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Kid-tested, mother-approved

Singer Francie Kelley to perform at mom Lois Crozier Hogle's 90th-birthday party

by **Jaime Marconette**

O One evening, in the quiet hours shortly after midnight, Francie Kelley sat down at the piano. Her husband, Pat, joined her, and within 20 minutes a lullaby to their unborn child was written.

Kelley never planned to make a children's album. But as she prepared to have her first child and then experienced the joys of watching Katie grow up, her songwriting reflected these wonders.

In 2002 she released "Wake Up & Go To Sleep!," a loving lullaby to her 8-year-old daughter. A sophisticated collection that fuses country and jazz, the album features mostly original compositions by Kelley, with such titles as "Precious One," "Babies Won't Keep," and "Jammin in My Jammies."

The latter song will be the theme of Kelley's next concert, "Jammin' in My Jammies," which will take place on Saturday at Linden Tree in Los Altos. The show will feature Kelley, her husband Pat on guitar, and daughter Katie singing back-up vocals. Kids and parents are invited to come and listen and jam in their jammies.

"The shows are a lot of fun. We try to get people participating," said Kelley, 48, who was raised in Palo Alto but currently resides in Los Angeles.

Kelley will also perform on Sunday at a benefit at Hidden Villa. That event will celebrate the 90th birthday of her mother, environmentalist and activist Lois Crozier Hogle. Proceeds will be split equally among Acterra, the Committee for Green Foothills and Hidden Villa.

An award-winning environmental leader, Crozier Hogle helped found, guide and inspire a host of organizations, including Committee for Green Foothills, the Peninsula Conservation Center (Acterra's predecessor), Hidden Villa, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Peninsula Open Space Trust and the YWCA, among others.

Though Kelley has not followed in her mother's footsteps, she nevertheless credits her for pursuing a career in music.

"It is my mother's example of dreaming big that inspires me," Kelley said.



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"And I want to inspire children to dream big, too!"

For this special occasion, Kelley will debut a new poem she has written in her mother's honor, and in the spirit of the environment. Entitled "Common Purpose" ("The Acorn Song"), the work is a metaphor for what her mother has accomplished, Kelley said.

"A dream of protecting the foothills for future generations, was like an acorn that she, Wally Stegner and Ruth Spangenberg 'planted' in the living room," Kelley said. "The poem mentions things that Mom loves, that she wants to share with everyone.....'Listen to the meadowlark,' she often says. 'Oh look at the oaks and the poppies.' She loves to share beauty with others. And natural beauty enriches our spirit."

Rounding out the family celebration will be son Allan Hogle, who will also honor his mother, but in spoken word, instead of song.

Though Kelley started playing piano when she was 8 and took voice lessons beginning at 15, it wasn't until she was pregnant with Katie that she began writing children's music. The lyrics and music on "Wake Up & Go To Sleep!" were written over a number of years.

"It was totally inspired by having a child," Kelley said. "I just found myself moseying over to the piano."

As Katie grew up, the music grew along with her, Kelley said, adding that as her daughter's life became more active, the songs did, as well. The beginning of the album features upbeat songs, which slowly transform into mid-tempo pieces, and finally end in lullabies. The title, "Wake Up & Go To Sleep," mirrors this progression.

Pat, a jazz musician with eight albums to his credit, co-wrote many of the album's songs. He was also recently featured on the cover of Guitar Magazine and will tour with Natalie Cole this spring.

"Such a cool byproduct was I got to collaborate with my husband," said Kelley, who cites the Beatles and Peter, Paul and Mary as influences.

The couple's musical styles are easily noticeable on the CD. Alongside Pat's jazz guitar, Kelley weaves folk and rock melodies. Their combined musical expertise has resulted in a sophisticated styling and arrangement rarely found in children's recordings.

When it came to lyrics, however, daughter Katie provided more than enough inspiration.

"The lyrics are a response to being a mother," Kelley said. "It's something tangible that she'll always have that says 'I love you.'"

With this album, Kelley aims to bring parents and children closer together, helping moms and dads reconnect with the joys of innocence and wonder. On "Song of Life," Kelley sings, "Children are the song of life/The lullaby for my soul/The peace of mind I searched the world for/Lives quietly just inside your door."

When not writing music, Kelley is an art consultant, helping interior designers select art for hotels. She also oversees a children's choir.

Kelley hopes to keep bringing the joy of music to children and parents alike, and intends to release more CDs in the future.

"I feel like my authentic voice is in children's music," Kelley said. "I feel so at home."

Editorial intern Jaime Marconette can be reached at jmarconette@pawebweekly.com.

Who: Francie Kelley and Pat Kelley in concert. The event will honor the 90th birthday of Kelley's mother, Lois Crozier Hogle.

Where: Hidden Villa's Duveneck House, 26870 Moody Road in Los Altos Hills

When: Sunday at 5:30 p.m. The reception will begin at 4 p.m.

Cost: Tickets are \$90 (\$1 per year of Crozier Hogle's life so far). Proceeds will be split equally among Acterra, Committee for Green Foothills and Hidden Villa. The total amount of the contribution, minus \$15 per attendee, is tax-deductible. Discounts will be made available for seniors and students.

Info: Please call Committee for Green Foothills at (650) 968-7243. *Francie, Pat and Katie Kelley will also perform on Saturday at 11 a.m. at Linden Tree Children's Recordings and Books, 170 State St. in Los Altos. Admission is free. For more information please call (650) 949-3390 or visit www.lindentreebooks.com.*

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