
Mad Folk NEWS

Newsletter of the Madison Folk Music Society

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Carrie Newcomer returns to town, Feb 16 at 7:00p.m.

It seems like ages since we've shared a concert with Carrie Newcomer, but that long cold spell is about to heat up this month when Carrie Newcomer makes a return visit to Madison with her CD release concert for her latest CD, *The Geography of Light*. The concert will be at a new venue for MadFolk, The Brink Lounge, and will have an earlier start time of 7:00. Tickets are \$16 in advance and \$18 the day of the show.

For singer/songwriter Carrie Newcomer, beauty is discovered in the midst of the ordinary. Life is experienced in the spaces between darkness and light. Truth is found in the bond between music and word. Newcomer's new Rounder release, *The Geography of Light*, is about navigating and exploring the appearance of light and shadow in our lives. It is a layered work. On one level, the listener experiences these types of connections through Newcomer's lyrics, which explore life with a progressive spiritual sensibility. In a world that encourages us to move faster and think bigger, Newcomer invites the listener to slow down and reflect on the small things that make life worthwhile. As *Rolling Stone* wrote, "Newcomer asks all the right questions and refuses to settle for easy answers." On another level, the listener hears a skillfully arranged and performed collection of folk roots tracks, with Appalachian and classical influences. Newcomer's style is straightforward and accessible. Overall, she is not afraid to take on serious subjects, and does so with a healthy measure of good humor and self-awareness. For her, "songwriting is not about being clever,



flashy or fancy—it is about telling a compelling story in language and music with elegance and clarity." The result is a resonant soundtrack for a world that is both sacred and ordinary. Carrie is a singer-songwriter who is a dynamic performer and able to touch (Continued on page 2)

Bill Staines performs at Wil-Mar Center on March 1

Come join us as Bill Staines makes his way back to Madison on his bi-annual stop in Madison. Bill's reputation among folk music folk is legendary and enduring: in almost every folk venue across the country Bill's performances set attendance records; at folk sing-arounds Bill's songs are the ones everybody knows. Many of his most well-known songs, including "The Roseville Fair," "River," "Wild, Wild Heart," "Yellowstone Winds" and "A Place in the Choir (All God's Critters)," have been covered by such artists as Nanci Griffith, Jerry Jeff Walker, Grandpa Jones, Fairport Convention, Priscilla Herdman, Gordon Bok and Mason Williams.

After over 40 years of recording, traveling and singing, he continues to reward his audiences with musical and entertaining evenings. Don't miss his Madison performance, Saturday, March 1, starting at 8:00 p.m. at the Wil-Mar Center. Coming to this show will also give you the chance to purchase Bill's latest release, *Old Dogs* which came out in 2007.

The American landscape has been a major theme for this New Hampshire-based singer-songwriter. (Continued on page 3)

Carrie Newcomer (continued from page 1)

audiences in a very personal way, Carrie delights listeners with her Midwestern storytelling and humor. She has been reviewed as amazing, haunting, strong but subtle, virtuoso, literary and poetic. Barbara Kingsolver says of Carrie, "Carrie Newcomer is much more than a musician. She's poet, storyteller, snake-charmer, good neighbor, friend and lover, minister of the wide-eyed gospel of hope and grace. All this, and she comes with a voice that declares, "Sit down a while and listen. Who could ask for more?" Certainly not her fans in Madison! Her national audience continues to grow--and she *still* comes back to play for The Madison Folk Music Society.

Equally exciting as having Carrie back in Madison, she will bring with her to the stage her long-time pianist and also joining them will be Madison's own husband and wife team of Chris Wagoner & Mary Gaines. Gaines & Wagoner have been in the studio with Carrie several times over the years recording on her CD's. Now we will have the opportunity to see live the musical combination that makes her CD's so outstanding. Opening the show will be the Bob Westfall Band, which is also one of the bands that Gaines and Wagner collaborates with. To learn more about Carrie Newcomer, be sure to check out her web site at: www.carriewcomer.com.

Parking for The Brink Lounge:

The Brink Lounge is located in at the corner of E. Washington and Blount Street. (for long-time Madisonians, that is the old Buy & Sell Shop) There is limited parking in their lot and the lot across the street at the paint store is available in the evenings too. There is **ample** parking just up the street on Main St. in the MG & E "good neighbor" lot. From E. Washington, take Blount to the first right on to Main and the first large lot on your right is this lot. The back corner of the lot has a gate opening that comes out right across the street from the venue.

CD Reviews by Judy Robinson

Carrie Newcomer The Geography of Light

Although I saw Carrie Newcomer perform last time she was in town, I wasn't familiar with much of her music and knew very little about her career. I went to her website to learn more about both and was scanning various articles when I saw one titled "A concert in the courtroom – Folk singer Carrie Newcomer performs for youngsters under care of mental health court". When Newcomer was touring last fall, she performed for a group of kids as part of a project to help them learn how to use the arts as a creative outlet. Not exactly a run-of-the-mill venue, especially for a singer who has also performed at Carnegie Hall.

