In the summer of 1941, a musical group of labor activists known as “The Almanac Singers” climbed into a midnight blue Buick and blazed a trail across the USA, spreading the gospel of unionism and bringing folk music back to the people. The group, with members Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Lee Hays & Mill Lampell, created a new kind of topical music, using old folk melodies to tell the stories of the times. They played in union halls, on picket lines, theaters and radio shows, planting seeds wherever they went.

The Almanac’s now almost-mythical journey has become an inspiration for legions of musicians, free thinkers, and gasoline gypsies, and has paved the road for many of today’s singer/songwriters. At the core of it were some of the greatest labor songs ever written, including “Union Maid,” “Talking Union,” and “Which Side Are You On?”

Some seventy years later, with the help and guidance of Pete Seeger and The Woody Guthrie Archives, Rik Palieri and George Mann are traveling down the road from Pittsburgh to Los Angeles, up the west coast and then from Seattle to Buffalo, singing at some of the same places and towns. The Almanac Trail will be like an old-fashioned “Hootenanny”—an evening of history, music and fun for all generations!

AND THEY’RE COMING TO MADISON!

These new “Almanac Singers” will be at the Madison Labor Temple (1602 S. Park St.) performing at 7:30 on Friday evening, August 9. A donation of $10 is requested, but your donation should be according to your means. (Beer and soda available at affordable prices during the performance.)

There will be a “social hour meet and greet” with the singers at the Labor Temple Bar from 6:30-7:30 before the performance. (If you haven’t been there before, you should know that the Labor Temple Bar burgers and fish fry are just about the best in town.)

Music has been a central element of the progressive labor movement—and all other social movements—for at least a century and a half. And in fact the Almanac Trail revival goes back over seventy years—yet the songs they sing are as reviving and inspirational as when Pete and Woody sang them.

Come join us for an evening of great folk and labor music and revive your spirits!

$10 recommended donation
Madison Labor Temple
1602 South Park St.
Friday evening, August 9
Social Hour, Meet and Greet at 6:30 in the Labor Temple Bar
Performance at 7:30
Sponsored by:
The South Central Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO
Wisconsin Labor History Society
Confessions of a Folk Festival Gypsy

Some believe we are entering the dog days of summer, but for this unrepentant folkie, August represents the season when I am magically transformed into a folk festival gypsy. And without leaving the Midwest, I can indulge my passion for folk music, dance and art every weekend through Labor Day.

The first of the August festivals is the closest to home, the Sugar Maple Traditional Music Festival at the Lake Farm County Park August 2nd and 3rd. The Main Stage line-up this year includes Charles Coberly, Al Scorch and The Country Soul Ensemble, The Steel Wheels, and the old time dance band Horseshoes & Hand Grenades on Friday evening, beginning 5pm. Saturday’s Main Stage begins at noon, with Al Scorch & The Country Soul Ensemble, followed by the Kevin Prater Band, Don Stiernberg Trio, Freakwater, Martha Redbone Roots Project, and at 9 p.m. The Revelers will play Cajun music for dancing. A big tent provides protection from the elements (but not mosquitoes – come prepared.) The Roots and Reasons stage provides a chance to get up close and personal with some of the musicians, and food carts provide great tasting treats, including both beer and ice cream.

The second weekend in August is reserved for the 35th Annual Shawano Folk Music Festival, in Mielke Park, not far from the Menomonee Reservation in the northwoods west of Green Bay. Matt Watroba is the honorary Co-Director this year, who got to select his choice of Joe Crookston (from Ithaca, NY) as a featured performer. Joining him will be Madison’s own Lou and Peter Berryman, Caravan Gypsy Swing Ensemble, Frogwater, Milwaukee’s Mike Mangione & the Union, Wade Fernandez, Stas Venglevski and Mischa Litvin playing Russian folk tunes, the Tonantzín Dance Company, and Bill Miller’s younger brother Clinton, an extraordinary guitarist, composer, singer and visual artist. There are indoor evening concerts Friday and Saturday (8/9 & 8/10) in the air-conditioned Mielke Arts Center, and workshops throughout the day under tents and/or in the woods on Saturday and Sunday. Area artists and crafters display their wares, and some give demonstrations, on the pathways into the park. In past years an aquarium display of fish to be found in area lakes and streams, and a buckskin/trader encampment provided additional interest for young and old. A homemade quilt or two, and other items from crafters are raffled off in the closing concert Sunday afternoon, August 11.

