

Robin And The Giant Biography

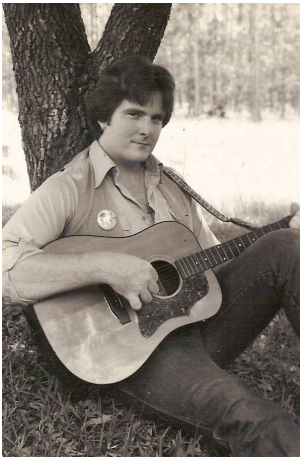
Robin And The Giant are Robin MacBlane and Larry Whitler.

Robin MacBlane was born Robin Lee Peronto on September 11, 1954 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She became Robin MacBlane after marrying her husband, Ronald MacBlane. The MacBlanes have two children, T.J. and Shannon.

Larry Whitler was born Lawrence Howard Whitler on February 8, 1955 in New York, New York. Whitler married Rita Kinard (previously Rita Smith) in December of 1981. The Whitlers have one son, Alex Whitler. Rita and Larry were divorced in 1990.

Robin MacBlane is a visual artist and a writer. Her art mediums include acrylics, watercolor, mixed media, pencil, oil paints, and photography. Her writing includes stories for children, stage plays, poetry, and lyrics for much of the Robin And The Giant song catalog.

Larry Whitler is also a visual artist and a writer. His mediums include pastel, acrylics, and pencil. His writing mostly manifests itself in songwriting both lyrically and musically. Whitler also wrote a novel for young readers titled "Oreo And Braun: XOB, The Full Circle Quest."



Prior to working with MacBlane, Whitler wrote and released three 45 rpm singles as a solo artist and one single with Jeff Denlea as the duo Whitler And Denlea in the 1970s and early 1980s. Whitler And Denlea performed primarily at small bars on Long Island, New York. Whitler departed to pursue a songwriting career in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and later toured the college circuit primarily on the east coast of the United States.

MacBlane and Whitler teamed up in 1987 at Whitler's request to perform a children's show for a school for handicapped children in Ocala, Florida (Hillcrest School For

Exceptional Children).

The duo formed Quill And Keyboard Productions as the business name to umbrella all of the works of Robin MacBlane and Larry Whitler. The name for their business was an idea from Robin that the two settled on after a long series of names were considered over lunch at a local McDonald's restaurant.

The name, Robin And The Giant, came to Whitler one day while taking a shower. He says that at six feet six inches tall the little children would always remark on his size and while in the shower one day he heard an "inner



voice” whisper the name “Robin And The Giant.” He says he knew immediately it was the perfect stage name for MacBlane and himself and that he wasted no time getting out of the shower and phoning MacBlane to tell her.

Their first show at Hillcrest School was the spark that led to other shows at other elementary schools and the duo decided that the music should educate as well as entertain. They combined their writing talents to create their first body of work titled, “Time To Learn” (released in 1988) which featured songs co-written by MacBlane and Whitler that taught basic lessons (the alphabet, the names of the planets, the colors of the rainbow, etc.).



In the late 1980s Robin MacBlane was working as an accountant at Microdyne Corporation near Ocala, Florida. During those same years Larry Whitler was working at WMFQ-FM radio in Ocala (sister station of WWKE-AM). Both stations were music stations with the FM format as Adult Contemporary and Easy Listening and the AM format being Top 40 and Oldies.

MacBlane and Whitler co-wrote the stage musical “West Parnell Lane” in 1988. The songs and story were written in the piano practice rooms of Central Florida Community College (now The College Of Central Florida). The show originally contained ten songs. An eleventh song (“Pucker Up And Kiss”) was added in 2010 when the duo re-recorded the dialogue and songs for release as a double CD. The first stage presentation of “West Parnell Lane” featured an all-child cast that included Robin’s children T.J. and Shannon and Larry’s step-daughter, Brie Kinard. The other children in the show were friends. The show was performed on the Central Florida Community College stage in 1988 and the proceeds from the ticket sales were donated to the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

In 1989 Robin And The Giant released the song, “Stand Up For The Children,” which they performed live that year at the Year Of The Young Child ceremonies. The song, written by Larry Whitler, was entered into the U.S. Congressional Record in 1989 by Congressman Cliff Stearns. It was included on a Robin And The Giant cassette album titled, “Stand Up For The Children.” The song was again produced and re-recorded in 2007 for the Robin And The Giant CD titled, “Not Too Long Ago.”



The late 1980s and early 1990s saw Robin And The Giant performing children’s shows at schools throughout the state of Florida. During those years MacBlane and Whitler penned nearly one hundred songs for children that were released on cassettes.

Simultaneously, Whitley continued to write songs for his solo catalog. MacBlane and Whitley would keep the two entities “Robin And The Giant” and Larry Whitley’s solo work separate.

