

# Mad Folk NEWS

Newsletter of the Madison Folk Music Society

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## July sizzles with Folk on State performances

Folk on State for July will leave you wanting more! The following is a little about each performer, but to really know the music you have to hear it, not just read about it, so come on out

### FOCUS ON FOLK

#### A look at songwriting with the Buffali

**Andrew Yonda:** I wrote my first song in fourth grade on the bus ride home. A friend and I ripped off "Doo Wah Diddy." I didn't write another song until I was 18, when I stole my brother's hand-held cassette recorder. Then I bought a 4-track, which exploded my songwriting wide open. I generally get melodic ideas that just pop into my head from nowhere, and I'll improvise



lyrics right away, because usually the mood is impossible to match later. If I want to write but I don't feel inspired, I can force myself by setting a challenge, such as playing some arbitrary descending line and

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and see some great music at no cost. July 7 brings two wonderful duos to our stage, first time Folk on State performers Scott & Michelle Dalziel, who come from our neighboring Iowa, and for their fifth year, Small Potatoes, who come from our neighboring IL.

While Scott's guitar and vocals are smooth and effortless, Michelle's vocals and percussion prove soulful and rhythmic, complimenting each other in their yin & yang musical approach making their harmonic weavings a natural blend.

Small Potatoes is Jacquie Manning and Rich Prezioso. This Chicago-based duo has been touring on the folk circuit since 1993 and in that time they've become sought-after regulars at many

clubs and coffeehouses across the U.S. They have made repeat appearances at major folk festivals, including the Kerrville Folk Festival, the Walnut Valley Folk Festival, and Philadelphia Folk Festival. They were one of the "most requested" acts at the 1999 Falcon Ridge New Artist Showcase. Jacquie is also a past winner of the Kerrville New Folk Songwriting Contest

July 14 brings back for his fifth year for Folk on State, Peter Mulvey. We have only one performer this week, that is because once Peter gets on the stage, his fans won't let him leave after one hour! Peter is a self-described "city

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From left: Michelle & Scott Dalziel, Small Potatoes, and Peter Mulvey

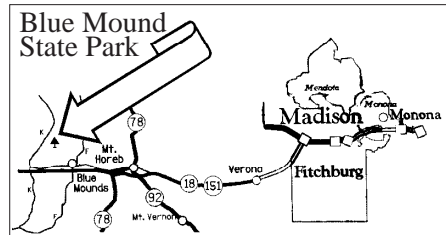
## Come sing at Blue Mound!

With the June weather cooperating, Mad Folks and campers alike joined in the first of this summer's sing-alongs at Blue Mound State Park in Blue Mounds, WI. And there are two more on tap—sponsored by Mad Folk and led by Madison's own Mac Robertson.

On July 20, the sing-along will be in the park amphitheater; on August 24 (note date change from what we reported last month), it will be in the shelter at the top of the hill. The sings start at 8 p.m.

Bring your voices and instruments and join in the spirited gathering. *Rise Up Singing* books will be available if you don't know the words.

Blue Mound State Park is just north of the Village of Blue Mounds, about 25 miles west of Madison via US Highway 18/151 (see map above).



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# Eric Schwartz house concert

On Friday July 27, Eric Schwartz will be making his only Wisconsin appearance. This is not your traditional folk show. Eric is one of those

incredible singers who has mastered many styles of music and has per-

formed some beautiful songs, but it is his offbeat sense of humor that makes him so unique and fun. When talking to a member of the audience a day after the show the last time Eric played here, he said, "My jaws still hurt from laughing so much." His show is hard to explain, and as mentioned below, "You'll just have to experience it for yourself."

PA disc jockey Otto Bost wrote, "Eric is a writer who has mastered many styles, and his songs are as varied as the people of New York...The thread that holds them together is the solid craftsmanship of a young man with a pen in his hand, and an intriguingly offbeat view of the world."

Fans and music journalists have tried to describe an Eric Schwartz show. Some talk about Eric's gorgeous voice with its baritone-to-Bee-Gees vocal range, the intelligent way in which he uses satire and irony to convey a message, or the tremendous energy and personality he infuses into every show. But most will add, "You'll just have to experience it for yourself."

