

# The Folk Song Society of Greater Boston

# FSSGB

# FOLK LETTER

*Dedicated to providing opportunities for everyone to make, enjoy & support folk music*

Volume 53 Number 3

July/Aug/Sept 2025

Josée Vachon House  
Concert

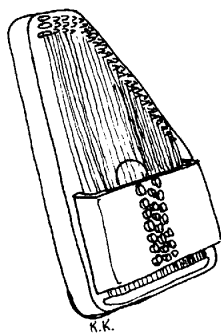
Steve Turner House  
Concert

The Kossoy Sisters  
with Kate Seeger and  
Dean Spencer

James Keelaghan

Sally Rogers and  
Howie Bursen

Mid-Day Singing  
Parties



Look for more info on  
our website:

[www.fssgb.org](http://www.fssgb.org)

Email [info@fssgb.org](mailto:info@fssgb.org)



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Facebook!

## Josée Vachon House Concert

Sunday, September 7, 2pm  
Location TBD  
\$20 at the door (\$5 for students)  
Reservations required: email  
[HouseConcerts@fssgb.org](mailto:HouseConcerts@fssgb.org) for  
reservations and directions.



Born in Québec and raised in Maine, Josée Vachon shares her Franco-American upbringing through traditional and contemporary folksongs from Québec and Acadia and through her own compositions.

She began singing publicly with the support of the Franco-American Center at the University of Maine, where she discovered others who shared her rich heritage. She quickly gained recognition as a new Franco-American voice through early performances at state festivals in Maine and at schools and parish soirées.

In July 1993, she co-founded the folk group Chanterelle with award-winning fiddler Donna Hébert and singer/guitarist Liza Constable. Ms Vachon has 12 solo recordings to her credit, and continues to perform and record the music that best represents her love of Franco-American culture.

## Steve Turner House Concert

Sunday, September 21, 2pm  
Cambridge, MA  
\$20 at the door (\$5 for students)  
Reservations required: email  
[HouseConcerts@fssgb.org](mailto:HouseConcerts@fssgb.org) for  
reservations and directions.



Steve Turner is known as a pioneer of highly sophisticated English concertina song accompaniments, stretching the boundaries of traditional forms, with one of the best voices in the business. He is a multi-instrumentalist, who also accompanies himself on the cittern, and also plays mandolin and tenor banjo.

Steve began his career on the Manchester, UK folk scene at the end of the '60s, with the Geordie band "Canny Fettle", touring with them for eight years and making two albums with them.

In 1979 he won the UK Melody Maker's national "Stars of the 80s" competition, which persuaded him to turn professional, and for the next 12 years he toured solo, nationally

*continued on p. 2*



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To join or renew: send your name, address and phone number along with a check for \$10 student, \$20 single, \$30 double, \$35 family membership, or \$25 for organizations to FSSGB at PO Box 2941, Acton MA 01720. **You can also join or renew online** via our website. You can join or renew for up to 3 years at a time.



### Folk Letter Deadlines

The deadline for getting articles and ads into the Folk Letter is always the 10th of the month preceding the month of publication:

#### Sept 10 for the Oct-Nov-Dec issue

We will continue to have combined issues for the foreseeable future.

Thanks for helping us by observing the publication deadlines.

## Daytime Music Parties

FSSGB offers daytime music parties to sing, play accompaniment, socialize and have fun making music with others at private homes or other locations in eastern Massachusetts. Daytime Music Parties are hosted two Fridays a month from 11:30am until roughly 2:30pm (scheduled to help those who travel avoid heavy traffic and nighttime driving.)

Interested folks should contact our sing coordinator (Don MacLeod - phone/text 617-283-8532) for singing party dates, locations and other pertinent information.

Folks planning to attend are asked to please RSVP at the earliest to help our hosts plan. Those providing contact information to our coordinator will receive music party invitations a week in advance of the scheduled date.

