



Duo debuts at San Gregorio Store

By Stacy Trevenon [stacy@hmbreview.com]

Rather than ignore their musical forebears, Carol Ann Ives and Stevie Gurr let the best from the past energize their sound today.

Listeners can see and hear for themselves when the duo performs Saturday at the San Gregorio Store, on Highway 84 at Stage Road.

The past defined Gurr, who came from the 1960s San Francisco scene to play with Dr. John, Elvin Bishop, blues icons and others.

“It’s music that I think is respected, but not necessarily played with the same fervor it used to be,” he said. “I loved to feel a strong sense of passion from people who would listen to it. Like food for the soul. I haven’t lost that.”

Instead, it goes into his music with Ives. The songs on their new CD “13 Seasons,” mostly written by Ives except for some oldies and played with instrumentation ranging from brass, a Wurlitzer piano, multiple guitars, violin, harmonica and more, have been critically characterized as “Cowboy Junkies atmospherics with Fleetwood Mac and Aimee Mann pop sensibilities.”

Folksy yet driving, melodically compelling, lyrically haunting yet thoughtful, these strains will fill the store from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday.

For her part, Ives, whose clear yet commanding soprano expresses the songs, only recently segued into music through a dark twist of fate. Due to a scheduling mixup, she narrowly avoided being on one of the planes that crashed on Sept. 11, 2001. She wound up in Canada for a week with musician friends before driving back across the country. That tragic week, and the dot-com shakeup, which wreaked havoc on the marketing field she worked in, decided her future.

“Everything was upside down,” she said. “What the heck was going on, and what was I going to do now? (Music) was the only thing that made sense to me.”

She pursued music and “it was like I found my left arm and didn’t know I’d been missing it.”

Naming themselves Emith — a term that loosely translates as “the good life” — the duo and their fresh ballads, bohemian pop, art rock and driving folk covers and originals, have snagged independent music awards.

The San Gregorio Store can be reached at 726-0565.