



2006 Induction Class



Mary Travers

With her long, flowing, blonde hair and crystal-clear soprano vocals, Mary Travers was a major influence on the folk music of the 1960s and '70s. A founding member of Peter, Paul And Mary, Travers, not only became one of the most commercially successful folk performers, but, used her position to become an inspirational political spokesperson. Together with Peter Yarrow and Noel Paul Stookey, Travers performed at Civil Rights rallies with Dr. Martin Luther King, in Birmingham, Alabama and Washington, D.C., and, at numerous anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, fund-raisers and teach-ins. During the 1980s, Travers helped to call attention to the struggles of Latin America.

A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Travers grew up in New York's Greenwich Village. As a youngster, she became enchanted with the American folk songs played by The Weavers, Leadbelly and Woody Guthrie. While in high school, Travers became a regular performer at the Sunday afternoon folk music sessions at Washington Square Park. Together with a teenage group, The Songswappers, Travers appeared twice at Carnegie Hall and recorded with Pete Seeger. After singing in the chorus of a short-lived Broadway show, Travers balanced work

in the literary and advertising field with appearances in New York clubs at night and weekends. After meeting humorist, folksinger and guitarist Stookey and folk music producer Milt Okun, Travers helped to form Peter, Paul and Mary. The trio performed its debut show at the Bitter End in 1961 and began a decade-long series of concerts and recordings. Their self-titled debut album, released in 1962 became a major hit, remaining in the top ten for ten months and the top twenty for two years. Their single, "If I Had A Hammer" became an anthem of the Civil Rights movement. Over the next decade, Travers and the trio helped to popularize the songs of Bob Dylan, John Denver and Gordon Lightfoot. Travers' lead vocals helped to make the trio's rendition of Denver's "Leaving On A Jet Plane," a major hit in 1970.

Shortly after releasing a "greatest hits" album, "Ten Years Together," in May, 1970, the trio announced their separation. The mother of two daughters-Erika, born in 1960, and Alicia, born in 1966 — Travers remained active as a soloist, releasing five albums and performing in college and clubs throughout the United States. In addition, Travers lectured at colleges on "Society And Its Effect On Music", hosted a music and interview show on Radio Pacifica (KPFK) in Los Angeles and produced, wrote and starred in a television series for the BBC.

Travers reunited with Stookey and Yarrow in 1978 for a benefit concert, Survival Sunday, that Yarrow organized and produced at the Hollywood Bowl. Their performance was so encouraging that they agreed to resume their partnership. In the two decades since, Travers has continued to record and perform approximately forty-five concerts each year with the trio.