Judging from her new cd 'The Geography of Light', Newcomer would be a first-rate role model for anyone trying to learn how to focus their creative energy. Her exquisite allusions and imagery convey an enormous amount in very few words. In the opening track 'There Is A Tree', she sings about a life spent 'between what is said and what is meant.' 'Geodes' invites us to look for the beauty in everyday objects and tells of a belief that geodes are formed from 'pockets of tears'. 'Biscuits and Butter' is a prosaic reference to the simplicity of life for this country's early settlers that she uses as a contrast to the enormity of the challenges that they faced.

MadFolk is presenting Newcomer in concert at the Brink Lounge on Sat, Feb 16th (see above article for details.) Go to carriewcomer.com to hear her cd's, or find out more about her philosophy, activism and career.

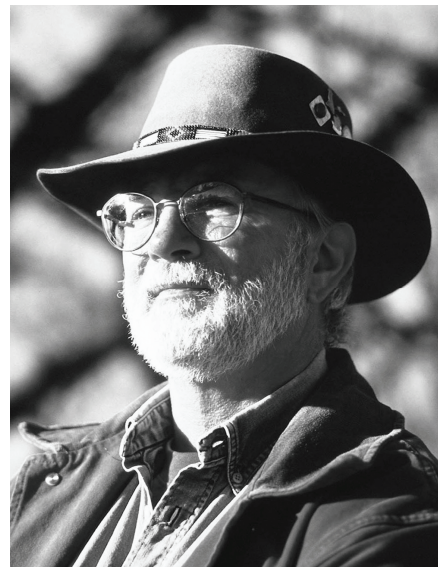
Garnet Rogers Get a Witness LIVE

Garnet Rogers has been a fixture on the North American folk circuit for more than two decades. He started out touring with his brother Stan and continued as a solo performer after Stan's death in 1983. He's a baritone and his voice has always had a lushness that envelopes you but there is a noticeably richer timbre on his new live CD 'Get a Witness.' His voice is captivating; there are even a few inflections and certain phrasings that made me think of Johnny Cash in his prime.

The up-tempo opening track 'Junior' will resonate with people who are not fans of the current Administration. The refrain is 'You don't speak for me' and since Rogers' is a Canadian citizen, he means it literally. The second song 'Beyond This Wall' was written for Canadian troops in Afghanistan. The lyrics cogently describe the day to day existence of the countless troops and Dave Matheson accompanies Rogers with some heavenly work on the keyboard. The title track captures the euphoria of those perfect days when the sky seems bluer and for whatever reason, life goes a little more smoothly. There is a live version of 'Night Drive' that has just under 12 minutes of his inimitable guitar work. Rogers will be playing at the Café Carpe on Fri, Feb 8. Tickets are \$15 in advance, for more info, go to www.cafecarpe.com or call (920) 563-9391. Go to www.garnetrogers.com to hear songs from 'Get a Witness', buy his records or learn more about his impressive career.

Bill Staines (continued from page 1)

His songs reflect on the personalities, lifestyle and environment of open places in the American West, Staines hails from Lexington, Massachusetts. As a youngster, Staines was heavily inspired by the folk scene in Boston and Cambridge in the early '60s. Together with junior high school friends, Dick and John Curtis, Staines formed a folk band, The Green Mountain Boys. Although the Curtis brothers preferred old timey string music and bluegrass, Staines remained tied to romantic folk ballads. Staines later organized and ran a student folk music coffeehouse, The Barn, at Lexington High School. The experience prepared him when he became the host of a weekly, open mic, hootenanny at folk music club, Club 47, in Harvard Square. Staines gained notoriety as a songwriter when Randy Burns and the Skydog band recorded his first original song, "That's the Way It's Going to Go in Time," in 1966. He released his debut album, *Bag of Rainbows*, the same year. A self-taught, finger style, acoustic guitarist, Staines was heavily influenced by the playing of Jackie Washington, a regular performer at Club 47, and by Tom Paxton. Staines uses a right-handed Martin D-18 guitar that he turns over and plays left-handed.



Staines weaves a gentle blend of wit and humor into his performances, and as one reviewer wrote, "he has a sense of timing to match the best standup comic." Interspersed between his own songs, he performs songs ranging from traditional folk tunes to more contemporary country ballads, and delights in having the audience participate in many of the numbers. He's been known to yodel a tune or two -- having won the National Yodeling Championship in 1975 at the Kerrville Folk Festival in Kerrville, Texas.

