
Mad Folk NEWS

Newsletter of the Madison Folk Music Society

Volume 34, No. 7/ July 2008

Beat The Heat - Come See These Cool Performers at Folk On State in July

The artists who are performing at Folk on State in July are a phenomenally talented group; many are regional favorites, one is a cherished local treasure and one is a sibling to a pillar of the local folk scene. Folk on State gives you an opportunity to see them in a casual, relaxed setting so make plans to come on down and catch their shows.

Our July 5 show will be two regional acts, Lee Murdock and Patchouli. Murdock (pictured) is from IL and began performing in Chicago in the mid 1970's. As his interest in folk music and the maritime tradition grew, he expanded his repertoire of blues and popular music. He has uncovered a boundless body of music and stories in the Great Lakes. There is an amazing timelessness in this music. Great Lakes songs are made of hard word, hard living, ships that go down and ships that come in. The music is grounded in the work song tradition, from the rugged days of lumberjacks and wooden sailing schooners. His fans have discovered a sweetwater treasure in his songs about the Great Lakes, finding drama and inspiration in the lives of sailors and fishermen, lighthouse keepers, ghosts, shipwrecks, outlaws and everyday heroes. With a deeper understanding of the folk process, Murdock's repertoire combines historical research and contemporary insights. Making folk music for the modern era, Murdock's work is a documentary and also an anthem to the people who live, work, learn and play along the shores of the Great Lakes today.



Bruce and Julie Hecksel of Patchouli are a husband and wife duo. They recorded their first jam session together on January 6th, 1993 in a church in Chicago. Bruce's primary instrument is acoustic guitar. In addition to intense study in many styles from fingerstyle, flamenco, classical, jazz, flat picking, and folk, he studied concert piano, choral compositions and plays bass guitar and percussion on stage. But Bruce started his guitar adventure in a punk rock band named Be Safe Be Seen. At a Canadian music festival in 1991 his electric guitar and amp were stolen and he was left with only his acoustic guitar, which he took as a sign and never played an electric guitar again.

As lyricist and lead vocalist of Patchouli, Julie's background is in words. She began reciting poetry when she was seven. Dabbling in violin, drums, and trombone throughout school, she worked many of her poems into acapella pieces that she and friends would perform. When she and Bruce met they put the poetry to music and Patchouli began. Julie now plays multiple instruments: six and twelve string guitar, upright bass marimbas, flutes and hand drums.

On July 12 the artists will be Matt Watroba and Tret Fure. Watroba lives in Detroit and brings a very special set of talents to the stage whenever he appears as a folk musician. His excellent guitar playing, mellow voice, friendship with his audience, and knowledge of his presentations is impressive. Add to that Matt's own special brand of humor and you are in for a most entertaining and enlightening evening. You will feel his obvious love of folk music, both traditional and contemporary--the writers and performers, the heroes and villains. Matt sings songs of compassion, inner strength, humor, and every day living. He sings songs that you will feel and remember for a long time. You will love his music, you will love the journey that his music takes you on, and you will love the place that his music takes you to. His love of folk music led to his position of "Folks Like Us" radio host, a position he held for over 20 years on WDET-FM. He was awarded "Best Overall Folk Performer" by the Detroit Music Awards for the year 2000. He has shared the stage with some of our greatest performers, including Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, (continued on page 2)

Folk on State (continued) Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Arlo Guthrie, Christine Lavin, Peter Yarrow, and Richard Thompson. Local artist Tret Fure (pictured) is well known among fans of both the folk and women's music genres, her career spans 4 decades. She began her professional work at the age of 16, singing in coffeehouses and campuses in the Midwest, moving to Berkeley where, after performing weekly on the campus of UC Berkeley where she attended college, she discovered that music really was her life. At 19, she moved to LA to pursue a songwriting and musical career. She went on to record her own album in 1973 on MCA/UNI Records, with the late Lowell George of Little Feat as her producer. While recording her second album, Tret became interested in sound engineering, learning the trade and becoming one of the first women engineers in LA. Over the course of her career she has engineered and produced countless recordings by a variety of artists, including her own work. In the early 80s, Tret left the mainstream music industry. Armed with a fierce desire to retain full artistic control, she began exploring the independent side of the industry and soon discovered the blossoming genre known as Women's Music. After 4 releases on her own label, *Tomboy Girl Records*, she has re-established herself in the folk world.



