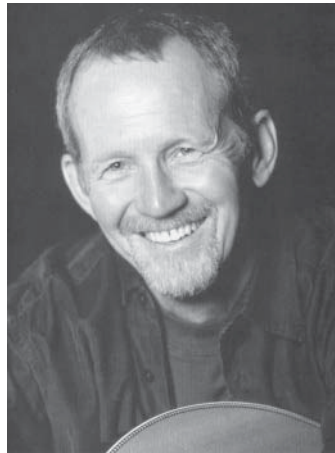

Mad Folk NEWS

Newsletter of the Madison Folk Music Society

Volume 30, No. 6 / June 2004



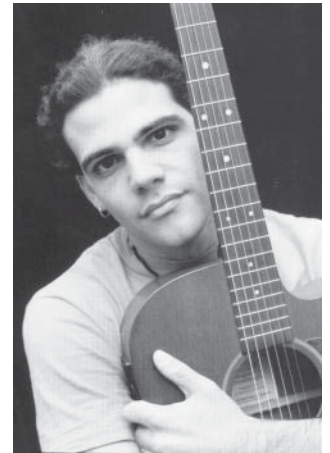
Greg Greenway



Johnsmith



Amy Curl



Joe Reilly

Folk At 4 lists full June slate of performers

With the first two weekends completed, it looks like Folk at 4 will have another successful season. The second weekend took inside to our "rain venue" in the Union using the Rathskeller, which turned out to be a wonderful room, and along with the smell of popcorn, you could purchase food from their restaurant and also beer. We could still use a few volunteers, please call Mary Fiore at 256-4687 if you have a few hours on a Saturday afternoon to help set-up for the concert. Folk at Four is a series that will be running every Saturday from 4:00 to 6:00 thru Labor Day weekend. It is located at Peace Park in the 400 block of State Street, with a rain location in the Rathskeller at the Union. For the full season line up see www.madfolk.org.

The next few weeks will bring us: On June 5th, two Wisconsin performers, Dave Stoddard and Marianne Flemming. Dave is a Wisconsin-based writer and performer who has made a mark on the Midwest's theater, concert and festival scenes. Playing guitar, piano, and banjo, his phrasing and unique rhyming have earned him comparisons to Loudon Wainwright III, while his piano-based music and melodies (as well as his

pointed sarcasm) have earned him comparisons to Randy Newman. Marianne, back for her second year at Folk at 4, is a Florida native transplanted to Wisconsin, and she carries the total package, both as a polished songwriter and serious riffing guitar. Please see more about her at www.marianneflemming.com.

On June 12 we have two excellent singer-songwriters, Greg Greenway and Johnsmith. Greg will be making his first appearance at Folk at 4; however, he has played Madison several times in the last few years at both house concerts and the Phil Ochs song nights. Greg is a superb songwriter with a warm voice. He has five solo CDs including a new live CD. See more on Greg at www.greggreenway.com. Johnsmith, who travels nationally and abroad, is a Wisconsin-based performer who will be making his second appearance on the Folk at 4 stage. John has a rare gift of songwriting that allows him to share his soul with you. John has released 5 CDs, his latest, *Traveler* came out in December. You may read more about John at www.johnsmithmusic.com.

June 19th brings us two young musicians, Amy Curl and Joe Reilly. Amy is based in Madison and can be seen frequently playing locally. Amy has a charming performance and it would not be a complete performance if you did not hear at least one story of her cat! See more info on Amy at www.amycurl.com. Joe

will be coming around the Lake from Michigan. Joe is Italian, Cherokee, and Irish-American, and you will see a little of all these identities in his songs. Joe weaves his ideals of love, peace, social (continued on inside page)

Folk & bluegrass fest

The Arts Council of Edgerton is sponsoring the Log Cabin Days festival June 19-20 at Edgerton's historic Log Cabin in Clay Pit Heritage Park.

The event will feature folk and bluegrass. Saturday performances begin at noon and will include: Benjamin Bruce, James Travis, The Dark of the Moon Contra Band, Dreams and Train Smoke, Tracy Jane Comer, Stephen Lee Rich, Brett Frazier, and the Wayfarin' Strangers.

Sunday's schedule starts at 10 a.m. with a Gospel sound and be followed by folk and bluegrass music later in the day. On tap are: Witness, the Jammin' With Jesus band, The Christian Country Witnesses, Jefferson County, Aaron Nathans, Greg Winkler, and Tin Ceiling.

The park is located on W. Lawton St. near downtown Edgerton. There will be a \$3-per-day donation at the gate, \$5 for 2 days. For further info, call Kathy Hartenberger at 608-884-3198 or Alan Lemke at 608-884-6427. Or visit us on the web at www.edgertonwisconsin.com/logcabin.

Meeting

Mad Folk Board: June 2

7:15 p.m. at 813 Woods Glen Court

Folk at 4

(continued from page 1)

and environmental justice in to his melodies. See more about Joe at www.spiritboy.org.

