Volume 41 No. 1 January 2015

# Start the New Year off with the music of Tracy Grammer

Review by Darcy Greder

High praise for Tracy Grammer came early in her career and accolades continue to flow forth following her transition from being one-half of the most promising duos in the last twenty-five years-Carter and Grammer—to the solo work she has crafted since the untimely death of partner, Dave Carter. For five short years, from 1997-2002, Carter and Grammer produced four studio CDs, toured extensively and garnered the attention of fellow artists, critics and fans on the strength of Carter's writing and the musicality of their collaboration. Poised on the brink of stardom and heralded as "the new voice of modern folk music," this next big thing never reached their full potential due to the passing of Carter. In those four years of ascendancy, Carter and Grammer toured relentlessly and honed their performances shifting toward the end to feature Tracy's vocals, a direction that was planned to take preeminence. It was Dave Carter's expressed desire for Tracy's voice to be out front. By their last recording together. Tracy's vocals were featured in half of the songs on the album.

The loss of Dave Carter left a hole in the music community spurring shock and tributes. Just days after his death, Tracy went on to Falconridge where the duo was set to headline. In place of their performance, the community of artists and audience combined for a musical tribute to the memory and artistry of Dave Carter. Tracy, feeling the loss most profoundly on both a professional and personal level, found strength and comfort in that gathering playing alongside fellow artists paying homage to Carter. Indeed, throughout the next year, Tracy would work to fulfill dates booked by the duo—interpreting both the

musical genius as well as the humanity of her late partner. Early shows were a bit of a struggle and the loss of Carter was palatable as Tracy performed and talked about him. Her grief work was, in part, played out in the intimate clubs and venues that provided a stage as Tracy honored the bookings. As in the arc of any grieving, there came a time for Tracy to evaluate what would come next, both personally and professionally. And the answers to those questions have given rise the next chapter of her musical story.

To say that Tracy has found her voice may be an overstatement-of Tracy's talent, Joan Baez has said, "Tracy Grammer is a brilliant and unique individual. Her voice is distinctive, as his her mastery over the instruments she plays." High praise and indicative that those chops have always been evident. Although Tracy was born in Florida, she grew up in California and was raised in a musical family. Her father played acoustic, electric and lap steel guitars and a distant relation played in the Lawrence Welk orchestra. It is said that Tracy began her musical journey on a borrowed violin at age 9. She would go on to complete a degree in English literature from the University of California, Berkeley. In the business, she is known for her 'clear alto voice and perfectly intoned violin, and guitar work that are alternately softly nuanced or percussive.' Village Records states that Tracy "flies solo with a style and grace that must be heard to be believed... she is a voice to be reckoned with."

In her post-Carter and Grammer career, Tracy has released three solo albums. Her first, The Verdant Mile, is an EP and the title track is her first original composition, a eulogy for Dave Carter. The Verdant Mile is infused with refer-

ences to Carter songs performed by the duo-Gentle Arms of Eden, The Mountain and I Go Like the Raven create a mosaic to reveal Tracy's circuitous journey from grief to acceptance of Carter's death. For fans and reviewer's alike, The Verdant Mile gave a promise for things to come, and Tracy has kept faith through her subsequent releases. Flower of Avalon is folk with a country-rock inflection. Produced by Tracy and John Jennings, the recording combines outstanding musical arrangements with peerless performances by Jennings on guitars, Tracy on vocals, fiddle, acoustic guitar, banjo and dulcimer, and features Mary Chapin Carpenter harmonies on many of the tracks. Reflecting on Tracy and this body of work, Carpenter states, "Her pure voice conveys the simple truths of these songs; her gifts as a musician are like that of a painter who is a master of chiaroscuro, offering light and shadows at every turn." Lesser-known instrumentalists play Dobro, mandolin, piano, drums, organ, bass and clarinet. In February 2006, Flower of Avalon received the American Folk Alliance's awards for solo artist of the year 2005, song of the year and album of the year. Her third solo effort, Book of Sparrows, is a seven-song EP released in December, 2007. Ever the multi-instrumentalist, Tracy plays multiple stringed instruments on the disc and receives support on vocals and various guitars from Jim Henry. Tracy and Henry toured together for several years, beginning in September 2003. Henry also shares co-producer credits with Tracy for Book of Sparrows. In 2014, in a commitment to grow as a songwriter, Tracy joined 21 other female singer-songwriters in a project headed by Cary Cooper called "RealWomenRealSongs." The project re-

### Continued from pg 1

quires each participant to write and upload one song per week for 52 weeks to the RealWomenRealSongs YouTube channel.

