



Go to section

 Search
 Yellow Pages
 Archives

[an error occurred while processing this directive]

Teen's music career takes flight

By [D. AILEEN DODD](#)
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Published on: 01/01/07

Watch out, Diana DiGarmo.

A contender hailing from Lawrenceville is grabbing the diva spotlight.



Vino Wong/Staff Photographer
([ENLARGE](#))

Mill Creek High student Tiffany Milagro (right) is co-produced by Jayne Olderman and J. Donte Harris. Tiffany hopes to launch a tour of schools called 'Follow Your Dreams.'



Vino Wong/Staff Photographer
([ENLARGE](#))

Tiffany Milagro, 16, sings at Diamondheart Records Studio in Duluth.

And Tiffany Milagro Piedrahita is formidable competition.

She's 16 with a five-octave range and a lot in common with DiGarmo.

Like DiGarmo, Tiffany — who uses the stage name Tiffany Milagro, instead of her full name — is a former beauty queen who worked the pageant circuit to her advantage.

Both can belt out everything from blues to country tunes with poise and emotion well beyond their years. Both are devout Christians who got their big breaks while they were still in high school. But that is where the similarities stop.

Tiffany doesn't do show tunes. Her soulful brand of inspirational pop with attitude landed her on Billboard music charts without ever getting dissed by "American Idol" judge Simon Cowell.

"I think that she has a very talented voice," Tiffany says of DiGarmo, an "American Idol" runner-up from Snellville. The two met on the pageant circuit.

In January, Tiffany said she will begin talks with Gwinnett County school officials to launch a special music tour of public and private middle school campuses called "Follow Your Dreams." The tour and motivational campaign will challenge middle school students to find and develop their talents.

"I've never been that great in school," she said. She calls herself a solid "C-B" student.

In school, "it's almost like you are judged by how good your grades are," she said. "We all don't fit that mold. I have creative talents."

It took some time before Tiffany found her niche. She tried ballet. She played the clarinet for a week and then dumped the class and the instrument. Her mother, Melba Piedrahita, didn't know what to try next, until she noticed her daughter could carry a tune at 10.

"I heard her singing and said maybe we should try voice lessons," Piedrahita said. Her mother hired an opera teacher who worked at Greater Atlanta Christian School. The teacher was impressed.

"She told me that [my] daughter will be able to do anything she wants to with her voice. She has a five-octave range."

Tiffany studied opera for three years, but she wasn't exactly thrilled with the genre. "I actually brought country songs to my opera teacher and asked her to help me learn them."

Her parents helped her to record a demo, and Tiffany got booked to sing at charity fund-raisers such as the "Dare to Share" benefit at Château Élan last year.

A friend of the family introduced Tiffany to a Duluth songwriter/producer with a list of famous clients including Patti LaBelle. Jayne Olderman of Olderman Music, wasn't expecting to be impressed. She thought Tiffany seemed too pure to be taken seriously. Her bus-riding buddies at Mill Creek High School had nicknamed her "Jesus" because she didn't curse or join their antics at house parties.

"She ended up blowing me away at the audition," Olderman said. "She is a diamond in the rough. It was love at first sound."

Olderman called her song-writing partner J. Donte Harris of Buford and they went to work on



Vino Wong/Staff Photographer
(ENLARGE)

Tiffany Milagro, 16, who has a holiday song on the charts, sings at Diamondheart Records Studio in Duluth.

lyrics. Tiffany and her powerhouse voice blew out a few microphones as she worked to record her first CD, "What's It To You," which receives airplay on 80 radio stations across the country and has been downloaded by fans in Japan.

Tiffany's holiday season single, "Why Can't It Just Be Christmas," was on Billboard's Hot 100 single sales chart.

Now that Tiffany's career is taking off, she has less time for tumbling, horseback riding, watching "The O.C." on Fox and hanging out with friends, but she is willing to make sacrifices so she can sing professionally.

Her parents are her biggest supporters. They formed an independent record company so they could provide proper supervision and maintain her girl-next-door image, like her 19-year-old sister, Courtney, a contestant in the upcoming Miss Georgia pageant. Tiffany, which means "miracle," is the couple's miracle child. She was born at a time when her mother didn't think she could have children.

"We want her to sing songs that whether you are 60, you're 7 or you're 12, you can turn on the radio and get some enjoyment out of it without being offended," said her father, Fred Piedrahita.

Piedrahita and his wife are working with Olderman to find an investor to secure financing for Tiffany's first music video, which could cost them between \$10,000 and \$250,000 depending on quality, Olderman said.

For years Tiffany kept her music career a secret at high school.

She said she led a double life, like Disney's character Hannah Montana, because she didn't want to be popular simply because she was recording music.

Now, Tiffany is becoming more comfortable with her rising profile.

"You can put her in a challenging environment or a stadium and she will take 15 minutes to scout out the scene, get comfortable and it's like bam!" Olderman said.

mundohispanico

The voice of Georgia's Hispanic community since 1979

El vocero de la comunidad hispana de Georgia desde 1979

Check out **MundoHispanico**

[Nation/World](#) | [Metro](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Living](#) | [Travel](#) | [Business](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Health](#) | [Site map](#)

© 2007 [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#) | [Customer care](#) | [Advertise with us](#) | [Visitor agreement](#) | [Privacy statement](#) | [Permissions](#) | [Our partners](#)