

Guitars In Sync

Local Father-Daughter Duo Showcase Their Musical Talents

BY ANALIESE KREUTZER

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GEORGE BOWLEY AND LAURIE DUPUIS



When George Bowley first heard the music of Les Paul and Mary Ford in the 1950s, he was captivated. Now, 65 years later, he and his daughter, Laurie Dupuis, have released a CD and begun performing the music they love at local venues.

Bowley and Dupuis have been recording music in Paul and Ford's multiple guitar and vocal style for more than 30 years. Until recently, their music remained underground, literally, as they put together tracks in a studio in the basement of Bowley's Haymarket home.

"About three or four years ago, we decided we wanted to make music to release to the public," Bowley said. The duo put together *Guitars in Sync*, a 12-song CD they released in late 2017. The CD includes classics such as Paul and Ford's hits "The World is Waiting for the Sunrise" and "Vaya Con Dios" as well as an original song by Bowley titled "Guitars in Sync." The CD was considered for two Grammy nominations.

The CD wasn't the duo's first commercial recording though. In the 1980s, they recorded jingles for the Don and Mike radio show in Washington, DC. In the 1990s, they recorded a five-song karaoke cassette for the Pocket Songs label titled *You Sing the Hits of Les Paul and Mary Ford*. "We had to get the arrangements and the recordings to sound exactly like what they recorded," said Bowley.

Performing live has been another recent development for them. In 2018, through an acquaintance, they were asked to perform at Heritage Hunt Club in Gainesville as the opening act for an Everly Brothers tribute show. "They gave us 25 minutes," said Bowley.



Laurie Dupuis and George Bowley perform at the Hylton Performing Arts Center in October 2019.

“We had never performed before a live audience. The curtain opened up, and there were 300 people there. Afterwards, we said that went well. Let’s try another one.”

They have since performed at local libraries, country clubs and, in October 2019, at the Hylton Performing Arts Center on George Mason University’s Manassas campus. To achieve their sound when performing live, they use background recordings minus the parts they play live. “We play and sing to ourselves,” said Dupuis.

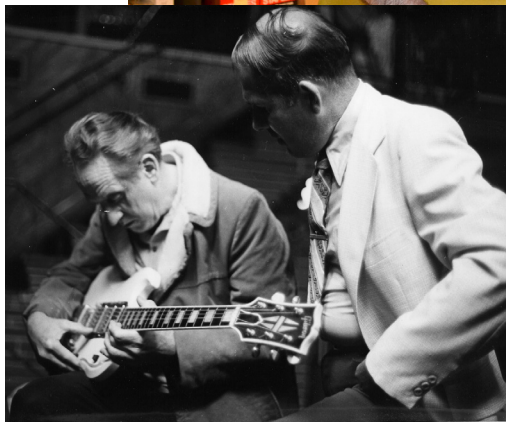
“It’s fun. We look at an opportunity to perform as another night to sit down and play music and be happy knowing that people are sitting there listening to us because they want to listen to us. You can’t beat that,” Bowley said.

A Lifelong Passion

Bowley was in high school when Paul and Ford came out with their first hit. “That style of music just grabbed me and stayed with me for the rest of my life,” he said. Bowley—who went on to get an advanced degree in communications engineering—already had developed a strong interest in electronics and broadcasting. When he saw Paul on television talking about the equipment he used to create his music, Bowley realized he had some of that same equipment and wondered whether he could make music like that. He wrote to Paul and the two eventually met and bonded over their shared love of experimenting with what was being called the new sound.

“It was a process called overdubbing, where a guitar wasn’t just one guitar, it was a series of guitars,” said Bowley. “Les would record a track and then he would superimpose another track on top of that one. He would build an orchestra of guitars. He did the same thing with the vocals. Mary would sing the lead, and then she would sing a harmony track and another harmony track. It almost sounded like a chorus. When they had their first hit, nobody knew what he was doing.”

Bowley and Paul lost touch when Bowley entered the U.S. Naval Academy and then went on to serve 20 years in the Navy. In 1972, he moved to the DC area. With the prospect of



ABOVE: George Bowley and Laurie Dupuis in their basement studio. LEFT: Les Paul and George Bowley in 1977.

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staying in one place for a while, he got out his recording equipment and renewed his friendship with Paul. The two shared their experiences with multiple track recording techniques over the years and got to the point where they were on the same level in terms of what they could do.

In October 1997, at the Iridium Club in New York City, Paul said, “George and Laurie are the only two people I have ever heard in my lifetime who have exactly duplicated the sound that Mary and I had in the 1950s.”

A Labor of Love

Although they didn’t make music their careers—Bowley worked in the private sector for 25 years after he retired from the Navy, and Dupuis is a clinical psychologist who recently completed her doctorate—it is clearly something they love.

“We do everything from composing, arranging, producing, recording, editing, mastering, distribution, mechanical licensing, promotion, the whole nine yards,” said Bowley. “It takes quite a while from an idea to completion, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. I wouldn’t want anybody else messing with my tracks. If it takes us a year to do a song, so what?”

“We’re not fame and fortune oriented. We get .0003 cents if someone listens to one of our songs on YouTube,” he said with a chuckle.

Bowley and Dupuis are thinking about doing more performances this year and possibly creating another CD, but they are moving ahead at their own pace. “We take what comes and enjoy whatever we get,” Bowley said.

For more information about the duo, to learn about upcoming performances or to purchase the CD, visit their website GuitarsInSync.com. ♦