



Side by Side

DORIS JUSTIS AND SEAN MCGHEE

Brought together by the music of John Denver and Dick Cerri, Doris and Sean have performed together for 30 years with a virtual "who's who" of folk music including: the Chad Mitchell Trio, the Limelickers, Tom Paxton, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Bill Danoff, Noel Paul Stookey and the Brothers Four. They are blessed and honored to have shared the stage with a long list of performers over the years. And owe Dick Cerri more than can be listed here.

DORIS, a mainstay of the local folk scene, has been a concert performer, a coffeehouse regular, a concert producer and a host of her own radio show. She has performed at the Bitter End, Birchmere and Kennedy Center. Doris is Vice President of the World Folk Music Association.

SEAN is a vocalist and guitarist with a quick wit and irreverent sense of humor. A master of the 12-string guitar, he has been featured at the Birchmere as one of the "Three Folk Tenors."

BILL DANOFF has been extraordinarily successful on the international stage. He has been singing and writing songs since the late 1960s when he performed and co-wrote songs with John Denver at the Cellar Door in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. When Bill and his then partner, Taffy Nivert, invited Denver to help them finish writing a song, little did anyone know that the song would soar to the top of the charts. "Take Me Home Country Roads" catapulted John Denver into national prominence. Another Danoff-Nivert song, "I Guess He'd Rather Be in Colorado" was recorded by Denver and it became the theme song of Colorado. And with Emmylou Harris, he wrote her hit, "Boulder to Birmingham."

PAUL PRESTOPINO began playing the piano at age three, and over the years expanded to the harmonica, banjo, mandolin, dobro, recorder, and electric bass, among others. He is a member of the dance band, Hold the Mustard and has accompanied Peter, Paul and Mary and the Chad Mitchell Trio (and John Denver) for many years.

RON GREENSTEIN began playing bass for a local Philly band and moved on to play with the Tanner Brothers, Bucks County Grass, Skookit Express and Borderline. He currently plays bass for Travis Wetzel, Tom Paxton and the Chad Mitchell Trio.

BOB HEFFERAN, a guitarist who is from Phoenix, played with the Mitchell Trio with John Denver in the 1960s, after Chad left to go solo. He has played as a member of the WFMA House Band for many years.



Doris Justis and Sean McGhee

with Special Guest Bill Danoff

Accompanists

Paul Prestopino, Bob Hefferan & Ron Greenstein
and a Very Special Surprise Guest!

September 26, 2015 - 7:00 PM

Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington, Rockville, MD





Looking Back Down 30+ Years On the Road...

Side by Side was created out of Dick Cerri's desire to have a houseband for his musical events after his first house band ended. At Dick's next Birchmere Showcase, both Doris and Sean performed in solo sets. The next day they met again, had dinner and sang together. As Doris recalls, "it was magic." (*Sean describes this differently...*). She knew this was something special but had no idea what Sean wanted and of course they did not really know each other. One month later, they were the houseband at the Showcase and have performed at most of them since. They are the only act to perform at all 25 of WFMA's Annual Fundraiser Concerts and continue their role as houseband at WFMA's *El Golfo Restaurant Showcase* in Silver Spring, Md., occasionally.

Within a few months, Dick had "discovered" *Schooner Fare*, and *Side by Side* opened for them at their first DC area performance at Ireland's Four Provinces. The duo did so well, that they were soon getting gigs at the Washington and Northern Virginia Ethical Societies, Takoma Café, Kennedy Center and continued monthly at the Birchmere Showcases (for 7 years!). Mignon C. Smith (longtime employer and friend) arranged for her friend to photograph the duo on her Watergate balcony for their very first promo photo (see cover, second photo), and with the help of Dick and his radio program, they were always in demand at music venues, restaurants and private occasions. They have been honored and blessed to have met, shared the stage and performed with many of their favorite folk musicians and the list is so long it could not fit here! Just saying, that it has been a dream come true to be part of so many events and performances these past thirty years.

Doris had her "15 minutes of fame" when, to honor Dick and his 25 years in radio, she set about to reunite the Chad Mitchell Trio who had not been together in over 20 years. The Trio was known to be Doris and Dick's all-time favorites. She had heard over and over how they would never get together again and well...

she just called Mike Kobluk and asked! To her surprise (she nearly fell through the floor!), Mike said casually on the phone, "Oh, would you like us to sing?" She was totally stunned (in the most fabulous way) and finally, (after collecting herself) said in her most professional voice, "Why yes, that would be lovely and Dick would be so surprised." Now, she had found the members of the Trio to *invite* them to the concert January 25, 1986, not dreaming they would consider performing! And that is just what happened! She managed to keep it a secret with the help of co-conspirators Sean and Powell, who knew of her secret plan.

So how did all of this happen in the first place? Doris heard about Dick's radio program when she was in 7th grade from her still best friend, Gail. They discovered a mutual love of folk music and fell madly in love with the Trio (and later John Denver who replaced Chad in 1965) and share this love to this day. Doris became a constant listener of Dick's "Music Americana" and was corresponding with Dick on and off the air as she contributed to his "Notes on Folk". She went away to college and on returning to the DC area several years later, discovered Dick's program was still on the air. Soon she was working with Dick at radio station WJMD and then shortly his program moved to WLTT where it stayed for many years. In 1984, Dick announced there would be "showcases" at the Birchmere in VA and Doris began to book four acts per month. Sean's was one of the first tapes received and was booked in May.

Doris set out on the folk music highway in 1962 that leads *Side by Side* to this night and this final celebration - this long and winding road from Gail and "Music Americana" to *Side by Side* and today.

Thanks for being here to share this special evening!

