

Mad Folk NEWS

Newsletter of the Madison Folk Music Society

Volume 30, No. 2 / February 2004

Mustard's Retreat is our Feb. concert

Our February concert (February 21) gives everyone another opportunity to see and hear Mustard's Retreat—but whether you've heard them before or not, you won't want to miss this concert.

This duo from Ann Arbor, Michigan, is in their 31st year of performing together, and they just keep getting better. David Tamulevich and Michael Hough met as short-order cooks in Ann Arbor in 1974.

"David and I were a pretty good team in the kitchen even before we had music in common," Michael recalled. Within a year and a half they found themselves full-time performers.

The group's name does not come from a historical event or old fiddle tune, as is often believed, but from a musical chum named Nancy Mustard, who taught David a guitar slide, around which he wrote an instrumental called "Mustard's Retreat." Accompanying themselves on guitar, electric bass, dulcimer, harmonica, and penny whistle, they sing their own gentle love songs and vivid

ballads, tall tales, as well as offer treasures from America's vast traditional song bag.

Some comments from other folk singers to recommend Mustard's Retreat say a lot about how wonderful this duo is:

"They are so warm and friendly and giving on stage, completely in touch with the audience," said Tom Paxton. "There are no barriers at all, and you just love to watch that

and be part of it. But the thing that strikes me about them that makes it all work so well is that their timing is so tight. Michael is such a wonderful, simple bass player; his timing is just flawless. And that's why two guys can move you musically the way they do—they have a gorgeous sense of time and tempo, a real musicality to what they do. They're nice guys on stage and

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PERFORMERS & VENUES

Instead of a president's column for the rest of this year we will instead have a column in the newsletter that will bring to you articles on both Wisconsin performers and Wisconsin venues.

We plan on telling you about different venues throughout Wisconsin so when you're in any part of the state vacationing or visiting you will know where you can go find a place to listen to live music! We will also showcase some of the talent that comes from right here in Wisconsin. Some of these folks spend so much time on the road that even though they live in our own backyard we may not get a chance to see them as they are traveling across the U.S.

If you know of a Wisconsin venue or Wisconsin musician that you would like to tell us about, please email the information to madfolk@charter.net.

Meetings

Mad Folk Board: March 31
7 p.m. at 813 Woods Glen Court

If you haven't renewed, THIS IS IT!

If the mailing label on this newsletter ends with Exp. DEC 03, you need to renew your membership. If you don't do it now, you won't be getting next month's edition of *Mad Folk News*.

As a reminder, your membership benefits include receiving this newsletter every month, a \$1 discount off the DOOR price (not advance price) of any Mad Folk event, and a coupon good for a 10% discount (up to \$15) on accessories, strings, books, and music at Spruce Tree Music. Take some time to renew now!

Bill Staines Returns to Madison March 6

New England's Bill Staines is a true living legend of folk music. Singing mostly his own songs, he has become one of the most popular singers on the folk music circuit today and averages around 200 concert dates a year. His timeless songs "River," "Roseville Fair," and dozens more have become standards, recorded by artists ranging from Nanci Griffith, Jerry Jeff Walker, and Glen Yarbrough to Grandpa Jones.



Weaving a gentle blend of wit and humor into his performances with a sense of timing that would give the best stand-up comedians a run for their money, Bill intersperses his own songs with traditional tunes, contemporary country ballads, and audience participation numbers such as "All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir." His music is a slice of Americana, reflecting with the same ease, his feelings about the

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Mustard's Retreat—Feb. 21

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entertaining as hell, but there's also music in them.”

“I work with them several times a year and always wish it was more,” said Canadian songwriter Garnet Rogers (who MadFolk is producing in concert in May!). “The thing that always impresses me is the incredible openness they have with the audience. They stand up there and just radiate friendliness; the audience is included in the whole process, encouraged to sing along, and talk back.”

Through the years, they have released seven recordings, including an often hilarious live CD called *5 Miles or 50,000 Years*, and a warmly reflective set of original songs called *Wind and the Crickets*, which offers convincing proof of Tom Paxton's thesis that their stage antics work because they have the musical chops to go with them. Their most recent album is *A Resolution of Something*, a collection of primarily original Tamulevich/Hough compositions. The recording was co-produced by Garnet Rogers and includes support from such luminaries as Rogers, Peter Ostroushko, and Pete and Maura Kennedy.

