

The ex might have left with her pipes

TWAIN from E1

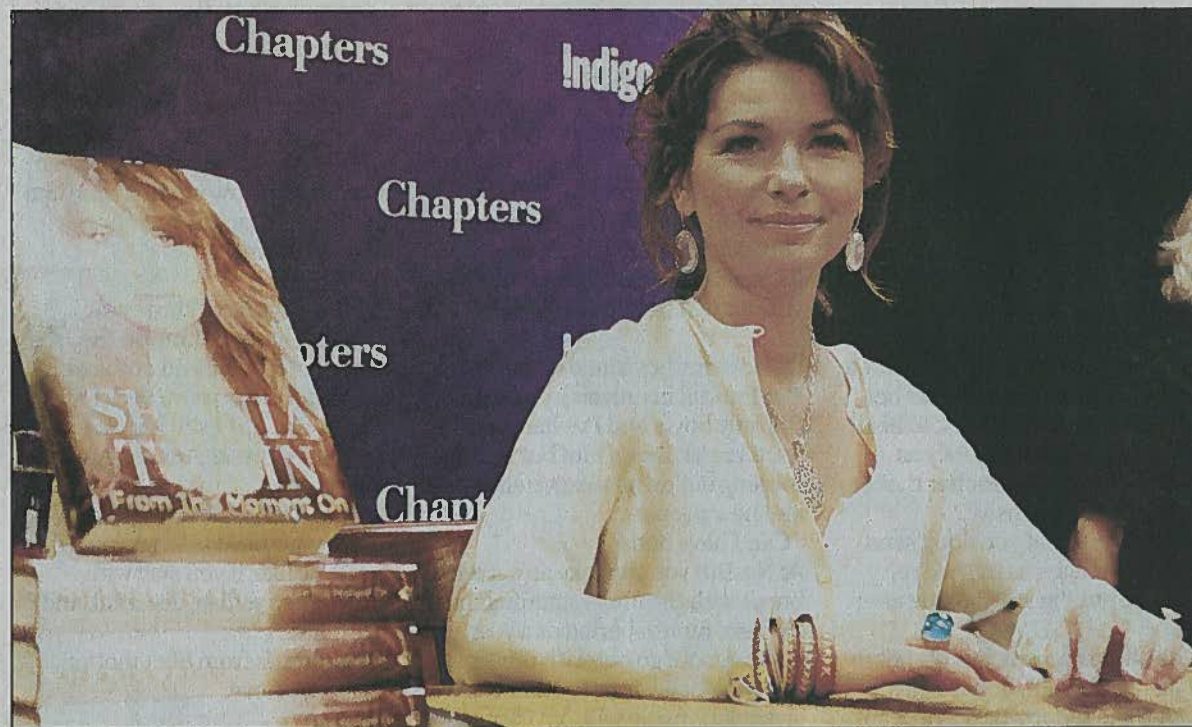
"It suddenly hit me, during the divorce, when I was most vulnerable, that I may never be able to sing again, and that was really terrifying."

"I don't want to retire. I don't want to run away. I don't want to do nothing. It's not in my nature. But to find satisfaction and pleasure in singing again, I had to force myself through all my fears and anxieties, going back to childhood."

Twain's memoir recounts episodes of grinding poverty, family dysfunction and sexual abuse during her childhood in Ontario's north.

Though her vocal apparatus shows no signs of physical damage — a series of examinations by a Nashville ENT specialist, recorded for and aired in the TV series, gives us a queasy close-up of the squillion-dollar vocal cords opening and closing — the singer said she's still frightened to perform in public, and has no plans to tour till she regains her confidence.

But it's full steam ahead with her next recording project, once she decides who'll produce and engineer it, who she'll be co-writing the songs with, and who her musical "facilitators" will be. All those roles were performed during their marriage by Lange, whom she described as "a genius."



RICK EGLINTON/TORONTO STAR

Shania Twain, seen Tuesday at Chapters Indigo at the Manulife Centre to meet the public and sign copies of her book *From This Moment On*, says writing it required her to revisit her youth's poverty, dysfunction and abuse.

"I've learned a lot from him."

Even so, she added quickly, she was a composer and recording artist long before Lange took her under his wing. The TV series shows her writing and recording a new song to be released soon as a single. And Twain recently recorded a duet with Lionel Richie, his old song

"Endless Love," (once a hit for Richie and Diana Ross) that will be featured on his upcoming country music album, *Tuskegee*.

"I'd put in my 20,000 hours writing songs before I met Mutt," she said. "And now I'm ready to throw myself back into the water. It's the only way to do it."

Twain agreed to do the TV series — a close-quarters chronicle of her efforts to regain her voice, come to terms with her past and the remaining members of her family (her parents were killed in a car crash in 1987), as well as overcome her divorce angst, build a relationship with new husband, Swiss busi-

ness exec Frédéric Thiébaud (the ex of the "other woman"), and retrace her musical path — because "the camera would force me to stick with the plan," she said.

"It was my insurance. I hated doing it, but if I ever wanted my life back, I knew I'd have to go through with it."

"So, that's what I'll be doing all summer, working on a new album," added Twain, who was remarkably relaxed and composed during the interview. She was dressed in a loose, peach-coloured top, with a chain of exquisitely fine gold loops around her neck. She seemed eager to talk about her life and work.

"I wrote the book before I went to a publisher," she explained. "I wrote it all myself in about eight months. It was twice as long as it is now. The actual writing wasn't difficult... I write the way I speak. It didn't take long to find a publisher. Simon & Schuster were really good at helping pare it down, checking facts, filling in blanks."

"I did it so that my son (Eja, 9, with Lange) would have the truth from me. As a public figure, I was concerned that if something happens to me, who knows what he may hear about me? My own parents died young, and that's always in the back of my mind."

"At least my son's left with the truth."

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