
Mad Folk NEWS

Newsletter of the Madison Folk Music Society

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July brings five more weekends of Folk on State

On the first day of the month, making her first appearance on our stage, will be Jackie Tice. Radio programmers have heralded Jackie with banners like, "best new songwriter" and "a stand-out!" With the release of her most recent CD, *Second Skin*, Jackie has made full use of her award-winning performing and song writing skills. Produced by Grammy Winner Bill Miller, the album includes 10 songs spanning pop-rock, jazz, and folk styles. "She writes songs with messages," says Miller. "Her music has elements of jazz and rock. Hers is a voice that needs to be heard and her songs are as poetic as they are powerful." "Lyrically brave" is how *Acoustic Guitar* magazine describes the music of Jackie Tice, adding, "Tice's songs capture instances of universal recognition and appeal. A Kerrville New Folk Award winner, she mingles her Native American and Old European roots, carefully combing through subjects from Shakespearian love to

the call of coyotes. She's been called "an eloquent storyteller whose songs elevate common experience with subtle layers of meaning" (Richard Fox, WCUI) and an artist with "a poet's touch," writing about "complex, believable characters who grow more vivid with each listen" (R.A.B. Perch, Folk Acoustic).

Sharing the weekend with be Small Potatoes. They are not newcomers to the Madison audience and we are excited to bring them back for their fourth year at Folk on State. Small Potatoes is Jacquie Manning and Rich Prezioso. This Chicago-based duo has been touring on the folk circuit since 1993 and in that time they've become sought-after regulars at many clubs and coffeehouses across the U.S. They have made repeat appearances at major folk festivals, including the Kerrville Folk Festival, the Walnut Valley Folk Festival, and Philadelphia Folk Festival. They were one of the "most requested" acts at the 1999 Falcon Ridge New

Artist Showcase. Jacquie is also a winner of the 1998 Kerrville New Folk Songwriting Contest. They call themselves "eclecto-maniacs" and describe their music as "Celtic to Cowboy." They both sing; they both play guitars and an array of other instruments. They even yodel. *Dirty Linen* magazine called them "one of the most polished, inventive, and entertaining shows on the circuit." *Sing Out!* magazine called *Time Flies* a "wonderful, wonderfully eclectic" album and said, "Small Potatoes might well be leading mainstays on the folk scene for years to come." Their new album, *Waltz of the Wallflowers*, appeared on several "Best of 2000" radio playlists, including WFMT's syndicated "Midnight Special."

July's second Saturday, the 8th, will bring us Karen Mal and The Prince Myshkins. Karen joined us in this series our first year and she again is making the trek up here from Texas to visit our stage. She lived in Wisconsin for a while before making her home in Texas. In three short years, Karen has gone from a virtual unknown on the Austin acoustic music scene to one of the most sought-after performers around, both as a solo artist and as a sideman for others on mandolin, guitar, and harmony vocals. Karen has opened for and/or appeared onstage with performers such as Tom Paxton, Slaid Cleaves, Tom Prasada-Rao, Gail Davies, Buddy Mondlock, and Tom Kimmel. Originally from New England, Karen worked in regional theatre for several years as an actor and musical director/composer before settling in Austin, Texas, to play music full-time. She has lived and worked in places from Manhattan to Memphis, from Wisconsin to California, and toured in 40 states.

The other performers have just an opposite story for where they live. They were originally living in California

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FOCUS ON FOLK

A Look at songwriting with Aaron Nathans

Aaron Nathans is a local songwriter who has a masterful way of interpreting and writing about the world. With wisdom and wit, he creates songs about everything from grapefruit to political figures to old friends who never change.

Q: How did you get started writing music?

A: I'd always enjoyed creative writing, and cracking my sister up with song parodies. I took piano and clarinet lessons, and played saxophone in the high school marching band. During high school, when I was at a summer camp in Russia, I met this guy from Corvallis, Oregon, who was a real hippie, and he wrote his own protest songs. I thought that was the coolest thing. That fall, I bought "Guitar For Dummies" and learned the basic chords. I gradually learned to fuse my love for poetry of the absurd (an ode to bean dip was one of my more memorable works) with the guitar.



