

# Mad Folk News

## KAREN SAVOCA & PETE HEITZMAN RETURN MAY 8<sup>TH</sup> FOR AN INTIMATE PERFORMANCE

by Darlene Buhler

From upstate New York, Karen Savoca, first of all, is not a chick with a guitar, conga is her main instrument. Karen Savoca is an extraordinary singer. The daughter of a big band vocalist with a record collection full of the greatest jazz and soul singers, she spent her childhood harmonizing with her family around an old upright piano. A soulful and engaging performer, Karen draws you into her world like she's inviting you to the table for supper. With a love for the old standards her parents and grandparents taught her, the rhythm and blues of the sixties, and the singer-songwriters of the seventies and eighties, Karen is a songwriter unbounded by topic or style. Whether set in a garden or on a city street, funny or poignant, her songs are full of lasting images, melodies and characters.

Pete Heitzman has had a guitar on his

lap since he was ten, and was playing in bars by the time he was in eighth grade. A versatile and improvisational player, he has created a style that is all his own, innovative and refreshing. Pete bends, plucks, and wrings captivating textures and soundscapes from the guitar or six-string bass, and has been aptly described as "the aurora borealis of guitar players".

Both Pete & Karen started playing music at a young age, did music individually and eventually met while playing in the same band. Karen & Pete eventually broke off to become a duo performing mostly original music, and original it is. It is hard to pigeon hole what genre to put Karen & Pete's music, but the following is from one of her press kits and is a good description. Karen's appearance on the contemporary folk scene says more about the broad-minded

audience of folk than it does about her music. The duo's live performances are uplifting and hypnotic, they put some funk in the folk. At the Vancouver Folk Festival '99, as the Sunday sun was setting, for the first time in 22 years, 10 thousand people inexplicably removed their shoes and waved them over their heads. Together she and innovative guitarist Pete Heitzman have been described as a self-contained mini-band with "the fearlessness of a high-wire act

working without a net." It's an elusive mix... melodic, funky and spontaneous.

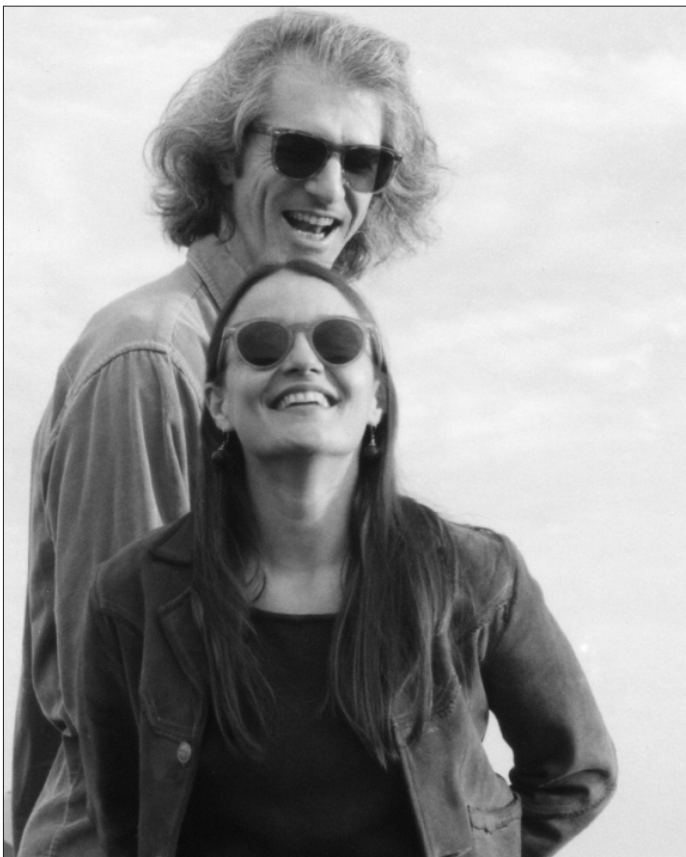
Karen & Pete will be returning for their third house concert in the home of Darlene Buhler on Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. For a reservation/directions please call Darlene at 225-0710 or email at [dbuhler@charter.net](mailto:dbuhler@charter.net). A donation of \$15 is requested for the performers.

