
Mad Folk NEWS

Newsletter of the Madison Folk Music Society

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Bittersweet Holiday Concert Dec 7

In conjunction with Wild Hog in the Woods Coffeehouse, we will be presenting the Bittersweet Christmas Band in concert on Friday, December 7, at 8 p.m. at the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center. Tickets cost \$14 in advance but \$16 on the day of the show.

The touring Bittersweet Christmas Band includes traditional artists Phil Cooper, Margaret Nelson and Kate Early, who comprise Strong Old Music, joined by songwriter and "wise" woman Susan Urban. The band presents varied perspectives on the holiday season from the reverent to the ridiculous. These four musicians offer two to four-part harmonies, masterful instrumentation on guitar, dulcimer, penny-whistle, hand drum and other percussion instruments. More information on the Bittersweet Christmas Band can be found at <http://uuwisewoman.tripod.com/bittersweetband/>.

Amongst them, Cooper, Nelson and Early have produced 14 recordings while Urban has released three recordings.



As the Bittersweet Christmas Band, these four have produced the CD, "Dance in the Dark of the Year," which features renditions of traditional carols and solstice tunes, witty and sometimes biting commentary on modern holiday customs, and some serious observations on the human condition. Mad Folk encourages concertgoers to bring a non-perishable food item for donation to local food banks.

January Brings the Music of Curtis and Loretta

Join us on January 5th at the Wil-Mar Center for the music of Curtis & Loretta, the duo from Minnesota will bring you music that comes straight from the heart. The husband and wife duo's extraordinary harmonies and proficiency on a parade of stringed instruments create an alluring frame for their poignant original songs, and carefully chosen traditional pieces from the British Isles, America, and beyond. The current menagerie includes Celtic harp, mandocello, mandolin, guitars, clawhammer banjo, and National steel ukulele, plus a bit of kazoo, harmonica, and shakers. For over three decades, Curtis Teague and Loretta Simonet's harmonies have gotten tighter than ever, their stage presence has blossomed, and they've graduated from the (continued on page 2)

Curtis & Loretta

(continued from page 1) street to dedicated fans at folk clubs across the U.S. They rack up 40,000 miles a year, crisscrossing the country to deliver their own unique brand of folk singer/songwriter music. They've shared billings with Jez Lowe, Vassar Clements, Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, Anne Hills, Greg Brown, Holly Near, and Bill Staines, to name just a few.

Rick Mason wrote in the *Minneapolis City Pages A-List*, "There's something about the charming local folk duo Curtis & Loretta that transcends their talents on a variety of stringed instruments, their finely interwoven vocal harmonies, and their ability to make traditional folk tunes -- mostly from the British Isles--shimmer with fresh vitality. That secret ingredient is at the core of Loretta's songwriting (Curtis ain't no slouch on that score either.) With a journalist's eye for detail and a knack for tugging at heartstrings while cutting to the quick of an issue, she writes riveting songs..."

CD Reviews by Judy Robinson

Christine Lavin 'Happydance Of The Xenophobe'

As some Harry Potter fans may know, a xenophile is someone who is interested in strange and foreign things. Conversely, a xenophobe is someone who is afraid of strange and foreign things. Rest assured that even though Christine Lavin is one of the people doing the happydance, she is not the titular xenophobe. If you think that the CD sounds intriguing based on that information, you will not be disappointed. Lavin drew inspiration from quite a mixture of sources; she displays her civic pride (and competitive tendencies) in 'The Most Polite City In The World'. She pays homage to chocolate and caffeine in 'Chocolate Covered Espresso Beans' and continues the concept of singing about her favorite foods by teaming up with jazz entertainer Lodi Carr to rhapsodize about whipped cream. Lavin often uses her ingenious humor to couch her pointed political and social commentary. In 'More Than 1,000,000 Americans', she uses a different tactic and addresses the issue of gun violence head-on. The song is heart-rending, she puts a very real face on the people who have been killed by guns and eloquently depicts the effect that the loss of each victim has on their loved ones. The last song 'Reminiscing With The Elusive Gentle Lonely Boxer Of Love' is actually a skillfully assembled medley of songs and has an added bonus; a member of Mad Folk is featured as a guest performer. Lavin will be playing at the Verona High School Performing Arts Center on Saturday, Dec 1. Please go to www.christinelavin.com or call (608) 848-2787 for more info.

John Wort Hannam 'Two Bit Suit'

Canadian folk artist John Wort Hannam refers to his music as 'Blue Collar Roots Music', his songs underscore the fact that working-class folks on both sides of the border share the same burdens and the same hopes. The title track affirms the fact that you don't necessarily need money to have a good time, just the right attitude. In '10,000 Acres', he proclaims his dedication to the family homestead and his love for the woman who works it with him. The melancholy 'Infantryman' is a soul-stirring reminder that these days, the sacrifices of military service are usually made by the 'have-nots.' 'Black As Coal' is an enormously powerful song; his descriptions of the difficult conditions that miners work in and the dangers that they face on a daily basis are extremely unnerving. 'At First Light' is a beautifully plainspoken love song written from the perspective of an over the road trucker.

In addition to releasing 'Two Bit Suit' which is his 3rd CD, Hannam had other noteworthy accomplishments in 2007; he was one of the newest New Folk Winner's at the Kerrville Folk Festival and also won Grand Prize for Best Song at the Calgary Folk Festival Song Writing Competition. You can go to johnworthannam.com to find out more about his music and follow the link to his MySpace page to listen to 4 songs from the CD. If you like what you hear, go to cdbaby.com to buy his CD on-line.



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