Closer to home the next weekend, MadFolk’s last Summer Sing-along, facilitated by Mac Robertson on banjo, and David Eagan on guitar gives an opportunity for participatory singing in a circle at the Main Shelter at the top of the hill at Blue Mounds State Park at 8 pm, Friday night August 16. In case of rain, the beautiful new enclosed shelter near the pool, provides a dry refuge, as it did during wet and rainy June.

The next day, August 17, the 7th annual Gandy Dancer festival will be held in downtown Mazomanie, straddling the railroad tracks right downtown. Two tents keep music going from 11 am to 8 pm. WORT’s Country Music Guru Bill C. Malone will emcee the Main Stage, where the Krause Family Band, The High 48’s, KG & The Ranger, the Dixie Sizzlers, Lou and Peter Berryman, and, at 6:30 p.m., the Byron Berline Band will play. Throughout the day, train buffs will give Gandy Dancer demonstrations on the RR tracks, and food and craft exhibits. Between 12 and 4, Madison’s 8-gauge Club will have a model train exhibit, and jugglers and stiltwalkers will entertain young and old.

The last weekend in August is the grandaddy of all Wisconsin folk festivals, the 38th annual Great River Folk Festival on the UW LaCrosse Campus. The festival begins with a 7:30 Friday night concert by Dar Williams in the Cartwright Center. A host of activities begin the next morning at 10, including music performances and hands-on workshops, delicious food from the People’s Coop and others, children’s activities, and a traditional arts and craft fair. Great River takes its arts and crafts very seriously, with juried prizes, and over the years this gypsy has acquired some treasured pieces for her caravan.

Weather permitting, there is a Saturday evening (5 pm) concert near the trees and stars, featuring Barbara Jean, Madison’s Harmonious Wail, The May North, SHEL, and Willy Porter, and a Sunday 4:30 p.m. Farewell Concert featuring Claudia Schmidt, the Songwriting contest winner and The Ultrasonics, over in time to head back home in the daylight, arriving in Madison at a reasonable hour. If you are lucky, you might even hear the UW-LaCrosse chancellor play his mean blues guitar licks!

In terms of variety of offerings and atmospherics, none can beat the 37th Annual Fox Valley Folk Music and Storytelling Festival held the Sunday and Monday of Labor Day weekend at Island Park in Geneva IL. Access to the island is via a trestle bridge under the much used Metro train tracks over the rushing Fox River. You haven’t lived until you have walked back to your car (parked in the Kane Co. Government Center lot) in the darkness, after the generator-powered lights on the island have been turned off following Sunday night’s Ghost Storytelling session.

There are eight stages running simultaneously from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. Sunday and Monday; the challenge is choosing between workshops by fabulous folk musicians, music to dance to, and storytellers. Food and music/craft vendors line the pathways between the stages, tempting all comers. A central CD tent carries even obscure recordings of all featured artists, And what a line-up is planned for 2013 – over 30 artists in all, including Ben Bedford, Bob Bovee, Madison’s The Cajun Strangers, Andy Cohen, Judy Cook, February Sky, Jeni & Billy, Dan Keding, Lil’ Rev, David Massengill, Mustard’s Retreat, Zoe Mulford, Sparky and Rhonda continued on next page
Sh*tty Barn Season Continues into Fall

Tickets available at www.shittybarnsessions.com/

August
Wed, Aug 7 - 7pm, Whitney Mann/Corey Hart
Wed, Aug 14 - 7pm, Dana Falconberry
Wed, Aug 21 - 7pm, Charlie Parr
Thu, Aug 22 - 7pm, Freedy Johnston/Kevin Bowe and The Okemah Prophets
Fri, Aug 23 - 7pm, Syd Straw/Nick Brown
Sat, Aug 24 - 5pm, FairShare CSA w/Juniper Tar, Dead Pigeons, Peter Mulvey
Wed, Aug 28 - 7pm, The Pines

There’s something about Wisconsin summer nights that demand attention. They’ve got a way of making people want to slow down. It probably has everything to do with being cooped up inside, generally avoiding the other two seasons we have here - the rainy one and the cold one. Summer here is something to savor, and as Wisconsinites we’ve perfected how to do just that.

Being someone that consumes music almost as frequently as I consume air, summer to me means music. Lots and lots of live music.

There is no better place to enjoy live music than in the company of the best people than with a Further more beer in one hand, and a plate of Enos Farms organic catering in the other. There are grills at hand for the more ambitious Barn goers amongst us. Each show is capped around 100 people, so there’s never a bad seat in the house. The performers are hand-picked by Barn owners Chris and Martha Staples...and you should trust their musical taste. The Barn line up for this season is a well-balanced mix of local, regional and national artists all who hold an immense amount of talent.

