

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 4

Oct/Nov/Dec 2025

James Keelaghan

Steve Turner House
Concert (*date
changed!*)

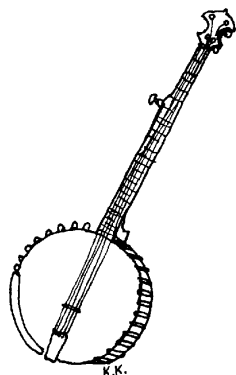
The Kossoy Sisters
with Kate Seeger and
Dean Spencer

Sally Rogers and
Howie Bursen

Annual Pub Carol
Sing

Mid-Day Singing
Parties

Tony Saletan



Look for more info on
our website:

www.fssgb.org

Email info@fssgb.org



Join us on
Facebook!

James Keelaghan with David Woodhead

Friday, November 7, 2025, 7pm
First Parish in Waltham, 50 Church St, Waltham
Admission: \$30 (17 and under free)

**We recommend you get your tickets in advance
at fssgb.org**



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: “[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.”

continued on p. 3

Steve Turner House Concert

Wednesday, September 24, 7pm
(*date changed!*)
Cambridge, MA

\$20 at the door (\$5 for students)
Reservations required: email
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.

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.

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):

- 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) for updates as music parties occasionally get rescheduled or cancelled.



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:

Dec 10 for the Jan-Feb-March issue

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

Thanks for helping us by observing the publication deadlines.

Jim Malcolm, straight from Scotland

Enjoy a witty and intimate evening of Scottish songs and humor, from one of Scotland's finest singer-songwriters. .

House concert at the home of Margaret and Allyn Dimock
Wed Oct 1, 2025 at 7.30pm
Concord MA (Address given on sign-up)

Reservations required as seating is limited

For reservations and more info:

email: dimockhouseconcert@gmail.com or call: 617-233-8333

ADVERTISEMENT

The Kossoy Sisters with Kate Seeger and Dean Spencer



Sunday, October 26, 2025, 2pm
Newton Corner, MA
\$20 at the door (\$5 for students)
Reservations required:
HouseConcerts@fssgb.org

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 bell-like 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 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. 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 numerous folk festivals. 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.

Irene and Ellen will be joined by the fabulously talented Kate Seeger and Dean Spencer.

Sally Rogers and Howie Bursen



Saturday, November 15, 2pm
Theodore Parker Church
1859 Centre St, W. Roxbury
\$20 at the door (\$5 for students)
Tickets are available at the door, but you can also purchase them in advance at fssgb.org.

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!

Pub Carol Sing

Saturday, November 29, 2025, 4-7pm
The Substation, 4228 Washington St,
Roslindale (new venue!)
Free, open to all

Sponsored by the Folk Song Society of Greater Boston and The West Gallery Quire

Start your holiday season with FSSGB's favorite Christmas tradition – the annual Pub Carol Sing! This event is back for the first time since the pandemic, and we're in a very exciting new venue – The Substation in Roslindale! There's plenty of free parking in the neighborhood and lots of local food options for dining out or bringing food to the event. The bar will be open, featuring a wide variety of beer, wine, cocktails and non-alcoholic beverages.

Come and sing Carols from the Sheffield, West Gallery, and Sacred Harp traditions (as well as some standard favorites), led by Bruce Randall of The West Gallery Quire.

Suitable for all voices and melodic instruments. Music will be available.

Contact Bruce Randall (melismata@hotmail.com) for more information.

Tony Saletan

For almost 70 years now, Tony Saletan has been a close and important friend of mine. I was deeply saddened when I picked up the phone to hear Jill Rosenthal, speaking through tears, say, Tony died that morning. She had just lost her husband and was doing the sad task of sharing the news. So much of what is right in my life has been contributed to by Tony.

