

Mad Folk News

Bryan Bowers at the Brink Jan. 6th with Tom Kastle!



Occasionally you hear someone described as a "Force of Nature." If that has ever confused you, you must come hear Bryan Bowers (bryanbowers.com) -- autoharp master, singer/songwriter, storyteller, and folk song stylist supreme -- at his Mad Folk concert on January 6. Bryan defines the term. He's a big man, with a big voice, and energy and musicianship to match. Some performers are able to make a song "their own" by singing them (Sinatra and "My Way," Elvis and "Love Me Tender"), but when Bryan Bowers sings a song -- whether he wrote it himself or not -- his big soul and generous delivery makes it seem like EVERYONE'S song, which is a much more rare ability and perfectly in tune with the world of folk music.

"...This man makes more music from an Autoharp than you can imagine from a 12-string guitar and a harpsichord combined. He has more stage presence and charisma than any stage performer in recent memory."

-The Washington Times

Bryan also has a sense of humor in suitable proportion to the rest of his enormities. On this visit to Madison, he brings a fabulous new recording called CRABBY OLD MAN. Pictured on the album is a rumpled and beaming Bryan, white hair flapping in the sunlight, holding up a huge crab in each hand, no doubt hauled in from his paradise on the Pacific coast north of Seattle. As to his professed "crabby"ness, one of the joys of being in Bryan's presence is that he tells it like it is, crabby or not. A man of strong opinions which he is NOT likely to keep to himself, he also wears his heart on his sleeve, and like his physique, that heart is a big one. Moreover, his live shows and his recordings showcase the musical dexterity won from long years perfecting his craft, as well as the profound love he has for the people and the music that have been his life for the last fifty years.

Born in Yorktown, Virginia, Bryan Bowers was raised in New Bohemia near Petersburg of the Civil War's Battle Of The Crater fame. As a child, Bowers would tag along with the field workers and gandy dancers and learned to sing old call-and-answer songs. Bowers recalls, "I just thought that music was something that everyone did. It was years later that I realized what I'd been raised around." That grounding in traditional music may have been the spur which inspired him to drop out of college in the late '60's, take up the guitar and shortly thereafter turn to the autoharp--of which instrument he has become known as the preeminent innovator and acknowledged master. In 1993, Bryan was the first living member inducted into the Autoharp Hall of Fame to stand only with Maybelle Carter, Kilby Snow, and Sara Carter.

In addition to redefining the autoharp, Bryan is also well known as a singer-songwriter, lending his skills easily to raucous and slightly bawdy musical jokes to tender

and loving songs such as "You've Got a Friend", which beautifully describes how music can evoke our happiest times.

You can be sure of an evening of stories and song, at the hands of a dynamic outgoing performer who can be wild and zany on stage while playing a song like "Dixie" and five minutes later can have the audience singing "Will The Circle Be Unbroken" in quiet reverence and delight.

Opening for Bryan Bowers will be Tom Kastle (www.tomkastle.com). Tom is a singer, songwriter, sailor, and teller of tales, based in Madison, who brings a sense of "writing out of the tradition" to his music. Recently, he has toured the Midwest and East Coast from Halifax to the Chesapeake and has been heard on Simply Folk, WORT, and WMMM. He was a guest host on Rich Warren's "Sweet Folk Chicago" show on WFMT. In Madison, he is the tenor banjo player in the Forward! Marching Band, an occasional instrumentalist in the Learning Curve and the Narrator (with occasional singing parts) for the Candid Concert Opera Company.



The Bryan Bowers concert with Tom Kastle will be at 7:00pm on Friday, January 6, 2012, at the Brink Lounge, 701 E. Washington St, in Madison. Tickets \$14 advance, \$16 day of show, available online at [brown paper tickets](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/210511):

www.brownpapertickets.com/event/210511.

Award-winning songwriter and actor Tim Grimm comes to the Brink!