Our performers on July 19 are Randall Williams and William (Chico) Schwall.

Williams is the most nomadic artist in the lineup, he graduated from the Royal Conservatory of Mons, Belgium...at the head of his class. He felt that classical music lacked the inclusiveness of folk music, and that the inevitable division between performer and audience was unbearable. And so Randall returned to the world of traveling with his guitar, writing songs in train stations and sleeping on couches, then singing and playing on street corners, cafés, and pubs. For a time he lived aboard a 20' sailboat that he bought for \$800, teaching himself how to sail by single-handing through the Baltic and North Seas with his guitar sleeping in the berth beside him at night. He wrote a book about the trip, which begins with the story of almost getting squashed by a tanker before dawn one morning in the North Sea. He moved to North Africa, then set off across the Sahara by hitching with locals - bouncing through a minefield on the way that made his mother have bad dreams. He loved the adventure, but he missed the music. In 2005, Randall returned stateside to scrounge up a career as a performing songwriter, hoping it wasn't too late.

William (Chico) Schwall is the brother of Jim Schwall who is a fixture on the Madison folk scene. Chico's music reflects the Midwestern landscape and blue collar family in which he grew up and shares a uniquely rich palette of musical colors drawn from an extensive musical career. Self taught on guitar, Chico absorbed blues and folk, slide guitar and finger picking. He discovered the mandolin, banjo, fiddle and flute and expanded his horizons to include Celtic, Klezmer and World music. Chico has performed and arranged traditional music for theatre productions including "Under Milk Wood" with Brit. Theatre Company and Northwest Touring Theatre, performed with the Eugene Symphony and Oregon Festival of American Music orchestras and actively played on the Contra Dance circuit. Chico's songwriting brings together the sounds of his colorful, musical upbringing and his own thoughtful reflection on the world we live in and the life we live. Skeptical and empathetic, passionate and smart. His debut CD 'Cut Off the Line' was called "inspiring and thought-provoking" by Seattle's Victory Music Review. His newest release, 'Driving by Moonlight', is an intimate celebration of original, rootsy songs and textured instrumentals. On his website www.chicoschwall.net, he intriguingly describes his new cd as "More dreams and nightmares with acoustic psychodrone accompaniment."

July 26 will bring Tim Grimm and LJ Booth to our stage. Grimm is an Indiana native who returned to Indiana after living in LA for several years. He had left behind a reputation in the Midwest as an up and coming singer/songwriter whose skills were honed at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago. He also travels and plays now and again with friend Ramblin' Jack Elliott. Tired of living in LA, Tim and his wife bought an old farm not far from where he grew up. It was during the time they were deciding to leave behind their lifestyle in LA, that Tim began to write songs again, inspired by the area in which he grew up. Tim is a musical storyteller, whether writing of his own journey back to the land, describing those who never left it, or honoring those who came before. Rich with descriptive details, these are songs sung with warmth and intimacy, recognizing the inextinguishable national romance with the idea of the family farm and the realities of the vanishing landscape of rural America. "The way this talented artist can paint pictures dripping of time-honored Americana images with his words, can not help but evoke comparisons to everyone from Woody Guthrie and Steve Goodman to Nebraska-era Bruce Springsteen" Midwest Beat Magazine

LJ Booth is well known to Madison folk audiences, he performs in Madison on a regular basis and (continued on page 3)