Upcoming dates (these are all Fridays at 11:30am-2:30pm in Malden unless otherwise noted):

- Aug 14 (THURSDAY!) **Open (seeking a host!)**
- Aug 29 Malden
- Sep 12 **Open (seeking a host!)**
- Sep 26 Malden
- Oct 10 Malden
- Oct 23 (THURSDAY!) Cambridge
- Nov 7 Malden
- Nov 21 Malden
- Dec 5 Malden
- Dec 19 Malden

There is no charge for singing parties. Small snacks to share would be appreciated, but are optional.

Please contact Don if you would like to host in the future. Keep an eye on the website ([www.fssgb.org](http://www.fssgb.org)) for updates as music parties occasionally get rescheduled or cancelled.

## Steve Turner House Concert (*cont'd from cover*)

and internationally, releasing four albums with Fellside Records during this period (Out Stack, Jigging One Now, Eclogue and Braiding).

After 13 years away from the folk scene he made a welcome return in 2004 performing in folk clubs and festivals, and in 2008 producing his 5th album, the highly acclaimed "Whirligig of Time" which featured UK luminaries Martin Carthy, Nancy Kerr and Miranda Sykes.

Since then he has released further albums, "Rim of the Wheel", "Spirit of the Game" and "Late Cut", and his latest much anticipated 9th album "Curious Times" featuring Martin Carthy was released in Spring 2023.

Steve's concerts are always delightful—please join us!

## James Keelaghan with David Woodhead

Friday, November 7, 2025, 7pm  
 First Parish in Waltham, 50 Church Street, Waltham, MA  
 Admission: \$30 (17 and under free)  
 Advance ticket info coming soon



Contemporary folk songs, at their very best, offer an insight into the hardships, attitudes, and resolve of characters and events that shape our day-to-day lives. You can dress these songs up in inspired arrangements and intricate instrumentation but, at their very essence, the archetypal folk song is all about stories. Stories and people. Something such compelling songwriters as Eric Bogle, Si Kahn, Ewan MacColl, and Stan Rogers ... all understood and mined so effectively.

James Keelaghan, too, burrows into that same rich seam with equal ability and comparable conviction. To quote Eric Bibb, the award-winning American acoustic bluesman, after listening to Keelaghan perform: “[You’re] a joy to hear, just beautiful. Reminded me of the best of the best of another time – Liam Clancy, Tom Paxton etcetera.” Less colourful but more succinct, Dave Marsh, the eminent Rolling Stone critic, simply described Keelaghan as “Canada’s finest songwriter.”

Truly, throughout a career that now spans almost four decades, the Juno and Canadian Folk Music Award winner has created a repertoire of incalculable importance – a unique body of work, either inspired by or drawn from the folk tradition. Ten solo albums flush with enduring lyrical relevance. Take the beautiful but heart-breaking ballad, Jenny Bryce, for example. From any point of view, it’s indistinguishable from the numerous traditional tracks covered on his disc *A Few Simple Verses*.

What’s more, various other originals from the Keelaghan cannon must surely enter the domain of traditional folklore. Most notably, *Small Rebellions* (highlighting the 1931 slaughter of peaceful striking miners in Bienfait, SK); *Hillcrest Mine* (a prelude to the worst coal mining disaster in Canadian history); *Kiri’s Piano* (a triumph over adversity amidst the shameful, racist treatment of Japanese-Canadians during WW II); *Cold Missouri Waters* (a harrowing portrait of the 1949 Mann Gulch Fire in the mountains of Montana) ...

A relentless musical spirit, Keelaghan has surrounded himself with a variety of crackerjack companions down through the years that have largely included the late, innovative, free-spirited fiddler and composer, Oliver Schroer, the exuberant, Chilean, Latino-fusionist guitarist, Oscar Lopez (with whom Keelaghan made two albums under the banner of *Compadres*), or the ubiquitous, former *Spirit of the West* anchor and multi-instrumentalist, Hugh MacMillan. Scrupulous audiences from Alberta to Australia bared witness to the sum of these resourceful parts.