Interspersed with her own solo work, Tracy continues to give honor and tribute to the creative brilliance of Dave Carter. In 2005, her company, Tracy Grammer Music, made arrangements with Elise Fischer, Carter's sister and copyright owner, to administer the catalog of Dave Carter, giving her effective control over the duo's music. Since then, Tracy has released four Carter and Grammer albums:

2006—Seven is the Number 2007—American Noel 2008—Little Blue Egg 2012—Joy is My Love (EP)

Little Blue Egg is particularly notable as it contains 11 previously-unheard duo recordings that had been recovered from the Carter and Grammer archives. Little Blue Egg consists of eleven songs (ten of them Carter compositions) for which Carter had recorded vocals a decade or more earlier. Tracy found the tapes in their home and finished the songs herself. These posthumous releases provide a glimpse into Tracy's solo career and performances. In concert, Tracy deftly moves from Carter and Grammer offerings to her own solo work while telling stories about the duo's first meeting, Carter's quirks and fancies or her own misadventures and missteps. She is a masterful storyteller with a riotous sense of humor and is thus able to give honor to Carter's memory alongside the evolution of her life and career deftly balancing life's joys and sorrow to tilt toward hope.

...Opening the concert will be Zachary Scot Johnson, who is both a well traveled singer/ songwriter, having shared the stage with many artists in this genre of music and has a strong internet presence, including a YouTube channel with well

over 30 million views. He has been touring nonstop since 2001 and has performed just about everywhere within the US. He has released three cds, including 2004's "Moment of Clarity", 2008's "To Whom It May Concern" and 2011's "Live at the Guild" with longtime collaborators Mark Paffrath and Jeff Ward. Born and raised in Racine, WI, Johnson now resides in Saint Paul, MN. He graduated in 2006 from Lawrence University in Appleton, WI as a triple major student of music performance, theatre arts and psychology. Johnson will celebrate his most exciting release yet: a stunning 6 disc, 125 song tribute to the music of Tom Waits. He is currently recording new original music for his next release. Zach's music has brought him to stages of all sizes across the country and onto multiple NBC, CBS, ABC and FOX morning and evening shows, radio around the country and more. Johnson's mastery of many instruments lead to exciting live shows, where Johnson performs on piano, 6 and 12 string acoustic and electric guitars, baritone guitar, dobro, banjo, mandolin, violin, lap steel, harmonicas, octave mandolin, viola, bass, drums, percussion, banjolin, dulcimer, ukulele, pedal steel and more. His repertoire covers a wide range of styles and genres, from folk to jazz, rock to spoken word, blues to pop, country to a cappella, gospel to instrumental and more. Johnson is a nationally touring artist, performing 75 or more dates annually and is a proud member of the Grammy Recording Foundation. His hit YouTube channel, thesongadayproject has Johnson bringing a song-either original or cover-from wherever he is on any given day and has run for over 825 consecutive days (over 2 full years without a single missed day), and gamered an astonishing number of loyal viewers. Over 50 guests have appear on the channel in collaboration with Zach including Jeff Daniels ("Dumb and Dumber", "The Newsroom",

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

etc.) Noel Paul Stookey (from Peter, Paul and Mary), Creed Bratton (from "The Office" and The Grass Roots), Lisa Loeb, Mary Gauthier, Mary Black, David Wilcox, Ellis Paul, Lucero and more. Johnson has strong Facebook and Twitter fanbases. Please be sure to visit him on Facebook as well as his website www.zacharyscotiohnson.com.

