

Mad Folk News

Mad Folk welcomes Ronny Cox to the Brink for a special August Show

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

♪ Ronny Cox is an artist who wears a variety of hats — from musician to actor to family man. His musical style is eclectic and he confesses that he has no set-in-stone criteria for picking or writing songs.

With a career that spans over a hundred and twenty-five films and television shows. Ronny's first film... his first time acting in front of a camera was as the guitarist in the famous "dueling banjos"

scene in DELIVERANCE. His second big film was BOUND FOR GLORY, Hal Ashby's film about Woody Guthrie.

The truth, though is Ronny has been writing songs and telling stories for over four decades.

Only in the last ten years has the world seen him evolve from being an "actor who

and AT THE SABASTIANI (2006), were recorded live with almost no overdubs or corrections, "The idea was to capture that spontaneous magic, to give people a real sense of what we do in a

"A study in easygoing amiability and unforced charisma. He charms crowds with self-teasing humor, tart progressive insight, and a lulling Southwestern folk sound..."

- Scott Alarik, Boston Globe



sings" into knowing him as a "singer who happens to have a pretty fair career acting"

His recording debut, RONNY COX, was released in 1993 for Mercury Records in Nashville and, according to Ronny, was "pretty much a country record — at least it seemed so to me." For his next album, ACOUSTIC ECLECTRICITY (2000) Ronny wanted a more "folkie" approach, so he turned to his son, John, to produce it. COWBOY SAVANT (2002) was a studio album produced by Wendy Waldman and his next two albums, RONNY COX LIVE (2004)

live performance."

A few years ago, Ronny's wife Mary passed away. He met Mary when he was 14 and she was his only love. Developing his newly released album, RONNY COX – SONGS WITH REPERCUSSIONS, in one of the ways he has dealt with the loss. It is a personal studio collection of songs that are mostly selected from other sources with three original songs. Repercussions made it to the #1 spot of the Folk DJ list in the summer of 2009.

Like Ronny, the songs are eclectic, funny, touching, insightful and compelling. Each tune showcases an original, sophisticated lyric-driven sound and the stories that accompany these songs... are something else entirely. "The songs that I write and choose reflect that I pride myself in being able to find great songs and record them, not as covers, but as extensions of what I do as a performer."

2012 MidWest Folk Music Festivals

July 14 -- Blackhawk Folk Festival
Mount Morris, WI
www.blackhawkfolk.org

July 20-22 -- Hiawatha Traditional Music Festival
Marquette, MI
www.hiawathamusic.org

July 15 -- Woodstock Folk Festival
Woodstock, IL
www.woodstockfolkmusic.com

August 1-5 -- Grateful Garcia Gathering
Black river Falls, WI
www.gratefulgarciagathering.com

August 3-4 -- Sugar Maple Traditional Music Festival
Madison, WI
www.fourlakesmusic.org
August 10-12 -- Shawano Folk Music Festival
Shawano, WI
www.shawanofestival.com

August 16-18 -- Irish Fest
Milwaukee, WI
www.irishfest.com

August 17-18 -- Larryfest (Bluegrass)
Rockton, WI
www.kvama.org/larryfest.php

August 18 -- Gandy Dancer Festival
Mazomanie, WI
www.midcontinent.org

August 24-26 -- Great River Folk Festival
La Crosse, WI
www.greatriverfolkfest.org

September 2-3 -- Fox Valley Folk Music Festival
Geneva, IL
www.foxvalleyfolk.com

November 2-4 -- Stringalong Weekend
Olympia Resort, WI
www.uwm.edu/Dept/Folk

WORT brings The Kálmán Balogh Gypsy Trio to The Brink Friday July 27

The Kálmán Balogh Gypsy Trio is a dynamic merging of music from the old and new worlds. Balogh continues a fabled European musical tradition harking back to the collaboration of masters like Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt and violinist Stephane Grappelli, connecting ancient folk music traditions of Europe with the chord progressions and swinging rhythm of jazz. Balogh's cimbalom becomes a new and compelling voice centering the Trio, which is enhanced by violin/viola and acoustic bass. Similarities between jazz and traditional folk music, such as improvisation and a kaleidoscope of emotional expressions, are immediately evident.