Folk on State 2008 schedule

July 5 - Lee Murdock & Patchouli

July 12 - Matt Watroba & Tret Fure

July 19 - Randall Williams & William (Chico) Schwall

July 26 - Tim Grimm & LJ Booth

August 2 - Tracy Jane Comer and Michael Bryant w/ Randy Green & Small Potatoes

August 9 - Tracy Beck and Jason Wilber

August 16 - Dave Stoddard & April Verch Band

August 23 - Ben Bedford & Jack Williams

August 30 - The Next Generation - Macyn Taylor & Jeremy Goodman w/ John Fabke

Folk on State (continued) this will be his 4th performance at Folk on State. Born in the Philippines, most of Booth's childhood was split between India and Idaho. With traveling in his blood, he hitchhiked extensively in the States and in Europe after leaving home...working a variety of jobs; oil rigs in Wyoming, a lumber yard in Portland, planting trees in Idaho, playing street music in Germany and Switzerland, maintenance work at Crater Lake. In 1987, he came out of the woodwork with YARNS. SING OUT described this debut as "simply, great music", and added, "I don't know how far he has strayed from Wisconsin thus far, but L.J. Booth is one hell of a Yarnspinner and singer...". In the years following, Booth was indeed traveling---playing clubs (from Passim, to the Cactus Cafe) and festivals (including Falcon Ridge, Edmonton, Kerrville, Telluride, and the Rocky Mtn. Folks Fest)---building a stage presence that has become his trademark. He has entered three songwriting "competitions"... Kerrville's New Folk, Telluride's Troubadour, and Falcon Ridge's Showcase.... and won all three--invited back to a main stage performance the following year. Acoustic Guitar Magazine wrote "this gifted singer-songwriter skillfully connects the dots between his own past, present and future with succinct, often powerful lyrics, appealing melodies, and agile fingerpicking...his keen fascination with life's journey draws listeners closer to the memories and revelations that make it worth traveling". LJ is right in the middle of working on songs for his 4th CD which he will be recording live at his home town gig, Tomorrow River Concerts, in his home town of Amherst, WI on October 3rd and 4th.

The series will continue throughout the summer. Our performers on the first Saturday of August will be **Tracy Jane Comer and Michael Bryant w/ Randy Green & Small Potatoes**. We are always in need of volunteers, if you'd like to help out, please contact Darlene Buhler at dbuhler@charter.net or (608) 225-0710

Folk on State is a joint collaboration between The Madison Folk Music Society and The Greater State Street Business Association. It is funded by Madison Arts Council, Greater State Street Business Association, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission with additional funds from the Overture Foundation and the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation, and local businesses in the State Street area.

MUSIC FOR MAXWELL STREET DAYS

A collaboration of the **Madison Folk Music Society** and the **Madison Songwriters Group** will present music at Lisa Link Peace Park, 452 State Street in Madison, during Maxwell Street Days, July 18-20, 2008. Performances will feature area musicians in the folk, bluegrass and country genre. On Friday, performances will start hourly from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm. The Saturday schedule will sandwich the Folk on State series (1-3 pm) between music at 10:00 and 11:00 am and 3:30 and 4:30 pm. Sunday will start at noon with the last performer at 4:00 pm.

DIRECT FROM NORWAY: TRADITIONAL MUSIC & DANCE

Featuring the music and dance of WESTERN COASTAL NORWAY!

Champion Dancers & Musicians
Vidar Underseth
& Leikny Aasen



Fiddler
Arngunn
Timenes Bell



SUNDAY, JULY 20

7:30 pm

Advent Lutheran Church/Madison Christian Community Church

7118 Old Sauk Road, Madison, WI

Air-conditioned; handicapped-accessible; ample parking

Presented by the HARDANGER FIDDLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Tickets \$10 at the door (½ price for children 5-12)

Directions: located on Old Sauk Rd. on the west side of Madison.
Take the Old Sauk Rd. exit off the west Beltline and travel east, approximately one mile.
The church is on the left, near the intersection of Old Sauk Rd. and Gammon Rd.

Questions? Contact Paula at 608-833-7066 (goode@uwccc.wisc.edu) or Inna at 608-236-0468 (ivlarsen@wisc.edu)

For more information about this concert and the music & dance workshops July 17-20 at Folklore Village, see **HFAA.ORG**.



HARDANGER FIDDLE MUSIC & DANCE WORKSHOPS

AT FOLKLORE VILLAGE JULY 17-20

The Hardanger Fiddle Music and Dance Workshops will feature the traditional music and dance of Western Coastal Norway. Dance teachers from Norway, Leikny Aasen and Vidar Underseth will teach springar from Solund, rull, and other dances from Sogn, Sunnmøre, and Nordfjord. Master Hardanger fiddler Arngunn Timenes Bell will teach music of Gaular, Sunnmøre and other areas of coastal Norway. Hardanger fiddle will also be taught by Americans Dan Trueman, Karen Solgård, and others. Aspiring and developing Hardanger fiddle players are encouraged to apply for the Bernt Belchen Jr. Scholarships. There will also be mouth harp and singing workshops, dance parties, concerts, and lectures at an accomodating venue set on acres of re-stored prairie. The workshops will be at Folklore Village on July 17-20. Folklore Village Farm is located 35 miles west of Madison, Wisconsin. Visit www.hfaa.org or contact workshopchair@hfaa.org.