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## Madison Folk Music Society

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# Folk On State

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kid" from Milwaukee. He played, wrote, and sang in bands while studying theatre at Marquette University. After graduating, he traveled to Ireland, where he learned the trade of busker on the streets of Dublin. Returning to the U.S. a few years later, he settled in Boston, building an audience through street and subway performing, while also immersing himself in the thriving musical community. Since his 2000 release *The Trouble with Poets*, Mulvey has found a home with the venerable indie label Signature Sounds Recordings. His most recent albums for the Massachusetts label were the 2004 release *Kitchen Radio*, the 2003 collaborative *Redbird* album (with label-mates Kris Delmhorst and Jeffrey Foucault), and his 2001 CD, *Ten Thousand Mornings*, an album of cover songs recorded entirely in the subways of Boston. His most current CD, *The Knuckleball Suite is a must have in everyone's CD collecton, and the title song pays homage to one of the best listening venues anywhere, the Café Carpe.*

July 21 is a very exciting show as it brings two new performers to our stage.



Randall Williams has been around the planet and back a few times. His songs tell those stories: night fires in the Sahara, first world

cobblestone, and the common humanity in all of us. Randall trained for the opera stage but ditched the conservatory for what one voice and one guitar can say when there's nothing in the way. "It comes down to how we love, not where we draw the line." A life of travel, lived good and true. Randall was a finalist in the Snowbird Festival songwriting competition and a Falcon Ridge Emerging Artist in 2007. More at [www.wherisrandall.com](http://www.wherisrandall.com).

Iain Campbell Smith is a favorite on the Australian music festival circuit. He is the subject of a film about his experiences on peacekeeping operations in the war-torn islands of the

South Pacific where his work as a musician and radio broadcaster contributed to the success of the world's first-ever unarmed peacekeeping force. His songs range from deep gravity to extreme comedy. His live performances have earned descriptions from "Australia's answer to Billy Bragg" to "Loudon Wainwright meets Noel Coward."



Closing out the month on July 28 brings us well-known Madison musicians Amy Curl & Dan Kennedy and also returning to our stage and traveling all the way from California will



be the duo of Berkley-Hart. If you saw them last year at Folk on State, we're sure you'll be back for this year's show!

Amy Curl showered us with songs last year in the closing weekend for

Folk on State; she returns this year with Dan Kennedy to show us the harmonies she is now working on. You can hear Amy around town in one of the many groups she is playing with including the group Albert where she is now the lead singer.

Hailed as masters of both two-part harmony and dazzling song craft, over the past 10 years, San Diego's Berkley-Hart have established themselves as one of the premier acoustic duos touring the country.

They have four award-winning CDs (*Wreck 'n' Sow*, *Something to Fall Back On*, *Twelve*, *Pocket Change*) and a live concert DVD called *O Berkley, Where Hart Thou*. More info at [www.berkleyhart.com](http://www.berkleyhart.com).



## FOCUS ON FOLK

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then improvising vocals and see where they lead me. Usually chords just flow from the melody—it almost feels like I'm transcribing chords when I figure out what is supposed to go underneath a melody.

**Clare Fehsenfeld:** My own songwriting started in high school. I listened to a lot of punk at that time in my life. My then-boyfriend and I were driving around in a backwater Michigan town. We were in my beat-up Honda with an upside-down American flag on it and got pulled over. They confiscated my cigarettes. Oh I was mad!!! So I wrote a very teenager song about it, with lyrics like "how do you sleep at night?" and "little do they know..." It was a pretty catchy melody, though. The first surviving songs I wrote were since I moved to Madison and into Nottingham Co-op, a sometimes intimidatingly artistic environment. It was a fun challenge to write pop songs that my avant-garde roommates would find interesting.

**AY:** Clare's and my first song was called "Sweet Potato Pie," a nasty improvised rap song. It was that moment that we decided we needed to work together. We usually present half-written songs to each other and then either work on them together or let the other person take them home and work on them. Sometimes we'll just make up a song together in our practice studio and write the whole thing collaboratively. It seems the more we work together on a song, the better it turns out. We just toss out ideas and write by consensus—usually it's easy to agree on good ideas. If we disagree, we just have to trust that both ideas are good, so either direction will succeed.

**CF:** It's great to have an editor. Though sometimes challenging to the ego! I find that, in contrast to Andrew, my songs will sometimes come and go and take months to write. I try not to force the process too much or it can feel tedious. Our latest challenge, where we've been just writing and writing since January, has been a unique challenge. We have several new songs I think are really great. And lots more okay ones!