Kálmán Balogh is one of the foremost Hungarian cimbalom players, de-

scending from a famous dynasty of Hungarian Gypsy musicians. His virtuosity is matched only by his understanding and respect of his heritage. A graduate of the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, Balogh has completed many successful tours throughout the world with various folk, classical, and jazz music ensembles, including well over a dozen tours in North America. The cimbalom, an oversized hammered dulcimer played with mallets like a vibraphone, possesses piano like percussive capabilities to drive a band rhythmically or take the melodic lead. In Balogh's expert hands, the cimbalom can do both simultaneously. His mastery of this unique and rare Hungarian folk instrument has mesmerized audiences.

The Trio includes excellent musicians who have worked with Balogh extensively. Robert Lakatos, a viola and violin player from Slovakia, is steeped in classical music training and played with important

classical orchestras, but always gravitated toward folk and world music. He plays in several groups ranging from classical to folk and jazz genres. Bassist Csaba Novák is one of the most versatile bass players in Hungary, familiar with Gypsy, Klezmer, folk, and jazz music styles.

Melodies polished in European villages for centuries are interpreted with great respect and understanding by the Trio, enabling present day music lovers to experience the emotions and beauty inherent in the music of our ancestors. The Kálmán Balogh Gypsy Trio brings a contemporary and uniquely forward-looking edge to time-honored traditions, leaving audiences enthralled and inspired.

For more information contact Dan at (608) 233-5322.



Review by Kiki Schueler

It's the little things that make me happy. In the case of The Pines, that thing is that the cover art for their new release, *Dark so Gold*, matches that of their previous two Red House Records releases. While *Sparrow in the Bell* features the blue-gray sky of early evening, and *Tremolo* glows yellow with midday sun, *Gold* blushes the pink of a sunrise, making a day-long trilogy. Despite the three years that have passed since their last record, the music on *Gold* also matches that of their previous releases—gorgeous, haunting- and slightly haunted-American. This is their most polished effort to date, which may have to do with their expanding lineup. Lead singers/guitarists Benson Ramsey and David Huckfelt are still front and center, but in addition to regular rhythm section JT Bates and bass player James Buckley, keyboardist Alex Ramsey has an increased role, and new additions Jacob Hanson and Michael Rossetto on guitar and banjo, respectively, also contribute. While Rossetto's contributions are immediately obvious on the two tracks he plays on, it's harder to pick out Hanson's. Ramsey is such an accomplished and creative electric player it's difficult to imagine he needs any help.

And yes, both Ramseys are the sons of Greg Brown's longtime sideman and producer Bo Ramsey, who also produced this record along with the band. Musical talent certainly runs deep in this family. Alex stands out anytime he sits at the piano, especially on the driving "Be There in Bells" (on which Benson again gives a shout-out to "ol' St Paul" just as he did on "Heart and Bones" on the last record). His keyboard work is less interesting, though it does provide a perfect canvas for Rossetto's banjo on the instrumental "Grace Hill." Surprisingly from a pair of great lyricists, there are three instrumental tracks on *Gold*. All are pretty, but they start to feel like filler, especially on a record that only runs ten tracks in under forty minutes. Of the remaining seven tracks, four of these are definitely Benson's show. Opening track "Cry, Cry, Crow" calls to mind the flat farmlands and early-morning chores of his native Iowa. The image-rich closing line "In the dome-light, wherever you are going, the hourglass you're holding is filled with falling snow" may be one of his best. The meditative "All the While" aches with emptiness and echoes with longing, Alex's keyboards compounding the effect.

Huckfelt makes the most of his time in the spotlight. Benson isn't much for choruses; his songs are more like poems set to music. On the other hand, Huckfelt usually has a line or two worth repeating; in "If by Morning" it's "I'm not asking for much just your meadowsweet touch," though "we jump from the bridge in our mind" may be the real keeper here. His "Chimes" is the most upbeat song on the record, despite lines like "now it's sudden death, overtime, in the darkest corners of my mind." Driven by piano and electric guitar, it may lead

to unabashed toe-tapping. I've always been a little disappointed that the Pines don't share vocals more often (usually one sings backing vocals to the other's lead), but "Rise Up and Be Lonely" sees them sharing lead, even if it is slightly disproportionate. Huckfelt takes the verses, which borrow from Robert Frost (opening line "Whose woods these are I think I know") and Robert Johnson ("I believe I'll dust my broom"), while Benson sighs the title line in between. It's stunningly effective, and it makes me wish they would do it more often. Maybe on the next record.