Madison audiences have an opportunity to hear and see Tracy Grammer and Zachary Scot Johnson on January 16 at 7:00 pm at the Brink. Information about this and other Madfolk concerts is available on the web site at: http://madfolk.org/

If you are on Facebook, please consider (if you have not already) "friending" or is it "liking" this page. Then when you are on this page you can invite others to "like" this page.

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## Claudia Schmidt with Dean Magraw

The spectacular Claudia Schmidt is coming to town and if that weren't enough, joining her onstage is the impossibly gifted Dean Magraw. It's hard to imagine a more exciting linkup. Claudia by herself, as decades of Madison (and worldwide) fans can attest, exudes more honest and driving musical emotion in five minutes than ten of us mortals cobble together in two days. She says of her newly released nineteenth album that the process, with many old and new

countless others, has a built in metronome and a jazz ear that could tell you the key of a maple tree a block away. His fancy finger-work is astonishing but delicate. Like Claudia, he creates music that is beautiful and exciting at the same time. It will be an unforgettable thrill to behold Claudia and Dean actually playing together on stage. Many of the quotes used to describe Claudia or Dean could be applied to both of them. For example, this one, about Dean, could be

used equally well for Claudia: "Watching him perform, it's clear that he's doing exactly what he wants to do. He exudes antic joy." -- Pamela Espeland, MinnPost.com. To participate in a night of antic joy, with warmth and passion thrown in for good measure, come to this most musical of shows!

Claudia Schmidt with special guest
Dean Magraw
Saturday, February 28, 2015
7:00 pm (Doors open at 6:30pm)
The Brink Lounge
701 E. Washington Ave.
Madison, WI 53701
608-661-8599
\$15 in advance
\$17 day of show



friends, was "...a humbling and breathtaking experience;" that is the perfect phrase to describe a Claudia Schmidt concert. Somehow she exudes excitement and humility at the same time; it is a wonder to behold. Her songwriting is flawless, her voice gives you goosebumps, her joyous phrasing makes you shiver with delight, and she is a dazzling instrumentalist.

And speaking of dazzling instrumentalists, there is none finer than the perennially popular and prolific Dean Magraw of the Twin Cities. For many years partnered with mandolinist Peter Ostroushko, Dean, who has played and recorded with



## Jon Dee Graham do not forget freedom records ~ 2014



Review by Kiki Schueler

If you've seen Jon Dee Graham play a show, you know what a force of nature he can be. Do Not Forget does its best to capture that feeling. Composed of fan recordings and radio station appearances, the record spans eighteen years and a good chunk of the US. The bulk of the recordings are from the last couple of years, which isn't surprising given the nonstop tour schedule he's been on during that time. Midwest recording enthusiast Rob Hanning contributes tracks from Missouri and Nebraska, while Mike Fickel, credited as "Head Archivist/Program Manager/Producer" in the liner notes, recorded most of the Texas tracks. It's no shock that most of those are from the legendary Continental Club in Austin, where Graham plays a weekly gig with his band the Fighting Cocks. The Cocks vary from track to track, but the most frequent co-conspirators are Andrew Duplantis (also of Son Volt) on bass, Joey Shuffield on drums and the great Michael Hardwick on guitar. The latter has been with Graham longer than anyone, and you can hear his inspired guitar work even on the earliest tracks featured here, all the way back to "\$100 Bill" from a radio station live set in 1996.

Understandably, the sound quality isn't at the level of professionally recorded live records, but it still sounds re-

markably good for what is in some cases a guy sitting in the audience holding up a microphone. The roughness can be jarring at first, but over the course of eighteen tracks you adjust. Besides, the professional recordings are already out there (if you don't already own all of Graham's studio records, you should get them). A testament to Graham's prowess as a storyteller, the track "Jon Dee Has a Flat Tire" isn't even a song; it's just a story about this one time when Jon Dee had a flat tire. He starts off by saying, "I'm about to tell a really long

story. Those of you who just said "aw" should go smoke a cigarette, you have time." Eventually I may tire of it, but it hasn't gotten old yet. It falls three tracks in on the decidedly mellower first half of the record. The aforementioned opening track, "\$100 Bill," is a sweet meditation on the memory of a father-son trip. "Lucky Moon," another travelogue of sorts, gets allstar backing from Texas alt country band the Gourds at TT the Bears in Cambridge, Mass. The emotional "Swept Away" is even more powerful here, played solo at the Fire Room in Osage Beach, Mo. "The Majesty of Love," also solo from the same tour, is a valentine of the everyday sort, finding beauty in the mundane.

