

Acoustic duo offers a wide range of music

By Nancy Shohet West | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT NOVEMBER 27, 2012



SUSAN WILSON

Bill McGoldrick Acoustic Duo featuring Pamela Stiebler.

It is hard to describe the Bill McGoldrick Acoustic Duo without inevitably invoking the “odd couple” cliché.

McGoldrick is a 57-year-old ex-rocker who spent the past few decades touring with a variety of bands before deciding he was ready for a different kind of arena; the other half of the duo is Pamela Stiebler, a 23-year-old folk singer and budding songwriter who as a teen was a backup singer for bands in her native Brazil.

One thing the two have in common is a Berklee College of Music education; he

graduated in the mid-1970s, and she is anticipating receiving her degree in May.

And the two found each other, as many odd couples do, through Craigslist.

“I had been thinking for a couple of years about doing an acoustic act,” McGoldrick said. “I was tired of playing in bands. I’d done it for so long. Dealing with all the egos, all the issues . . . and musically, you tend to get swallowed up in most bands. It’s hard to get six or seven people to play well together and be one hundred percent in sync. I wanted to get away from all of that and play a pure acoustic thing.”

So he posted an ad for a vocalist, and it drew the attention of Stiebler, who was living in Montreal trying to learn French and preparing for Berklee.

“Initially I was on Craigslist to look for housing in Boston, and then I checked to see if anyone was looking for a singer,” Stiebler recalled. “That’s what led me to answer Bill’s ad. I sent him a video, and when I came to Boston to look at apartments, we met in a local park and I had my audition while sitting on a park bench. The same week I moved to Boston, I played my first gig here with Bill, out in Holliston.”

Stiebler is the lead singer, while McGoldrick plays guitar and sings backup. Although Stiebler is majoring in songwriting at Berklee, she has yet to muster the courage to perform an original piece, despite McGoldrick’s encouragement.

“It’s been great performing with Bill,” Stiebler said. “In bands, the sound gets really loud and the equipment often isn’t that good. In a duo like this one, you can hear yourself and express yourself. Hearing a song with only vocal and guitar helps people to see and understand the song in a really raw way, without the drum fills and all the other flourishes of a band.”

This fall, the Bill McGoldrick Acoustic Duo has become one of the region’s most popular acts, appearing regularly from Providence to Woburn.

The schedule for the next two weekends has them performing Friday night at the Main Streets Market & Cafe in Concord, Saturday night at the restaurant 3 in Franklin, next Thursday at Noon Hill Grill in Medfield, and Dec. 7 at Pejamajo in Holliston.

Though the act bears his name, McGoldrick is unstinting in his praise for Stiebler.

“Pam is one of the best singers I’ve ever worked with, and I’ve been doing this for a

hundred years,” he said. “Her sound is influenced by R&B and soul singers, but she has a unique voice that should be heard by lots of people in the world and eventually will be, I’m certain. There’s a purity in her voice. It’s flawless and beautiful.”

Because of this, McGoldrick has no problem letting the young singer take the lead when they perform.

“Pam’s left hand will signal me to go higher, lower, faster, slower. I know how to do what I’m told because I’ve been married for many years. Our act is pure, clean, acoustic. We go from R&B to soul to blues to country to pop to rock and roll. We play some Brazilian stuff from Pam’s background as well. The music can be very delicate with two people. You can really get to the nuances of songs.”

For more details on the Bill McGoldrick Acoustic Duo and a complete schedule, go to www.billmgoldrick.net.

GUITAR MASTERS: International guitar duo Loren and Mark, comprising New York musician Loren Barriger and New Zealand native Mark Mazengarb, will appear in concert Friday at 8 p.m. at the Amazing Things Arts Center, 160 Hollis St. in downtown Framingham.

Their self-titled debut album received the Syracuse Area Music Award for “Best Americana Album” last year, and they followed up that recording with “Onward,” released in August.

General admission tickets are \$20; students and seniors, \$19; Amazing Things members \$17; and ages 11 and younger, \$10. Call 508-405- 2787 or visit www.amazingthings.org.

OPEN STUDIOS: More than 40 Fountain Street Studios artists, ranging from emerging to internationally recognized talents, welcome the public to an open studios event Friday from 5:30 to 9 p.m. and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

View paintings, photography, fabric art, prints, and handcrafted jewelry while taking in musical performances, portrait demonstrations, and book signings at the historic Bancroft Building, 59 Fountain St. in Framingham.

For more details or directions, call 617-750-5003 or go online to www.fountainstreet-studios.com.

JEWISH CULTURE: On Sunday, Congregation Mishkan Tefila in Newton hosts LimmudBoston, an all-day, volunteer-driven conference celebrating Jewish culture.

The lineup of more than 90 events, including classes and concerts, will provide something for everyone, beginner to scholar, secular to observant.

Speakers include Rabbi Benjamin Shalva of Temple Reyim in Newton; Terezin and Auschwitz survivor Edgar Krasa of Newton; Brookline family dynamics expert Ruth Nemzoff; Larry Ruttman, author of a book on Jews and baseball and a lifelong Brookline resident; and Rabbi Moshe Waldoks of Brookline, co-editor of “The Big Book of Jewish Humor.”

The conference opens at 8:45 a.m. and runs until 7 p.m. at Mishkan Tefila, 300 Hammond Pond Parkway, Chestnut Hill. To register or for more information, go to www.limmudboston.org.

HOLIDAY SAX: The Friends of the Marlborough Public Library will present a holiday program called “Saxophones Under the Tree” on Wednesday at 7 p.m. featuring Sax-O-Four, a quartet of saxophones that plays jazz, light classics, theme music, and holiday classics.

The free concert will take place in the library’s Bigelow Auditorium, 35 West Main St. in Marlborough. For more information, call 413-648-9663.

ARTFUL COMEDY: New Repertory Theatre is continuing its performances of “Chesapeake,” a comedy by Lee Blessing, Wednesdays through Sundays until Dec. 16 in the Black Box Theater at the Arsenal Center for the Arts, 321 Arsenal St. in Watertown.

Tickets are \$36. For a schedule of performances or to purchase tickets, call 617-923-8487 or go to www.newrep.org.

SEASONAL TEA: Gore Place, the historic estate at 52 Gore St. in Waltham, will once again be offering its very popular Santa Teas on Dec. 8 at 1 p.m., Dec. 15 at 10:30 a.m. and 3 p.m., and Dec. 16 at 3 p.m.

The event features a special children’s menu, activities and a visit from Santa with songs and stories. Admission is \$35, or \$30 for Gore Place members. Tickets should be purchased at least one week in advance.

To order tickets, call 781-894-2798 or e-mail events@goreplace.org. For more details, go to www.goreplace.org.

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Send ideas to nancyswest@gmail.com. Please list the date of your event in the subject line.

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