



The Granby Drummer November 2009

GEF Songwriters Showcase Line-up Revealed

by Barbara Cashman

On Friday, December 4, at 7 PM, four friends will meet in Granby to benefit the Arts Endowment of the Granby Education Foundation. Artists all, they share the stage at GMHS to weave their individual music and styles into a performance that is sure to be far greater than the sum of its significant and acclaimed parts. As previously announced, Granby and (now) Nashville's own **Fred Wilhelm, Jr.** has been instrumental in bringing this award winning group to Granby. With the sponsorship of GEF supporters Good Works Insurance, Lost Acres Orchard, Granby Pharmacy, Squadron Capital, Pierce Builders and Windsor Federal Savings Bank, the evening's ambience and folksy Americana entertainment will reach the parent/child/partner/sibling/friend/citizen in each of us.

Lori McKenna describes herself as "...a housewife from Stoughton who likes to write songs." Writing since the age of 13, McKenna was coerced by family to try an open-mic performance at the age of 27; already a mother of three, she was well received, and began to slowly build a following and local industry support in the Boston area. Four CDs and seven years later, balancing her life as a performer, wife, and 150,000 mile mini-van driving mom, McKenna's lyrics about marriage, family, loss, and growing up quickly, caught the ears of Nashville. Not just any Nashville, but super star Faith Hill Nashville, who quickly recorded four of McKenna's songs, placing three, including title track *Fireflies*, onto her 2005 CD. With the backing of Hill and husband Tim McGraw, an Oprah appearance, international tour, and a fifth CD, *Unglamorous*, soon followed. Multiple awards and songwriting recognition have not really changed McKenna's life all that much – her family has a new home and car, but they still live in the same town where McKenna grew up, and she continues to write songs about life at her kitchen table when the youngest of her five children is tucked into bed.

The GEF is very pleased to announce the addition of **Catie Curtis** and **Mark Erelli** to this evening's performance. Curtis has released 10 CDs, founded a youth music endowment, performed at the Human Rights Campaign's official Obama Inaugural Ball, and toured with The Lilith Fair and Dar Williams. She has achieved both commercial and critical success, and in partnership with Mark Erelli, won the Grand Prize in the International Songwriting Competition for their song *People Look Around*, a response to Hurricane Katrina. Curtis balances her concerned involvement with a writing style and heart that "...see light where so many would look and see darkness" as described by singer /songwriter Mary Gauthier.

Mark Erelli rounds out the foursome with his own lyrical talents. His songs have been called "intimate masterpieces" by the Boston Globe, with his music describing the meeting place of a social conscience, the newly found maturity of a new father, hope, faith, responsibility, heroism, and family. Erelli has released seven CDs, achieving both critical and commercial success while managing to remain just outside of any industry formula.

In support of art and friendship, this group will interweave their songs in a one- time only event sure to be full of stories and musings about the roads that brought them to success. Tickets, only \$20, are available through our friends at Granby Pharmacy, or via the GEF website at www.granbyeducationfoundation.org. Please join us afterward in the GEF Coffeehouse for delicious snacks, the chance to chat with friends, purchase CDs and to meet these tremendous artists. To learn more about each of these artists, please visit them at their respective websites, www.fredwilhelm.com, www.lorimckenna.com, www.catiecurtis.com, www.markerelli.com.