In 1957 he and I joined forces with Manny Greenhill, Marcel Kisten, and Bob Gustafson to form what became the Folk Song Society of Greater Boston, still making ways for people to share singing the old traditional songs and singing for the old causes. Tony was an excellent performer, the host of the first series of programs on public television for children to learn traditional songs from many cultures throughout the world. It was broadcast in classrooms all over the country.

James Keelaghan (*cont'd from cover*)

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 heartbreaking 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.

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)

Tickets will be available at the door, but we recommend getting them in advance to make sure you get a seat!

Steve Turner House Concert

(cont'd from cover)

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 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!



New music opportunity for instrumentalists

Larry Cramer and I will be offering occasional FSSGB instrumentals music workshops during the day in an off week and limited to five or less. Our focus will be to enjoy a laid-back session sharing information to help each other understand and play their tunes better. Please contact Don 617-283-8532 if interested.

— Don MacLeod

Tony Saletan

(cont'd from p. 4)

He was chosen by the US State Department to represent the United States as a cultural ambassador, taking 16 months to travel around the world, teaching songs and learning songs from the people he met. Tony often gave concerts and during his marriage with Irene Kossoy, they performed together, weaving beautiful harmonies to traditional tunes. Always learning, he decided at some point to take up the art of calling contra and Square dances. Most who knew him have danced to his calling, especially at the annual NEFFA folk festival. He was a master leading dancers through complicated formations, and sometimes he did it through singing his calls, an art not many have mastered. Tony along with Irene released several records.

Most recently Tony, alongside his friend Joe Hickerson and his second wife, Jill Rosenthal, researched and selected the songs included in the play George and Ruth: Songs and Letters of the Spanish Civil War, released as a CD on which he performed the songs with myself and my husband, Dan Lynn Watt taking the roles of George and Ruth. Later the play has been released as a hardcopy book imprint on Amazon and as a free download through ALBA, the archive of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade. His contributions to Folkway Records, Pinewoods Camp, Work Fellowship Center, the Revels, to name a few more we have shared. Suffice it to say, traditional music and traditional dance and the cause of justice have lost a true cultural carrier and scholar. And his large networks have lost a dear friend. I send huge hugs to Jill, and his children, Nina, Jesse, Charle and Emily, and to Irene. We all have some singing and dancing to do.

Thank you, Tony.

— Molly Lynn Watt

THE FOLK SONG SOCIETY OF GREATER BOSTON
P.O. Box 2941, Acton, MA 01720, fssgb@fssgb.org, info@fssgb.org

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2025-2026 Officers & Coordinators

President	Ed Council, (508) 904-4539, elc@timberfield.com
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Concert Sound	sound@fssgb.org (Chair role vacant)
Fall Getaway	Lori Fassman, (978) 264-9710, lori@fassman.com
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Trad. Swaps	Lynn Feingold, (781) 227-7500, lynnfeingold0@gmail.com
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SEND NEWSLETTER ITEMS TO:

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Acton, MA 01720-4210
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)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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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.

In Case of Snow!

It's getting to be that time of year! In case of inclement weather, please check with the host or hostess of any event to see if it's still going on and check our website (www.fssgb.org) for updates. We try hard to "have the show go on" under any circumstances, but sometimes have to cancel if there's a big storm. If you don't have access to the website or prefer human confirmation, you can call Lori at (978) 621-5814 (mobile) for information.



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

UPCOMING EVENTS

www.fssgb.org

- Wed., Sept. 24 **Steve Turner house concert**, 7pm, Cambridge, \$20 (*date changed!*)
- Sun., Oct 26 **The Kossoy Sisters with Kate Seeger and Dean Spencer**, 2pm, Newton Corner, \$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.
- Sat., Nov 29 **Pub Carol Sing**, 4-7pm, The Substation, 4228 Washington St, Roslindale, free
- Sat., Jan 17 **Annual FSSGB Members' Concert**, 4-6pm, First Parish in Waltham, 50 Church St, Waltham, \$10

See www.fssgb.org for details about all events

* advance tickets at www.fssgb.org