## THE PINES MAKE A FIRST APPEARANCE AT KIKI'S HOUSE OF RIGHTEOUS MUSIC

by Kiki Schueler

For their January appearance on *Thirty Minute Music Hour*, which airs on Wisconsin Public Television, Minneapolis-based band the Pines rented tuxes. I'm still not sure exactly why (it would be hard to make their graceful folk any classier), but perhaps they wanted to make a good impression for their first gig in Madison. I think it worked—afterward, host Andy Moore called their performance "mesmerizing." Despite touring extensively since releasing their debut record in 2004—including several stops at the nearby Café Carpe in Fort Atkinson—and in spite of playing with an impressive list of musicians including Bon Iver, The Holmes Brothers, Jolie Holland, The Arcade Fire, and Spider John Koerner, the Pines have yet to play a proper show in Madison. That will change on May 15, when they make a stop at Kiki's House of Righteous Music. The show will also feature their friend Ben Weaver, a fellow Twin Cities resident.

My introduction to the Pines, the songwriting duo of David Huckfelt and Benson Ramsey, came courtesy of





Weaver, who played a show at the house last summer. He thought they would be a perfect match with the good listening room and attentive audience, and mentioned Ramsey's famous father in his sales pitch. There's not an article or CD review out there that doesn't bring up the fact that Benson is the son of Greg Brown's sideman and producer, Bo Ramsey—as if failing to do so would be to leave out an essential bit of information. It's true that Benson's guitar playing demonstrates the same restrained intensity as his father's, but being Bo's son is certainly not his only claim to fame. The Pines' three releases, the last two on Brown's venerable Red House label, have garnered them heaps of praise, and their most recent release, *Tremolo*, is a beautiful, thought-provoking record where happy and sad come in quick succession (to borrow a line from Elliott Smith).

Opening track "Pray Tell" finds Huckfelt asking difficult questions like "Who hung the moon so low in the sky?" and "Who opens up the door between heaven and hell?" Their electric/acoustic guitar pairing percolates here, giving an urgency to the anxious but unhurried blues. The shuffling love song "Heart and Bones" features Ramsey's unique voice, which bears a striking resemblance to Dylan's on his recent releases. There's also more than a hint of the Felice Brothers' unaffected Appalachian blues, though thankfully minus the Brothers' attitude.

Interestingly, most of their songs don't follow the traditional folk verse-chorus-verse format, though it often sounds like they do with the use of repeated musical patterns. The exception is the restrained six-minute epic "Shiny Shoes." Admittedly, with a line as good as "But no matter how hard you try, no, you can't put the tears back in your eyes," you need to use it more than once.

Even though Huckfelt and Ramsey both hail from Iowa, they began their musical partnership in the unlikely location of Arizona, where they met while both were living in a Mexican barrio. The music they created reflected their home more than their current residence. Eventually, after committing to a career in music, they relocated to the Midwest, settling in Minneapolis, which in addition to being home to Red House Records has birthed bands as unique and influential as the Replacements and the Jayhawks. Hopefully, given their proximity to Madison, this will be just the first of many shows in town. You can judge for yourself if their *Thirty Minute Music Hour* performance is everything Andy Moore claimed it was. The video, and all previous episodes of the show, is available for viewing at [www.wpt.org](http://www.wpt.org).

For more information about their May 15 show with Ben Weaver, contact me at [righteousmusicgmt@gmail.com](mailto:righteousmusicgmt@gmail.com). The show is at 9 p.m. and has a suggested donation of \$10.