# CD REVIEWS

## Iain Campbell Smith—*Ballads and Barsongs*

Originally from Australia, Iain Campbell Smith has recently moved to the U. S. and *Ballads and Barsongs* is his second U.S. release. He uses Texas as the setting and name of the first track on the CD; what better way to immerse yourself in Americana than by writing a song about possibly the most legendary state in the country?

The opening track is cleverly phrased and there is a very pleasing lilt in Smith's voice that reminded me a little of Donovan. The songs are rather disparate in style and subject matter, yet they blend well together and showcase Smith's versatility to good advantage. "Out There" is a poignant reflection on being open to the opportunities that life offers and "Four Strong Hands," is a deeply moving affirmation of the resilience of the human spirit. Two of the lighter songs, "Sexy Little Woman" and "Maryanne" are both tributes to Smith's lady love.

Iain Campbell Smith's web site, [www.iaincampbellsmith.com](http://www.iaincampbellsmith.com), notes that he has been taking time away from his performing career for the past 5 years. He was sent to the islands of the South Pacific by the Australian Foreign Ministry because of a series of internal and regional

wars. He has been writing songs based on the stories of the people in that area as they worked to rebuild their lives.

Smith will be performing at Folk On State on July 21, perhaps he will share some of his experiences from his time in service when he is in town.

## David Francey—*Right of Passage*

The title of David Francey's most recent CD, *Right of Passage*, is a thought-provoking play on words. In the liner notes, Francey explains that he believes life's transitional moments are how we earn our 'right' of passage.

The songs are based on life's milestones of varying significance. "Leaving Edmonton" is about falling in love with his wife and "Promised Land" recalls a trip to his native Scotland. One of the things that I found most intriguing about the concept is that Francey drew upon experiences of his friends and family as well as his own. "Ballad of Bowser MacRae" was inspired by a cherished friend's conversation with his young son and "The Gate" is a reflection on a turning point in his parent's courtship. He contemplates one of the world's perpetual tragedies in "New Jerusalem," a lament about the killing that continues in the names of Allah and Jesus. The lyrics that Francey uses to capture the common thread in all of these expe-

periences are proof of his songwriting mastery. The language is simple yet descriptive and the images he evokes are both universal and personal.

Francey has lived in Canada since the age of 12 and has won two Juno awards, which are the Canadian equivalent of our Grammys. Judging from the numerous glowing quotes and reviews on his web site, [www.davidfrancey.com](http://www.davidfrancey.com), he is held in high esteem by his fellow performers and the folk music press.

I was not familiar with his work but after listening to *Right of Passage*, it is very clear why he has developed such a large and devoted group of fans.—*Judy Robinson*

# Eric Schwartz

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Eric's Sundays in high school were spent listening to two hours of Doctor Ruth followed by two hours of Doctor Demento. That should explain his penchant for sexually explicit, hu-



Eric Schwartz

morous songs. Piano was Eric's first instrument. After studying guitar in Madrid, he spent a year performing on the streets and in the cafés of Europe (he can sing songs in five languages and speaks

Spanish and French). Eric then moved to Greenwich Village and quickly became a staple on the vicious Village bar scene for five years as he honed his craft as an original singer/songwriter.

You can read the full bio and sample CD selections at his website [www.ericsschwartz.com](http://www.ericsschwartz.com).

The show will start at 7 p.m., and the requested donation is \$15; however, we have added a sliding scale donation to \$10 for those who can not afford \$15.

Please e-mail [dbuhler@charter.net](mailto:dbuhler@charter.net) or call 608-846-9214 for reservations and directions.

# Blue Mound sings (continued from page 1)

Here are driving directions: From Highway 18/151, go north on County Highway F and turn left on County Highway ID into Blue Mounds. Go west on Highway ID about a half mile to Mounds Road. Turn right (north) and follow Mounds Road north through town. (Mounds Road becomes Mounds Park Road once you leave the village.) The park entrance is one mile north of the intersection of Highway ID and Mounds Road.

You will need a state park sticker to drive into the park, but once there, the sing-alongs are free!

By foot or bicycle, you can reach the park by way of the Military Ridge State Trail. The park access trail is about .7 mile west of Mounds Park Road on the Military Ridge Trail.



Mac Robertson has a rapt audience at the June singalong.