

Mad Folk News

Lou & Peter Berryman playing twice in December!

Love the holidays but feel overwhelmed? You may have Santa-Claustrophobia! Get relief at Lou and Peter Berryman's Nondescript December Concert on December 2 at the Stoughton Opera House at 7:30. If you have telltale symptoms such as visions of sugarplums, if you find yourself donning gay apparel, tearing open the shutters and throwing up the sash, dashing through the snow, if your little round belly shakes like a bowl full of jelly, and if you see deer and fat men in the night sky, you could probably benefit from an evening of no holiday anything; of the uninteresting door prizes, everyday cookies, and colorless stage decorations that have become hallmarks of Lou and Peter's more special concerts.



Santa Claustrophobia Dec 2nd @7:30 in Stoughton

This is not a Christmas concert, but it is definitely not an anti-Christmas concert. As Lou said in a recent interview with Michael Muckian for Madison's Brava Magazine, "SantaClaustrophobia is a word we made up years ago, when we did a pre-Christmas concert and wanted to make clear that it would be a break from the busyness of the holidays. it is definitely not anti-anything!"

And as Peter added, "We just thought it might be nice for folks to take a shopping break, so to speak, and escape temporarily from the 24 hour Christmas music blasting from every shopping mall speaker and TV commercial. (Though our CDs do make nice stocking stuffers of course.)"

This concert, consisting of two sets of music with a short break for sampling

the bland treats to be offered, will feature many Berryman favorites, but also songs from Lou and Peter's brand new CD called Rocky Frontier. This collection was released just a couple months ago to pretty darn good reviews, and is already being used as a fund-drive premium for Berkeley CA's famed KPFA listener sponsored radio. There is only one holiday song on the CD, and the Berrymans promise not to sing it at the Opera House this time around. But that leaves fourteen other new songs to choose from, as well as all their hundreds of un-holiday-themed favorites going all the way back to the vinyl years.

And regarding the Stoughton Opera House, Peter makes this observation in the Brava magazine interview:

"I should add that the Stoughton

Opera House, where we have performed a number of times, before, during, and after its restoration, is one of our favorite venues in the entire country. It is glorious acoustically and visually, and creates some sort of exciting chemistry between the performer and the audience. Stoughton has a true treasure in this great old hall."

Tickets (\$20, plus transaction fee for credit cards) can be purchased at the Stoughton Opera House Box Office at 381 East Main Street, Stoughton, WI, Monday through Friday from 9am until 4:30. They can also be purchased by phone at 608-877-4400 or online. For more info and online ticket purchases, go to www.cityofstoughton.com and click on the Opera House icon.

THAT show is at the beginning of December (December 2). To bookend the month entirely, don't forget Lou and Peter's annual Early New Year's Eve fundraising blowout at the Goodman Community Center. For this show, whose cover charge is split 50/50 with the Community Center, a brand new selection of bland cookies will be offered at the intermission, and an entirely fresh collection of ho-hum door prizes and cardboard stage decorations are in the works. And the songs will be almost completely different from the songs sung at the early December show. This time, Berryman holiday songs, such as they are, may be sprinkled throughout, and more but different songs from the new CD will be sung.

This concert has always proven to be a

Continued from front page:

whole lot of fun, and has you out in time to attend a later New Year's Eve blowout to celebrate the actual transition from 2011 to 2012. Tickets for this show (\$16 advance or \$20 day of show) available at the Goodman Center on Waubesa St., Orange Tree Imports on Monroe St., or B-Side Music on State St, or online from Brown Paper Tickets at brownpapertickets.com/event/212329 (\$2 fee). Phone orders with credit cards call the Goodman Center at 241-1574.

For those not familiar with Lou and Peter's songwriting and performing, here are a few kind words:

"The Berrymans' recorded output approaches 200 songs. These touch regularly on topics that are everyday, even banal: cheese and snow, dogs, appliances, cars, Cher. But there are darker themes of sorrow and addiction; of struggling with relationships, with the music business, with clutter. There is sprightly, often brittle humor, and there are moments of peace and benediction. The words, ominous and gleeful alike, are sung to the sweet waltzes and polka tunes Lou composes."