There are plenty of remaining dates for the season that should not be missed. Dana Falconberry’s will be venturing to the barn on August 14th and is one of many that shouldn’t be missed. The imagery in her music recalls her Michigan upbringing speaking of lakes, maple leaves, Ojibwe legends. Her almost childlike voice is positioned at the front of an up and down pop sound in a way that makes one feel light, connected to nature and the landscapes she creates.

There’s also the FairShare CSA night on August 24th featuring Juniper Tar, Dead Pigeons, Peter Mulvey. This event not only helps to raise funds for FairShare CSA Coalition which connects and supports Community Supported Agriculture farmers and eaters in Southern WI, but it also has a three band ticket that’s bound to entertain. They’ll make supporting a good organization sound even better.

On August 28th The Pines will be back at the Barn and bound to stun. They have a way about them that makes you wonder about things. They can make you feel sad, a little haunted, but it’s poetic. They bring you into their own atmosphere; one that is hard to escape, but is a welcome refuge of contemplation.

The season continues on through the fall with even more incredibly talented acts, but don’t wait that long if you can help it. For the full remaining lineup and other information visit: http://www.shittybarnsessions.com/

September
Wed, Sep 11 - 7pm, El Valiente and Building on Buildings
Wed, Sep 18 - 7pm, David Olney and Sergio Webb
Wed, Sep 25 - 7pm, Pieta Brown and the Sawdust Collective

October
Wed, Oct 2 - 7pm, Field Report/Kalispell
Wed, Oct 9 - 7pm, Adrian Legg
Wed, Oct 16 - 7pm, Communist Daughter

There’s something about Wisconsin summer nights that demand attention. They’ve got a way of making people want to slow down. It probably has everything to do with being cooped up inside, generally avoiding the other two seasons we have here - the rainy one and the cold one. Summer here is something to savor, and as Wisconsinites we’ve perfected how to do just that.

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Mad Folk Concert Tickets
When you see this symbol – 🎵 – you’ll know that you’re reading about a Mad Folk sponsored event. Advance tickets for Mad Folk shows are available online at www.madfolk.org and at these outlets:

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- Spruce Tree Music, 851 East Johnson

Purchase tickets ONLINE for Mad Folk concerts via Brown Paper Tickets:
https://www.brownpapertickets.com/producer/10879
You can also purchase advance tickets by mail. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope with your check payable to Mad Folk, PO Box 665, Madison, WI 53701. If all else fails, call 608-846-9214 for information.

Rucker, Sanctified Grumblers, Michael Smith, Dennis Stroughmatt et L’Esprit Creole and more! All that music, dance and storytelling for a $15 per day donation, the Fox Valley Folk Festival is a real bargain.

So bring your lawn chair or blanket, your mosquito repellent, some cash for entry tickets and CDs of your new favorite performers, and join me on the Festival circuit.

Meg Skinner

continued from second page
Stay Tuned
Blake Thomas, Mary Fox & Andy Frye Stay Tuned ~ 2013

Review by Kiki Schueler

Before I met Blake Thomas, I reviewed his first record, Real Like Theater, for local music newspaper Rick’s Café. When I went to the CD release show I was surprised to find that the gorgeous voice with the Jim Croce croon belonged to the skinny redhead on stage. Over the years he’s never stopped amazing me. He’s released four albums of stunning original country/folk/rock music. But he found another avenue for his talents when he moved to Minneapolis and started working with the Yellow Tree Theater. First came the collection of traditional songs he did as a soundtrack to its production of Our Town, in which he also played the role of Stage Manager. The songs weren’t in the play; instead, the entire cast gathered in the lobby before the show for a sing-along. The next step was a big one. He, his wife Mary Fox, and their friend Andy Frye committed to writing an original musical. That’s right, original, like from scratch.

The three of them wrote the book about a radio variety show (think Prairie Home Companion), and Thomas wrote the music and lyrics. The soundtrack was available at performances of the show, which opened April 5th and ran for a month, and to those who had backed the project on Kickstarter, and is currently streaming on his website. As the beloved Emerald Coffee Radio Hour undergoes modernization after the death of its longtime host, the
glory days are relived through vinyl records of the show complete with crackles and pops. As in the play, new clashes with old. The most obviously modern song is the hilarious “Brand New World,” credited to Loki & D-Raz, played by cast members Jessica Lind Peterson and Ryan Nelson. It’s an ingratiatingly catchy rap/dance/electronic number that demonstrates Thomas genuinely can write any kind of song. The only problem is that it and the Willard’s Party Pilsner jingle (with its catch line “a little bit of beer never hurt anybody”) sound out of place, jarringly so, next to the rest of the more authentic-sounding soundtrack.

