

# Castlebay Performers' Biography

The poet Robert Burns (1759-1796) collected and wrote new lyrics for hundreds of traditional Scottish folk tunes which he felt were falling into obscurity. Working in the Scots language of the "lowlands", which is distinct from the Gaelic of the highlands and islands, he produced many masterpieces of 18th century poetry and song. Among these are *My Love is Like a Red Red Rose*, *Comin' Through the Rye* and *Auld Lang Syne*, popular even today at New Year's celebrations. His short but colorful life has become the subject of both legend and scholarly documentary.

The duo Castlebay (Julia Lane & Fred Gosbee) have studied the man, the myth, and the music. They have presented lecture/performances for elder hostels, libraries, and schools in New England, New York, Georgia, and South Carolina. In their program romantic love songs are interspersed with lively dance tunes as well as poems and anecdotes about the Scotland's National Poet.

Castlebay is well known for their sensitive arrangements of traditional Scottish music. Both Julia Lane and Fred Gosbee are fine vocalists and support their singing with a variety of instruments including Celtic harp, 12-string guitar, fiddle and woodwinds. They have toured the British Isles annually since 1993 playing at folk clubs, art centres, and festivals.

Castlebay's Celtic tours have inspired the duo to create much original music, including a collaboration with Scottish musicians in the southwest of Scotland, where Robert Burns lived and worked. This work, *The Sang O the Solway*, combined original instrumental compositions written by the duo with traditional songs from the region. Castlebay has performed this work with Scottish colleagues several times in 1999 and 2000 throughout southeastern Scotland, and in 2001 at the prestigious Celtic Connections Festival in Glasgow. They have recorded several albums of both traditional and original work including *Ae Fond Kiss* which features seven compositions by Robert Burns.

In addition to their concerts and recordings, Castlebay has a commitment to cultural education. They maintain an on-going exchange with Scottish musicians and folklorists and present educational programs about Scottish music and folklore. They are listed in the Maine Arts Commission touring artists roster, the New England States Touring Roster, and the Connecticut Library Association Presenters roster.

Julia Lane studied classical and flamenco guitar at Phillips Exeter academy and used the guitar to accompany her singing until 1989 when she discovered the Celtic harp. Self-taught, she rapidly became a skilled and exciting player, winning the Senior Professional division at the New Hampshire Scottish Games Harp Competition in 1990 and 1991 and the International Folk Harp Competition at Stonehill College in 1992. She is in demand as a teacher of performance workshops for the harp

throughout the east coast of the US.

Fred Gosbee has played classic and 12-string guitar for over 35 years, began playing violin and viola and Irish flute about 1995. He learned many traditional songs from his family, who worked as lumbermen in the forests of New Brunswick and Maine. His original songs have been sung and recorded by other artists.

*"Thank you so much for coming to the Ridgefield Library to share the fascinating life and work of Robert Burns with our audience. What a wonderful evening of music, poetry, and song. You can't get a better combination than that!"*

*"Everyone I spoke to afterwards really enjoyed the show, especially the Scottish contingent. I think you probably made a lot of people yearn for the "old country!"*

*"Good luck and thanks again,"*

Leslie Lambton  
Adult Programming Director  
The Ridgefield Library and Historical Association  
Ridgefield, Connecticut