

## The Point



Guitarists/singers Jeanne Mackey and Mary Trevor and bass player Kris Koth plan to get together again in October.

# Lifeline's final performance is likely to have an encore

by Susan Gutchess

Lifeline was defunct, but then it wasn't, but now it is again—with exceptions. Guitarists/singers Jeanne Mackey and Mary Trevor and bass player Kris Koth gave a strong performance of what was termed a "farewell" concert at the Birchmere on June 9.

Energetically produced by Dolores Smith, the concert was the penultimate performance by the original members of Lifeline. Understandably, the crowd responded with whistles and applause to the announcement that the group plans an encore concert in the D.C. area in October.

### ON STAGE

The trio opened with "Long Time Friends," a fitting choice for the spirited crowds, which reacted like it was Old Home Week. The song, written by Cathy Winter, is an ode to old friends and new. It was a fine choice thematically and musically as it proved an excellent vehicle to showcase the group's talents. Mackey and Trevor's closely woven harmonies provide fine musical texture to the performance, and Koth's adept bass strengthens the rhythmical structure. In contrast to the common role of the disinterested bass player in the background, Koth performs as an equal third. The group is clearly tightly knit and the show is enhanced by their easy manner with each other onstage and their obvious enjoyment in playing together.

The evening contained a full range of songs, encompassing ballads with a

strong message ("Woman be Free"), love songs ("Let Me Inside You"), numbers about life's passages—including the moving "Bamboo in the Wind" written by Gary LePow to his father upon his mother's death—and the humorous "Your State's Name Here." While the three are unabashedly Lesbian in onstage remarks, none of the songs were addressed solely to this audience. Oddly, the repertoire did not include any strong political songs—an area that has traditionally been one of the group's fortes.

The selections included some old chestnuts such as Patsy Cline's seductive "Walkin' After Midnight," as well as some new numbers, including three songs written by Trevor that she billed as a love trilogy. Particularly impressive was the range of musical styles—calypso, reggae, samba, ballads, country, rock n' roll—you name it. Lifeline's instrumentation is bare-bones; Mackey and Trevor perform on amplified six-string acoustic guitars, Mackey occasionally turns to the mandolin, and Koth plays the bass. Occasionally, the instrumentation drowned out the lyrics, but the variety of styles and techniques that they have mastered is a real asset to the band and often gives the impression of a much larger group.

The evening ended in an encore which included a stirring performance of "What You Got to Believe" by Dan Hicks. It was clear that those watching the show got to believe that this would not be Lifeline's final performance, and that they would have at least one more chance to hear the group in concert. ▼