

Cindy Kallet, Grey Larsen Offer Beautiful Music And Warmth On A Winter Night

By MATTHEW MURPHY

Cindy Kallet and Grey Larsen were able to stop this modern, maddening, spinning globe for a few hours Sunday night at the Woods Hole Community Hall and reveal a world of beauty, harmony, and melody, as they cast their musical spell. This was not so much a concert as two gentle and feeling souls sharing their lives through music with the audience. The two are highly accomplished and respected performers.

You might have thought you were sitting by a wood stove listening to some friends play music. The two dressed casually in jeans, boots, and comfortable shirts. They warmly and graciously complimented the venue, the volunteers, and the organizers. The concert seemed their way of giving back in music the welcome they felt in this special place.

Ms. Kallet began with one of her original pieces, "Blackberry Downs." She wrote it in 1976 when she lived on the Vineyard. It resonated with images of ducks on a winter's day, floating on the brackish waters, ebbing and flowing with the tide. The song captured perfectly the still and stark beauty of the Cape and Islands in the winter. Their music did not try to fend off the cold: it embraced it and reflected its splendor.

Ms. Kallet and Mr. Larsen performed without amplification, their voices and instruments, their stories and laughter filling the hall. Ms. Kallet's voice is simply pure, natural, and lovely. Her guitar playing fully supports her voice and Mr. Larsen's flutes and songs.

Mr. Larsen plays his instruments very deliberately. He played the fiddle, two flutes, a tin whistle, a concertina, and a harmonium, a form of traveling church organ. His eyes closed as he played, Mr. Larsen seemed to feel and enjoy each note he created. He has spent time studying and reviving old Irish flute tunes, carrying on and sharing a multi-ethnic tradition of folk and traditional music, and his professionalism is apparent.

Their introductions to their songs were informative and full of good humor. They spoke of their experiences in New England and of their neighbor Joe Dawson,



MARILYN J. ROWLAND

Grey Larsen and Cindy Kallet shared their good humor last Sunday at the Woods Hole Folk Music Society's concert series at Woods Hole Community Hall.

back in Bloomington, Indiana, known for his crooked tunes and preservation of the tunes of Appalachia and southern Indiana.

They sang Ms. Kallet's fun, funny, and splendid original songs, involving the audience in numerous sing-alongs. Topics were wide-ranging, includ-

ing songs about diapers ("Got to Know Diapers"), losing your only pair of glasses on a homemade sailboat on a man-made lake that "drowned those woods alive" ("Shores of Lake Monroe"), and about changing the world a little bit at a time with the decisions we make ("If You Say Yes").

Especially lovely was their rendition of "Cherry Tree Carol," a song of a pregnant Mary and Joseph traveling through a cherry tree orchard and the family tumult caused by a virgin birth and a woman hungry for cherries.

"Back When We Were All Machines," Ms. Kallet's and Mr. Larsen's most recent song, with its three-part sing-along chorus, "Makes me feel my robot roots, back when we were all machines," was a wonderful commentary on our growing personal isolation through constant and multifaceted digital communication. Look for their video on YouTube.

Mr. Larsen explained that in the early 1800s, the wooden flute, much like his older wooden flute, was the standard flute played by

all classical musicians. When the metal flute came along, most flutists abandoned their old wooden flutes for new-fangled metal ones. Musicians in Ireland snapped up the old wooden flutes because they went for next to nothing, and that was about what the musicians had to spend. This chain of events led to a blossoming of Irish flute music.

Mr. Larsen had both an early wooden Irish flute, and a newer one, and played plaintive airs and lively jigs and reels on both. Ms. Kallet played a Michael Gurian guitar, handmade in New Hampshire, which she has had since 1971. The exterior is somewhat the worse for wear, but the tone is still gorgeous.

It was simply a wonderful and moving evening. The 39th season of the Woods Hole Folk Music Society continues on Sunday, January 16, with a performance by Claudia Schmidt and Sally Rogers, who will sing folk music, jazz, and children's songs.

(Matthew Murphy is an attorney and resident of Falmouth.)