Some people have such a comfortable grasp on the whole idea of creativity that they can slip seemingly without effort from one medium to another. In the performing arts, a certain select number of artists are able to step from the acting arena into that of the performing musician (and songwriter!), bringing to the show not only their musical gifts but the communicative and dramatic skills learned from their acting careers. Jeff Daniels, Cher, Kris Kristofferson, Tom Waits, and other multi-talented actor/musician/songwriters come to mind. The perfect example of such an enormous and flexible talent is Tim Grimm, being presented in concert by Mad Folk on January 20.

Tim Grimm has toured and recorded with his friend, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, appeared with Harrison Ford in the film *Clear and Present Danger*, and has shared the stage with writer and poet Wendell Berry. His recording *The Back Fields* was named Best Americana Album in the 2006 Just Plain Folks Music Awards in Los Angeles (the largest and most diverse music awards in the world). Named 2000's BEST DISCOVERY in *Roots/Americana Music* by *The Chicago Sun-Times*, and 2004 MALE ARTIST of The Year by the Free-

form American Roots DJs, his songs and performances have established him as a unique voice in Americana music. Each of his past 5 recordings have reached the top of the Folk or American-roots charts.

Grimm walks the fine line between folk and country, while maintaining a strong footing in tradition. We hear the rural rumblings that have shaped his life, but we are also invited in to a bigger picture, as evident in so much of his work. Critics searching for comparisons most often cite Johnny Cash, Woody Guthrie and (Nebraska era) Bruce Springsteen.

Tim is an award-winning songwriter, and actor on stage and screen. After several years working in Los Angeles (where he co-starred for 2 seasons on the NBC drama *Reasonable Doubts* and appeared in several films), Tim returned home to Indiana. He now lives with his wife and sons on an 80 acre farm close to where he grew up. Tim's songs are full of the rural rumblings that have shaped his life—rich with descriptive details, and sung with warmth and intimacy—recognizing the inextinguishable national romance with the idea of the family farm and the vanishing landscape of rural America.

His recordings include *Heart Land*

(2000), *Coyote's Dream* (2003), *NAMES* (2004), and *The Back Fields* (2005). In 2007, Grimm put together a concept cd with several of the Midwest's finest songwriter's—including Corazong artist—Krista Detor, Carrie Newcomer, Tom Roznowski, and Michael White. The recording, *Wilderness Plots*, was drawn from the short stories of noted author, Scott Russell Sanders, and explored the settling of the American Wilderness in the Ohio River Valley Region between The Revolutionary War and The Civil War.

Tim has performed in theatres and coffeehouses around the United States, as well as significant Festivals, including the Kerrville Folk Festival, Wildflower Festival, Fox Valley, the Pawtucket Arts Festival, the Indiana Festival at Conner Prairie and he hosts The Americana Music Series and Americana Downtown in Indiana. Still very active on stage and onscreen, Tim's most recent projects include guest spots on television's, *CHICAGO CODE* and *DETROIT 187*, work on the upcoming untitled feature film with director, Ramin Bahrani and starring Dennis Quaid, and he will appear in Indiana Repertory's production of *GOD OF CARNAGE* in early 2012.

Experience Living River Music!

By Ken Lonnquist

Last May through July my 90 year old mother slipped away. In the process, my siblings (I'm the eighth of eight children) and our partners and kids found ourselves leaning --- in a way none of us had anticipated --- on the vast river of music that has coursed through our lives. I had my ukulele with me every day at the hospital, and we'd play and sing my Mom's favorites for her... and our own favorite songs that brought us comfort, and then an increasingly wide-range of songs that continued to occur to us "in the moment".

That experience was truly profound... of course, because of my Mom's passing, but also because of the musical outpouring we shared. I discovered a lot of things about song, and songs, that I never really knew before. Some old songs are "tools" in the "cultural toolshed". They hang up there on the wall, and you eye them curiously, knowing what they're about... but until you happen to really need them as a tool, you don't fully appreciate how well crafted they are, and how effectively they apply to a given situation. We swam together, my family and I, through a

The Tim Grimm concert is on Friday, January 20th, 2012, at the Brink Lounge, 701 E. Washington in Madison. Tickets \$14 advance, \$16 day of show, available online at:

www.brownpapertickets.com/event/210514

"living river" of song. As Mom entered into the hospice phase, we were around her bedside daily, talking and singing for hours and hours at a time. Her passing was a long, tearful serenade. I felt like I was swimming underwater much of the time, moving from song to song to song.