Garnet Rogers, who also produced *Wind and the Crickets*, said, “Their music is community music. It comes from our common roots and traditions, pays tribute to those roots, and expands on them. It is music that speaks to people's hearts and lives and binds them together as an audience. Nobody is just a spectator with Mustard's Retreat. Everybody is part of the show, and that is the exact definition of folk music for me, that inclusiveness, that notion that this music is for everybody.”

The show starts at 8 p.m. at The Wil-Mar Center at 953 Jenifer St. Tickets for this concert are \$12 in advance and \$14 the day of the show, and can be bought at B-Side Records, Borders East & West, Orange Tree Imports, Spruce Tree Music, and Steep and Brew Coffee Shop on Odana Road.

Bill Staines

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prairie people of the Midwest or the adventurers of the Yukon. If you're lucky, you may even hear a yodel or two—Bill is a past winner of the Kerrville Folk Festival National Yodeling Championship.

Last year, Bill released his 23rd album, *October's Hill* (Red House). For over 35 years, Bill has traveled back and forth across North America, singing his songs and delighting audiences at festivals, folk song societies, colleges, concerts, clubs, and coffeehouses.

Bill makes his bi-annual visit to Madison on March 6 at 8 p.m. He will be performing at the First United Methodist Church, 203 Wisconsin Avenue. There is plenty of parking with two parking ramps available.

Prices are \$14 advance and \$16 day of show. Also at the concert, we are collecting non-perishable items for a local food pantry. Please contribute!

Prepare yourself for a marvelous evening!

One On One

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with Bowles, and as the tracks progress, the emotional thread moves from heart to humor and back before transitioning to stark expression. The album closes with Mare Edstrom's breathtaking, introspective “I.” *One on One* is approachable and beautiful yet takes risks with relevant commentary on our times.

The music on this album is in a “one on one” format—one singer/one instrument. Duo Fred & Ethel extend the format slightly offering only voice: one Fred/one Ethel. The songwriting is all original. Every track on *One on One* is an original recording that has not been released on other albums. A few of the songs can be found elsewhere, but in completely different versions. The folk influence is predominant as is the all-acoustic vibe.

Kenn Fox is the man behind the Wisconsin-based Spiritone Records and the producer of *One on One*. On the eve of the new release, we caught up with Kenn to get some insight on his latest project.

Q: *Many of the artists showcased on One on One are returning from the previous Wisconsin Collections albums, but there are several newcomers on One on One. Are there highlights from these new artist's work that you*



would like to point out?

A: “That has been one of my underlying goals from the start—the concept of always introducing new artists to the mix. The idea of combining new artists with so-called veterans gives each CD a fresh and exciting angle. The fans of established artists get a taste of the new talent as well. They all promote each other as well as promote the entire Wisconsin scene. There are many exciting new artists being introduced on this collection. Mare Edstrom, Greg Boerner, Fred and Ethel, Amy Curl, Bill Reuter, and Tim Angsten are all newcomers to Spiritone. Both Mare Edstrom and Fred and Ethel will have full-length releases due out on Spiritone in early this year. It will be a very exciting year for the label!”

Q: *Thematically this album runs the range from social consciousness and political concerns to love and introspection. When you approached the artists to participate on the project, did you have this sort of mosaic in mind?*

A: “I never influence any of the artists as far as content. This freedom is very important to me. It is not my role to designate content. That is the true beauty of the process for me, seeing where it all falls in the end.”

Q: *This is your fourth release in the Wisconsin Collections series. How is this one different?*

A: “I believe everyone involved has grown throughout the course of the four releases. Certainly the artists have grown. This release has more participants as well, so I believe interest has grown. I've grown as a producer. The people who are working with me on the editing and mastering have added a whole new dimension to the process. So all and all, every aspect of the process has truly evolved!”

One on One and the other Wisconsin Collections CDs are available directly from Spiritone Records and from select area independent record stores. A release concert is being organized, to be held at the Café Carpe in Fort Atkinson and to feature many of the Spiritone artists. Details on that and other Spiritone news are available online at www.kennfox.com.

Wisconsin Artists Showcased in new CD Release: One on One

The Wisconsin independent record label Spiritone has just released its fourth compilation album, *One on One*. Like previous releases in the series, *One on One* promotes Wisconsin artists and in-

cludes area musicians and others with a strong tie to Wisconsin.

You will likely recognize the established names like Don Conoscenti,

Ralston Bowles, Tracy Jane Comer, Kenn Fox, Bill Camplin, and Randy Green. A surprise appearance by West Coast legend Simon Stokes and a collection of newcomers make this release rich with artistry and diversity. *One on One* opens

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