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Lavin, Berrymans to share Madison stage

Peter and Lou Berryman met Christine Lavin almost twenty years ago at a little folk festival on Long Island. At subsequent encounters at festivals

around North America they formed a mutual admiration society which meets all too rarely. You all are all

invited to join them on August 24 for a shared concert at a Madison location which has yet to be determined.

Christine Lavin is a singer and songwriter whose hilarious, well-crafted, pointed and poignant songs have influenced a generation of folksingers. Her album titles say a lot about her and her work: *Shining My Flashlight On The Moon*, *Good Thing He Can't Read My Mind*, *Getting In Touch With My Inner Bitch*.

Her career began in the early '80s as part of the seminal group of folkies in New York City. Madison audiences might know her best as a founding member of the Four Bitchin' Babes, whose annual performances in Madison draw huge audiences.

Her vibrant performances draw in audiences, often she connects by stepping out among them, visiting and singing with them, even drawing them up on the stage.

Look for another article in the August issue of *Mad Folk News* for more laudatory comments about Christine, and for updates about Madison's own Lou & Peter Berryman; but for now, just remember to save August 24, 2006 for a memorable musical evening.

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Folk On State

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nia and have moved to Wisconsin. (Rick Burkhardt, accordion, and Andy Gricevich, guitar) perform original cabaret-tinged songs about contemporary social and political issues. Their often hilarious, always thought-provoking lyrics have endeared them to fans across the U.S., and their rapid-fire vocal delivery and odd (yet catchy) melodies are sure to please the casual listener and the musical connoisseur alike. Their songs have been heard on NPR's "Morning Edition" and Pacifica's "Democracy Now," as well as on countless community radio stations. This spring they premiered a production of Brecht & Weill's *The Threepenny Opera* (featuring Rick's new translation of the script and a new arrangement of the score by their alter-ego trio, The Nonsense Company) in Chicago and Olympia, Washington, to critical and audience acclaim.

July 15 brings us to a two-hour set from Madison's best known folkies, Lou & Peter Berryman. On their website, Lou and Peter say: "You probably wouldn't be here if you didn't know at least a teensy bit about us, but in case you don't, here are a few clues: We write all our own songs. Lou writes the music, Peter writes the words. Lou plays accordion. Peter plays 12-string guitar. Most of our stuff is funny in one way or another. We've been making a living at this for almost 25 years. We are best friends and were married to each other briefly many years ago, hence the same last name, but have been happily married to our current respective spouses for decades. We both turned 55 in 2002 so the duo has over 110 years' experience on the planet."

On July 22 we welcome longtime Madison favorite Peter Mulvey back for two hours of his wonderful music and his new CD, *Knuckleball Suite*. In the years since former subway-performer Peter Mulvey "blew away the competition" (*The Boston Herald*) to win the Boston Acoustic Underground Award, he has captivated audiences all over North America and the UK with his "huge energy, quickfire, quirky take on life, and extraordinary guitar style" (*The Irish Times*). His ninth album, *The Knuckleball Suite*, is vibrant, surprising, and in many ways, like a notch falling perfectly into a groove for a

Sing under the stars at Blue Mound!

Madison folksinger Mac Robertson (below right) has agreed to lead the singing at the Folk Sing-alongs in Blue Mound State Park on July 21 and August 18 at 8 p.m. in lighted and roofed main shelter at the top of the hill. The first summer sing-along was a rousing success, with around 50 young and old campers (shown below) and area folk music enthusiasts joining in. Come watch the sun set in the west from the highest point in southern Dane County, and sing along with Mac.

