

# Linda Allen: Hear Her Roar

by Margaret Bikman

The social and environmental justice committee of Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship sponsors a concert by longtime Bellingham songwriter Linda Allen at 7pm on Saturday, April 13, at Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship (1207 Ellsworth St.), celebrating her 50 years as a working musician. All proceeds after expenses will benefit the Bellingham Food Bank.

Linda will be joined by her daughters Jen and Kristin Allen-Zito, her husband Scott Slaba, and musical friends Janet Stecher and Susan Lewis (Rebel Voices), Phil Heaven, Jeff Wilson, Tom Rawson, Jan Peters, Laura Smith, Chad Petersen, Kitty King, Sonny Lowe, Jerry Steinhilber, Meryle Korn, and Marie Eaton.

She'll also celebrate the release of her 11th and 12th recordings, *Into the Promise of Morning* and *Singing the News*. She'll also share songs from her past albums.

Allen says that *Singing the News* comes out of the folk tradition, with an emphasis on social change, and *Into the Promise of Morning* features songs of comfort and healing.

Her long-time passion has been to create music to touch hearts and minds, and help bring about personal and political change, and that's why *Singing the News* is important to her.

"I've always felt that songwriting was the tool I had to offer to help bring about a more compassionate and just society. I like to bring forward forgotten social and political history."

It's what she did as Washington's Resident Songwriter during the State Centennial, in the work with women's history projects, and now with the program she's doing with her multi-media "Here's to the Women!" presentation, about the 19th Amendment.

She says that folk music has always been the voice of ordinary working people, the very people who are often at the front lines of the social injustices that confront us today. Folk music brings us joy, pulls us together as a community, and can move us to action, she says.

"It is the perfect tool for sharing stories politicians and historians may overlook, or often choose not to hear. Much of what I have learned about hidden histories I learned from folk music."

"For women, I know that music which speaks to our issues has been particularly important to me and to other women I know. I have a strong calling to empower women to find their voices, physically, spiritually, emotionally."



Linda Allen, 1970.



1989.



2019.

She says that even though she remains rooted in the folk tradition, for the past 10 years she's been passionate about music in palliative care. She founded two choirs in Bellingham, the Bellingham Threshold Singers and Women with Wings, who sing at the bedside or in facilities for those most in need of healing music. Now she works as a certified clinical musician with Hospice of the Northwest, and *Into the Promise of Morning* was created to share with colleagues and friends within that healing community and beyond.

"Doing the work I do with Hospice, I am very aware that my time on earth is finite. I live in gratitude much of the time."

How a song is born is always a bit of a mystery, Allen says. She tends to write the lyrics first, then the tune. She will often bring it to her husband, to a few friends

she trusts, and eventually to the stage where the audience will let her know if it works.

"Something does seem to take over when I'm onto an idea. When that happens I have to drop everything and take the time to complete it, or it will be lost. News stories and historical accounts have been major sources of inspiration."

She's chosen the Bellingham Food Bank to benefit from donations to the concert, not only because of the good work the organization does for the community, but also to bring awareness to the annual Food Drive, which takes place the next day.

Suggested donation for the concert is \$15. No one will be turned away for lack of funds. Non-perishable food items for the Food Bank encouraged. More details are available at [www.lindasongs.com/new-events](http://www.lindasongs.com/new-events).

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