*Mad Folk News* is published monthly by the Madison Folk Music Society, a non-profit, volunteer-led society dedicated to fostering folk music in the Madison area. Contact us at [madfolk@charter.net](mailto:madfolk@charter.net). Learn about concerts, membership, scholarships, and volunteer opportunities at [www.madfolk.org](http://www.madfolk.org).

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### MadFolk Ticket Outlets

When you see this symbol – ♪ – you'll know that you're reading about a Mad Folk sponsored event. Advance tickets for Mad Folk shows are available online at [www.madfolk.org](http://www.madfolk.org) and at these outlets:

- Borders Books East, 2173 Zeier Road
- Borders Books West, 3416 University Ave.
- Orange Tree Imports, 1721 Monroe Street
- Spruce Tree Music, 851 East Johnson

You can also purchase advance tickets by mail. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope with your check payable to Mad Folk, PO Box 665, Madison, WI 53701. If all else fails, call 608-846-9214 for information.

# LETTERS FROM A FLYING MACHINE

## PETER MULVEY ~ 2009 SIGNATURE SOUNDS

*Review by Kiki Schueler*

Peter Mulvey is a genuine entertainer, a smart songwriter, a fantastic guitar player, a quick wit, and a skilled storyteller. His live shows have always been an engaging combination of those things, but until now his CDs have only documented his talent for playing and singing. In addition to nine new original tunes, *Letters from a Flying Machine* also includes readings of a handful of the many letters he has written to his nieces and nephews. Some of these are familiar stories that I've heard in various forms at his shows over the years, while others are more traditional letters, simply relaying a day's activities or giving the news. The first of these letters is to Edgar and includes musings on the marvels of mechanical pencils, iPods, and air travel, especially the kind that includes fresh-baked cookies. Lucy gets a recounting of how she put Uncle Peter on the spot with her questions about DNA and whether babies die. Adeline hears the story of Vlad the Astrophysicist, one of Mulvey's favorites, and his astute answer to the question, "Are there intelligent civilizations out there other than us, and if there are, why haven't they tried to contact us?"

Young Vincent gets perhaps the best of these stories, the engaging tale of Dynamite Bill, a real person from Mulvey's father's childhood with a talent for blowing things up. Dynamite Bill goes on to become a secondary character in the song bearing his name. The song is stick-in-your-head catchy courtesy of repeated lines and the jangly guitar all over the tale of January Medley and the little boy Mohamed Ali. He sums up Bill's skills simply, "Funny: you never think you gonna need no Dynamite Bill, until someday something happens and you find that you will, because you gotta make something go boom." Mulvey's wit shines brightest on "Some People," his sharp and concise catalog of all types of people while he just stands back with a smile. "Some people go to the synagogue. Some people go to the woods. Some people go to a shrink

and think everybody should," he opens, "some people go crazy in plain sight on the streets of the neighborhood, and I go mmm, mmm, mmm, mmm, mm." Live audiences usually laugh out loud in response to observations like "Some people go and they put their heads in cryogenic stasis. Some people go too long without getting laid on a regular basis," and "Some senators go into airport johns and get their reputations besmirched."

"Mailman," which turns a letter into song, logically should have been the album's definitive track; surprisingly, it's probably the weakest. As he wrote a thank-you note to Chris Pureka for a book of poems, he decided to set it to music, which was perhaps not his best decision. It never transcends the limitations of its source, always sounding like a dashed-off note instead of a fully realized song. Mulvey's friendships and collabora-

tions have always been key elements of his songwriting, and that is especially true of *Letters*. "Dynamite Bill" and two other tracks were co-writes with Tim Gearan, while closing track "On a Wing and a Prayer" came from a partnership with Tim Fagan. Perhaps some of his best material in recent years has come from working with fellow Milwaukee resident songwriter Paul Cebar. Cebar had been saying they should write a song together, but it took years before that finally happened. Since then, the pair has collaborated on several. These co-writes, like Kitchen Radio's "Charlie" and this album's "What's Keeping Erica," always sound somewhat unexpectedly like a perfect combination, as if they each contributed a precise half of the song.

