

Intelligencer - June 16/02 p.3 (Sun)

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Sunday p.3

**T**hrough good times and bad, Sandra Valks has sung her way through life.

Ever since she was a young girl and singing around the family piano, Valks has always been most comfortable on stage and in the spotlight doing what she loves best.

She sings at funerals, weddings and special occasions. She also sings in a group, with the Eastminster United Church choir.

"I'm most proud of my ability to communicate my music to my audience and have them experience their emotions," said the 55-year-old Valks, a Christmas Day baby.

"The tears or joy of the audience connects them to their own emotion of the moment."

Valks performed in her first Stirling Festival of Sacred Praise vocal competition when she was five years old and not even in school yet.

She returned to the same festival the past two years as an adult competitor. She cherishes what the adjudicator said about her earlier this year.

"He said I have a skill to communicate a song," said Valks.

"I know I touch people with my singing. I touch their memories or I touch their joy. It's part of my stage presence to connect with my audience and have them experience their own emotion."

What's remarkable about Valks' ability to bring out the emotions in people is that she's only had one year of formal voice lessons when she was 12 years old. Everything else has been self-taught, including her stage presence and playing the guitar.



PHOTO - CROMBIE McNEILL

## Sandra Valks In life, in death

STORY BY HENRY BURY, THE INTELLIGENCER

Valks, Sandra

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