Living River Music continued on backage



Review by Kiki Schueler

I confess, I'm one of those people who make best-of lists at the end of the year. Convinced that people care about what I think, I include these lists in my Christmas card letter and post them on my blog in the hope that some worthy records that may have been overlooked in the flood of releases will get a second chance. Finishing high on my list—number three behind my new favorite band, the Features, and my beloved Ha Ha Tonka—is the most recent release by the Athens, Ohio band Southeast Engine. Since its release in March 2011, *Canary* has seldom strayed far from my CD player, its Depression-era storyline songs as fresh as when I first heard them. Released on the newly revived Misra label, now distributed by Bloodshot Records, the record captures the trials of an unnamed Appalachian family as they endure the hardships of the time.

No song on the record pinpoints the nature of these difficulties better than the surprisingly catchy “1933 (Great Depression).” A unique combo of piano, cymbal crashes, fuzzed-out guitar and rollicking Hammond organ propels this song. Even though “it’s 1933 the debt collectors follow me” and “even though the mill is gone,” there is still hope:

“Roosevelt won the election, we’re gonna make it through the Great Depression.” Meanwhile, the final line sums up all of the frustration by asking the oh-so-obvious, “what’s so goddamn great about the Great Depression?” The song is also our first introduction to Ruthie, the love interest of our narrator—“she’s my sister’s friend, she lives up around the bend, and when church lets out her face is the one I see.” She returns as the title character in the penultimate track, a sweet violin-driven proposal: “oh Ruthie, won’t you take this ring, come let us marry by the spring.” It’s yet another glimpse of optimism in the midst of misfortune, a theme repeated throughout the record. The final track, the unlisted minute-and-a-half instrumental “Sourwood Mountain,” is a fiddle and banjo hoedown seemingly straight from the *Anthology of American Folk*.

The standout centerpiece of the record is the gentle ballad “Adeline of the Appalachian Mountains.” Gently plucked banjo backs this song of admiration and devotion to “Adeline my twin sister.” Lead singer, and also songwriter, Adam Remnant’s voice teeters on the edge of breaking as he sings his praise. Though it is the longest track by only the barest of margins—its 5:09 running time just one second longer than the opening track, the alternately aching and whirling “Curse of Canaanville”—it feels much more epic. Remnant’s scratchily sincere voice is the key to selling this album-length step back in time, part Dylan, part unnamed backporch historian. Unlike the Decem-berists’ in-your-face braggy bookishness, Southeast Engine subtly evokes a specific place in our country’s timeline without ever

seeming as though they are trying to give us a history lesson. Despite specific names and places, their story, told with violin, harmonica, various keyboards and even the occasional horn section, has a universal everyman feel.

Canary is a gritty, gutsy and undeniably gorgeous record from a band that deserves a much bigger audience.

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.madfok.org.

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Cooney's Colorado Chronicle

My music partner Lou and I met the legendary folk singer Michael Cooney when we opened for him at a nightclub called "Bunky's" on the corner of Park and Regent Streets in Madison. Bunky's, then a music hotspot, began as a restaurant in the 1930s, was reborn as a restaurant and nightclub in the 70s through the 80s, and exists today as a restaurant on Atwood Avenue, run by the original owner's great granddaughter and her husband.

The date of our gig with Michael was Tuesday, October 20, 1981. That week in Madison we also played a Simply Folk (public radio folk music show) fundraiser, the good ol' Club de Wash, and a chili bake-off, way out by the Beltline in the parking lot of what was Phillips Department Store, in a blizzard. Our career has always been a farrago. Now most of it is a long-ago farrago.

We immediately formed a mutual admiration society with Michael that night. He helped is in a thousand ways soon afterward, by encouraging us to tour nationally, and by introducing us to venues he thought would be appropriate for us. Best of all, he began singing some of our songs on his tours, which helped build our audience even before we showed up anywhere. Though he now lives happily and somewhat reclusively with his wife Margot on an idyllic little farmstead on the coast of Maine, we do keep in touch.