As clever as they are, the letters (not to mention the letter song) can become a bit tiresome with repeated listens, but that's what the "next" button is for on your CD or MP3 player. *Letters from a Flying Machine* is another solid entry in Mulvey's impressive discography, not to mention a record of some of his best stories.



# The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

May 2010

## Mad Folk Events



- ♪ **Jack Williams / Ronny Cox**  
Thur, 4/08 -- 7:00pm at the Brink Lounge, 701 E. Washington  
-- \$15 advance, \$17 day of show
- ♪ **Eliza Gilkyson**  
Tue, 4/20 -- 7:00pm at the Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer Street  
-- \$14 advance, \$16 day of show
- ♪ **Bob Franke (John Statz opens)**  
Sat, 4/24 -- 8:00pm at the Brink Lounge, 701 E. Washington  
-- \$14 advance, \$16 day of show

## Venues



701 E. Washington  
thebrinklounge.com  
608-661-8599

### The Brink Lounge

- Wed, 5/05 -- Jessi Lynn -- 7:00
- Thu, 5/06 -- Chick Singer Night hosted by Beth Kille -- 8:00
- Fri, 5/14 -- Lynette Margulies -- 6:00
- Fri, 5/14 -- John Masino -- 7:00
- Tue, 5/25 -- Madison Songwriters Group -- 6:30
- Sat, 5/29 -- Paul Stiegler -- 7:00

### Mad Toast Live! at the The Brink Lounge

Tuesdays -- Music, talk and variety show hosted by Chris Wagoner and Mary Gaines -- Now at 6:00pm -- \$5 unless otherwise noted

- 5/04 -- Anna Laube -- 6:00 / John Craigie -- 7:00
- 5/11 -- Willerm Delisfort Project (Jazz)
- 5/18 -- Corey Hart -- 6:00 / The Rohnellaros -- 7:00
- 5/25 -- Randal Harrison and Stas

### High Noon Saloon

- Sat, 5/01 -- Kentucky Derby Party -- 4:30 -- \$5 (21+)
- Tue, 5/04 -- The Dirty Shirts -- 6:30 -- \$4 (21+)
- Wed, 5/12 -- Natalia Zukerman -- 7:00 -- \$10 advance / \$12 door (18+)
- Wed, 5/12 -- Family of the Year / Gold Motel -- 9:30 -- \$8 (18+)
- Thu, 5/13 -- The Knitters -- 8:00 -- \$18 advance / \$20 door (21+)
- Sat, 5/15 -- 10th Annual Bob Dylan Birthday Tribute -- 9:00 -- \$7 (21+)

### Cafe Carpe

- Fri, 5/07 -- Bill Camplin & The May Beeknots -- 8:30 -- \$8
- Sat, 5/08 -- Larry Peen / Carmel Mikol -- 8:00 -- \$8
- Thu, 5/13 -- The New Pioneers -- 7:00 -- \$7.50
- Fri, 5/14 -- Patchouli -- 8:30 -- \$7.50
- Sat, 5/15 -- Ernie Hendrickson -- 8:30 -- \$7.50
- Fri, 5/21 -- Randy Sabien & Bill Camplin -- 8:30 -- \$15
- Sat, 5/22 -- Robyn Plier w/ Peter Roller -- 8:30 -- \$8
- Fri, 5/28 -- Terrence Coffman & Will Basley -- 8:30 -- \$5

### Wild Hog in the Woods Coffeehouse

- Fri, 5/07 -- Stone Ring (Celtic music) - Charlie Johnson -- 8:00 -- \$2 members / \$3 gen'l public
- Fri, 5/14 -- Tom Kastle -- 8:00 -- \$2 members / \$3 gen'l public
- Fri, 5/21 -- Dave Fallow w/ Richard "Uncle Dick" Fallow -- 8:00 -- \$2 members / \$3 gen'l public
- Fri, 5/28 -- Erin O'Brien & Doug Brown -- 8:00 -- \$3 members / \$2 gen'l public