James Keelaghan grew up in a bungalow in northwest Calgary, AB, with six siblings, an Irish father, and an English mum. His brother Bob would develop into a noteworthy guitarist with the excellent, but now defunct, Agnostic Mountain Gospel Choir. From his father, Jim, James developed a love of history. The family record collection provided further inspiration. Traditional folk LPs by the likes of The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, Séan Ó Riada, and Harry Belafonte certainly caught young Keelaghan’s ear. He still cites Belafonte *At Carnegie Hall* as a recording that changed his life at age six!

Appearing on over 250 recording projects, bass player David Woodhead has worked with many influential artists including Perth County Conspiracy, Stan Rogers, Don Ross, Oliver Schroer, Loreena McKennitt, Gil Scott-Heron, Steve Rodby, and David Sanborn. David has been described as “that musician who leads from in front and behind as the situation demands and seems happiest planting various challenges and musical surprises in a spirit of playfulness.” (Jowi Taylor, CBC radio host)

## The Kossoy Sisters with Kate Seeger and Dean Spencer

Saturday, October 25 **OR** Sunday, October 26—stay tuned for more info about the date and time!

Location TBD

\$20 at the door (\$5 for students)

Reservations required: email

HouseConcerts@fssgb.org for reservations and directions.

The Kossoy Sisters, Irene Saletan and Ellen Christenson, performed at the first Newport Folk Festival, sang in the original Production of Woody Guthrie's *Bound for Glory*, and recorded their legendary *Bowling Green for Tradition Records*. They are known for their clear belllike harmonies, which have inspired and influenced other singers. Although they sing mostly southern mountain songs, they have also adopted other traditional and contemporary songs, as well as written some of their own.

Irene and Ellen began singing in harmony at the age of 8 or 9, singing mostly what they heard around the house: songs of the 20's and music hall songs. In their early teenage years, they became immersed in traditional songs and became part of the music scene in Washington Square in Greenwich Village. By the age of 20, they had performed widely in New York. In addition to Newport, the Kossoy Sisters performed at many other festivals and coffee houses, including the Fox Hollow Festival, University of Chicago Folk Festival, and the Eisteddfod in eastern Massachusetts. In 1997, *Bowling Green* was reissued as a CD by Rykodisc. The Kossoys resumed performing for the Folk Song Society of Greater Boston, the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, the Pinewoods Folk Music Club of New York, and participated in the Truly Acoustic Folk Festival in Cambridge, MA and the Summer Solstice Festival in southern California, among others. In 2001, the Coen Brothers included the Kossoy Sisters' version of "I'll Fly Away" in their movie, *O Brother, Where Art Thou*. Their album *Hop on Pretty Girls* was released in the fall of 2002.

## Sally Rogers and Howie Bursen

Saturday, November 15, 2pm

Theodore Parker Church, 1859 Centre St, West Roxbury, MA

\$20 at the door (\$5 for students)

Reservations required: email

HouseConcerts@fssgb.org for reservations and directions.

Sally Rogers and Howie Bursen have been a performing duo since they met in 1981 in a Greenwich Village coffeehouse. They play both traditional American and original songs and tunes to delight audiences from their home in Connecticut to far reaching places like Hungary and ...Israel! Howie is also an award-winning winemaker and Sally is a Master Teaching Artist in Connecticut schools.

Folk singer, songwriter and educator Sally Rogers has performed from coast to coast for forty years. She has performed for audiences around the world at festivals, concerts, schools, and most any other public place you can imagine. Sally is equally talented at stirring a crowd to sing, or at using music to draw out even the shyest child in a classroom to become an active and enthusiastic participant. Widely known for her crystal clear voice, Sally accompanies herself with guitar, banjo and mountain dulcimer. Many of these instruments are used in her solo performances.

Howie Bursen is best known for his gravity-defying, triplet-filled, fiddle-tune variations and is certainly one of today's foremost practitioners of clawhammer banjo style. He has taught clawhammer at the Maryland Banjo Academy, Common Ground and the California Traditional Solstice Festival, and his eclectic recordings contain quite a number of stellar clawhammer solos. Speaking of eclectic, Howie is also an excellent singer, song-writer and guitarist, and he makes his living as manager and head winemaker for a Connecticut vineyard.