The record turns the corner as the slow-building wonder of "Look Up" gives way to "Beautifully Broken," one of the standout tracks from It's Not as Bad as It Looks. The song takes an honest look at addiction treatment, inside "a level three facility for the drunk and the disturbed, all the drugglers and the strugglers, God's crippled little birds." It's a dark song disguised by an undeniably catchy melody. The highlight of the second half is "October," a frequent set ender

and probably the sexiest riff he's ever written. On this night in Lincoln, Neb., they get an assist from Josh Hoyer of the Shadowboxers on piano. This tune was made for rollicking barroom keys; it's too bad it can't get that treatment all the time. The record closes with a barn-burning version of the title track, previously unreleased. This isn't the most essential Jon Dee Graham record, but it is a sort of audio photo album of a remarkable career. Not to mention something to tide you over in the months between his visits to Madison.

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 *nnnv.madfolk.org*.

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"...a brilliant artist and unique individual. Her voice is distinctive, as is her mastery over the instruments she plays." - Joan Baez



photo by Ben Barnhart



# Tracy Grammer

Friday, January 16 7:00 pm

THE BRINK LOUNGE, 701 E. Washington, Suite 105

Tickets \$15 advance, \$17 day of show

Available at: www.madfolk.org,
Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports



Non-perishable donations of food will be collected for local food banks.



### Me and the Kiki song; Part A

This Whither Zither has stretched itself into a two-part travelog of an armchair journey regarding a haunting song in my life. The second half of this stirring episode will be out right here next month; don't touch that dial.

My wife, Kristi, has had the nickname Kiki for most of her life. Aside: Her mother told me that as a child, Kristi dropped a pair of scissors on her brother's toy train and wrecked it. He ran to their mother and said, "Kiki cut my choo choo ding dong with the owow sha-shap."

This was in Appleton, Wisconsin. A few years later, in the same town, my sister Mary became hooked on a recording of a song called "Kiki" about a woman of that name. As I've mentioned previously, our mother worked for a middle-of-the-road radio station in Appleton and brought home records deemed unsuitable for their audience. This provided us kids with a stream of strange music, such as the Mad Magazine single, "Pimples and Braces," and oddities like "Kiki." I love Mary dearly but she must have played this song a thousand times. The rest of the family considered moving into the garage.

A few years after that, in high school, I began to have interest in the Dadaists and Surrealists. In reading about all those often Paris-based folks, the name "Kiki of Montparnasse" repeatedly surfaced. As I was to find out over the following years in my sporadic reading about that scene, this Kiki -- real name Alice Ernestine Prin -- was a beloved model and muse of many of the artists of the day, an artist in her own right, a cabaret singer, and eventually, for a while, the owner of a Paris cafe she called Cafe Kiki. She was famed photographer Man Ray's primary model, and they were romantically involved for several years. Now and then I found myself wondering if my sister's Kiki song was about this particular Kiki.

My to-be-wife (an Appleton High School classmate) meanwhile was pursuing an education in the languages, especially Spanish and French. She went on to major in these languages in college, and graduated with a major in Spanish and a minor in French.

A few months after Kristi and I started dating in 1979, fourteen years after our high school graduation, she traveled to Paris with her sister and fell in love with the city. In recent years she has visited Paris twice on her own, and has become more fascinated with the place each time.

Recently I found a book on the web that seemed to link our obsessions nicely. It's a large book and expensive new (\$160!), so I bought a used copy for about \$20. A glorious book full of photographs of the scene, it has the name "KiKi's Paris: Artists and Lovers 1900-1930," so you can see how I thought it would interest both of us.

