



Rick Stanley

Singer/Songwriter and Harper

Rick Stanley is an award-winning singer/songwriter/guitarist/harper and harp-maker. These days he designs and builds custom folk harps and performs the music of his Celtic-folk roots. He embodies the resurgence in the late 20th century of the ancient oral tradition of performance, and the rekindled interest in the folk lever harp -- emblem of Irish nationalism since the 10th century. His innovative rhythmic and complicated picking style on Irish harp stands in stark contrast to the simple chords often plucked by modern troubadour harpers.

Rick has had a long career in folk music as a guitarist and singer/songwriter. He started performing in the coffee houses of Boston, New York and ultimately the West Coast where Columbia Records signed him. Producer Terry Melcher, who made the magic of the “Byrds” hit albums, took on the role of manager and producer to Rick and Pam Polland, “The Gentle Soul.” They made the charts with two singles, “Tell Me Love,” written by Rick and the first modern Celtic song to hit the American charts; and “She’s a Flying Thing that Sings” written by one-time member of “The Gentle Soul,” Jackson Browne. Their self-titled album, on the Epic label, was called “Most beautiful...album of the year” by *Billboard*, the top trade magazine for the music industry. Sony/Sundazed Records released the complete recordings of The Gentle Soul in March 2003.

“... Rick Stanley is a world-class musician, arranger and artist who has performed or recorded with many great musicians: Paul Horn, (Mike Love & The Beach Boys, Linda Ronstadt & Kenny Edwards, Al Kooper, Jackson Browne,) Glen Campbell, Ry Cooder, Hoyt Axton, Steven Stills and other fine musicians in his long career with Columbia and Epic Records. Rick is one of those rare musicians who were first in line when talent was being passed out...”
(*Eric Cathcart, The Kilt & Harp, Winter 2002*). The next decade found Rick living in Europe and touring the world, performing in venues from pubs to the palaces of Emperor Haille Selassie and the King of Nepal. All the while, Rick was writing the songs for two more highly acclaimed albums recorded at A&M Studios in L.A. with Joni Mitchell’s talented producer, Henry Lewy.

Years before the recent Celtic renaissance, Rick recorded a powerful album called *On English Hills*, containing some of his favorite Scots, Irish and English ballads and a few of his originals. Rick is a world-class guitarist (he’s worked with some of the best, like Ry Cooder and Glenn Campbell) but once he started singing with a Celtic harp Rick found the perfect accompaniment to his rich “Cat Stevens” voice, as can be heard on his solo effort *The Ballad of Bothwell & Marie*. Rick studied with some of the best harpers Europe has to offer: the Ratigan sisters, Máire Ní Chathasaigh, William Jackson, Grainne Hambly and others.

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Because Rick's formative years were not only filled with music, but as apprentice to a master cabinetmaker who was one of the last hand-tool builders, he has excelled at designing and building both nylon and wire-strung harps (visit his website at www.celticharps.com). The last decade has been dedicated to creating masterpieces out of wood, glue and consciousness and, of course, an equal amount of Rick's time has been given to mastering the accompaniment of his ballads and original songs with his hand-built harps. His Masters in English Literature and creative writing have made it easier for him to create songs that are historically accurate as well as beautiful. Rick performs either with his group Border Lord, or as a solo artist often accompanied by Irish fiddler Tara Dutcher and Claudine Stanley on bodhran.

DISCOGRAPHY

Bonny Brave Boys, self-produced, 2003. Traditional and contemporary ballads and airs performed on vocals, harp, cello, guitar, bodhran and whistle. Joining Rick and Robin are Chulrua's Tim Britton and Pat Egan. Produced and engineered by Tim Britton.

The Ballad of Bothwell & Marie, self-produced, 2001. Traditional and contemporary Celtic Ballads on harp, guitar and cello.

On English Hills, self-produced, 1983. Traditional Irish, Scottish and English Ballads on guitar, penny whistle, hammered dulcimer, highland pipes.

In the Golden Dome, produced by Mac Gayden at Broken Door Studio, Nashville, 1980. Rick Stanley on guitar and vocals; Mac Gayden on slide guitar, bass; Buddy Spicher on fiddle, violin, cello; and Biff Watson on synthesizer.

Something Good is Happening, produced by Henry Lewy at A&M Records, 1972. Beautiful new age music written and performed by Rick Stanley and *The Loading Zone's* Paul Fauerso.

Song of Life, produced by Henry Lewy at A&M Records, 1970. Original new age music with Rick on guitar and vocals and Paul Horn on flute.

Gentle Soul, produced by Terry Melcher, Columbia Records, released on Epic label, 1969. Rick Stanley--vocals and guitar, Pam Polland--vocals, Ry Cooder--slide guitar, mandolin, and Van Dyke Parks--harpsicord. NOTE: The complete works of *The Gentle Soul* were re-released March 2003.

VENUES

The Troubadour, 1968-1969 (CA)

The Golden Bear, 1968-1969 (CA)

Club 47 Mt. Auburn, 1966-1968 (MA)

Mallorca, Spain; Fuji, Italy; Germany, 1969-1976 (2,000+ audiences)

MIT and other colleges throughout the US, 1969-1971, 1973-74

Amherst College, 1979 (performed w/The Beach Boys and Mac Gayden to 5,000+ audience) (MA)

Concord's Colonial Inn, 1996 (MA)

All Things Scottish CelticFest, 2001 (Cedar Rapids, IA)

Milwaukee Irish Fest, 2001, 2002, 2003 (WI)

Chicago Celtic Fest, 2000, 2001, 2002

The Mill, 2003 (Iowa City, IA)

Celebration Concert - host Jeff Holtz, Western Illinois University (2003)

AWARDS, ETC.

2002 Recipient of Traditional Arts Award, Iowa Arts Council.

Appeared on November 2003 music spotlight, ***LIVING IN IOWA***