

Mad Folk NEWS

Newsletter of the Madison Folk Music Society

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Final round of Folk on State

The next few weeks will bring us in to the final weeks of Folk on State. The series has been wonderfully attended and the rain has not been too bad. We will start August out with Joe Jencks and Freebo & Photoglo on the 5th of August.

Joe Jencks is a national touring performer and songwriter whose emerging career is based as much in ministering to the human spirit as it is in the performance of music. According to one reviewer, "A Joe Jencks concert is definitely not a visit to the inner world of some guy with a guitar who would like us all to sit still and listen politely. It's an occasion for singing, a contagious rising up of voices, an act of joy and defiance." Following Joe's performance will be Freebo & Photoglo. What do you get when you combine two artists who have collectively worked with everyone from Bonnie Raitt and Dan Fogelberg to Vince Gill and John Mayall, who have



Jencks



Freebo & Photoglo

had songs recorded by singers from Faith Hill to The Everly Brothers, worked on albums ranging from Maria Muldaur, Crosby, Stills & Nash, Ringo Starr, and Jimmy Buffett, and who can write, play both guitar and bass, and sing harmony like a dream? You get the irrepressible duo of Freebo & Photoglo.

August 12 will bring JohnSmith back to our stage and making their debut appearance in Madison, Berkley-Hart. JohnSmith is one performer who doesn't wear hype well. His artistry speaks for itself. In fact, the idea of "just being real" is a prominent theme throughout his music. And yet, to sim-

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FOCUS ON FOLK

A Look at songwriting with Amy Curl

The Beginning:

I had always played around with melodies when I was learning to play the piano as a child, and in my 'tween years I tried adding words, mostly for church events. My first 3+ minute song came the summer I turned 15, and I wrote a couple of songs in high school, but I started in earnest in college when I had access to a guitar. I wanted to think of myself as a songwriter then, but not until I inherited a piano and wrote a larger batch of songs did I start really feeling like a songwriter. Some days I still wonder, though participating in February Album Writing Month



Curl

(continued on back page)

Silly Songwriters' Summit!

Christine Lavin & Lou & Peter Berryman

Mad Folk took advantage of a recent opportunity to produce a concert featuring one solo and one duo who happen to be singer/songwriters and friends: New Yorker Christine Lavin and Madison's own Lou & Peter Berryman. The concert is on Thursday, August 24 at First Unitarian Society Meeting House, beginning at 7 p.m.

Christine Lavin is a prolific songwriter and recording artist, and her September 2005 CD, *folkZinger*, on Applesseed Records brings her num-

ber of solo albums to 17. In addition, she recorded three "Four Bitchin' Babes" disks, and has produced six compilations showcasing the works of contemporary singer/songwriters whose music she loves. Lou & Peter Berryman's work is included on several of the CDs.

Christine has won two New York Music Awards, five ASCAP composer awards, the Kate Wolf Memorial

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Lavin

FOCUS ON FOLK

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(www.fawm.org) has helped me build confidence.

The Passion:

Songwriting helps me make sense of the world and of my feelings about myself and the world. It's a beautiful and powerful way to connect with people, to express emotions, to communicate truths that are too deep, too hard, too scary, or too ridiculous to say out loud with only just bare words and awkward eye contact. Experimenting with writing songs from another's perspective has been a tremendously valuable and moving experience for me. I learn so much about life and about myself from the creative process and discipline of songwriting. Songwriting is distilled, concentrated life. If it's good songwriting, it's concentrated life with a good beat that you can dance to!

The Process:

I generally start with words. Occasionally I'll start with a chord progression or riff. Melody almost always comes last or simultaneously with the words, while I'm floating the words over the chord progression that I'm fiddling with.

The rhythm of the words or the storyline of the song is usually what I use to propel me through the writing. Phrases in texts and in conversations jump out at me all the time, and I have a million

scraps of paper with great words on them. I'm still waiting for a melody to wake me up in the middle of the night, but I have definitely sacrificed sleep for words pouring out of my brain.