To get to Blue Mound State Park from Madison, take Highway 18-151 west past Mount Horeb and take the exit marked highway F. Turn left on ID, then follow signs to the park, turning right by the Citgo station and continuing past the trailer park on your left, a major turn to the left, and up the hill to the top. There is lots of parking near the shelter. You will need a park sticker to enter the park, but the sing-along is free, and definitely participatory. Folk musicians are encouraged to bring their instruments, as two Madisonians did in June. Folk music under the stars is definitely worth experiencing!



musician with a history as rich and diverse as Mulvey's. *The Knuckleball Suite* places him firmly at the forefront of acoustic/alternative's most stellar singer/songwriter/guitarists.

July 29, the final Saturday, brings longtime Madisonian Marques Bovre to our line up. After 15 years with the Evil Twins, Marques Bovre is starting afresh with some new musical friends (Maggie Weiser and Ken Stephenson) in a band called SoDangYang. More stripped down and acoustic in nature, SoDangYang is strong on vocal harmonies and producing simple, bedrock foundations for Marques Bovre songs. Marques Bovre and SoDangYang will be spending early June recording an EP titled *New Guitar* at the Big Rock Studio (with the legendary Mercury Dave) outside Stevens Point.

Also playing this weekend will be SONiA, joined by her band, Disappear Fear. According to Roger Dietz of Singout Magazine, "There is an exuberance and passion shining from Sonia Rutstein (SONiA) that warms an audience with good nature and humanity. For SONiA's devotees a live

album becomes a chance to bask in the life force that energizes her songs. 'The act' is real. She is real. SONiA cares and wants us to care about the issues that bruise and abuse. Her music contains spirited protest updated for today's ears with charm and a touch of glamor. This album does not disappoint. On this, her tenth release, SONiA rocks with her new band DF05. Here SONiA's expressive singing exhibits flirtatious nuance and thoughtfulness as well as the resounding echo of our tradition of meaningful folk singing. After a number of transformations with the group Disappear Fear (periods with and without her sister Cindy Frank who here adds her angelic voice to the Kerrville Festival cuts), and after a fair amount of touring as a solo artist, SONiA is yet again 'enlivened.'"

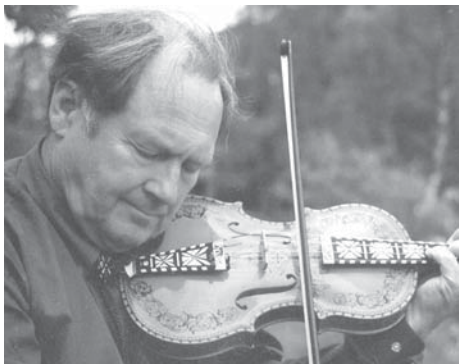
The music will flow from 1-3 p.m. and will be located in the 500 block of State Street at the Francis/State St. Park—better known as Concrete Park. Park across State Street at the Francis Street ramp. If Mother Nature decides to rain on us, we will move to the Memorial Union Rathskeller.

Norwegian fiddler Buen plays Madison

Direct from Norway, the Hardanger fiddle master Hauk Buen makes his second appearance in Madison in a live concert on Sunday, July 23 at 7:30 p.m. at Advent Lutheran Church, 7118 Old Sauk Road. Accompanying Hauk will be master dancers from Norway, Karin Brennesvik and Sigbjørn Rua.

He will be a featured musician and teacher at the 2006 workshops of the Hardanger Fiddle Association of America (HFAA) to be held at Folklore Village near Dodgeville July 20–23.

He has been a favorite performer and teacher at many workshops in the U.S. over the years. Besides his popularity with American audiences, Hauk has given concerts around the world and was a featured performer at the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer. Hauk is also a master fiddlemaker whose instruments are prized by fid-



dlers in America and Norway for their rich, even tone.

Hauk Buen is considered a Norwegian national treasure and one of the best interpreters of the rich folk music traditions from the Telemark region. He won the Norwegian National Competition in Hardanger fiddle in 1962 and 1963, as well as many other prizes and honors. In 1992 he won the Spellemannprisen (Norwegian equivalent of the Grammy) for best folk music recording.

