

# MARY, . . .

## Peter & Paul

**P**eter, Paul & Mary came to my attention in 1962, when they released their first album, also called, “Peter, Paul & Mary.” The two guys in the group, Noel Paul Stookey and Peter Yarrow, both played guitar and sang.

And there was one woman singer, Mary Travers.

She was blond, blue-eyed, with a radiating smile and a chorus of curves. Mary sang sweetly; her harmonies shimmered.

To my eyes, she was beautiful.

I was a seventeen-year-old folk music fanatic when their album came out, and I’ll admit, I had a crush on Mary.

So I was delighted when I got a call in 1979 from Mimi Fariña of the Bread and Roses Festival of Music. Peter, Paul & Mary were going to be playing the festival that year and had requested my services as the festival’s house bass player to back them for their show. Rehearsal would be the day before the show, backstage, at one o’clock sharp.

They overnighted me their set list, I bought the three Peter, Paul & Mary albums I needed to cover the tunes on the list, and started studying the bass parts.

This is what I found: all of Peter, Paul & Mary’s tunes are fairly straightforward, as far as the bass player goes, with one exception, and that’s their big hit “Leaving on a Jet Plane.” The bass man kicks off this arrangement playing a

melodic bass lead. He starts the song off, sets the tempo, sets the groove, and sets the mood of “Leaving on a Jet Plane,” playing a bass line that is part melody and part bass vamp.

As the lone bass, new boy on their block, opposite three people who had been playing together for almost a quarter century, when it came to kicking off “Leaving on a Jet Plane,” I was scared witless.

*[Continued in the book...]*



NOEL PAUL STOOKEY, MARY TRAVERS & PETER YARROW  
ACCOMPANIED BY THE AUTHOR  
BREAD AND ROSES FESTIVAL OF MUSIC, BERKELEY, OCTOBER 7, 1979

BY JON SIEVERT