Moving on to the final show in June on the 26th, we will bring back two performers from last year, Alastair Mook and Madison's own Lou & Peter Berryman. Those who saw Alastair last year will remember the boyish face that had a voice described as "whiskeyed." Alastair is a writer of his own songs, but also at times will do a cover of those who have come before us, and he covers them well. www.moock.com is where you can find out more about Alastair. Sharing that weekend will be Lou & Peter Berryman. With their touring schedule we are delighted that they will be joining us again. Possessing a writing style all their own and topics that often hit close to home, they routinely pack concert



Alastair Mook



Lou & Peter Berryman

halls, clubs, and other venues. More on the Berrymans at www.louandpeter.com.

And a quick preview for the first week of July—on the 3rd we will welcome back both Tracy Jane Comer and LJ Booth. Tracy is another performer that Madison can claim as its own, although she is a transplant from North Carolina. Tracy can be seen playing live locally

and also is a frequent guest on WPR Higher Ground with Jonathon Overby. More on Tracy can be found at www.tracycomer.com. LJ has been described as "a truly consummate performer...the perfect blend of songwriting, great guitar work, and the art and charm to pull it off effortlessly." See more on LJ at www.ljbooth.com.

Why should Mad Folkies Care?

A Marc Blitzstein Cabaret on June 27

(*Mad Folk stalwart Meg Skinner penned the following story*)

A Marc Blitzstein Cabaret, honoring the 135th birthday of Emma Goldman, featuring Soprano Helene Williams and Leonard Lehrman, piano, will be held at the First Unitarian Society at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, June 27.

Why should dyed-in-the-wool Mad Folkies like myself care about a concert of musical theatre and art songs of the '30s-'50s?

I would argue that it is because Marc Blitzstein, who has been called "the social conscience of American music" wrote songs and musical theatre that came from the impulse that motivates many topical, political singer-songwriters of today.

Tim Robbins, who portrayed the dramatic Broadway premiere of Blitzstein's opera in his film of the same name, described [The] *Cradle Will Rock* as "a positive, uplifting celebration of humanity, creativity & freedom." *Cradle* deals portrays a '30s Steelworker organizing drive, but the Orson-Wells-directed, John-Houseman-produced premiere had to be moved eight blocks down Broadway opening night when congressional HUAC red-baiters ordered the Federal Theatre Project outlet 891 boarded up because *Cradle* was too hot to handle.

The concert June 27 will feature Blitzstein songs from *Cradle, No for an Answer* [about season resort workers in the off-season], and his unfinished *Sacco and Vanzetti*, as well as selections from his *Juno, Reuben Reuben, New York Opera, Idiots First, and Goloopschik*, concluding with "Where Do I Belong" and "If I Can't Dance, It's Not My Revolution," both from *E.G.: A Musical Portrait of Emma Goldman*, by Leonard Lehrman & Karen Ruoff Kramer.

Critic Lehman Engel wrote of Blitzstein's operas, "The words and lyrics are as monosyllabic as possible, as plain as folk music. The simplicity seems to be indicating where the music is going and what is going to happen—but not quite. It announces its intention to be banal, but this avowal is only flirtation."

The late Alastair Cooke said of Blitzstein, "Without any highbrow premise or any academic fol-de-rols, he has found a way of presenting plays which is to my mind the nearest, most effective equivalent to the form of a Greek tragedy." And the issues he dealt with—labor rights, freedom of expression, gay rights—are as timely in these days of the Patriot Act as they were in Blitzstein's lifetime (1905–1964).

Soprano Helene Williams, co-founder of the Bronx Opera, and composer/conductor/pianist Leonard

Lehrman, founder/director of the Metropolitan Philharmonic Chorus, have been performing as a team since 1987 and are coming to Madison for the fifth time to consult the Blitzstein archives at the Wisconsin Historical Society library. Since 1969, Lehrman has been editing, adapting, reconstructing, and completing the works of Marc Blitzstein. This is their first public performance here, as a prelude to the nationwide celebration of the Blitzstein centennial next year.

A recent Portside posting by Jack Radey, honoring Pete Seeger on his 85th birthday, made reference to a famous debate in the '30s between Pete's musicologist father, Charles Seeger, and Kurt Weil. The question being debated was, "What is the correct [sic] music for the progressive movement: folk music or art songs?" In Jack Radey's view, Charles Seeger "wiped the floor with Weil," whose work (based on Bertold Brecht's *Beggar's Opera*) Blitzstein translated as *Threepenny Opera*. In fact, Blitzstein's one big hit, covered by many, was "Mack the Knife."

Folkies with a social conscience and eclectic tastes, however, will appreciate the spirit behind Blitzstein's songs.

A suggested donation of \$10 will be collected at the door. For more info, contact Meg Skinner at 238-6950 or askinner@wisc.edu.

Third-Friday Sings *alive in Madison!*


Beginning in June—and through the summer months—the popular Third Friday Sings return to the Madison area as an in-town event.

The Madison Parks Department has offered Mad Folk the use of the Brittingham Park Shelter for our sings. The park is located on the near west

side off of West Washington Ave.

June 18, July 16, and August 20 are the dates. We plan to start singing about 7 p.m. and will go to about 10. All are welcome. We will again be using the *Rise Up Singing* books.

If you are interested in leading one of these sings, please let Mike Tuten know. He can be reached at 274-6340 or by email at mnchu2101@charter.net.




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fior@charter.net
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tracy@tracycomer.com

Committee contacts:
Concert: Darlene Buhler, 846-9214
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