-- Kenneth Burns, Isthmus

"Wisconsin songwriters Lou and Pe-

ter Berryman do to Midwestern sensibilities what Christine Lavin does to stressful New York, and what Tom Lehrer so long ago did to the intellectual pomposities of Cambridge: hoist the norms of everyday culture hilariously on their own petards. Their satires are at once biting funny and endearing, wildly absurdist and vividly human. They have the rare ability to make us simultaneously laugh at and care about the people they lampoon."

-- Scott Alarik, The Boston Globe

Lou & Peter Berryman
Goodman Community Center Early New Year's Eve Fundraiser Show
Saturday, December 31, 8:00 until 10:30pm
Goodman Community Center in Madison

The Santa Claustrophobia Show
Friday, December 2, 7:30pm
Stoughton Opera House in Stoughton

Irish Christmas in American at the ICHC Dec. 16

With the possible exception of an aromatic peat fire, the performers of an Irish Christmas in America will bring everything else necessary to transport their audience into the enchanting spirit of the holiday during a show at the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center, 2133 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, on Friday, Dec. 16 at 7:30 p.m.

Produced annually since 2005 by fiddler Oisín MacDiarmada of the award-winning traditional band Téada, the family-friendly show will include well-known carols, ballads sung in Irish, high-energy music and thrilling dancing. Narration brings to life ancient customs and stories while photographic images provide a rich historical context.

According to MacDiarmada, one of the most heartfelt themes of the Christmas show is emigration from Ireland. "Music was a way that people stayed close to home."

In addition to MacDiarmada and other members of Téada, this year's show features County Kerry vocalists Éilís Kennedy and Pauline Scanlon of the much heralded new duo Lumiere. Their music springs from a well of ancient songs and spirituality but at the same has a modern sound and a decidedly feminine feel.

The séan nós or "old-style" dancing of Brian Cunningham from County Galway has garnered Ireland's top awards. He tours internationally including to Japan and South Korea, where he was invited to accompany Irish President Mary McAleese during a 2005 state visit.

Séamus Beglay, accordionist, singer and storyteller, is known for his traditional dance music in the West Kerry style and also for his sharp wit. He has performed and toured with many well-known groups and artists including Altan and Mary Black.

Irish harpist Gráinne Hambly performs extensively throughout Europe and the United States. From County Mayo, she began studying music at age 4 and took up the harp when she was 14. A review in the Irish Herald described her music as "pure joy".

"Lively and reflective ... a powerful evocation of the season." - Folk Wax

Reserved seat tickets for adults are \$21 in advance and \$25 on concert day. The ticket price for ages 10-16 is \$15 and the concert is free for younger children. To order tickets and for further information, visit www.ichc.net. Tickets may also be ordered by calling (414) 345-8800.

MadFolkNews 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. Learn about concerts, membership, scholarships, and volunteer opportunities at www.madfolk.org.

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A VERY SHE & HIM CHRISTMAS

SHE & HIM ~ 2011 MERGE RECORDS



Review by Kiki Schueler

If they know her at all, most people know Zoë Deschanel as the perky actress in films like *Elf* and *500 Days of Summer* and in the new Fox series *New Girl*. She also has a second career as the She half of the band She & Him. I am quite vocally not a fan of Deschanel the actress in her many “manic pixie dream girl” roles, but that’s another review. I am also not a fan of She & Him, and not just because of the incorrect syntax of their awkward moniker. Surprisingly, my dislike has less to do with Deschanel and more to do with the fact that for every record she puts out with M. Ward (the Him half of the group), the more time that he isn’t doing his own music. She has a nice, listenable, if unremarkable, voice. No breathy, whiny girl singer here; instead, her pleasant voice has a nostalgic 50’s feeling. My main criticism of their Christmas record *A Very She & Him Christmas* is the same as that of their other records: too much She and not enough Him. However, I am a fan of Christmas records, especially well-done, even adequately done, modern ones, which are few and far between. Despite the spate bombarding us every holiday season, I haven’t been moved to purchase one since Bob Dylan’s unlikely turn a few years ago.

