

Tom & Cilla Dunn

In different parts of the world, as yet unknown to each other, Tom & Cilla both started their performing careers by playing coffee house and campus gigs in the 1960's, a time when folk and folk/rock music was the rage.

Cilla grew up in England and remembers seeing a number of great British musicians perform on the university circuit before they became famous - Tom remembers hanging out in coffee houses in Canada, stealing chords and guitar licks from yet to be discovered, Joni Mitchell and her husband Chuck, who played some great ragtime tunes.

They met in the late 1960's when Cilla arrived in Canada, and got to know each other through a shared passion for music, often playing and singing together at informal gatherings with friends. People often told them their voices were a great blend and they should sing as a duo, but they both wanted to concentrate on solo careers as singer/songwriters. However, because they were travelling on more or less the same circuit, once in a while there was a chance to sit in on stage and play together if one of them had a free week, and once or twice they were booked as a duo.

In the mid 70's Tom signed a recording deal to do two solo albums, featuring many of his original tunes. These were released on the United Artists label and received widespread airplay on radio stations. By 1980, Cilla had settled in Huntsville, working at the local radio station and doing some acting and singing in local theatre productions of Broadway musicals, performing occasionally for special concerts, as well as composing songs with Huntsville playwright Stina Nyquist for musical plays.

Their lives took them in different directions so they did not meet up again for almost two decades, but when they did they discovered they still loved playing and singing together. Now married to each other, they still enjoy making music: in the living room, in their home studio, and - sometimes - in front of an audience. As singers, they bring their own style of harmonies and arrangements to well-known or original songs; as guitarists, they use finger picking styles and different settings for each guitar to create delicate harmonies and counter melodies. Their repertoire ranges from heartfelt to upbeat in a mix of songs and instrumentals that reflect influences from folk, jazz, ragtime and contemporary styles.