In 1991 Whitley was hired to host the afternoon drive radio show at WTMC in Ocala. Later that year he secured an hour of time each Sunday and MacBlane and Whitley used that time to broadcast the radio version of Robin And The Giant. That show featured original stories and songs written entirely by MacBlane and Whitley. 56 of the stories from those radio broadcasts are published in the book, “The Gift Of The Barking Frog (And Other Gifts From The Heart)” published by Quill And Keyboard Productions.

Four hour-long specials of The Robin And The Giant show were featured nationally on the still infant satellite radio network called Digital Cable Radio on the For Kids Only channel. Those specials were, “Fond Memories Of Christmas,” “Back To School,” “My Springtime Friend,” and “Time To Travel.” The specials were also released as cassettes and CDs.



Live shows for Robin And The Giant were infrequent during the 1990s and limited to the occasional appearance by special request. Larry was recently divorced and the duo decided to hold off on the touring and, instead, channel their talents through recordings and broadcasts while first, and foremost, continually being active in the daily lives of raising their respective children.

The first non-children’s radio program hosted by Robin And The Giant featured MacBlane and Whitley on an entertainment focused talk show that included guest interviews, phone conversations with listeners, and a segment of the show dedicated to a unique “breakfast table style” reading of the local newspaper (The Ocala Star Banner) as a service to the blind and visually impaired listeners in the area. That segment became popular in the mid 1990s because of the candid banter between Robin And The Giant that often took the news stories on entertaining tangents.



The visual artists in Robin MacBlane and Larry Whitley surfaced during the latter part of the 1990s. Artwork in the form of painted benches, painted wooden boxes, portraits, canvases, and even Matryoshkas (Russian nesting dolls) materialized as the duo pursued the art talents that lay latent because of the focus on music and broadcasting. For a brief period music took a “back seat” and, thinking that a name needed to be applied to their art projects, Robin And The Giant scrambled the

letters of their name and dubbed themselves Bathing Nodine Art. Their logo featured a bathing woman in an outdoor bathtub set in a garden.

A three year stint as Activities Director at an Assisted Living Facility presented opportunities for the duo to use their musical and artistic talents to enrich the lives of the elderly. Art projects and talent shows abounded at the facility. Early in 2001 MacBlane and Whitler wrote "Live To Sniff," a full color illustrated book for children that tells the story of two dogs who come from opposite backgrounds and meet to become best friends.

In October of 2002, Larry Whitler received a call from Tish Moeller, General Manager of WOCA radio in Ocala, and asked if he would like to be the morning host of a local radio program called AM Ocala Live. Whitler took the job and approached it from a more entertainment driven perspective than his predecessors who had been more political in their approach to the show.

Instinctively, Whitler knew the show would be better if he could recruit his friend and partner, Robin MacBlane, but resistance from management prevailed and the status quo of having one male host persisted for the first year and a half of Whitler's stint on WOCA.

Toward the end of 2003 Whitler invited MacBlane to do a Friday segment on the radio of upcoming events in the area. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Eve of 2003 presented an opportunity for the duo to create holiday specials.



In April of 2004, Whitler invited MacBlane to be with him on the radio broadcast. Resistance from management to have a morning drive "team" almost caused Whitler to resign but a luncheon meeting with Moeller successfully persuaded her to accept the Robin And

The Giant formula as a marketable formula and Robin remained with the show.



Toward the end of 2007 Larry Whitler published "Barefoot Billetdoux," a book of 200 lyrics to songs he had written over the years accompanied by his original pen and ink illustrations. A profound sense of sadness was experienced when the book made Whitler realize that those lyrics needed to be accompanied by the melodies they were written with and not just the cartoon-like line drawings he had created for the book.

Feeling that the music had been abandoned in the wake of the art and radio endeavors, Whitler expressed his desire to MacBlane to re-visit the music. Robin And The Giant were reborn with the decision to re-record

the songs that had been so much a part of their lives more than a decade earlier.

The internet provided the tools that enabled Robin And The Giant and Larry Whitley (also known as "12 String Poet"), as a solo entity, to share, promote, and even sell their music to the entire world.

In 2010 Whitley and MacBlane created the video feature "Notables: The Well Sung Heroes Of Songwriting" to elevate awareness of the men and women throughout history that have been responsible for writing the music that has become part of the fabric of contemporary life. The feature is hosted on YouTube.

The video feature spawned the concept of creating a live version of Notables to further expand the mission of educating the public about the contributions of songwriters.

Today audiences are entertained, educated, and enriched by the live version of Notables which MacBlane and Whitley say is the adult version of the Robin And The Giant live show.



The musical portion of Notables features guitar/vocal performances of the songs of the showcased songwriters illustrating the genius of the writers and the beauty of their work in its simplest form of words, melodies, and chords. The spoken portion of Notables reveals tidbits of information and little known facts about the authors and composers of the songs that have become embedded in our collective consciousness.



As notable songwriters and artists in their own right, Robin And The Giant continue to create music and art and to educate and entertain their listeners and fans.
