

# Kingston Trio brings iconic folk sounds to University Auditorium



**By Bill Dean, Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011**  
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Kingston Trio singer/banjoist George Grove puts the influence, significance — and just how big the group was at one time — in terms that anyone who loves popular music can understand.

Begun as a group of college singers in the mid-'50s, the Kingston Trio formed in the San Francisco Bay area of California and decided to give it their best shot for a year to see what would happen. What happened was the group released its self-titled, first album in 1958, and it contained a little, irresistible ditty called “Tom Dooley” — a tune that became a 6-million-selling superhit and started folk's huge revival of popularity in the '50s and '60s, Grove says in a phone call from Los Angeles.

“They fashioned a career in those first four years that is just unsurpassed. They had at one point (December 1959) four albums at

the same time in Billboard's Top 10 and nobody, not even The Beatles, have ever had that, ever since,” says Grove, who with the Kingston Trio will perform Saturday at University Auditorium.

The group's smash-hit second album “...From the ‘Hungry i” remained on the Billboard album charts for a staggering 457 weeks. Indeed, in a six-year period from 1957 to 1963, the Trio was the “most vital and popular folk group in the world,” according to AllMusic.com.

That in turn means that the group formed by Bob Shane, Nick Reynolds and Dave Guard — three singers who harmonized and played acoustic guitars and banjo — were at the forefront of the folk-music revival and influenced an almost limitless crop of acts in the '60s and '70s including such top bands as Fleetwood Mac and The Eagles, Grove says.

“They encouraged so many people to pick up a guitar, a banjo and start singing, and do something with it,” Grove says. “And those people later on became musicians like Joe Walsh. I remember going to an Eagles concert, we went backstage, and Joe Walsh said to Bob Shane ‘Hey man, do you remember teaching me how to tune a guitar on the beach at Wakiki?’”

Of the founding members, Guard died in 1991, Reynolds died in 2008 and Shane retired from the road in 2004 after having a heart attack. These days, Shane, who turned 77 on Feb. 1, lives in Phoenix and

remains on oxygen 24 hours a day. He does manage, however, to join Grove and singer/guitarists Bill Zorn and Rick Dougherty whenever the Kingston Trio plays within driving distance of his home.

“We just gave a concert in the greater Phoenix area, and Bob came out to that and did a cameo onstage, he comes out and sings ‘Scotch and Soda’ and ‘Tom Dooley’ and talks to the crowd,” Grove says.

“Bob has one of the most iconic voices in all of American musical history, and he's never lost it.”

Based on the continuing popularity of the group, neither have the current members. Invited by Shane to join the group in 1976, Grove has now performed with the Kingston Trio for 35 years. And Zorn, the Kingston Trio member that Grove replaced when he joined in the '70s, rejoined the group in 2004 after Shane retired from the road.

“Bill has one of the most powerful voices I've ever heard. So he is our anchor vocally, our mainstay,” Grove says. “And you take the third guy, Rick Dougherty, he's the fellow who replaced Glenn Yarbrough in The Limelighters. Glenn Yarbrough (“Baby, The Rain Must Fall”) had one of the most incredible tenor voices of all time,” Grove says.

“So it would take somebody to replace him that had an incredible tenor voice, and that's what Rick had. He was in The Limelighters for 14 years, and he quit the The Limelighters, and a year later he was in the Kingston Trio.”