While he takes a couple of turns on lead vocals, notably the reworked standard “When That Great Ship Went Down” and “Real Love Will Lift You Up” (the most Blake Thomas-y tune here), Thomas is unfailingly generous in handing out the best songs to the rest of the cast. The clear winner is the fifties’ style, finger-snapping doo-wop of “Is It Strange (High & Low),” sung by Frye, who wholeheartedly sells the tale of a guy who’s “never been so high before I’ve been so low.” It’s the one that sticks (pleasantly) in your head long after you first hear it. Peterson channels Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, and every other great country lady whose man has done her wrong on the absolutely note-perfect “Little White Lies.” From opening line “Every night it’s the same old thing, you’re running around like you lost your ring” to closer “I did not realize I’d come to memorize the number to every honky tonk in town,” it’s a shoulda-been hit. Though I guess it probably was in the Emerald Coffee universe. Fox lends her gorgeous voice to the contemporary folk of “Back Home” and the jazzy forties-ish “When the World Is Married to My Dreams.” Nelson returns with the Sinatra-esque “Answer Me This,” sung with Rat Pack-y charm.

While Thomas plays the lion’s share of the instruments (the credits list ten, including wine glass and an even more surprising saxophone), he does get some help from a few familiar names including frequent collaborators and Madisonians Mary Gaines, Chris Wagoner, Shauncey Ali and Chris Sasman. If you didn’t get a chance to see the musical during its run, you should have a listen to the soundtrack. Even if you think you know Blake Thomas, I bet you didn’t know he could do this.

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Mad Folk News is published monthly by the Madison Folk Music Society, a non-profit, volunteer-led society dedicated to fostering folk music in the Madison area. Contact us at madfolk@charter.net. Learn about concerts, membership, scholarships, and volunteer opportunities at www.madfolk.org.
Pop Quiz? No! Folk Quiz!

Here are some of the folkies who have played in Madison over the last few years. Match the name with the tidbit. Info quoted from their web sites.

1. Andrew Calhoun
2. Anne Hills
3. Bill Staines
4. Bob Franke
5. Bryan Bowers
6. Carrie Newcomer
7. Christine Kane
8. Christine Lavin
9. Chulrua
10. Claudia Schmidt
11. David Francey
12. Eliza Gilkyson
13. Ellis Paul
14. Enoch Kent
15. Finest Kind
16. Gina Forsyth
17. Holly Near
18. Jack Williams
19. Joel Mabus
20. John McCutcheon
22. Matt Watroba
23. Michael Cooney
24. Mustard’s Retreat
25. Peggy Seeger
26. Prince Myshkins
27. Sally Rogers
28. Small Potatoes
29. Sparky and Rhonda Rucker
30. Steve Gillette and Cindy Mangsen
31. Susan Werner
32. Tim Grimm
33. Tom Kastle
34. Tom Paxton
35. Tracy Jane Comer
36. Vance Gilbert

A) In the mid-1980s, she moved to New Orleans to study classical and jazz violin ... and quickly developed an irrevocable passion for Cajun music.

B) Paying tribute to American agriculture and to her Iowa farm roots, she keeps her audiences guessing ...

C) He is a singer, songwriter, tall ship captain, and teller of tales ...

D) They worked to make their own material obsolete by appearing ... as KPBS San Diego’s resident satirists ...

E) In 2009 and 2011 she traveled to India as a cultural ambassador, including musical performances organized by the US State Department.

F) In 1993, he was inducted into the Autoharp Hall of Fame to stand with Maybelle Carter, Kilby Snow, and Sara Carter.

G) The weekend of September 28th and 29th, 2013, [they] will host the Third Annual Bennington Songwriter’s Weekend in their home town ...

H) In 2011, he portrayed IWW organizer and songwriter Joe Hill in Si Kahn's play, Joe Hill’s Last Will ...

I) He then launched into a year and a half as support for George Carlin, leading up to the creation and recording of Up On Rockfield (2008).

J) The glowing reviews of [their] new album, The Singing Kettle, are steaming in.

K) He was born in 1943 in Carmel, California and grew up (mostly) in Tucson, Arizona. His parents divorced early and he spent much time in foster homes and the orphanage there and in California ...

L) She was born in Moradabad, India, the third daughter of educational missionaries.

M) He has toured and recorded with his friend, Ramblin’ Jack Elliott, [and] appeared with Harrison Ford in the film Clear and Present Danger ...

