

By The Lee - Lauren Stovall and Peter Sharpe

This month *Essential Listening* introduces you all to two new San Diegans who have a long musical and bluegrass background: Lauren Stovall and Peter Sharpe. Their previous progressive bluegrass band, *The Railsplitters*, was based in Colorado and toured internationally. After moving to California, they now work as the duo *By The Lee* and specialize in presenting both old and new tunes for private events, with a repertoire that features genres from classic jazz to modern-day pop and Americana music. Lauren is a talented vocalist, guitarist, and songwriter, and Peter is a multi-instrumentalist including mandolin, mandola, and guitar along with vocals.

Here's a tune from *By The Lee*, **Long Hard Road** <https://youtu.be/7fyyCbLwRIg>

Essential Listening asked them to give us some insight on their musical influences that include old time and new bluegrass. Here are their responses:

What was one of your first influences in bluegrass music?

For Lauren, in college, her gateway band was *Yonder Mountain String Band* before she became more interested in traditional music.

Pete was heavily influenced by the *Johnson Mountain Boys* and *Alison Krauss* after his sister made him a mixtape.

Dance Boatman Dance *Yonder Mountain String Band* <https://youtu.be/VMIsQ1nw61w>

Will You Be Leaving? *Alison Krauss* <https://youtu.be/L1nkK1lCnYM>

Live at the Old Schoolhouse (live) *Johnson Mountain Boys* <https://youtu.be/OshZDepgiWA>

Who is a recent influence?

For Pete, *Hawktail*, *Andrew Marlin*, and *Joe K Walsh* are regularly spinning in his album rotation lately. Lauren has been largely interested in more fiddle tunes and old-time music lately. Two of her favorite old time songs are "Sing Me a Song" by Olla Belle Reed and "Sally Ann"

Last One on the Line *Hawktail* <https://youtu.be/E4XkAZmSflo>

The Jaybird (live) *Andrew Marlin* <https://youtu.be/CG-drrSYAeo>

Never More Will Roam *Joe K. Walsh* <https://youtu.be/zLuWjqA8Ys8>

Sing Me a Song *Olla Belle Reed* https://youtu.be/oFo_GepwuaY

Sally Ann *Bruce Molsky and David Holt* <https://youtu.be/sh6hb9E3WZc>

Can you recommend an essential recording that you feel bluegrass musicians and fans should hear?

Why? What makes it essential?

Real Time by Darrell Scott and Tim O'Brien for the amazing harmonies.

Real Time (album) *Tim O'Brien and Darrell Scott* <https://youtu.be/VUJrdOpx8Js>

For a beginning bluegrass musician, whose music would be a good start for listening and learning?

As far as singing goes, Lauren always likes to recommend *Skaggs and Rice* the album because they leave so much room to practice both simple and complex 3rd part harmonies. Pete recommends Tony Rice's *Manzanita*, anything by *The Bluegrass Album Band*, and anything by the *Del McCoury Band* if you want to know what real bluegrass sounds like.

Manzanita (album) *Tony Rice Unit* <https://youtu.be/JRn6zJgG8WU>

Bluegrass Album Band (live) <https://youtu.be/QnoLocq7SGI>

I Feel the Blues Moving In (live) *Del McCoury Band* <https://youtu.be/dK13sUce6Yw>

As a musician, whose music are you listening to most?

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Richard Burkett

This is a real curveball here but we (as a couple and separately) listen A LOT to *Sylvan Esso*. They are not anywhere close to bluegrass, but they are amazing songwriters and create really amazing beats and the production of their last two albums is outstanding.

Radio Sylvan Esso <https://youtu.be/6LEmDEZVa5g>

Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year! Celebrate by listening to some new music (and new old music!).