While the songs don’t feature much by way of Ward’s vocals, they undeniably

sound like him. The simple (sounding) arrangements, the ever-present reverb, and the haunting guitars all result in a very listenable, if uncharacteristically subdued, holiday release. Unlike Dylan, who tackled such unlikely hymns as “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” and “O Come All Ye Faithful,” She & Him stick to more recent secular and safe material. The lesser-known tracks are a dreamy version of NRBQ’s Joey Spampinato’s “Christmas Wish,” the only track to feature Ward on lead vocals and consequently one of my favorites, and Brian Wilson’s “Christmas Day.” The pair engages Wilson again later on the record with a mellow ukulele (played competently by Deschanel) take on The Beach Boys’ “The Little St Nick.” In fact, if there is one word to sum up *A Very She & Him Christmas*, it is mellow. Traditionally energetic tunes like “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” and “Sleigh Ride” just barely reach bouncy. While that may sound like a complaint, it shouldn’t come as surprise to fans of Ward, who has made a career of being brilliantly inconspicuous. As the least visible member of supergroup Monsters of Folk, he stole the show. And when he chimes in vocally on the quietly addictive, pedal-steel-propelled “Sleigh Ride,” it all starts to make sense.

They fearlessly, occasionally foolishly, undertake songs permanently associated, for better or worse, with a particular artist. Their “Blue Christmas” will never take the place of Elvis’s, though they do get points for being even bluer, and this downer may be the track to skip for those prone to holiday depression. Their simple voice and uke version of “Silver Bells” misses the point and doesn’t even belong in the same search as Bing Crosby’s. “Baby It’s Cold Outside” avoids comparisons to my favorite Dean Martin version (and also her “duet” with Will Farrell in *Elf*) by reversing the roles. Deschanel is the one putting the moves on

Ward, while he protests woozily that he really can’t stay. This version is frostier than Martin’s lecherous, martini-fueled come-on, but in switching it up, it works. Mel Tormé may have recorded the ultimate version of “The Christmas Song,” but their torchy take to close the record may have been their most unexpectedly inspired selection from the book of holiday carols, and is perfectly suited for Deschanel’s voice.

Sure they could have taken more chances, and (again) there should be more Him, but *A Very She & Him Christmas* is a record you can put on repeat while opening presents on Christmas Eve and no one is going to complain till at least the fourth or fifth play. And that is quite definitely something.

MadFolk Concert Tickets

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 and at these outlets:

- Orange Tree Imports, 1721 Monroe Street
- Spruce Tree Music, 851 East Johnson

Purchase tickets ONLINE for Mad Folk concerts via Brown Paper Tickets:

<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/producer/10879>

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.

The Earl Scruggs of the Autoharp!



**Madison Folk Music
Society PRESENTS**

Bryan Bowers

with special guest Tom Kastle

Friday, January 6, 2012

7:00 pm

THE BRINK LOUNGE, 701 E. Washington, Suite 105

Tickets \$14 advance, \$16 day of show

Available at: www.madfolk.org,

Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports

Non-perishable donations of food will be collected for local food banks

WORT 89.9 FM



Bird Bird Bird Review Review Review

My music partner Lou and I wrote a song a number of years ago called Bird, Bird, Bird. It's a list song. I've always liked lists, and I'm not exactly sure why, except that it seems magical the way a list (often of nouns) can pretty much do all the work usually done by a combination of parts of speech. I think that's what thrilled me about Jack Kerouac's writing when I first read it; so many nouns. My favorite Kerouac story title is "October in the Railroad Earth." (Based on this title, there is now a New Jersey band called "Railroad Earth.") I know there's a preposition and an article thrown in there, but what a grouping of nouns!

Anyway, our list song represents a drive from the countryside into and through a small town and back into the country. It contains a subtext of social commentary. Here are excerpts:

Bird-bird, bird-bird, cow-cow
Bird-bird, bird-bird, cow-cow
Silo, tractor, Barn, plow
Bird-bird, bird-bird, cow-cow
Hay field, hay field, hay field...

