

Beyond 'Baby, Baby:' *Amy Grant weaves life of simplicity*

Last week, Christian recording artist Amy Grant celebrated her 53rd birthday at her Nashville home. She planned to spend the day cooking and sharing mimosas with friends, but the friends were such a distraction that she didn't get around to cooking.

After a three-decade music career, Grant now embraces contentment. She used to spend more energy on "presentation and set-up," she says, but a kitchen birthday party perfectly suits her current stage of life.

This stage of life includes a couple of weekends a month on the road. She'll travel to Knoxville this week for Scott Hamilton and Friends on Ice at 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6, at the Civic Coliseum. The show will feature Olympic and World Champion skaters, along with Grant and a live band.

Grant and her husband, country singer-songwriter Vince Gill, became friends with Scott and Tracie Hamilton several years ago when they worked together to support St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Gill has also used his talent to benefit Scott Hamilton CARES Foundation, which funds cancer research and education for families facing cancer. Gill might even hop on the bus to Knoxville, Grant says.

She admits that she enjoys be-



Six-time Grammy Award winner Amy Grant will perform this Friday in Knoxville during Scott Hamilton and Friends on Ice. *Photo submitted*

ing on the road, and that she keeps a bag packed to be ready for the next gig. She loves being around other musicians and is inspired by their creativity. She's naturally curious, so she enjoys the opportunity to explore new places. Gill calls her his "little gypsy bride."

It's a lifestyle that feels normal to her since she began performing as a teenager. It's hard for her to remember back to those days. Every decade brings more awareness of the world and how you fit into

it, she says.

She's past feeling "like a seventh grader who's dropped her lunch tray and wants to die." At 53, it just feels good to get to do what she loves, she says.

"No matter what happens, the world will keep turning. The drama fades away."

Last week, the couple were anticipating the arrival of their blended family for Thanksgiving. The oldest of their five children, Jenny, is embarking on a music

career of her own. She's a killer singer and songwriter, Grant says, but she'll have to work even harder to prove herself because of her famous family. Grant performs a duet with another daughter, Sarah, on her latest album, "How Mercy Looks from Here."

Four of Grant's 26 albums are Christmas records, and each Christmas season is different at her home, depending on her tour schedule. She tells the story of being on an airplane with the entire family one summer when one of her children pointed out that all the gifts she gave the Christmas before were in the airline's sky mall magazine.

Not surprising, since Grant remembers that she performed 23 times the previous December.

But Christmas can be a time of contentment, like her kitchen birthday party. She recommends that busy moms worry less about presentation and more about time together. The Scott Hamilton and Friends on Ice show is a good way to revel in the season with the family while supporting a good cause, she says.

She recommends simplicity for holiday decorating, too.

"You light a few candles and put on holiday music, and it really changes the atmosphere in your home."