



Sirens

In ancient lore there were Sirens, a dangerous lot, who would use their songs to lure the reckless upon the rocks, leading to certain death. Needless to say, the 21st century version of Sirens has that power, but use it in less threatening ways.

The combined voices of Donna Creighton and Jo-Ann Lawton have the power to do just about anything to their audiences, but certain death is not part of their agenda. Rather, their aim is to entertain, and often to pass on deeper messages learned from their own life experiences. It must be working. To date those who have left a Sirens show with a better feeling about the world and themselves are legion, while those who have left dead total zero.

Together for seven years now, Sirens have built up a following of fans, not just in their southern Ontario base, but also all through the west, the east, and into the United States. They have released independent CDs and recently were signed to a deal with one of the most prestigious acoustic-based labels, Borealis, helping them to expand their audience considerably while allowing them to put their music first.

The songs Sirens write draw from their own life experiences and from those of people they know and observe. The versatility exhibited by Sirens songs sometimes surprises their audiences. One could be excused for thinking Sirens a traditional folk duo based on an a cappella rendering like their song Anachy or the slightly more contemporary A Sailor's Wife. More contemporary folk styling comes through on songs like Un-forgiven and Giving it Back, while songs like When Push Comes to Shove even reflect a touch of Broadway-style show tunes. Mixed in with it all are touches of 50s doo-wop, rhythm and blues, jazz, country and whatever else seems to fit best with each set of lyrics.

Donna's background in theatre and teaching high school and Jo-Ann's song writing experience has taught them both many lessons about reaching out to an audience that is, sometimes, not in the mood to be receptive.

Appearances at coffeehouses and small folk clubs helped Sirens get their act together and recent years have seen them grace the stages of major folk festivals and larger clubs on both sides of the border. They are also comfortable bringing their act into soft seat auditoriums, such as the Wolf Performance Hall in London, where they have now performed a number of shows. They have also worked their magic in more expanded versions, arranged for and accompanied by musicians and choirs on stage and on record that allow them to explore the musical depth of their material as well as the lyrical.

Relating back to the dangerous Sirens of lore, there could be a bit of danger in these Sirens. That danger, however, is benign, and relates only to the risk of becoming a committed fan after witnessing a performance. This is how Sirens have built their career: one fan at a time, then ten at a time, and then a hundred at a time. Obviously, the next step is to build them a thousand at a time, and, of course, not to leave any bodies in their wake.

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