

**BETTY AND THE BABY BOOMERS**  
Release Their Fourth CD

***WHERE THE HERON WAITS***  
*A Collection of River Songs*

*Where the Heron Waits* – the new release from Betty and the Baby Boomers – is the Hudson Valley quartet’s fourth album, but it might well have been their first. Betty Boomer, Jean Valla McAvoy, Paul Rubeo, and Steve Stanne have been singing for the Hudson since 1985 when they met through the sloop *Clearwater*, the 106 foot long icon of the river’s environmental movement. But 2009 – 400 years after the river tribes watched the *Half Moon* sail past – seemed like the right time to record an entire CD of river songs.

*Where the Heron Waits* includes classics from the Clearwater canon like Rick Nestler’s “River That Flows Both Ways” and Pete Seeger’s “My Dirty Stream,” songs from some of the folk circuit’s most talented writers, like Cindy Kallet’s “Tide and the River Rising” and Bill Staines’ “River,” and sparkling originals from McAvoy. Among these are “Down by the River” which Seeger has been leading in his recent concerts by the Hudson, and “Back Bay,” which – along with selections by Seeger, Tom Paxton, and others – appeared on the 2005 recording *Songs for the Earth*, a tribute to Rachel Carson from Musicians United to Sustain the Environment.

Like their previous albums, *Where the Heron Waits* features rich three and four part harmonies in settings ranging from the driving fiddle and Dobro accompaniment on “Sail Away Ladies” (with new words by Stanne) to delicate finger-picked guitar backed by viola on “Tide and the River Rising.” Four of the thirteen cuts are performed *a capella*, including Jay Ungar’s well-known “Ashokan Farewell.” Originally an instrumental tune, McAvoy offers it as a solo vocal using Grian MacGregor’s lovely lyrics, in a track recorded live in Ireland during one of the band’s frequent visits there.

Stanne and Rubeo handle most of the instrumental work – Steve on guitar and Dobro and Paul on guitar and bodhran, the Irish skin drum. Paul “the



Photo by Mike Pogue

Younger” Rubeo of the next generation of Boomers plays bass guitar, while Robert Bard adds standup bass to several tracks. Bard also engineered the lion’s share of the album at his Skytop Sound Studio in New Paltz, New York, with Scott Petito at NRS Recording Studio in Catskill doing the mastering.

More musical color is added by Steve Bernstein on mandolin, Travis Jeffrey on banjo, Ed Lowman on fiddle, Tom McHugh on harmonica, and Rosie Newton on viola.

When it comes to preserving the Hudson, Betty and the Baby Boomers not only talk the talk and sing the song – they also walk the walk. All four are educators. Betty is a former English teacher turned naturalist, working on the Hudson and in the Valley’s other precious open spaces. Jean is the education coordinator for the Hudson River Research Reserve, protecting wetlands along the river. Paul, a longtime social studies teacher, today trains teachers to use computer and video technology to bring the river into their classrooms. Steve directed *Clearwater*’s teaching programs for nearly twenty years and now coordinates the education projects of New York State’s Hudson River Estuary Program.

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