Staines has been increasingly inspired by his experiences as an amateur pilot. His 1995 album, *Looking for the Wind*, included several aviation-themed songs including "Bill Hosie," about a builder of airplanes, and "Song for Tingmisartaq," written for Charles and Anne Morrow Lindbergh. In 1993, Staines composed "The Alaska Suite," an instrumental, fifteen tune, suite for strings and brass that was inspired by his many flights to Alaska. Staines' song, "A Place in the Choir (All God's Critters)" has become a children's music classic. In 1993, he released an album of children's songs, *The Happy Wanderer*, that included "The Hound Dog Song" and "I Can Feel the Sweet Winds Blowing (Bless My Soul)" as well as interpretations of "Home on the Range," "The Gypsy Rover" and "Kookaburra." In the 1980s, Staines periodically performed with the Passim All Stars, an informal folk group that also included Mason Daring, Jeanie Stahl, Billy Novick and Guy Van Duser. Staines' songs have been featured in four songbooks -- *-If I Were a Word Then I'd Be a Song* (Folk-Legacy, 1980), *-All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir* (Puffin, 1989), *-River* (Viking, 1993) and *-Music to Me* (Hal Leonard, 1994).

In addition to his many recordings, Bill is a self-published author. His autobiography, *THE TOUR, a Life Between the Lines*, was released in 2003. It's a fascinating read, part travelogue, part journal recounting his annual trips across the country. Throughout it he recounts his own personal history, in folk music and life, through the device of talking us through a year in the life of a traveling folk singer.

Minneapolis-based national touring performer Bill Isles will perform as the opening act. Isles returned to performing after a twenty-five year hiatus in February of 2000. Since that time, he has become one of the most highly-respected singer/songwriters in the Minnesota acoustic scene and has begun to get national and international attention.

His songs are down-to-earth poetic reflections of life experiences and often explore adventurous metaphorical worlds. These worlds vary greatly in scope and texture such as the differences between the clever honky-tonk ambiguity of "The Hole in Our Town" and the enchanting feel of "Sistine Chapel", both from his 2003 release "The Threshold". Each of his compositions provides a spectrum of interpretation opportunities, as well, as demonstrated by "Sistine Chapel". At first, you might conclude that the song is a first-person account of Michelangelo's first visit to scope out the project at the Sistine Chapel, but you start to realize that, perhaps, this is also an artist's perception of entering the "chapel" of his/her audience. Then, again, it also hints at the intimate interaction of lovers. It is this multi-layering that has drawn fans to listen over and over again, and to describe his live performances as "mesmerizing".

Join MadFolk in welcoming Bill Staines & Bill Isles, when we gather for another wonderful evening of music and stories. Concert starts at 8pm, Tickets are available at Borders Books East and West, B-Side Compact Discs & Tapes, Orange Tree Imports, Spruce Tree Music, and Step-N-Brew, Odana Road and are \$15 in advance and \$17 day of show. For more information on these performers, visit www.acousticmusic.com/staines and www.billisles.com

First Annual Helen Schneyer Memorial Scholarships Awarded at Mad Folk Annual Meeting

If the mission of the Madison Folk Music Society is to preserve the people's music and spread the good news, our annual meeting in November was a celebration in the true spirit of the tradition.

Mad Folk members shared a potluck supper and listened politely while the Mad Folk board reported briefly on its budget and successful concert season and welcomed new members.

The first highlight of the evening came when the board announced the names of the two recipients of the first annual Helen Schneyer Memorial Scholarship, Jeremy Goodman, who will use his \$300 scholarship to study mandolin with John Fabke, and Suzy Grindrod, who will use hers to support her guitar lessons with Dave Fallow.

Suzy Grindrod says that she's always longed to be able to call herself a musician and believe it. Although she studied recorder, cello, and dance as a child and finds herself surrounded by a family of musicians as an adult, and has been strumming and singing for classes of kindergartners and first graders, she lists among her goals the ability to emerge from her classroom cocoon, to play with/for a wider audience, to spread the gospel of being not merely consumers of music, but *makers* of music.

Jeremy Goodman, a student at West High School, has been playing classical violin half his life, got hooked on bluegrass when he attended a master class with Brian Wicklund four years ago, and now considers himself, not only a violinist but a fiddler. He has recently begun taking lessons and learning to pick some fiddle tunes on his great-great-great grandfather's 1897 Washburn potato bug mandolin. His goal: to have fun becoming a mando player.

The scholarship is named for the late sister of Mad Folk member Mona Wasow, who amused the group with some anecdotes about her famous folk singer sibling before presenting the awards to Jeremy and Suzy. When Helen Schneyer passed, Mona's colleagues in the UW School of Social Work collected money to honor her memory, and Mona donated it to the Madison Folk Music Society, which used it to host a memorial concert with Ed Trickett in 2006. Money raised at the concert became the seed money for the Helen Schneyer Memorial Scholarship fund to encourage the upcoming generation of folk musicians. Visit www.madfolk.org to learn how to keep the fund alive and folk music vibrant in Madison. This nod to the future was followed by a spirited tribute to the legacy-building tradition of folk music with a community sing led by Mac Robertson, leader of Mad Folk's summer sings.



From left to right: Suzy Grindrod, Jeremy Goodman, and Mona Wasow



In case you didn't catch it in the theater....

The phenomenal documentary 'Pete Seeger: The Power of Song' will premier on Wed, Feb 27 at 9:00 p.m. as part of the American Masters series on PBS.

Please check our local listings for details.



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Please check your mailing label and see if it's time to renew so you'll know about all the great music coming in 2008! THANK YOU!

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