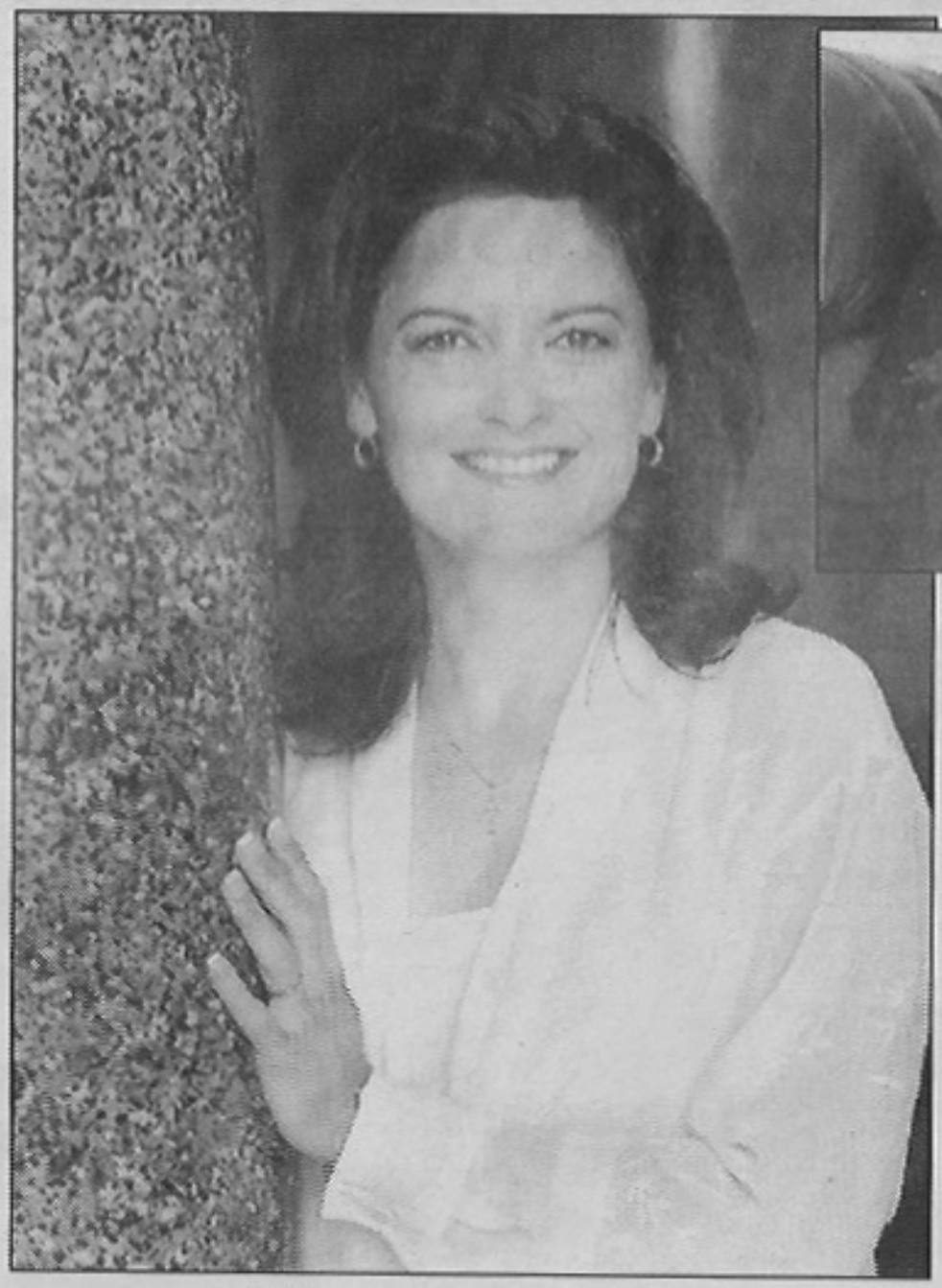

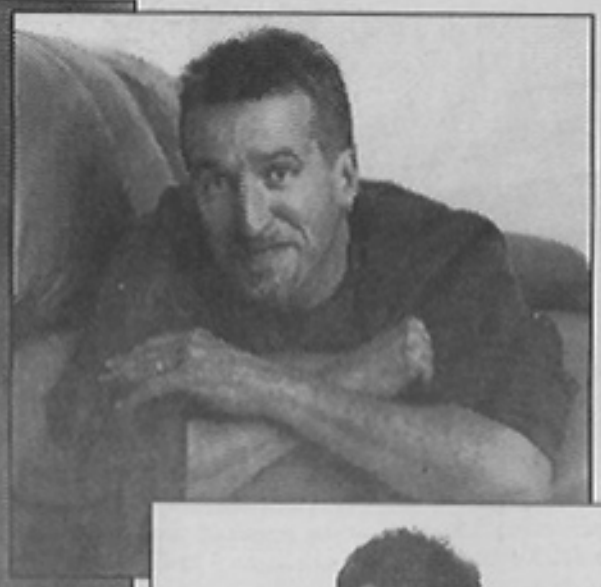

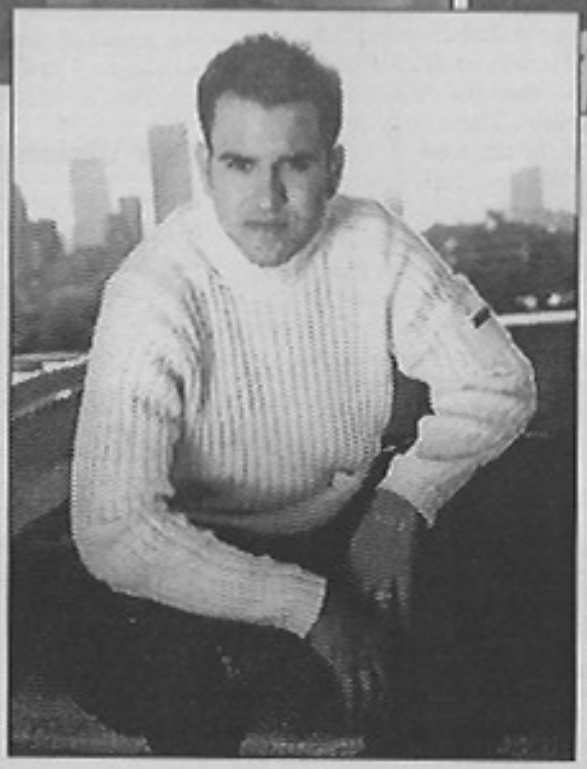

Pictured from left: Kelita, Steve Bell, Jake, Mark Masri (below) Not shown: La Chorale du Conservatoire du Musique Modern

And the Juno goes to...

Nominees stress commitment to ministry over fame & fortune

By David Raakman

It's been 14 years since Kelita was last nominated for a Juno Award. That nomination, the fourth in four years, was back in the days when Kelita was an accomplished country singer. In fact, three of those four Juno nominations were for Country Female Vocalist of the Year.

Nowadays, Kelita is using her talents "to inspire, encourage and give hope to people, challenging them to be honest with themselves, making room for God's power and the love of Jesus Christ to bring emotional and spiritual healing." So says her Mission Statement.

And in a time when she's probably least concerned about industry recognition, she has an excellent opportunity to win her first Juno Award at next month's ceremony (March 4) at Hamilton's Copps Coliseum. Her fifth Juno nomination comes in the Best Gospel Album category for her latest release *Naked Soul*, the fourth album of her storied career and second in the gospel music genre.

"I'm very honoured that my CD has been chosen as one of the top gospel albums of the year," Kelita said. "But at the same time, I have mixed feelings about it because it puts me back into the whole realm of thinking I might win and I can use this to promote myself, which is not why I'm doing this [music ministry]. I'm focussed on my ministry and I've tried to run away from the 'business' of music."

Such straightforward comments exemplify the basis for Kelita's whole ministry.

"My ministry is about being honest; that's where we begin to heal," Kelita said. "And the thrust of this album is about being honest and real."

Naked Soul is up against four other recordings in the Juno's Gospel Music category: Steve Bell's *simple songs*, self-titled albums from Jake and Mark Masri as well as *Mon Seul Espoir* by La Chorale du Conservatoire du Musique Modern.

As for the French entry into this year's nominations, I must admit that I know nothing about the artist or the album (other than its translated title being "My Only Hope"), so I won't

(Continued on page 14)