

## A Little Autoharp Story by Jerry Stewart

Last year (2008) at the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering (MLAG) I met a young lady (Elizabeth Devlin) who had an old silver top autoharp. I told her that the old Silvertone autoharps were very good because Mike Fenton said so. Mike told me this a few years ago when he and I found an old Silvertone autoharp in an antique store in Manassas, Virginia where I live. At that time Mike was staying at our house for a few days to perform an autoharp workshop for the Capitol Harper's Autoharp group.

The day of the workshop a lady (Jessie Devlin) came but without any instrument. She borrowed my old SSS Stewart guitar and she and Mike performed a duet of a song called "When the Rain Comes Down" which was written by Bob Devlin before he died.

Jessie told me that she would like to have an autoharp so the next day Mike and I went around to antique stores to look for one. Mike was also interested in finding old Bo Diddley records.

Anyway, back at the MLAG (2008) Saturday night concert they announced that the winner of the Leonard A. Reid Peoples Choice Award for Outstanding Vocal Performance was Elizabeth Devlin. The prize was a new professionally made autoharp and she gave an elegant acceptance speech and thanked MLAG for the Mary Lou Orthey Scholarship she received to attend the MLAG event.

This year (2009) at MLAG I was talking to John Dettra on the subject of old autoharps and when I mentioned the old silvertone and the young lady I had met last year, John told me that she was Bob Devlin's daughter. At that moment I realized that it was possible that the old silvertone autoharp she played at MLAG 2008 was the same autoharp that Mike and I got for Jessie Devlin years earlier. Needless to say, I was overjoyed by all of the connections in this story which I failed to recognize the year before. I searched the internet with "Elabeth Devlin" and found her music and pictures of that old silvertone autoharp at [www.myspace.com/elizabethdevlin](http://www.myspace.com/elizabethdevlin). I also found more on Bob Devlin at [www.petermccory.com/bobdevlin.htm](http://www.petermccory.com/bobdevlin.htm). More on Elizabeth can be found at [www.AllAreRelative.com](http://www.AllAreRelative.com).