Following the, Hardanger Fiddle Music and Dance Workshops there will be a concert on July 20 featuring the traditional music and dance of Western Coastal Norway. Hardanger fiddler Arngunn Timenes Bell will play music of Gaular, Sunnmøre and other areas of coastal Norway. Dancers from Norway, Leikny Aasen and Vidar Underseth will perform springar from Solund, rull, and other dances from Sogn, Sunnmøre, and Nordfjord. The concert is at Advent Lutheran/Madison Christian Community Church, 7118 Old Sauk Road in Madison, Wisconsin. Concert begins at 7:30 PM and general admission is \$10; \$5 for children. For more info, contact president@hfaa.org or call 301-270-4925 or 608-236-0468.

DENNY BREAU AT THE BRINK LOUNGE ON JULY 10

One of Maine's favorite sons, guitarist and singer-songwriter, Denny Breau, will bring his mix of blues, folk and country to the Brink Lounge, 701 E. Washington Ave., Madison, at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 10. Tickets are \$8 for Madison Folk Music Society members and \$10 for the public.

Breau's rhythmically flawless and dazzlingly clear style allows him to do amazing things with a six-string guitar. He first draws in an audience with a finely arranged melody and then slides effortlessly into scorching fingerwork. The lighting fast guitar lines are balanced with those that have a quiet intimacy and wrap tenderly around his carefully crafted songs.

Juno award-winning singer-songwriter David Francey said of Breau, "Denny is a master of the guitar. His singing is honest and passionate, his performances joyous and compelling." David Tamulevich of Mustard's Retreat called Breau "a guitarist's guitarist ... (with) an irrepressible energy and joy that just shines out when he is onstage."

The old adage about the apple not falling far from the tree certainly rings true as Breau's parents, Hal Lone Pine and Betty Cody, were RCA country artists beginning in the 1940s and his older brother, the late Lenny Breau, is recognized as a jazz guitar giant. A review of a solo album "of neighborly song portraits of weathered souls" by *Dirty Linen* magazine, said that "listening to Denny nimbly bend his acoustic steel strings... one can hear a jazz player's elegant fluidity."

Breau started playing guitar at the age of 9 and was working professionally by his early teens. During more than 30 years as a full-time musician, he has performed with many well-known artists and has opened for Chet Atkins. He has picked alongside outstanding guitarists including Bryan Sutton, Harvey Reid, J.P. Cormer, Pat Donohue, Dan Crary and Steve Kaufman. Breau has long been in demand as a studio musician and has done jingles and sound tracks for radio and television. Breau was inducted into the Maine Country Music Hall of Fame in 2004. He is the youngest inductee in the history of the organization.

Breau's last Madison performance was for the Madison Folk Music Society's Folk on State series in 2005. More information is available at www.thbrinklounge.com or by calling (608) 661-8599.

MAD FOLK SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 1ST

In an effort to encourage the next generation of folk musicians, the Madison Folk Music Society has established The Helen Schneyer Memorial Scholarship to fund folk music lessons of the applicant's choice. Two scholarships of \$300 in lessons per year will be awarded annually, to be paid directly to the folk music instructor of choice. Budding folk musicians of all ages are encouraged to apply. The deadline for 2008 applications is September 1st.

The scholarship is named in honor of the late great folk singer Helen Schneyer, who has played memorable house concerts in Madison at the home of her sister, Madfolk member Mona Wasow. Upon Helen's death on July 16, 2005 in Vermont, Mona's colleagues from the U.W. School of Social Work took up a collection in her honor, which Mona contributed to the Madison Folk Music Society. The funds were initially used to bring Ed Trickett to Madison for a Spring, 2006 Memorial concert, at which contributions were added for an additional memorial.

To apply: A simple application form can be downloaded from the Madfolk web site (madfolk.org) or by writing to Madfolk, P.O. Box 665, Madison, WI 53701. Applications will also be available at Spruce Tree Music and Madison Music. Applicants should identify the folk music teacher with whom they wish to study before applying; scholarships will be paid in advance, directly to the instructor. Deadline for applications is September 1 annually. Winners will be announced and presented at the Madfolk annual meeting in the fall (generally late October or early November).

