

Mad Folk NEWS

Newsletter of the Madison Folk Music Society

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Folk on State—five weeks remaining!

August will bring many new faces and a few old friends to the Folk on State (FOS) stage. We'll start our first Saturday, August 4 with Josh Harty and Bill Isles.

It's been 14 years since Duluth's Bill Isles suffered the near-fatal cardiac arrest that changed his life and jump-started his creative energies. When he started performing his heart-felt original songs and stories seven



Bill Isles

years ago, he never dreamed that his career would develop into a 45,000 mile—and 110-shows—per-year—itinerary. Words like “transcendent” and “mesmerizing” are common in audience descriptions of his live concerts and fans of all ages tell of listening to his albums over and over again. What they're finding is something of his story, and something of themselves. He'll be joined by his wife and musical collaborator, Kate.

Josh Harty sauntered onto the bus-

ting Madison folk scene when the young songwriter settled in the small city after a 26-year spell in Fargo, North Dakota. “Josh Harty is one of the best young talents I have heard in years,” says Bob Reha of Minnesota Public Radio after hearing Josh open for B.B. King in Fargo. Josh's performance im-



Josh Harty

pressed regional promoters and led to opening performances with Robert Cray, Roger McGuinn (of the Byrds), Keb Mo, and several engagements with Kelly Joe Phelps. Harty, a regular on the Madison scene, is described by the Dane 101 as “one of Madison's best singer/songwriters,” while the *Pulse* (Minneapolis, MN) calls him “an uncanny acoustic guitar based talent...a voice reminiscent of folk pioneer John Gorka.” “Josh Harty is one of those talents who you're not

sure if you should applaud in adoration,” says the *Duluth News Tribune*, “or strangle out of envy.”

August 11 brings two amazing folks to our stage, Billy Jonas and Ken Lonquist, and with both of these guys on the same weekend you will have a truly entertaining experience.

Billy Jonas and his “wild winded

(continued on inside page)

FOCUS ON FOLK

A look at songwriting with Jesse Banks

Q: How did you become a songwriter?

A: Writing songs seemed to just naturally evolve from playing music for me. The first things I wrote were just simple chord progressions or fragments of lyrics and eventually a lyrical idea just kind of clicked with some music and I ran with it.

Q: Do you remember the first song you wrote?

A: The first song I wrote that I actually liked was called “Water and Walls.” It's mostly just a string of nature images—the sky, the ocean, etc. For instance the refrain is:

*Old are the winds of time
Blowing off the mountain sides
Cold are the snows to fall
Strong are the water and walls*

Q: What is your process for writing songs?

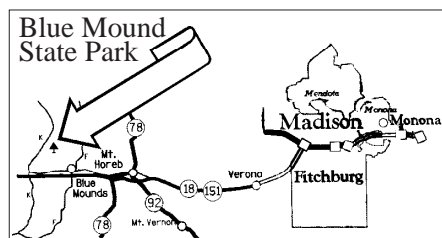
A: I write song in one of two ways. Either I start with a chord progression and fit lyrics to it or I start out with the lyrics and write the music to go to them. Sometimes it all comes together, but usually I have to work at one part.

One more Blue Mound Sing—Aug. 24

For those who are not going to La Crosse to hear Bill Miller and Jackie Tice kick off the Great River Folk Festival, there is an opportunity to sing folk music together in the shelter of Blue Mound State Park, 8 p.m. on Friday, August 24. Mac Robertson will be leading the singing and playing guitar and banjo—a family friendly event.

Note that this date represents a change from previous newsletter announcements.

To get to Blue Mound State Park from Madison, take 18-151 (Verona Road) west to Blue Mounds (past Verona and Mount Horeb), turn right on County F, then soon left on ID, then right by the guard rail and Citgo Station, following signs for Blue Mound State Park. A park sticker is needed to enter the park, but the Sing-along is free, and sunsets are spectacular from the highest point in southern Wisconsin!



Shape Note School at Orton Park Fest

The Southern Wisconsin Shape Note Singers will present a shape note singing school in conjunction with the Orton Park Festival at 10–11:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 25.

This unaccompanied four-part harmony tradition traces its roots to the singing schools held in New England in the 18th century. Its unique sound was described recently by a *New York Times* travel writer as “the place where Bluegrass meets Gregorian chant.”

Having been preserved for several generations in relative isolation in the rural South, the tradition is now enjoying a renaissance across the U.S., Canada, and England. There has been shape note singing in Madison since Hugh McGraw of Bremen, Georgia, presented a workshop at the Madison Folk Music Festival in 1983. The 21st annual Southern Wisconsin All-Day Singing will take place on November 10, 2007, at Folklore Village Farm, Dodgeville.