### Folklore Village

- Sat, 5/01 -- Arabic Calligraphy with George Allam -- 2:00-4:00pm
- Sat, 5/01 -- Old Time Barn Dance / Potluck -- 6:30pm
- Tue, 5/04 -- Open Mic and Jam Session -- 6:30pm
- Sat, 5/15 -- Stitch, Spindle and Skein -- 9:00am-4:15pm -- Reservations required
- Sat, 5/15 -- Maypole Saturday Night Social / Potluck -- 6:30pm



701A E. Washington  
www.high-noon.com  
608-268-1122



18 S. Water St.  
Ft. Atkinson, WI  
cafecarpe.com  
920-563-9391



Wil-Mar Center  
953 Jenifer St.  
wildhoginthewoods.org  
608-233-5687

Folklore Village  
3210 Cty Hwy BB  
Dodgeville, WI  
folklorevillage.org  
608-924-4000

### Mother Fool's Coffeehouse

Mother Fool's  
1101 Williamson  
motherfools.com  
608-259-1301

- Sat, 5/01 -- Boo Bradley w/ Bare Hands Jug Band -- 8:00pm -- \$6
- Sat, 5/08 -- Crooked Mouth String Band -- 8:00pm -- \$7
- Fri, 5/14 -- Katie Todd -- 8:00pm -- \$6
- Fri, 5/21 -- Ricky Stein -- 8:00pm -- \$6

## On the Air



wpr.org

**Simply Folk** on Wisconsin Public Radio w/ Tom Martin-Erickson  
Sun 5:00-8:00pm

Concerts recorded in Wisconsin, music and dance of people the world over. For playlists, calendars, station listings, and more, visit [www.wpr.org/simplyfolk](http://www.wpr.org/simplyfolk).



wort-fm.org

**WORT 89.9 FM** community radio  
Sun -- 3:00-5:00pm

- **On the Horizon** (world music) w/ Ford Blackwell, Paul Novak & Dan Talmo  
Weekdays 9:00am-noon
- Sun -- **World Book of Records** (folk from the world over) w/ Tracy Doreen
- Tue -- **Pastures of Plenty** (traditional American folk) w/ John Fabke
- Wed -- **Back to the County** (country music on a theme) w/ Bill Malone
- Thur -- **Diaspora** (folk and international) w/ Terry O'
- Fri -- **Mud Acres** (bluegrass and acoustic) w/ Chris Powers

## Madison Dance

**African/African-American Dance** classes with live drumming -- Sun, 7:00-9:00pm -- Metro Dance, 3009 University Ave. -- 255-3677 / 251-4311

**English Country Dance** taught -- 1st and 3rd Mon, 7:30-9:30pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 238-9951 or 238-9951

**Cajun Dance** taught -- Sun 5/09 -- instruction at 6:15pm, dance 7:00-10:00pm -- Harmony Bar & Grill, 2201 Atwood Ave -- 249-4333

**International Dancing** -- Wed and Sun; classes 7:30-8:30pm, request dancing 8:30-11:00pm -- The Crossing, 1127 University Ave. -- 241-3655

**Irish Dancing** -- Monthly Ceili and set dance events are posted at [celticmadison.org/dance](http://celticmadison.org/dance)

**Italian Dancing** -- Tue, 7:00-9:00pm, no experience or partner necessary -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 838-9403 (Philana)

**Madison Contra Dance Cooperative** -- Tue; 7:30 jam band practice, intermediate level dancing 7:45-9:40pm -- \$5 for non-members -- Gates of Heaven, 302 E. Gorham -- 238-3394 (Steve)