Help keep it going! Tax deductible contributions to continue this memorial scholarship may be made payable to Madison Folk Music Society, with "Helen Schneyer Scholarship Fund" noted in the memo portion, and sent to Madfolk, P.O. Box 665, Madison, WI 53701. This can be done at any time including when dues are submitted. In addition, there will be a donation box at Madfolk events to allow for donations to the fund as inspired by the moment. In this way, Madfolk hopes to ensure that there is a new generation who will attempt to replace those who have gone on to sing in the "Angel Band."

WISCONSIN FOLKSONG COLLECTION

Did you know that UW-Madison has a searchable, on-line collection of folk music recorded between 1937– and 1946? The Collection can be found at <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/WiscFolkSong>. It contains Wisconsin field recordings, notes, and photographs made by UW-Madison faculty member Helene Stratman-Thomas as part of the Wisconsin Folk Music Recording Project, co-sponsored by the University of Wisconsin and the Library of Congress during the summers of 1940, 1941, and 1946; and recordings collected by song catcher Sidney Robertson Cowell during the summer of 1937 for the Special Skills Division of the Resettlement Administration. The Collection reflects and documents the state's colorful pattern of immigration and occupational development during those years.

Materials in the Collection include:

Archive of Folk Culture (Library of Congress)

Folk Music from Wisconsin (Library of Congress Recording)

Helene Stratman-Thomas Collection

Mills Music Library Special Collections

Sidney Robertson Cowell Collection (1937)

Wisconsin folk singers photographs, 1940-1941, 1946.



UTAH PHILLIPS

1935-2008

Ray Bonneville Going By Feel

Ray Bonneville is most frequently described as a blues musician but his work also contains style elements of jazz, folk and Americana. His latest cd 'Going By Feel' has several up-tempo songs that will quickly have you tapping your toes. The hypnotic title track is about those times in life when you're not sure if you're going in the right direction and are relying mostly on instinct. The slower paced 'Carry The Fallen' reflects on the casualties of all wars. In the chorus, Bonneville's lyric 'While the men in high office line the pockets of their own, flag draped coffins carry the fallen home.' is accompanied by the mournful wail of a harmonica that is positively haunting. Bonneville lived in New Orleans for half a decade and describes it as the city most influential to his musical style. He is quoted as saying "New Orleans is where I learned to take my time, to allow space between the notes so the songs could truly groove." He pays tribute to the afflicted city in 'I Am The Big Easy.'. His words are a montage of images: children, shoe-shine men, Bourbon St, Mardi Gras and the message is that New Orleans will ultimately recover from the disaster of Hurricane Katrina.

Bonneville is Canadian born and has toured all over the world playing with musical luminaries that include, B.B. King, Muddy Water, J.J. Cale and Robert Cray. 'Going By Feel' is his second cd on a U.S. label, his first was 2003's Roll It Down. Go to www.raybonneville.com to learn more about his music and order his cd's.

Eliza Gilkyson Beautiful World

Eliza Gilkyson's voice never fails to amaze me. She somehow manages to be gritty and ethereal at the same time and as if that wasn't impressive enough, she is consistently innovative and able to move effortlessly between many different musical styles. The title track is almost chant-like, the lyrics and music are extremely simple as is the song's message; the world we live on is miraculous beyond human comprehension. 'Unsustainable' is done in retro mode, there is lots of steel guitar and Gilkyson sounds as though she could be performing on 'The Grand Old Opry'. Her delivery is misleadingly lighthearted, she is singing about the planet's inability to support our consumerism driven life style for much longer. 'Great Correction' is the first song Gilkyson wrote for the cd. She starts the song by singing of being tired of the human race and "the shadow across this land". But the song is ultimately optimistic, her last lines are "It's the bitter end that we've come down to/the eye of the needle that we gotta get through/ but the end could be the start of something new/when the great correction comes." Although her subject matter on the cd is sobering and thought provoking, Gilkyson has stated that 'Beautiful World' "may be my most joyful recording yet. Maybe it's because dark times can illuminate all that is good and decent and worth living for." There is one song with a topic that is a notable exception; 'Dream Lover' is about internet 'consummation.' It's a witty song and she sings it with gusto but you may not want to play it if there are with preteens within hearing distance-or you may want to use it to start a discussion about suitable employment opportunities.

Gilkyson will be touring to promote 'Beautiful World' but there are no Wisconsin gigs posted on her website www.elizagilkyson.com yet. You can go to her website to order the cd or call Red House records at (800) 695-4687.