Judy Hauff of Chicago, an accomplished singer, composer, and teacher, will lead the singing school on August 25. Singers of all ages are welcome to

participate; no experience is necessary. There is no charge for admission,

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and loaner books will be available. Singing will continue from 1–3 p.m. at the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center, 953 Jenifer Street.

For further info: Johanna Fabke, jbfabke@ol.com or 608.838.3112



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Folk On State

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word magic” have delighted audiences from three to 93. He has traveled around the world in the last 10 years sharing stages with some of the world’s favorite acoustic artists including Patti Larkin, Ani DiFranco, David Wilcox, Richard Thompson, and Pete Seeger. Audiences join



Billy Jonas

in the performance of Billy’s inventive compositions along with his clear tenor voice, acoustic guitar, and found and foraged instruments.

Ken Lonquist has been entertaining Madison folk, theater, and family audiences for 25 years. He was a weekly topical-song guest on (and later full-time host of) WORT-FM’s infamous “The Breakfast Special” show, branched out to write many full-scale musicals for CTM Madison Family



Ken Lonquist

from the Winnipeg Folk Festival to New York’s Harborfest and countless venues in-between. His songs and performances have been featured in award-winning signing videos and CDs that have garnered national awards and devoted listeners.

On August 18, we bring two brand-new performers to the FOS stage, Jay Mankita and Sue Fink. These two first met at the Midwest Regional Folk Alliance and are looking forward to performing together again in their debut show in Madison.

Jay Mankita is a quirky songwriter and masterful guitarist who makes his home in the Northeast. He sings about ecology, dogs, peace, food, justice, baseball, physics, soap, clichés, bread,

girlfriends, rain, worms, socialism, aliens, body parts, mistakes, the constant struggle to understand life, death, and love, and the eternal search for the present moment. Pete Seeger says Jay is “one of the half-dozen best songwriters today.” This is his first visit to Madison. More info at <http://jaymankita.com>.



Jay Mankita

Sue Fink is a somewhat quirky Chicago singer/songwriter who has been compared to Christine Lavin. Her songs cover universal issues:

a woman who finds herself dating a mannequin; the grief of an unexpected last good-bye; a tale of unrequited love (from a dog’s point of view). But whether singing of sorrow or absurdity, Sue treats her listeners to clever, heart-felt lyrics and sing-along tunes. <http://suefink.com>.



Sue Fink

The final Saturday in August, the 25th, we have invited two local groups: Lilies of the Alley and Moon House.

Jeff Hickey and Richard “Blackhawk” Kapusta have been playing as the duo Moon House for many years around Madison. They will bring great harmonies and fun to our stage as they share some of their own songs and covers of the folk songs that we have grown to know and love. Let’s see if their cover of Stan Rogers “Barrett’s Privateers” sounds as good outside as it does at their indoor shows.

Lilies of the Alley are from far-flung corners of the musical map. The Lilies have found a magical blend that keeps them coming back to revel in the power of the female voice. Combining three distinct vocal styles, The Lilies bring tight, adventurous harmonies to

such traditional songs as “Hush My Babe,” as well as contemporary compositions such as “Fields of Gold.” The Lilies specialize in three-part a capella singing and songs accompanied by guitar, banjo, and keyboard.

And of course your final weekend for FOS will be on September 1. We have a great finally show for you that will bring to our stage: John Flynn and Justin Roth. More about them in your September newsletter.



For September: John Flynn and Justin Roth

Shawano Folk Fest August 10–12

The Mielke Theatre in Shawano will again play host to the Shawano Folk Festival. This year’s dates are August 10, 11, & 12 (shawanoarts.com/folkfestival).

Performers for the Friday concert (7 p.m.) include Tom Pease & Pat Wiley, Festival Children’s Choir, Anna Lee Scully, Susan O’Rourke and Zig Zeitler (StoneCross), David Massengill, and Dennis Stroughmatt et L’Esprit Creole.

Saturday night, also at 7 p.m., the lineup includes Anna Lee Scully, 5-Milers, Viata Romaneasca (Romanian dance group), Peter and Lou Berryman, and Art Stevenson and Highwater.

Workshop artists include 100% Natural, Dorthy Zerbe, Kevin Soucie and Pine Wilson, and Mary Vercauterin & Friends.

Weekend Pass: \$50, senior citizen/children ages 12 & under \$38. Friday & Saturday evening concert tickets: \$18 each evening, senior citizen \$16. Day passes (age 13 to 64) \$10. Family pass \$25.

This year the festival will feature a children’s choir! A group of children will meet Friday with Ana Lee Scully at the Shawano Public Library. Any young person from 7–18 years old is welcome to join the choir.

