

# CONVERSATIONS

## CHENILLE SISTERS FAME IS RELATIVE FOR THIS ZANY TRIO

BY CAROL TEEGARDIN

**A**s soon as Grace Morand, Cheryl Dawdy and Connie Huber bombed into the Cafe Bon Homme in Plymouth and sat down to order wine, the waitress asked if they were the Chenille Sisters. The Sisters (who aren't sisters) weren't even wearing their usual re-sale shop Cyndi Lauper-style duds. They looked more like Ann Arbor Yuppies. As they dug into their salads, they talked, almost in harmony sometimes, about how it all got started two years ago.

**DETROIT:** Where did you get the name Chenille Sisters?

**DAWDY:** We were sitting around during one of our practices when we first got together. We thought of other girl groups and our name developed as a spoof. Chenille is a cozy, nostalgic fabric and our music was moving in that direction at that time.

**DETROIT:** What style would you call your singing?

**HUBER:** It's a hard question to answer 'cause we don't just do one style. It's an eclectic blend.

**DETROIT:** What brought you together?

**HUBER:** Grace and I were in a couple of bands together and Cheryl would occasionally come up and sing with us. We thought it was so neat and we enjoyed it so much we started getting together and figuring



out some songs here and there and started singing into our hair brushes.

**DETROIT:** Do you make much money at singing or do you have other jobs too?

**DAWDY:** We're starting to make some money, but not yet enough to live on so we all have daytime jobs. I work at the graduate library at U of M.

**MORAND:** I'm a hair stylist at Downtown Hair & Co. in Ann Arbor.

**HUBER:** I'm a speech pathologist.

**DETROIT:** Was all this fame a big surprise to you?

**MORAND:** Yes and no. We are really positive and optimistic about it and we talk about much bigger things than where we're at. We're sort of visualizing that we'll become very successful, but there's always that little seed of doubt. It blew us away

when "Prairie Home Companion" called us up! At this point, we really believe that there's a possibility that we can be famous. We get stopped in shopping malls and stuff.

**DETROIT:** Have you cut a record yet?

**MORAND:** Um-hummm. It's called "The Chenille Sisters" and we produced it independently. It's on our own label called Frou-Frou Records.

**HUBER:** We did it all very fast and it was very hard on us.

**DETROIT:** What would you say your image is?

**MORAND:** Tacky.

**DAWDY:** That was the point to begin with. You know how in Glamor Magazine they have the do's and the dont's? We do the don'ts.

**DETROIT:** How did your three-way humor evolve?

**DAWDY:** We wanted to create some sort of interaction

with the audience to fill in the spaces between songs.

**HUBER:** We all have our own personalities and we want them to come out. We want the audience to feel like they know us when we're done with the show—like they can come up and talk to us.

**MORAND:** We all tell personal little stories and we make it funny. The skits we write are usually the result of us lying on the living room floor and entertaining ourselves. We usually do one or two organized bits and then just let it happen.

**DETROIT:** Were you nervous when you appeared on "A Prairie Home Companion"?

**DAWDY:** That was really scary. People have established their careers by being on that show.

**MORAND:** Three and a half million people listened to us.

**DETROIT:** Connie, you play guitar for the group. Does

anyone else play musical instruments?

**MORAND:** Cheryl and I play the popcorn jar and oatmeal box.

**DETROIT:** Give me a little personal and musical background.

**DAWDY:** I'm 33 and I grew up in Dearborn. I've never really had any formal training. I don't know if that's good or bad. What made me most interested in singing was hearing Joni Mitchell—I played her records constantly and I started writing songs of my own.

**MORAND:** I'm 29. I come from a large family and I made my sisters be in shows with me. My parents are pretty musical. My mom plays piano. I studied voice in college.

**HUBER:** I'm 32. I have a degree in percussion. I played drums in high school. When I was in college, to avoid studying I started playing guitar and singing.

**DETROIT:** What would you do if you didn't do this?

**DAWDY:** Die.

**MORAND:** The only reason I do hair is to accommodate this. I've always wanted to be a singer.

**DETROIT:** Would you like to be on the cover of Rolling Stone?

**DAWDY:** Yes. And, Newsweek too.

**HUBER:** I'd like to be on the cover of Sports Illustrated.

**MORAND:** A few summers ago we were laying around thinking "Oh, wouldn't it be great to be famous, to sing in front of a bunch of people who were standing up clapping?" And now some of that is happening. ■