...Speed zone, thirty, Wal-Mart
Wal-Mart, Wal-Mart Wal-Mart
Garden tractor, go-cart
Asphalt asphalt, K-Mart
K-Mart K-Mart, gas pump
Gas pump, gas pump, gas pump
Wendy's drive thru, speed bump...

...Empty storefront, plywood
Plywood plywood plywood
Out of business for good
Relocated plywood
Hotel courthouse dead shrub
Dead tree, dead grass, dead shrub...

...Strip mall, pig farm, sow-sow
Silo, tractor, barn, plow
End construction, cow cow
Bird-bird, bird-bird, cow-cow...

...etc. I know there are some non-nouns tossed in, but not many.

Recently Lou and I spent three days performing at the Erie (PA) Art Museum, thanks to the efforts of the Museum's Director of Education & Folk Art, Kelly Armor, a person of limitless energy and boundless knowledge of folk arts around the world. Kelly thought our stuff would fit in with the thrust of a current show which was called "dysFUNCTIONal" (hmmm...).

We rarely perform for children but made an exception in this situation. The younger kids were wonderful, attentive, exciting. But we also played for a group of 19 and 20 year olds. We are known for helping people of that age develop their eyeball rolling muscles, and this seemed like another such experience. But later they were given a "listening assignment" which focused on the "Bird Bird Bird" song.

Kelly sent us a few of the commentaries they wrote that week, and we were delightfully blown away by their level of comprehension (and there's some funny stuff here too). They pointed out a few things about the lyrics that even I, the lyricist, wasn't aware of. Many of these young adults were not native English speakers, and reading their perceptive writings, it dawned on me that list songs might be more easily translated than songs with sentence structures. Of course, they didn't cover any of our OTHER songs, so I can't make any comparisons. But when writing this song I had wondered about the understandability of list songs like this even to English speakers. It didn't occur to me that they may be EASIER to understand. Here are the reports, uncorrected, introduced by Kelly:

Kelly: "Here is a nice, honest, solid answer:"

The social commentary of Bird, Bird, Bird is how the economy is down and its hard to make a good living in rural areas these days. And all they use is nouns to describe what they see. They describe through their lyrics that there isn't much going on in the part of Wisconsin where they live. They talk about run down businesses and it pretty much being a farming culture.

Through their music they get the message across that Wisconsin isn't a big time city with skyscrapers and big huge shopping malls, it's a low key not much going on culture. But they also get the message across that people there are hard working because they talk about how a business gets run down and has to relocate this implies to me that people in this society have to work hard to make a living.

Kelly: "Here's a kid with lousy spelling but a lot of energy and opinion:"

This song is referencing societal situations, it brings the audiences attention to the fact that big oil and big business, and business dominates the country and you can see this domination everytime you drive. the roads are littered with wal marts, gas stations, kmart, wendy's. but at the begining of the song they are sure bring up what people like to think the country is all farms and feilds. then after ripping on big business they discuss what those business' have done to our country, it talks about the things that have suffered due to the business. then it progresses into the farm scene agian. the reason for the progression is because the song is ment to simulatue a drive.

Kelly: "But my favorite answer of them all is from an incredibly diligent and wide-eyed Chinese student:"

At first, I have to admit that my listening is bad, especially for songs. I cannot figure out most of the lyrics. In this song, what do I understand is that birds, cows or any other animals' habitant was neither destroyed or took up by humans. The natural environment was replaced by the duplex drive way, gas pumpt, house or something like this. "Hey field", is a kind of regret for the natural field. In the whole song, the singers didn't say a sentence, all the lyrics are words. However, these words like "died trees,died grass" express their love for natural field and also transmit the hatefulness for the human behaviors, such as destroy the environment. Also, many words like "dicount stripper club" indicate that human are very selfish and devil. We killed numerous animals only for entertaining. By the way, the women singer's voice is very cute.

Quotes used with permission. Check out the Erie Art Museum: erieartmuseum.org/

WZ for Dec 2011

The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

December 2011

Mad Folk Events



♪♪ Bryan Bowers

Friday Jan 6
The Brink Lounge -- 701 E. Washington Ave -- 7pm
\$14adv/\$16d.o.s.

