

American Girl

By Andrew Weidman

Some missionaries dig wells, build churches, or cook meals large enough to feed armies, each according to their ability...

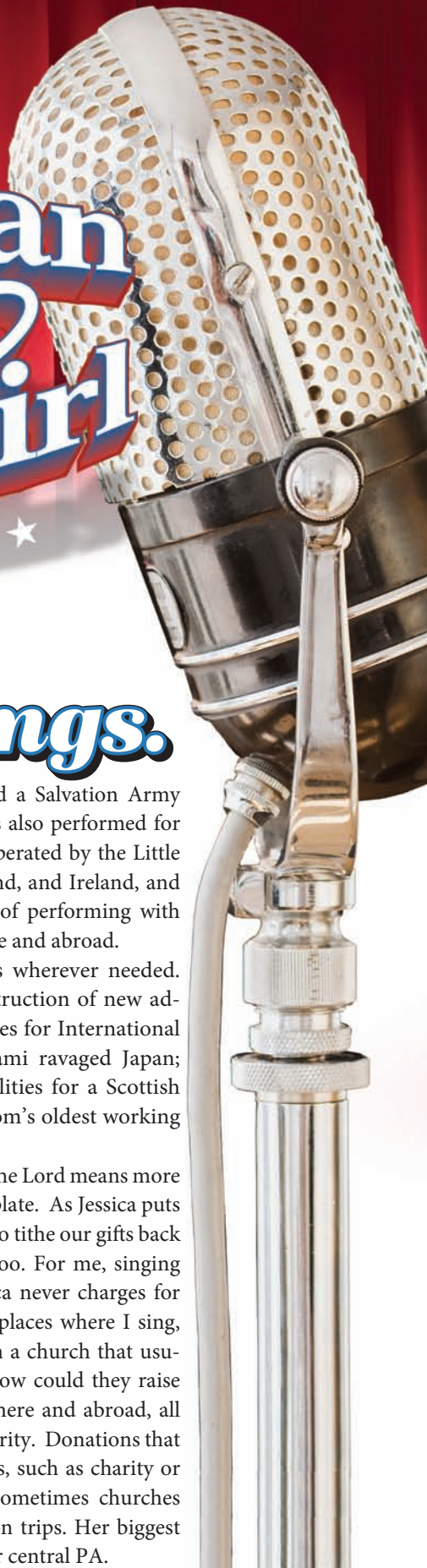
Jessica Weidman sings.

She's a classically trained operatic lyric soprano, going wherever her voice, and the Lord takes her. To date, that includes concerts locally and in Scotland, Ireland, and France. She's sung in tiny Scottish churches, St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, and the Royal Concert Hall in

Glasgow; as well as EuroDisney and a Salvation Army mission in Paris, France. Jessica has also performed for the residents of retirement homes operated by the Little Sisters of the Poor in France, Scotland, and Ireland, and in her travels, she's had the honor of performing with world renowned musicians, both here and abroad.

Jessica sings to help raise funds wherever needed. Her voice has helped to fund construction of new additions to hospices; purchase supplies for International Rescue Corps (IRC); restore tsunami ravaged Japan; and even build new bathroom facilities for a Scottish church featuring the United Kingdom's oldest working water closet.

She believes tithing and giving to the Lord means more than just putting cash in an offering plate. As Jessica puts it, "Scripture tells us we're supposed to tithe our gifts back to the Lord. Our talents are gifts, too. For me, singing is another way of tithing." So, Jessica never charges for her mission concerts. "Some of the places where I sing, a good turnout may be 30 people, in a church that usually sees 7. If they had to pay me, how could they raise any money?" When she sings both here and abroad, all moneys collected go to the host's charity. Donations that are raised locally go to specific needs, such as charity or church sponsored mission trips. Sometimes churches even choose to donate to her mission trips. Her biggest supporters are churches from all over central PA.





The seeds of each trip are sown on the previous trip, often making connections in the most unexpected places. On her latest trip, in November 2018, she met a woman from Zimbabwe, involved in charity work to supply brain shunt surgery to people in need. One thing led to another and Jessica has now been invited to Zimbabwe to sing for this charity. At another Café in Thomastown, Ireland; Lorna Byrne, a famous Irish author who writes about guardian angels, approached Jessica and she said, “I knew as soon as you came in the Café, I was supposed to talk to you”. After a brief conversation she asked Jessica to work with her in the future.

Jessica describes life as a road trip, “I’m a highway driver; I get out there and go! When I let God “drive the car”, He takes all the backroads. I may not get where I’m going as fast as I’d like, but the scenery’s a lot better. I get to enjoy the ride and I meet so many interesting people along the way. If you’re willing to give Him control of your life, you’ll be amazed where the Lord will take you.”

Singing has always been Jessica’s passion. At her first public performance at age 4, she knew the stage was for her. All through High School she pursued her dreams of becoming a Metropolitan Opera Star before life took a turn. Jessica recalls one afternoon when, as a young mother, she heard the Lord ask her, “Why don’t you sing for me anymore?” She laughed out loud, and said, “Where? No one’s asking me!” He replied, “If I asked you, would you sing for me?” “I answered, ‘Ok, Lord, show me where, and I’ll sing for you!’”

She began voice lessons anew, to get her voice back into shape. Before long, Jessica was singing for the Lord, at weddings and as special music for church services. Then she was asked to fill in at a fundraiser for Scottish Christian Outreach Teams (SCOT). A year later, in 2008, Jessica took her first missions concert tour of Scotland, visiting 14 churches in just two weeks. That was the first tour of 15 to date.



The road hasn't always been smooth and pothole free. Traveling light is no easy task when sound equipment is an issue. Suitcases are always just under the weight limit, barely. Thanks to higher European electricity, Jessica has blown out more power bars, transformers and hair dryers than she cares to admit. International law and work visa legalities can be complicated at best. Raising funds for airfare and accommodations often takes longer than expected and jet lag is a thing; the struggle is real. But the biggest obstacle came in 2014, with her diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis. Jessica recalls, "That was a humbling moment. I'm the kind of person who says, 'Don't worry about me, Lord, I can handle this. You have more important things to worry about than me.' Only, some things I can't handle on my own." That's when the Lord says, 'Don't forget, you still need Me.'

For every difficulty, however, there is joy. Jessica has made many friends across Scotland, and Ireland. She has also sung on the stage where *The Lion King* is performed. She's toured castles older than our country and sung in world renowned cathedrals. In December 2012, Jessica walked on stage at the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow, Scotland, joining Springfield Cambridge Festival Chorus in a Christmas concert benefiting the Children's Hospice Association of Scotland. Instantly, 3,000 people erupted into a standing ovation for 'The American Girl,' before she could even open her mouth. "As a little girl I dreamed of performing for hundreds of people and I had finally gotten my wish. Although I was there, not as a world-renowned opera singer, but as a missionary glorifying the Lord in song."

To hear 'The American Girl' for yourself, come to St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 600 S. 12th Street, Lebanon, 17042, on February 8th, 2019, at 7:30 pm, for a solo concert with James Bieber and Douglas Nyce.

For more information, visit JessicaWeidman.com. 🌱

Photography By Andrew Weidman