Mad Folk 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.



Josh White, St. James Infirmary, 1964

The Madison Public Library website (and maybe all such sites) provides access to thousands of online newspaper archives around the world to anyone with a card. This came in handy lately.

I've mentioned before that my music partner Lou and my guitar-playing pal Paul attended a Josh White concert in Oshkosh in the mid sixties. Interested in pinning down the date and venue of the show, I found articles in the archives of the **Appleton Post-Crescent** and the **Oshkosh Daily Northwestern**. It turns out that White gave two concerts on Sunday, September 27th, 1964, in the Lourdes High School Gymnasium in Oshkosh. One show was at 3:30 and the other at 7:30. We went to the 3:30 show.

The three of us were Appleton High School Juniors at the time, goofing with the prospect of forming a folk music band. I can't remember if I had already bought my 12-string Harmony guitar or if I was still playing my baritone uke, but Lou was pretty good on the banjo already, having learned from Pete Seeger's **How to Play the 5-String Banjo** book, and Paul was able to strum chords on his Gibson LG-2 guitar. Oshkosh is only 20 miles from Appleton, and though I don't think we owned recordings by Josh White yet, we were certainly familiar with the man, probably via my older brother Jeff's **Sing Out!** magazines. Lou still remembers the dress she wore, and I remember the first song on the program: the amazing **St. James Infirmary Blues**, often also known as just **St. James Infirmary**.

Josh White was born in 1914 so he was 50 by the time we saw him. In my geezerhood, of course, 50 seems awfully young, but at the time I was 16 and Josh White seemed a wise old sage, blowing the three of our minds with his music, a few years before *blowing one's mind* was an official concept. I doubt we had much of an idea that Josh White's career had been almost destroyed by the

blacklisting efforts of Appleton's infamous rotten scoundrel, Joe McCarthy. We also were not aware that White toured despite increasing physical problems, and died only five years after this concert, in September 1969.

Josh White had a unique and complicated life, which took him from traveling with country blues street musicians as an impoverished boy to eventually appearing on Broadway. Though he considered himself primarily an entertainer, he was legendary as a political artist and activist. He worked in film, including playing himself in the great Surrealist Hans Richter's film, **Dreams that Money Can Buy** (1947). White became close friends with enthusiastic fans Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and was the first African American performer to give a command performance at the White House. The Roosevelts are the godparents of Josh's son Josh White Jr., who is continuing in the tradition with his own stellar career as, in his own words, a "Folk/blues, pop, (and) jazz, vocalist, guitarist, songwriter, actor, adult and children's concert performer and recording artist, teacher and social activist."

Incidentally, on Monday, November 16th, fewer than two months after the incredible Josh White (Sr.) concert, Pete Seeger came to the Lawrence College Chapel in Appleton. I didn't think I could become more of a folk music fan, but I was wrong. I remember the goosebumps. Come to think of it, that may have been the night I decided to buy the used 12-string, which I own to this day. I should point out that we were hopelessly behind the times as usual, as the Beatles had already been on the Sullivan show way back in February of 1964, and indeed, September 1964 was the month the TV show **Hootenanny** ENDED its controversial run, which had begun in April of 1963. Michael Cooney has told me that when he heard the Beatles on the radio for the first time that year, he knew that the big folk craze was over. And that's the year Lou and I jumped in with all four work boots.

So. The **St. James Infirmary Blues**. What a song. It reminds me of **Mack the Knife**, with its theme of death and

its minor key. Scores of musicians have recorded some version of **St. James** over the years. The most well known version, for good reason, was recorded in 1928 (!) by Louis Armstrong. But Josh White is the man who really brought it to us that afternoon, in a spellbinding rendition, highlighting its beautiful weirdness.