♪♪ Tim Grimm

Friday Jan 20
The Brink Lounge -- 701 E. Washington Ave -- 7pm
\$14adv/\$16d.o.s.

♪♪ David Francey

Friday Feb 17
The Brink Lounge -- 701 E. Washington Ave -- 7pm
\$15adv/\$17d.o.s.

Venues



Wild Hog in the Woods

Weekly Friday night folk music in intimate setting
All shows at 8pm unless indicated otherwise.
\$2 for members, \$3 for non-members

- Dec 2 -- Patchouli
- Dec 9 -- Off the Porch
- Dec 16 -- Nelson Graham
- Sat. Dec 17 -- Hootenanny! -- 2pm

Cafe Carpe

All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise

- Dec 1, @ 7:00 pm New Pioneers
- Dec 2 -- Larry Penn
- Dec 3 -- Bill Camplin & The Saintly Nicks
- Dec 7, @ 7:45pm Peter Mulvey / John Sieger / Paul Cebar / Robin Pluer
- Dec 29, @ 7:30 pm Devil in the Outhouse
- Dec 31, @ 7:00 pm Mike Dowling w/ Randy Sabien

Mad Toast Live! at the The Brink Lounge

Music, talk and variety show hosted by Chris Wagoner and Mary Gaines

Tues. Dec 6 -- Jeremiah Nelson & Paul Otteson 6:30pm
-- Ritt Dietz 7:30pm

Tues. Dec 11 -- \$10; \$8 for members of MMC and Mad. Jazz Society and students
-- "Super Guitar Band" w/ Jack Grassel, Kirk Tatnell & Dane Richardson 3:30pm & 6pm
-- Improv Music Workshop following each concert for more info Laurie Lang - (608)833-2200

- Fri, Dec 2 -- Ritt Detiz Family Band -- 8pm -- \$6
- Sat, Dec 3 -- Sandra Beasley -- 8pm -- Free!
- Fri, Dec 9 -- Al Rose -- 8pm -- \$6
- Sat, Dec 10 -- Safety Last! -- 8pm -- \$6
- Sat, Dec 17 -- Hanah Jon Taylor -- 8pm -- \$6

Misc

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

Bob's BBQ Emporium's Open Mic - Thus, Dec 15 -- 7pm
-- 8164 Hwy. 14 Arena, WI

Gigs

Lou & Peter Berryman

Friday, December 2 -- 7:30pm -- Santa Claustrophobia
Stoughton Opera House -- 381 East Main Street, Stoughton

Saturday, December 31 -- 8pm-1030pm -- New Year's Eve Fundraiser Show
Goodman Community Center -- 2 Waubesa St Madison

Logon Aergon

Edgy new folk music with a soft heart and a sharp attitude

Friday, December 2 -- The Frequency @9pm
121 W. Main St., Madison

Bittersweet Christmas Band

Friday, December 16 -- House Concert -- Suggested donation \$10
for more details call 274-6340 or
e-mail: maddog-210@charter.net

Jim Schwall

Sunday, December 11, High Noon Saloon, Madison -- Tribute to Marques Bovre

Wednesday, December 14, Brink Lounge, Madison, 8:00

Monday December 26, Crystal Corner, Madison, 9:30 -- soloacoustic, no cover.

On the Air



Simply Folk on Wisconsin Public Radio w/ Stephanie Elkins, Interim Host

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.



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
- Mon - Global Revolutions (folk from the world over) w/ David & Martin Alvarado & Eugenia Highland
- Tue -- For the Sake of the Song (traditional American folk) w/Jim Schwall
- Wed -- Back to the Country (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
- Cajun Dance - Sun 12/18 - dance instruction at 6:15 PM, dance 7:00 to 10:00 PM - Harmony Bar & Grill, 2201 Atwood Ave, 249-4333
- SpiritMoves Ecstatic Dance 2nd and 4th Weds, 7:00-9:00 pm -- The Center for Conscious Living, 849 East Washington Ave. -- \$7 min. donation
- English Country Dance taught -- 1st and 3rd Mon, 7:30-9:30pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 238-9951 or 238-9951
- 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
- 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

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Madison Folk Music Society

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