You can learn more about Amy at www.amycurl.com.

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dbuhler@charter.net	
Norbert Wodke, secretary.....	836-8422
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Dede Goldberg.....	246-4332
Speedydd99@yahoo.com	
Bill Fiore.....	256-4687
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vickyjones@aol.com	

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Concert: Darlene Buhler, 846-9214

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Dede Goldberg, Newsletter 246-4332

Mary Schranz, Calendar, 273-2515

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Folk On State

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ply say that Johnsmith is a great singer/songwriter would not be enough. In addition to his incomparable musical abilities and finely tuned songwriting skills, John Smith possesses the even rarer gift of being able to share his soul. Playing the second set this weekend will be Berkley-Hart. Hailed as masters of both two-part harmony and dazzling song craft, over the past seven years, Berkley-Hart (based in San Diego) have established



John Smith



Berkley-Hart

themselves as one of the premier acoustic duos touring the country. In concert the duo shines, the obvious camaraderie between these two top songwriters driving each performance.

Two performers from North Carolina will be playing on August 19. First up will be Madison's Tracy Jane Comer,

who is originally from North Carolina and David LaMotte who is currently a resident of that state. Tracy, now starting to tour regionally and nationally, is an accomplished guitarist and multi-instrumentalist and singer/songwriter. She



Comer

earned four nominations by the Madison Area Music Awards (Best Acoustic Album and Best Acoustic Artist, 2004 and 2005) and performed at this year's MAMAs.



LaMotte

David LaMotte—It's been over fourteen years since David LaMotte has had a real job or a real haircut. In that time he has released eight albums and performed over 1,600 shows in 45 states and 10 countries, sharing stages along the way with artists like Arlo Guthrie, Shawn Mullins, Buddy Miles, Gillian Welch, John Gorka, Jez Lowe, and David Wilcox. A typical evening of performance with David includes everything from lyrically challenging, high-energy percussive songs in strange alternate tunings to more traditional songs of home, hope, and inspiration.

Finishing off the month on August 26, we welcome back for their second year each, Jeff Hickey and Mustard's Retreat. Jeff Hickey is an award win-

ning singer-songwriter who is also an accomplished instrumentalist and a fine interpreter of American traditional music. His CD *Loose Ends* was chosen Best Acoustic Album at the 2004 Madison Area Music Awards (MAMAs). He cites Doc Watson as his primary guiding star. Everything Mustard's Retreat does on a stage is aimed at pleasing, moving, and engaging their audience. Whether singing their own gentle love songs and vivid ballads, telling tall tales, or offering treasures from America's vast traditional song bag, a Mustard's Retreat show always feels like it's designed for the people who have come to see them that day, in that coffeehouse, concert hall, or festival. Audiences sense this from the moment David and Michael hit the stage, are drawn to it like hungry kids to Sunday supper and reward it the best way they know how.

The final show, September 2, will be two hours in the round with three of Madison's leading female performers, Amy Curl, Erin O'Brien, and Kellie Lin Knott. Watch for details on them in next month's newsletter.



Hickey



Mustard's Retreat

Lavin, Lou & Peter Berryman

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Lou & Peter Berryman

Award, and her concert career continues to take her all over the U.S., Canada, and points beyond. She invites fellow knitting enthusiasts to join her before the show, so a knitting circle will take place starting at 6 p.m. in the living room down the hall from the First Unitarian Society auditorium.

Lou & Peter Berryman's long career as a duo in Madison started in the mid-'70s, when Lou bought her first accordion, whereupon the two other members of their 4-piece band resigned, leaving these formerly married friends on their own again. They became full-time musicians in 1980, the year they recorded their first album, *Peter & Lou Berryman—no relation*. They recorded their 16th album in 2005 and they continue an active performing schedule while they write new songs.

The First Unitarian Society Meeting House is on University Bay Drive. Tickets are \$15 advance, \$17 day of show, available at B-side Records, Borders East & West, Orange Tree Imports, Spruce Tree Music, and Steep & Brew—Odana Rd.