

CURTIS & LORETTA

Curtis & Loretta's music comes straight from the heart. The husband and wife duo's extraordinary harmonies and proficiency on a parade of stringed instruments create an alluring frame for their poignant original songs, and carefully chosen traditional pieces from the British Isles, America, and beyond. The current menagerie includes Celtic harp, mandocello, mandolin, guitars, clawhammer banjo, and National steel ukulele, plus a bit of kazoo, harmonica, and shakers. Curtis' down-home sense of humor and Loretta's theater background engage the audience in an experience that runs the gamut of rolling with laughter to holding back tears, with plenty of side-trips in between.

The duo married twenty-four years ago in Santiago, Mexico. Ten years earlier, in the spring of 1977, they had chanced to meet each other on the beach just outside Santa Cruz, California. Their best guesstimate of the actual day is sometime in April. Love was born, a duo was formed, and they took to the road, hitchhiking up and down the West Coast, playing in cafes, and on the street.

Over the next three decades, Curtis Teague and Loretta Simonet's harmonies have gotten tighter than ever, their stage presence has blossomed, and they've graduated from the street to dedicated fans at folk clubs across the U.S. They've racked up countless miles over the years, crisscrossing the country to deliver their own unique brand of folk singer/songwriter music. They've shared billings with Jez Lowe, Vassar Clements, Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, Anne Hills, Greg Brown, Holly Near, and Bill Staines, to name just a few.

Their heartfelt original songs have won them fans throughout the U.S. and overseas. Curtis & Loretta revel in writing songs about the heroism and integrity of real-life, ordinary people, often people they actually know. "Angel of Bergen-Belsen" is the story of Luba Tryszynska, a holocaust survivor who saved 54 children during World War II. Curtis & Loretta sought her out and met her after writing the song, and visited her four times at her home in Miami. "Gone Forever" tells the heart wrenching story of Loretta coming to terms with her dad's Alzheimer's. "Elza and Branko (The Siege of Sarajevo)" details the love and bravery of a couple living through the Balkan wars. Curtis & Loretta located Elza (now a widow) and were in contact with her for many years.

Rick Mason wrote in the Minneapolis **City Pages A-List**, "Curtis and Loretta are in many ways the quintessential folk duo: finely honed vocal harmonies of multidimensional intrigue, abundant talent on an array of stringed instruments, deep traditional roots, great originals, and equally strong strains of gravity and playful irreverence."

And though it's not commonly known, folksingers do want to have fun! The duo's perennial humor shines through, with songs of harp players trying to get into heaven, small spenders on first dates, bugs, and lutefisk! In 2002, City Pages named them "**Best Acoustic Performers of the Twin Cities.**" They've received numerous Minnesota Music Award nominations for Best Acoustic Folk Artist.

Their latest CD, **Our Heritage in Song**, grew out of a project with the Minnesota Sesquicentennial Commission. On the strength of this CD, Curtis & Loretta received an **Arts Tour Minnesota grant** from the Minnesota State Arts Board in 2010, presenting "Minnesota Heritage in Song" at 19 venues across the state. The recording is made up entirely of songs folks would have been singing in Minnesota in 1858, when it was a brand new state. These traditional musical gems highlight Curtis & Loretta's old world charm as never before. The duo makes history come alive, as their voices resonate on such timeless poignant songs as "The Farmer is the Man," "Lincoln and Liberty," and "The Jam on Gerry's Rocks."

Curtis grew up in Duncanville, Texas, singing harmony in small country churches. He taught himself to play guitar, and everything else he's come across in his ongoing quest for vintage stringed instruments. He has a diploma in Musical Stringed Instrument Repair and Building from Red Wing Technical College in Minnesota. Loretta grew up in Stillwater, the historic river town known as the "birthplace of Minnesota." She sang in church, high school, and college choirs, and graduated from St. Cloud State University in Minnesota with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theater (acting). She studied harp with Bridgett Stuckey of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and vocal performance with Jeannie Brindley-Barnett.

CURTIS TEAGUE Vocals, mandocello, mandolin, guitar, clawhammer banjo, ukulele, harmonica
LORETTA SIMONET Vocals, Celtic harp, guitar, celeste, mandolin, kazoo, shakers