The Hardanger fiddle (in Norwegian, *hardingfele*) is often called the national instrument of Norway. It is similar to the violin, and each one is a handmade work of art. The most distinguishing feature is the four or five sympathetic strings that run underneath the fingerboard and add echoing overtones to the sound. A melody voice is accompanied by a moving “drone” voice. Together, the instrument and the playing style create the sound for which the Hardanger fiddle is famous.

This concert is sponsored by the HFAA and Mad Folk. Tickets (\$15; children half price at door) are available at Borders East and West, B-Side Records, Orange Tree Imports, Spruce Tree Music, and Steep and Brew on Odana Road.

For more information, contact Paula Goode at (608) 833-7066.

Music fest becomes Madison tradition

The Four Lakes Traditional Music Collective (FLTMC) has announced artistic line-up for its annual Sugar Maple Traditional Music Festival, which returns July 28–29, 2006, to Lake Farm County Park in Madison.

According to organizers, this year’s gamut of talent features top national, regional and local music groups in a variety of performance and workshop settings. “Traditional music styles for [this year’s] event range from Appalachian to Zydeco,” says FLTMC President Evan Murdock.

Murdock says advance tickets will be available throughout Madison. The annual gathering has drawn more than 2000 people in just two years. “Stay tuned to www.sugarmaplefest.org for tickets, event details, camping information, links, sound clips, schedules, music workshops, volunteer opportunities, and kids’ activities.

Artists for the July 28 shows include Guy Davis, Mike & Amy Finders Band, Bayou Ramblers, and Caravan Gypsy Swing. The performances run from 4:30 to 10 p.m.

Shows on July 29, which run from noon to 10 p.m., include Audie Blaylock & Redline, Lost Bayou Ramblers, Devil in A Woodpile, Kevin Tubb & the Lonely Stars, Hunger Mountain Boys, the everybodyfields, DitchLilies, Kay Weedon, and Dave Landau.

Ticket prices: 2-Day Pass: \$28/adv; Friday: \$13/adv, \$15/gate; Saturday: \$17/adv, \$20/gate; 12 & under FREE/gate; \$1 donation to Dane County Parks Commission per ticket included. Tickets available at Willy Street Co-op, The Exclusive Company, and Spruce Tree Music.

FOCUS ON FOLK

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When, at age 22, I won \$200 at a riverboat casino, I took it as a divine push to buy my own guitar and take some lessons. I never did get any good at writing protest songs, which is too bad, because that’s where the money is.

Q: Why are you passionate about songwriting? How has it affected your place in the world?

A: We can put something into the world that, if done right, resonates. Certain things have changed in the way people relate to me since I put my album out last year. For instance, [due to writing “The Old People’s Fruit”] I am no longer allowed to be in the presence of a grapefruit without someone pointing at it and quipping, “Aaron, a grapefruit! The old people’s fruit!” It’s a nice conversation piece. I’ve also befriended some great songwriters here in town since I started writing songs.

Q: What is your process of writing a song like?

A: Sometimes I will, in fact, hear melodies when I am sleeping. This is not necessarily a good thing because it only encourages the radio in my head. Pretty soon I’m waking up every night with some pretty awful melodies in my brain, but I have to get up and record them because, really, who am I to judge quality at 2 a.m.? More often than not, when the melody comes first, the song never makes it. The best ones start with an idea, maybe a phrase that sounds musical. Whatever is happening to me at the moment I’m writing, whatever I happen to be looking at, sometimes works its way into the song. For instance, if I’m staring at the bookshelf, and there’s Norman Mailer’s book “Oswald’s Tale,” then I’ll write down in my journal, “Norman Mailer’s writing’s Oswald’s Tale,” which then becomes “Norman Mailer’s in the county jail,” which became the first line for my song “Iris” (which is not about Norman Mailer at all). I learned a lot on this count from my wife, who is a better writer than I am. She always brings her surroundings into what she writes.

To learn more about Aaron and his debut album, *Same Old You*, visit www.aaronnathans.com. —Kris Adams