



Michelle Monet is a vocalist, composer, guitarist, impersonator, and an artist. How one can pack all that talent into a 5' frame is an amazing accomplishment in itself, but amazing is a pretty good word to describe Michelle.

The Brooklyn born and Denver raised youngster discovered her musical talents when she was 8, by picking up a guitar and teaching herself how to play it. Next, she discovered a voice that would make listeners forget the guitar.

By the time she was 17, she and her guitar were a solo act, playing the lounges and nightclubs in the Denver area for tips. Seven short years later she was packing concert halls and theaters performing her own original music. She and songwriting friend, the late Archie Evans, Jr., collaborated over the years with more than 50 songs to their credit.

Michelle eventually moved to Las Vegas. During a performance in a Vegas lounge, she sang "Memories," from the Broadway musical "Cats." By the time the song was over, she was being mobbed by a lady, who in reality was an agent for the "Legends in Concert," a major production. The agent was insisting she was Barbara Streisand. Michelle was insisting she was Michelle Monet.

The agent took her to the show's producer, and an audition was arranged. Michelle sang, and was hired on the spot to be Barbara Streisand in the "Legends" production. Michelle didn't want to be Barbara, she liked what she was doing with her original music, but the money offered was really good. "Okay," Michelle thought, "I'll do this for a week." It took her 9 years to divorce Streisand.

In the beginning, Michelle had to watch videos of Streisand, learning to copy her walk, her voice, how she sat, her gestures as she sang, her wardrobe, find the perfect wig. She was becoming Barbara Streisand on stage.

During those 9 years, she performed as Barbara in "Legends in Concert," "Superstars Live," "Streisand and Friends," and the multi million

dollar production "Beyond Belief" which ran for 9 months in Sun City, South Africa.

Over the years Michelle performed for dignitaries and celebrities including President and Mrs. Gerald Ford, Phil Donahue and Michael Jackson (she never spent the night at "Neverland."). She also appeared on the HBO "Barbara Streisand Special." It was she sing-



Photo by Jim Callicott

Michelle Monet

ing "Happy Days are Here Again" outside Madison Square Garden in New York, not the other Barbara, who made the big bucks for the special.

She toured as Barbara from



Photo submitted

Michelle as Barbara Streisand

Vegas to Atlantic City, New York to Montreal, and Russia to Sun

City. She performed at conventions such as Ford Motor Company and McDonalds Worldwide Convention.

South Africa proved to be her salvation. "I was so sick of being Barbara, and being told I had to do everything just as she did," reminisced Michelle, "Then one night I lost it, I flipped my wig, literally. I was singing a Barbara song, crying, and I flipped the wig off my head, into the audience, and walked off stage, leaving the singers and dancers wondering what was going on. I was immediately fired, which gave me such a relief, and a peace came over me that surely God must have placed it there." She also found a new direction in life.

She discovered her love for visual art quite by accident while doodling in a café in Cape Town, South Africa. Her doodling led to her newest art medium. She begins by drawing whatever the subject might be, and adding a mixture of polymer clays on top of the drawing. She then bakes the creation in a special oven, and adds embellishments and quotations to finish the art work. Each piece is unique and original.

Although she had heard of Gatlinburg, she had never seen the town until a month ago. She drove into town and started looking for a place to put her gallery. Michelle had been touring festivals across the country, but wanted to settle down in one spot. On Buckhorn Road, she found the ideal location. Although she just opened, her studio is already attracting new clientele. "I live to create," she says.

Art is not only her vocation, but it was also healing for her. She has come to terms with herself musically. In June, she produced a three night benefit concert in Louisville incorporating her original music with Streisand's in the show, "SHE, Streisand and ME, Monet." The reviews were outstanding and the concert was a huge success.

When you enter her gallery, Imagine This, at 248 Buckhorn Road in Gatlinburg, you'll see her outstanding collection of visual art, and in the corner stands her guitar.

Michelle is living her life now according to her motto, "Never say never to me, I'll figure out a way to make it work." And she has, be it musically or her artistic abilities. She is a great talent, and she is at peace with herself.