Michael doesn't tour much these days, having found his personal shangri-la which he hates to leave. But the last time we played on the same stage as Michael, at the Old Songs Festival in Altamont NY in the summer of 2009, we were all reminded that though he may have curtailed his touring, he is still the same amazing musician and performer that he was when we met him.

This year he was contacted by the re-

vered Denver Folklore Center and asked to join in their 50th anniversary celebration in 2012. He couldn't pass this up as he had been on the scene there in 1962, when the center had its beginnings. Michael wrote to us an "abbreviated tale" explaining his adventures at that time and justifying his sudden rare eagerness to travel, wondering if he and his wife could drop in for a visit on the way there or back. Well of course we said sure. I can't believe where the time goes, that we met Michael 21 years after his Colorado adventure, and it is now 30 years beyond that night in Bunky's.

I read his quickly jotted memoir of those courageous and footloose days with glee and asked him if I might reproduce it in Whither Zither. Here are his informal recollections, quoted with his permission:

"In February 1962, Grady Tuck and I decided to hitchhike from San Diego to Seattle and see if we could make some money around the World's Fair. Between us we carried three instruments and two duffle bags; only got one ride, from a guy in a pickup truck. Ended up riding freight trains. Got a bum steer from a freight-yard guy in (Roseville?), CA; he directed us to a train going EAST. We almost froze to death going over the Sierras. Ended up in Reno in the middle of the night. Sang in a bar where a patron said we could sleep in his room, he was staying up.

"Next day, for reasons totally unknown to me, Grady went to the employment office and got us jobs as busboys at Squaw Valley ski resort (home of '61 Winter Olympics). After one month, Grady was head busboy and I was fired. (Honest work is not for me.) I got a job singing in a neighbor resort; it included free lift tickets. We were kind of going with two Swiss girls who worked in the kitchen at Squaw Valley; one of 'em said she'd teach me to ski; took me up on a lift (first time on skis!). I broke my leg in two places.

"A friend of ours showed up to visit

and gave me a ride to Riverside, CA where my (rightwing fundamentalist) brother had moved from Tucson with his new wife and our mom. After two or three days I couldn't stand it and left, on crutches, with a cast on my whole leg, a banjo and 70 cents. (We call those The Good Old Days.) Went over the Rockies (Wolf Creek Pass) in a blizzard, at night, with a forest ranger; he dropped me at the top (clear sky) in the middle of nowhere, in the dark. I got to Denver in the morning, with \$1.30 (don't remember how).

"Was directed to a coffeehouse (The Green Spider) in an old storefront place where I played a few songs and told my story. Some people took me in -- they seemed like three strange gay high school boys ruled by a really weird girl. I was there for a day when they mentioned the Denver Folklore Center. I said, "WHERE?" and they took me to it, in a storefront a few doors down from the Green Spider. Harry was still painting the place, preparing for his eventual opening. I whispered "Save me!" to him and he offered me a place to sleep on the floor. So I spent two or three weeks there, sleeping on the floor while Harry slept on a platform (where he would later store instrument cases). We existed on yummy black bread and water. Harry TRIED to get me a job or two but I wasn't very enthusiastic about this. He finally lent me a guitar and put me on a bus to Boulder where there was a coffeehouse (The Attic) in the basement of some building. The two guys who ran the place hired me very occasionally but let me sleep on their couch.

"Many other stories from there, but...Harry opened the Folklore Center and it became a Big success. At one time he owned five or six adjoining storefronts on that block. So Harry and I go way back."

---Michael Cooney

Congratulations to the Denver Folklore Center, and deep thanks to Michael for allowing me to reprint this gripping remembrance of his Colorado days.

www.michaelcooney.com
www.denverfolklore.com
www.bunkyscafe.net

The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

January 2012

Mad Folk Events



Bryan Bowers with Tom Kastle

Friday Jan 6
The Brink Lounge -- 701 E. Washington Ave -- 7pm
\$14adv/\$16d.o.s. --
www.brownpapertickets.com/event/210511

Tim Grimm

Friday Jan 20
The Brink Lounge -- 701 E. Washington Ave -- 7pm
\$14adv/\$16d.o.s.
www.brownpapertickets.com/event/21054

David Francey

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

Venues



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

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

- Chris Powers
Friday, January 6 -- 8pm
- Page Foster
Friday, January 13 -- 8pm
- Moldy Jam with Cajun Spice
Friday, January 20 -- 8pm
- Irish Lumber Company
Friday, January 27 -- 8pm



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

Cafe Carpe

All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise

- JT Nero and Allison Russell
Friday, January 13 -- 8:30
- The New Pioneers
Saturday, January 21 -- 8:30
\$10 at the door

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.