N) That 1983 recording, Water Street, finally got him working in Chicago clubs and led to two more LPs during the 80’s ... The Gates of Love and Walk Me To The War.

O) After graduating from Michigan in 1969 with a degree in English Lit., he moved to Cambridge, MA, to attend Episcopal Theological School.

P) From the south but now based in Madison, [she] has been called “North Carolina’s gift to Wisconsin.”

Q) In recent years she has been known to host knitting circles before her shows.

R) The title of [their] latest CD, With Relish, is more than a bad pun; it is how they feel about performing.

S) Scotland born and now Canadabased, [he] formed the traditional Scottish group, The Reivers, with [three others].

T) [Her] seventh solo release, Promise, was recorded in her 19th century church/studio nestled deep in the hills of upstate NY.

U) As she celebrates her first album in three years, Peace Becomes You, she’s building on 40 creative years ...

V) Firepink Music was created by [this] singer-songwriter as her CD sales and visibility grew.

W) Formerly the radio host for Folks Like Us, a position he held for over 20 years on WDET-FM (Detroit) ...

X) The daughter of [a] songwriter ... whose songs were recorded by artists as diverse as Johnny Cash, the White Stripes, and Dean Martin ...

Y) After spending much of his life doing labour such as carpentry, he began a career in folk music ...

Z) Three of the finest voices in Canada singing about our past ...

AA) Born in 1935, [her] family connections are well-known in folk and classical music circles.

BB) He is left-handed and plays a right-handed guitar upside-down, with the bass strings on the bottom.

CC) They’ve called themselves eclecto-maniacs and described their music as “Celtic to Cowboy”.

DD) When a knee injury in his junior year sidelined him from athletics, [he] picked up a ... guitar to pass the time.

EE) [She] had become obsessed with a small community in her native Michigan called Beaver Island. She moved there ... and opened a [B&B] ...

FF) Some of her songs are included in both the Unitarian and Quaker hymnals. Her residencies have included many school visits teaching students how to collect oral histories and transform them into songs.

GG) When [his] mother and father came of age in the Great Depression, they took their old-time farm-grown music on the road with other family members as “hillbilly” entertainers.

HH) Their new CD, Let Freedom Ring, is a testament to the ongoing struggle for liberty in the [U.S]...

II) In 1962, he recorded a ... live album at the Gaslight entitled I’m the Man That Built the Bridges.

JJ) From 1958 through 1988, along with playing jazz (trumpet) and classical guitar, [he] was best known as an electric guitarist ...

--WZ Aug 2013

Solution: A=16, B=31, C=33, D=26, E=6, F=5, G=30, H=20, I=36, J=9, K=23, L=2, M=32, N=1, O=4, P=35, Q=8, R=24, S=14, T=21, U=17, V=7, W=22, X=12, Y=11, Z=15, AA=25, BB=3, CC=28, DD=13, EE=10, FF=27, GG=19, HH=29, II=34, JJ=18
The Brink Lounge
Thu, Aug 1 -- 9:30pm -- Aaron Williams & the HooDoo
Thu, Aug 8 -- 8pm -- Briana Hardyman Trio
Tue, Aug 13 -- 6pm -- Robert J Acoustic Solo
Sat, Aug 17 -- 9pm -- The Soapbox Project

Cafe Carpe
All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise
• Fri, Aug 2 -- Macarus Family -- $7.50
• Sat, Aug 3 -- Song swap w/ Tricia Alexandar, Pete Johnson, David Hawkins -- $7.50
• Wed, Aug 7 -- Opus -- 7:30pm
• Thu, Aug 8 -- New Pioneers -- 7pm -- $8
• Fri, Aug 9 -- Brett Newsky -- $7.50
• Fri, Aug 16 -- Jeff Mason & Perry Baird -- 8pm -- $5
• Sat, Aug 17 -- Bill Camplin & The Increased Laphams -- $9
• Sat, Aug 31 -- Birds of Chicago

Mother Fool’s
All shows at 8pm unless indicated otherwise
• Fri, Aug 2 -- Matt Nichols w/ Tristan Freides -- $6
• Sat, Aug 3 -- Echelon -- $6
• Fri, Aug 9 -- Brian Daly w/ Mark Adkins (Subvocal) -- $6
• Fri, Aug 17 -- The Ens -- $6
• Sat, Aug 31 -- The Jokes with Conscious Object-

Mother Fool’s Coffeehouse
1101 Williamson St.
608-259-1030

The Gandy Dancer Festival is a presentation of the Mazomanie Charitable Alliance. There is no price for admission.
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