigan Ford dealers may have been a little surprised when Cynthia Stasek turned up at their dealerships as a company representative ready to act as their business link to the home office.

It was an uncommon job for women several years ago at the time she began calling on Lincoln-Mercury dealers around the state.

"But I got a good reception," Ms. Stasek told a group of young women at a recent Madonna College career institute. "I didn't hear of anyone having bad feelings about my being a woman. I was accepted as one of the guys."

Visiting dealers is far from a social occasion. There is always work to be done.

"When you're in field sales, you do public relations work and answer complaints raised by customers," said Ms. Stasek. "You have to know about advertising and motivation, how to read a financial statement and have an innate sense of how to sell."

"You must be aware of what is going on in the business world, and in the dealer's town, so you can help him with any part that might affect him."

The job calls for a lot of traveling, she warned her listeners. Her territory covers Michigan and part of Ohio, so

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—Ford Rep. Cynthia Stasek

two or three of her nights are spent on the road.

"It is possible to have a social life on the road," she observed. "There is always someone around you've seen before. In fact, there is a whole network of people you meet when traveling. It can be fun, but it's expensive."

She added that she found it possible to keep up home social relations on weekends.

When Ms. Stasek was hired for training by the sales department, she was assigned to the Wixom office. After a about two years she started calling on dealers.

She told her audience that having a bachelor's degree is sufficient for getting hired. However, those who make

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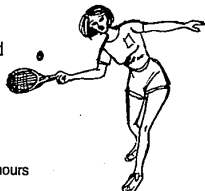
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