**Morris Dancing** -- Wed, 7:00pm -- call for location -- 238-9951

**Scottish Country Dancing** -- Sun, 7:00pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 835-0914

## Gigs

### Karan Casey Band

- Sat, 5/22 -- Irish Cultural and Heritage Center, 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee -- 7:30 -- \$19 advance / \$21 door -- (414) 345-8800 -- To order online, visit [www.ichc.net](http://www.ichc.net)

## Misc

**Madison Ukulele Club** -- Singalongs 1st and 3rd Weds 7:00-9:00pm -- call for location -- 246-8205 (Andrew)

**Celtic and Traditional Folk Music and Harp Workshop** - Jo and Wayne Morrison will present an evening of celtic music at 7 PM. The duo features harp with bagpipes and concertina, plus some vocals. -- May 7 at James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 2146 E. Johnson St, Madison, WI -- \$15 (\$10 if you sign up for the workshop) -- The Madison Folk Harp Society is organizing a workshop Saturday morning. -- May 8 -- \$30 -- Contact Rachel Avery for more information on the workshop at [rlave@hotmail.com](mailto:rlave@hotmail.com)

# MOTHER'S DAY ON THE BAY

Sunday, May 9 4:00 PM

WASHINGTON HOTEL COFFEE ROOM  
402 W Lakeside Street - Madison - Overlooking Monona Bay

A beautiful setting and wonderful music by the talented  
*Laurel Premo*



*LAUREL SHARES A MUSIC FULL OF LIFE THAT DRAWS FROM APPALACHIAN, FOLK AND BLUES ROOTS. FROM HAUNTING OLD BALLADS TO FEVERISH INSTRUMENTAL COMPOSITIONS, HER MUSIC IS MADE FOR ALL EARS.*

DISCOGRAPHY: Stung by the Nettle, Innertwine, Steep Side of the Hill

COLLABORATIONS: White Water, Red Tail Ring, Anna Ash and the Family Tree, Orpheum Bell, Michael Beauchamp, Evan Premo, Charlene Kaye, Mary Bonhag, Red Arrow Highway

INSTRUMENTS: Guitar, Fiddle, Banjo, Dobro, Cittern

*Free - Contributions Welcome*

# May at Mother Fool's

## Boo Bradley w/ Hands Jug Band

Sat. May 1: Boo Bradley is a hot blues stompin, jelly roll jumpin, rag jazz infusin, two-man acoustic jug attack from Madtown, Wisconsin. These boys throw down a porch stomp boogie chock full of old time Delta moans from the likes of Son House and Charley Patton, the Piedmont shake of Blind Boy Fuller and the earliest Chicago Ragtime mastery of cats like Blind Blake and Big Bill Broonzy.



## Crooked Mouth String Band

Sat. May 8: String band cabaret? Vaudeville honky-tonk? The Crooked Mouth String Band combine the folksiness of old-timey string bands with the harmonies and sensibilities of Bertolt Brecht. Hailing from the world of Chicago's vibrant theater scene, Crooked Mouth puts on a delightfully entertaining show. Not to be missed.

## Ricky Stein

Ricky Stein aspires to make music that comes straight from the heart. Whether singing to small audiences with just an acoustic guitar or bashing out loud rock n' roll to a packed house, Ricky always tries to deliver something unique and special. Having been born and raised in Austin, he is the product of a unique musical upbringing flavored by generations of legendary Texas artists such as Townes Van Zandt, Doug Sahm, and Willie Nelson. His father, Rick Stein, was an Austin singer/songwriter in the 1970's, and introduced him to the music of his contemporaries at an early age.



## Katie Todd

Fri. May 14: Piano based pop rock band from Chicago. Katie has one of the most unique voices out there and her shows are sublime. The music is well crafted and infectious. We are honored to welcome Katie back to the Mother Fool's stage.



Send your check, payable to MFMS to: Mad Folk c/o Tracy Comer, P.O. Box 930446, Verona, WI 53593-0446

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Madison Folk Music Society  join  renew

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