Together they present a fun-filled evening of entertainment that's not to be missed!

**THE FOLK SONG SOCIETY OF GREATER BOSTON**  
**P.O. Box 2941, Acton, MA 01720, [fssgb@fssgb.org](mailto:fssgb@fssgb.org), [info@fssgb.org](mailto:info@fssgb.org)**

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**2025-2026 Officers & Coordinators**

President	Ed Council, (508) 904-4539, <a href="mailto:elc@timberfield.com">elc@timberfield.com</a>
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**SEND NEWSLETTER ITEMS TO:**

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Acton, MA 01720-4210  
[folkletter@fssgb.org](mailto:folkletter@fssgb.org)

**FOLK LETTER DEADLINES** are the seventh of the month for the following quarter's issue. Advertisements are \$15 for 1/4 page, \$20 for 1/3 page, \$40 for 2/3 page, \$30 for 1/2 page, and \$60 for a full page. Email us for more information ([folkletter@fssgb.org](mailto:folkletter@fssgb.org))

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**PROGRAM COMMITTEE:**

Chairs: Lynn Feingold, Ruth Perry, Lori Fassman.  
Members: Isobel Abelson, Bill Lehrman, Suzanne Mrozak, Merle Roesler

*FSSGB is a 501c(3) non-profit organization.  
Contributions are tax deductible to the extent  
allowed by law.*

*Announcing the new 3rd Sunday*

**Junction Song Circle**

Come sing: Bring a ballad or traditional song to share!  
**First gathering: Sunday, July 20, from 2 to 4:30 p.m.**  
Community Room, Greater Hartford UCC  
1721 Maple St., White River Junction, VT  
Free and open to all

On the third Sunday of every month, we meet up in the community room of the Greater Hartford UCC in White River Junction to share ballads and other unaccompanied traditional songs. Our focus is on traditional British and North American ballads: stark, spellbinding story-songs handed down orally as homespun entertainment among regular people. But traditional songs from any tradition, in any language, are welcome!

Bring your favorite ballad or folk song and share it with our friendly circle—just unaccompanied voices: no instruments. Or just come to listen and immerse yourself in the world of these tales and their tunes. It's a participatory event, and everyone is welcome, regardless of ability, expertise, or confidence!

Contact Grant Cook ([mail.grantcook13@gmail.com](mailto:mail.grantcook13@gmail.com)) for more information—we hope to see you there!

ADVERTISEMENT

**FSSGB Library:** FSSGB's entire collection of printed materials resides at the New England Conservatory Library at 255 St. Botolph St., Boston, where it is available to the public for perusing onsite. The collection is known as Folk Song Society of Greater Boston (FSSGB) Collection at New England Conservatory. See the FSSGB website for information on how to access the materials and make donations.

# The Folk Song Society of Greater Boston



**THE FOLK LETTER**  
c/o FSSGB, Inc.  
P.O. Box 2941  
Acton, MA 01720  
[www.fssgb.org](http://www.fssgb.org)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

[www.fssgb.org](http://www.fssgb.org)

- Sun., Sept. 7      **Josée Vachon house concert**, 2pm, location TBD, \$20
- Sun., Sept. 21    **Steve Turner house concert**, 2pm, Cambridge, \$20
- Oct 25 or 26     **The Kossoy Sisters with Kate Seeger and Dean Spencer**, 2pm,  
exact date and details TBA, \$20
- Fri., Nov. 7      **James Keelaghan with David Woodhead**, 7pm, First Parish in  
Waltham, 50 Church St, Waltham, \$30 (17 and under free)
- Sat., Nov 15     **Sally Rogers and Howie Bursen**, 2pm, Theodore Parker Church, W.  
Roxbury, \$20.
- Dec 6 or 7      **Pub Carol Sing (tentative)**, afternoon (exact date and details TBA),  
The Substation, 4228 Washington St, Roslindale

**See [www.fssgb.org](http://www.fssgb.org) for details about all events**