Second Annual Gandy Dancer Festival in Mazomanie on July 20

Mark your calendars now for the 2nd Annual Gandy Dancer Festival featuring free train rides and Bluegrass music on July 20, 2008 in downtown Mazomanie. Laurie Lewis and the Right Hands will headline this year's festival along with a great-lineup of regional bands. This event will celebrate the opening of the Promenade, a redeveloped park area across Brodhead Street from the historic railroad depot (now the public library). As details become available, they will be posted at <http://www.midcontinent.org/> which is the website of the event's sponsor the Mid-Continent Railway Museum of North Freedom, Wisconsin. In case you were wondering, the name of the festival is derived from a slang term used to describe a railroad worker who lays or maintains track.



2008 MIDWEST FOLK MUSIC FESTIVALS

July 12	Blackhawk Folk Festival www.blackhawkfolk.org	Mount Morris, W
July 18-20	Hiawatha Traditional Music Festival www.hiawathamusic.org	Marquette, MI
July 20	Woodstock Folk Festival www.woodstockfolkmusic.com	Woodstock, IL
August 1-2	Sugar Maple Traditional Music Festival www.fourlakesmusic.org	Lake Farm County Park, Madison, WI
August 8-10	Shawano Folk Music Festival www.shawanofestival.com	Shawano, WI
August 14-17	Irish Fest www.irishfest.com	Maier Festival Park, Milwaukee, WI
August 22-24	Great River Folk Festival www.greatriverfolkfest.org	La Crosse, WI
August 31, Sep 1	Fox Valley Folk Music Festival www.foxvalleyfolk.com	Geneva, IL

SHAWANO FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL

In 1979, a small group of people organized the first Old Time Music and Craft Festival in Shawano, WI. In the years since, during the second weekend in August, Mielke Park in Shawano is filled with music, dance, crafters, food, friendship and a general good time. It has grown to become one of the best small folk festivals around. In 2008, the festival, now called the **Shawano Folk Music Festival**, celebrates its 30th year.

This year, there will be several familiar performers and some that are new to the Shawano audiences. Some of the Midwest's finest crafters will set up their booths along Mielke Park's wooded paths. Food vendors will fill the outdoor food court and the open stage will continue to invite musicians and storytellers to delight audiences under the food tent.

During the day on Saturday and Sunday, music in many traditional and contemporary styles will fill several outdoor stages located throughout the woods and meadows of the Park. The Friday and Saturday night concerts feature some of the finest performers around. Expect to join your voices with some of these musicians. Performers featured in the evening concerts include; Ronny Cox (better known as the actor in Deliverance, Bound for Glory, Beverly Hills Cop and others), Mark Dvorak, Frogwater with Lil' Rev, Tom Pease, Larry Penn, Anna Lee Scully, White Water (Bette, Dean and Laurel Premo), Fern Davidson, Stas Venglevski and Misha Litvin.

For more information on the schedule, tickets, volunteer opportunities and to view photos of previous events, go to the festival web site at www.shawanofestival.com.



Timbre, Timber, Tambourine

L	I	M	E	S		H	A	R	E	M		N	A	M
A	D	I	M	E		A	M	O	R	E		A	D	O
C	O	N	C	E	R	T	I	N	A	S		V	A	N
	S	E	N	O	R					A	D	A	G	E
A	N	T	E		B	E	E	F	Y		A	H	I	T
H	E	R		D	I	D	G	E	R	I	D	O	O	S
B	R	E	T	O	N		O	L	D	P	O			
A	D	L	I	B		D	T	S		A	E	S	O	P
		M	R	B	A	R		I	S	S	O	M	E	
T	A	M	B	O	U	R	I	N	E	S		L	E	T
A	V	E	R		S	E	P	I	A		W	I	N	E
R	O	D	E	O			A	T	B	A	T			
T	I	L		M	U	S	I	C	A	L	S	A	W	S
A	D	E		A	B	A	C	I		O	P	R	A	H
N	S	Y		R	U	M	E	N		P	S	Y	C	H

Here's the solution for last month's puzzle. Some day I think it'd be fun to cobble one of these together but put the solution up first and have readers contribute the clues. The challenge would be to keep it related to folk music, or at least to music in general. Could be fun.

