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Singer-songwriter Dagan shares his life in his book 'Songs and Their Stories'

By Nancy Acton

"I ought to write a book."

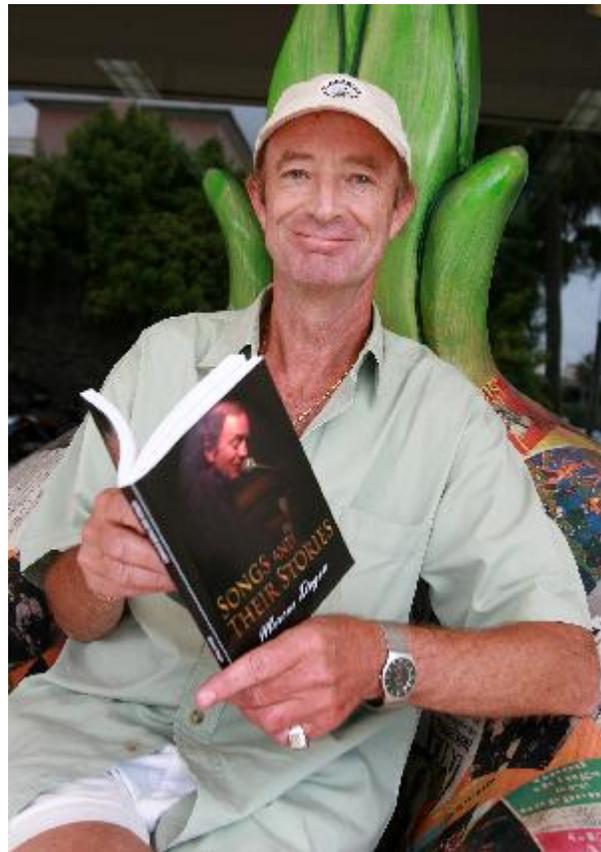
How many people with tales of interesting lives to tell have said that and done nothing? More than there are books in a bookstore, no doubt.

Singer-songwriter Marcus Dagan had been toying with the idea for decades, but as a freelance entertainer he was always on the move, and somehow it was never the right time or place. Until December, 2006 that is, when he was invited to perform, first at the wedding of Diana Darrid, mother of Hollywood actor Michael Douglas, and then through the New Year at Ariel Sands, which provided the impetus to begin, so he bought himself a laptop and set to work, writing for two hours a day.

By February of this year he had completed about two-thirds of the text and submitted it to a publisher, where it was promptly accepted, and by the late summer the presses were rolling.

Tomorrow evening there will be a book signing at the Bermuda Bookstore in Hamilton from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., followed by another on September 11 at the Book Cellar in St. George's from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Mr. Dagan has written countless songs during the course of his 30-year career, some of which are available on CDs, but as the title of his book, 'Songs and Their Stories', makes clear, the paperback is not an



From piano to page: Singer-songwriter and recording artist Marcus Dagan is all smiles following publication of his first book, "Songs and Their Stories". It includes a chapter on "the Bermuda experience", which was the inspiration for three songs. The author, who first came here in 1976, currently entertains on the Norwegian Cruise Lines "Norwegian Majesty".

Photo Tamell Simons

autobiography in the purest sense, but rather a snapshot of what inspired him to write some of the many songs in his collection — his travels, the people he has met, events and other snippets — , along with extra chapters on his CSs and more.

One song in particular is special to the smoky-voiced entertainer, and its inclusion is serendipitous. Written in 1979, the lyrics of 'Heroes of the Universe' were seemingly lost forever until recently, when he decided to sort an old pile of papers and the lyrics fell out.

Three songs — 'I Need All The Sunshine', 'All My Dreams Are Gathered Safely In', and 'Child of the Ocean' — reflect his connections with, and deep love of, Bermuda. He devotes a number of pages to the Island, and the many people he has met and worked with one way or another over the years.

Mr. Dagan first came to the Island in 1976 to entertain at the then-Rum Rimmers restaurant on Front Street. In fact, the gig launched his international career. Since 2002 he has been coming to Bermuda as an entertainer on the Norwegian Cruise Lines (NCL) vessels, principally the *Norwegian Majesty*, and he was also responsible for arranging four concerts on the Square in St. George's featuring fellow NCL artists and entertainers who were also sailing the US-Bermuda route. The first, post-Fabian in 2003, raised \$20,000 in four hours for the St. George's Preparatory School and families of those lost during the hurricane.

The author's newest CD, 'Bermuda Sessions', was recorded at Steve Easton's Platinum Studios in Hamilton with producer/arranger John Woolridge, Randy Lambert of Tempo, and singer Wanda Ray Willis, on back-up.

"Thanks to them, I have the best CD of my career," he writes.

An easy read, the flowing style of 'Songs and their Stories' is like a conversation with an old friend, into which just enough names, adventures and interesting snippets are dropped to keep the reader interested.

Future plans include Mr. Dagan recording an audio version of his book, and making another CD in Bermuda covering all of the remaining songs in his repertoire which he considers to be a legacy of his work.

"That is the end of being a live entertainer," he says. "Next year I am going to have a T-shirt made which says on the back, 'Marcus Dagan will tour', and list every city I have ever played in since the beginning of my career. Underneath that it will say, 'Too scared to quit'."

- For further information see website www.marcusdagan.com