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 - Thu, Jan 19 -- 7pm
-- 8164 Hwy. 14 Arena, WI

Living River Music!

Register by calling (608) 249-7714 or email ken@kenland.com.
Single sessions - \$15 , 12 sessions - \$120
www.livingrivermusic.com

Jigs

Lou & Peter Berryman

Friday, January 27 -- 8pm -- Old Berryman Songs Night
The Brink Lounge -- 701 E. Washington in Madison

The Lazy Reason

Thursday, January 19 -- Dragonfly Lounge @ 9pm -- No cover charge
121 W. Main St., Madison

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 1/16 - 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

Living River Music continued from second page

It all resonated deeply for me, and led to the creation of "Living River Music", a group music-making experience I'm launching with Dave Adler (keyboardist with The Gomers). We'll be navigating improvised weekly sessions for folks of all ages and levels of musical proficiency that explore how songs adapt to conditions and places, singers and players in any given moment... the very essence of live musical expression.

Dave was one of three close musical pals who came to Minneapolis last July to sing and play with me at my mother's Memorial Service. Afterwards, we played a five or six hour "Irish Wake" at an Irish Pub in the Twin Cities for my extended family. It was so fluid, so cathartic, and so meaningful.

Living River Music will allow music-lovers to participate in the changing tempo, dynamic, mood, and even meaning of a song --- as time, mood and circumstances move us. Instead of a lesson in "technical proficiency" on an instrument, Living

River Music will be a lesson in playing, feeling and experiencing songs with other musicians. The primary goal is that every participant experience the thrill of "letting go" musically, swimming in song-currents together improvisationally --- listening, feeling the tempo and dynamic, adjusting to group direction and flow, and developing and refining arrangements as new possibilities within songs are discovered. In this process, the therapeutic power of music-making can (and likely will) emerge as a "bonus" --- along with self-confidence, poise, performance skills and new friendships gained from navigating uncharted waters together!

No musical expertise is required --- only a love of communication and connection, and the desire to sing, clap, play percussion or an instrument. We hope the sessions will spark joy, camaraderie and self-confidence. Certainly some skills in improvisation, song-arranging and even songwriting should be expected. The Living River is a fine place to dive in!

The songs we play will be decided "in the

moment". A likely emphasis will fall on those familiar, accessible, and easy to learn. Dave and I have deep repertoires from which to draw in leading these ongoing "group-swims" through folk, rock, standards, originals, or anything that bubbles up (including group-improvised songs) and suggestions from participants --- which will be welcome and expected!

We expect to hold quarterly recitals in which favorite songs will be chosen that feature individuals, small ensembles or the group as a whole. Creating powerful programs of song for each recital will actually be part of our musical discovery, as we see how combining accapella arrangements, small ensembles or the whole group --- is a musical dynamic in itself.

Join us in Living River Music! Register by calling (608) 249-7714 or email ken@kenland.com. Single sessions - \$15, or \$10 per session for quarterly sign-up (12 weeks, \$120).

Visit www.livingrivermusic.com for more information.

Old Berryman Songs Night

For those of you who have been asking for Lou and Peter Berryman's older songs, like *Are You Drinkin' With Me Jesus*, *Alice Hotel*, and *Do You Think It's Gonna Rain*, now's your chance. Come one, come all to Lou and Peter's third annual Old Berryman Songs Night, at the Brink Lounge in Madison, on Friday, January 27, at 8pm. Tickets \$15 at the door. Yah Hey!

Madison Folk Music Society join renew

Name _____

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Choose membership category: Senior \$8 _____

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Regular \$12 _____

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Scholarship fund donation (optional) _____

Total \$ _____

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