Any word project like this ends up luring me down unexplored (by me anyway) cowpaths of thought. In this puzzle, I found myself wondering if the word TAMBOURINES had the same stem as the word TIMBRE. And if they both were related to TIMBER, as in toothpicks. Well, according to my sources (ink and pixel), yes and no.

TIMBRE is the quality of a sound. According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the word came from the French "sound of a bell" which came from Old French, "bell without a clapper," and before that, the word meant "drum," which evolved from the Greek TYMPANON meaning "kettle drum." I guess if you take a kettle drum, remove the drum-head, and turn it over, you could call it a bell without a clapper. But how strange. As quoted in the introductory pages of this online dictionary,

"It is often forgotten that (dictionaries) are artificial repositories, put together well after the languages they define. The roots of language are irrational and of a magical nature." -Jorge Luis Borges.

To make matters more irrational and magical, the word is usually pronounced TAMBER (rhymes with amber) but sometimes TIMBER (rhymes with limber) or, Frenchly, as "TAHM-bruh". I suppose TAMBER evolved the same way Favre became FARV.

Tambourine, the dictionary tentatively proposes, came in a roundabout way to be the diminutive of the Old French for "drum." Elsewhere (1911 Britannica) I was told the Romans used the word TYMPANON for both kettle-drum AND tambourine.

But TIMBER is completely unrelated. It comes from the "Proto-Indo-European" stem DOM meaning "build" (as in DOMESTIC).

I've had TIMBRE on the mind lately. To repeat myself, TIMBRE is the quality of a sound. It is how you can tell a Harley from a Suzuki, and how you can tell a harp from a bouzouki. It's how you can tell if it's your mother or your uncle on the phone, after hearing only the first syllable. It's how you can differentiate your microwave's "broccoli-done" buzzer from a backhoe's backing-up buzzer (Oh wait, you can't. Bad example.) *"Timbre describes all of the aspects of a musical sound that do not have anything to do with the sound's pitch, loudness, or length,"* according to Wiki. But I disagree somewhat about "timbre" having nothing to do with "loudness."

I've been thinking about timbre because someone mentioned to me lately that in the rock music world, "It's all about timbre." That seems right to me. Even way back when I was a young ukulele, that's how you could tell the Beatles from the Animals after hearing a measure or less of their music, without even hearing a complete word, or any vocal at all, for that matter. Though these days rock music all sounds pretty similar to me, that doesn't mean its timbre has become uniform; it just means I've become a codger. I'm sure any hep 14 year old could tell Dumpster Juice from Death Tongue with one mini-wail of the iPod.

Last weekend my musical partner Lou and I found ourselves to be token folkies at a rock festival. Being a lyricist, I tried

listening to the words bobbing in the flood of timbre which overtopped the levees of my pain threshold. Despite the Wiki definition, "loudness" does play a part in timbre, for when the hearing system is overloaded, it creates its own distortion. I've mentioned this before in Whither Zither. Whistle while hammering a nail in close quarters, and you will hear your whistle manipulated as if being sent through a fuzz-tone generator, every time the hammer hits. Part of rock music's trademark timbre is this in-ear overloading and consequent fuzzing of the sound, and is why a kid objects when told to turn it down; it effects his on-board signal processing, and changes the actual timbre reaching his young fuzztone-grokkng consciousness.

Anyway, as I say, I was trying to hear the words, and for that, earworks distortion does not help. But I did notice that repetition was used to counteract the problem. Verses were sung again and again; some songs were almost all chorus, repeated and repeated. In fact, we had a complaint from a perplexed audience member about our music, bothered that it had "no choruses." We do have some choruses, but not when compared to rock, which even in my bygone day had such passages as "My baby does the hanky-panky. My baby does the hanky-panky. My baby does the hanky-panky. My baby does the hanky-panky. My baby does the hanky-panky. My baby does the hanky-panky."

I sound like Andy Rooney, and really don't mean to, because a rock fest is one more great example of how music can be so many different things to so many different people. Personally, though, my recent weekend did make me nostalgic for quaint musical notions like melody. I came home and watched an interview with dear departed Utah Phillips and had my levees rebuilt. This is a folk music society after all, and I'm newly excited to be a part of its aesthetic, where acoustic timbres, wretched though they may sometimes be, are not dependent for their character on overloading the internal machinery. Which isn't growing any more resilient, I should add.



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