If you want a new way to feel the deep strangeness of this song, have a look at the 1933 Betty Boop cartoon **Snow White**, produced by Max Fleischer, featuring Cab Calloway singing a wild interpretation of it. The vocal begins a bit after the four minute mark, and it's there that the crazy backgrounds begin to scroll by behind the transmogrifying clown, Koko, who is ostensibly singing the song. It's a Surrealist wonder. This entire cartoon, all seven minutes of it, mostly drawn by the great animator Roland C. Crandall, is archived at the free site, archive.org. Here's the URL:

archive.org/details/bb_snow_white

Based on a centuries old folk song, **St. James Infirmary blues** contains this sad, inexplicable, evocative verse:

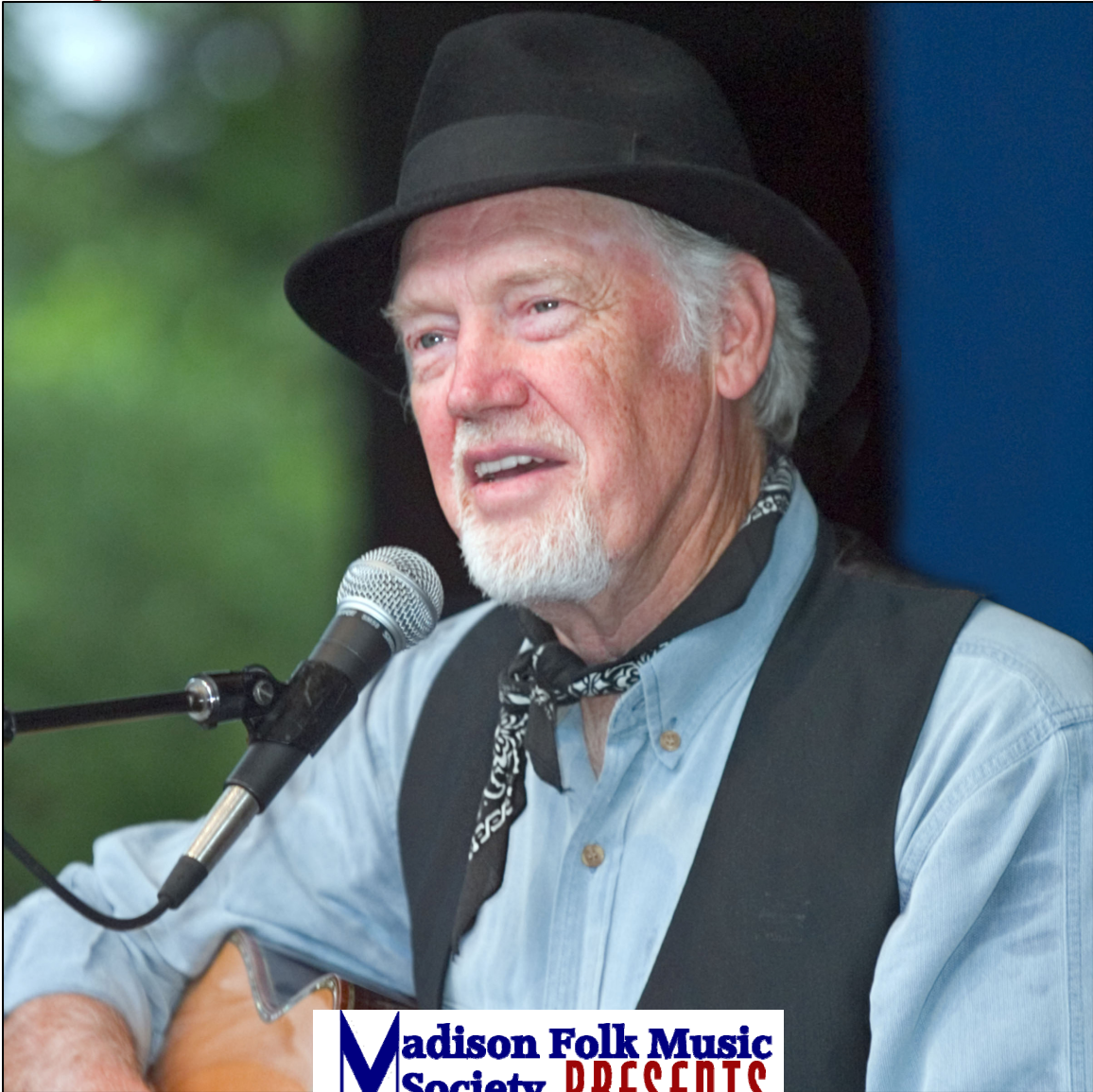
*I went down to St. James Infirmary,
Saw my baby there,
Stretched out on a long white table,
So cold, so sweet, so fair.
Let her go, let her go, God bless her,
Wherever she may be,
She can look this wide world over,
But she'll never find a man like me.*