CD REVIEWS

Karen Mal, *The Space Between*

Karen Mal's third solo CD, *The Space Between* is filled with songs that artfully convey virtually every aspect of romantic relationships; "Surprise" expresses the wonder of starting a new relationship. The title track, which was inspired by a rafting trip through a canyon, describes how love grows and changes. In "Falling" she captures how hard it can be to move on when a relationship ends. "For You Only" is a bold invitation to a reluctant lover-to-be and "Everything About You" is a true classic country heartbreak song, it is must-hear for Patsy Cline fans.

She explores other facets of the human condition with equal finesse. "When I was Three," (my personal favorite) is a poignantly heartfelt affirmation of the many joys of early childhood. "Suitcase Full of Memories" depicts the life of a modern day troubadour and the challenges of being on the road.

Mal is a native of New England

and she made her home in Door County for several years during the '90s where she performed with American Folklore Theater. She recently appeared at Folk on State where she quickly enraptured the crowd with her silken voice and warm, unpretentious style. She is currently based in Austin, TX, and the touring schedule on her website (www.karenmal.com) includes many of the premier folk festivals including Kerrville and Woody Guthrie. Her musical virtuosity and poetical lyrics will ensure that she is in high demand for many years to come.

Emma's Revolution, *Roots, Rock & Revolution*

Roots, Rock & Revolution is the 2nd CD that Pat Humphries and Sandy Opatow have released as Emma's Revolution. These tireless crusaders work for social justice on all fronts and the CD gives voice to several of the struggles that are taking place around the world. "Coast of Maine" speaks not only of the gentrification of what were once working class towns but also of the ever growing divide between those

who have the wealth and those who do not. "Silent No Longer" is about Ka Hsaw Wa and Katie Redford's fight to free the people of Burma from the slavery of the oil companies.

Pat and Sandy are able to convey the urgency of these situations without being strident and their lyrics don't overwhelm, they inspire you.

They make fine use of their keen sense of humor on some of the songs; "Vote" is an unapologetic demand for explanations of the outcomes of the last two elections. "Choir" is a heartfelt invitation to folks who share their vision and they belt it out in real toe-tapping gospel style. There is a breathtaking version of "Keep on Moving Forward," a song of Pat's that opened the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in 1995. The last song on the CD is the quintessential folk classic "If I Had A Hammer" and they infuse it with so much energy and optimism, it almost felt like I was hearing it for the first time.

Go to www.emmasrevolution.com to order their CD and get more info about these phenomenal activist/musicians.—*Judy Robinson*

Gandy Dancer Festival—Bluegrass for Badger 2

The sounds of Bluegrass music and train horns will resonate on Sunday, August 12 in Central Park, Madison, at the Gandy Dancer Festival. Planned to promote the restoration of the historic rail car, Badger 2, the festival will feature free train rides on the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad along with bluegrass and blues music and train programs.

Drawing from the rich treasury of train songs in the bluegrass, blues and gospel traditions seemed like a wonderful way to support the Mid-Continent Railway Museum's campaign to restore the "fish car," Badger 2, to original condition.

Badger 2 was custom-built by the Pullman Company in 1912 for the Wisconsin Fish Commission, a forerunner of today's Department of Natural Resources. For more than 30 years it transported fry and fingerlings from state-owned hatcheries to waterways around Wisconsin to help build up the game-fish population. In recognition of the unique status of Badger 2 as the

last survivor among the fleet of fish cars used by state agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Jeffris Family Foundation of Janesville awarded a grant for its restoration, contingent upon the museum raising matching funds.

"Gandy dancer" is railroad jargon for the hard-working section hands who maintained track for the railroads. Some authorities believe the name derives from the use of tools built by the Gandy Company, while others cite the rhythmic movements of the crews as they did their work.

"We want to borrow from their image to symbolize the hard work that is taking place to restore one of Wisconsin's railroad treasures, the Badger 2," says Johanna Fabke, a lifelong rail fan. She is working with Carolyn Hegeler and Bob Queen of Madison and Don Meyer, general manager of the Mid-Continent Railway Museum, to organize the festival.

Admission to all festival events is free, but tax-deductible contributions

to the fish car fund will be gratefully received. Performers will include the Alan Munde Gazette, the Nob Hill Boys, the Water Street Hot Shots, Joe Filisko & Eric Norden, Larry Penn, Round the Bend, and Jefferson County.

Neighborhood vendors will offer food, beer, and crafts.

The Wisconsin & Southern Railroad is donating 40-minute train rides on 1950s-era passenger cars pulled by a diesel locomotive. Distribution of free tickets begins at 9 a.m. on a first-come, first-served basis. The first train will depart from the festival grounds at 10 a.m. and the last at 4 p.m.

This event is funded in part by the Madison Arts Commission with additional funding from the Wisconsin Arts Board.

Further information, contact Johanna Fabke, at 6398 Nordic Lane, McFarland, WI 53558. You can phone her at 608/838-3112 or e-mail jbfabke@aol.com.