As Sarah Vowell says in an ingenious essay about the song in the online magazine **Salon**, "Listening to good music is like watching a quiz show without cue cards -- the fun is in knowing that you might not ever figure it out."

Thanks Josh White for the life-changing concert, and thanks to him and all others who over hundreds of years have helped keep the St. James Infirmary song in the mix.

www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/
[www.salon.com/1999/10/06/onesong/
archive.org/details/bb_snow_white](http://www.salon.com/1999/10/06/onesong/archive.org/details/bb_snow_white)
Appleton Post-Crescent
Oshkosh Daily Northwestern

"Focused, thoughtful songwriting which could only come straight from the heart." - *Cash Box*



**Madison Folk Music
Society PRESENTS**

Ronny Cox

Wednesday, August 15

7:00 pm

The Brink Lounge

701 E. Washington, Suite 105

Tickets \$15 advance, \$17 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.

The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

July 2012

Mad Folk Events



Jan Marra (Member House Concert)
Wednesday August 8 -- 8PM -- \$10 Donation

Count This Penny (Member House Concert)
Saturday August 11

Ronny Cox
Wednesday August 15
The Brink Lounge -- 701 E. Washington Ave -- 7pm
\$15adv/\$17d.o.s.

Summer Sing-Along w/ Mac Robertson & David Eagan
Friday July 20 & Friday August 17
Blue Mounds State Park Amphitheatre -- 8pm
Free! (State Park sticker req. for entry)

Venues



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

Cafe Carpe
All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise

- Fri, July 6 -- Bill Camplin & The Four Julies -- \$8
- Sat, July 7 -- Corky Siegel w/ Randy Sabien \$22.50 adv.
- Tues, July 10 -- Chris Pureka -- \$10 -- 7:30PM



Wil-Mar Center
953 Jenifer St.
wildhuginthewoods.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

- Woody Guthrie 100th birthday Night 6:30PM Friday, July 13
- Gandy Dancer Festival 11AM (9 hrs) Saturday, July 18

FOLKLORE VILLAGE

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

Folklore Village

- Thur - Sun, July 5-8 -- Midsummer Festival
- Thur - Sun, July 19-22 -- Hardanger Fiddle Association of America Annual Workshop



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

The Brink Lounge

- Thur. July 5 and Thur. July 19 -
-- Aaron Williams and the Hoo Doo 9pm
- Fri. July 27 -
-- The Kalman Balogh Gypsy Trio 8pm -
\$20/\$15(student/senior)

Mother Fool's Coffeehouse
1101 Williamson St.
motherfools.com
608-259-1030

Mother Fool's

- Fri., July 13 -- Bob Parins w/ Ben Gordon -- 8pm -- \$6
- Fri., July 20 -- Stuart Davis CD Release Party -- 8pm -- \$10

Gigs

Jim Schwall
Thursday, July 5 -- Fitchburg WI Library @ 7pm

with special guest Anna Vogelzang
Tuesday, July 10 -- Bon Appetit Café @ 7pm
805 Williamson St, Madison

KG & The Ranger
Sunday, July 8 -- Phoenix Park Bandshell, Delevan WI -- 3PM
-- Free -- www.phoenixparkbandshell.com

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, July 19 -- 7pm
-- 8164 Hwy. 14 Arena, WI

Madison Early Music Festival New England Contra Dance Party
-- July 7-14 -- more information at www.madisonearlymusic.org

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

WSUM 91.7 student radio

- Sun, 9am-10am -- Exiles Return w/ Elizabeth Delaquess

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 Strangers- Sun 7/15 - 12-9pm -- Fete De Marquette -- Madison, WI
- 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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