This renewed my interest in the song **Kiki**. I Googled, using a line from the song ("There's nobody like Kiki.") I initially got only one relevant hit: a Japanese site, with the first verse of the lyrics of the song in English and the rest in Japanese. The page also provided some hints where I might look for the song further. The title of the song was listed as "LES LA-VANDIERES DU PORTUGAL<KIKI>," with lyrics by Roger Lucchesi and composition by Andre Popp.

So I Googled "Les Lavandieres du Portugal" (The Portuguese Washerwomen) and got some weird hits. One was a YouTube clip of "Les Lavandieres du Portuguese" being sung (quite nicely!) by Jacqueline Francois (see the URL below). Exact same melody as the "Kiki" song of my sister's girlhood, but with no "Kiki" in the French lyrics. These lyrics, which I found translated poorly elsewhere, are all about Portuguese washerwomen ("Do you know washerwomen, as there are in Portugal? those of the river city of Setubal?...") Another hit was a TV theme show site which listed an instrumental version of this song as being the theme song for a syndicated show called Girl Talk (1962-1970).

This helpful site mentioned that the song was also listed by ASCAP with the Washerwomen title for the *instrumental* but the title "Kiki" as the title for the *vocal version*, with English lyric by songwriter Charles Tobias (author of such other hits as "Don't Sit Under The Apple Tree With Anyone Else But Me"). Adding the Tobias name to my search, I found a site with a free download of the song performed by the Hugo Winterhalter and Son Orchestra, and this time with the Kiki lyrics I was looking for (URL below) Here are the lyrics of this version:

(Refrain, sung twice after each verse:) Kiki! Kiki! There's nobody like Kiki!

She was known as the girl named Kiki She was Venus with lovin' arms She was oo la la la and chic-y That was Kiki with fiery charms Every night in a small cafe Kiki sang to the Casanovas Till [Mo Mo who was underway] Saw Kiki and his eyes went [big] Kiki rolled ['em] around her heart Like roulette rolls around the table And for [Mo Mo] of old Montmartre He would [cry in his wine and sing]

From a farm at the edge of Paris Came a fellow they called Rene All he owned was the clothes he carried

On his head was an old Beret
They both met on the Eiffel Tower
Kiki's heart started doin' tricks
And it opened just like a flower
And she fell like a ton of bricks
On a quaint little farm in France
[There's a ? that's] singin' love songs
And if you drop around by chance
If you do you will hear this song

Next Whither Zither: A third verse; how the song relates to Kiki of Montparnasse; Kiki as a singer; more about Charles Tobias; more links...

For now, have a listen to these:

Les Lavandieres du Portugal:

http://youtu.be/G21HL0ILIq4

Les Lavandières du Portugal, Kiki:

http://darkmp3.ru/slushat-hugo-win terhalter-et-son-orchestre.html

WZ Jan 2015

"...a true artist - she has talent AND the fire of genius." The Boston Globe





## Claudia Schmidt with special guest Dean Magraw

Saturday, February 28 7:00 pm

THE BRINK LOUNGE, 701 E. Washington, Suite 105

Tickets \$15 advance, \$17 day of show

Available at: www.madfolk.org, Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports







## ison 🍱 Tracy Grammer

Friday January 16 -- 7pm The Brink Lounge 701 E. Washington -- \$15 adv, \$17 d.o.s.

## ♪♪ Claudia Schmidt

Saturday February 28 -- 7pm The Brink Lounge 701 E. Washington Ave. Suite 105 \$15 adv, \$17 d.o.s.

Venues

## FOLKLORE VILLAGE...passing it on Folklore Village

3210 Cty Hwy BB Dodgeville, WI folklorevillage.org 608-924-4000

· Sat, January 17 -- Jane Night Social



Wil-Mar Center 953 Jenifer St. wildhoginthewoods. 608-233-5687

## Wild Hog in the Woods

- Mon, January 5 -- Coordinators Meeting -- 7pm
- Fri, January 9 -- Rusty River -- 8pm
- Fri, January 16 -- Wild Hob Belated 36th Birthday Party -- 7pm
- Fri, January 23 -- Christopher Powers -- 8pm
- Fri, January 30 -- Mike Bell and Friends -- 8pm



920-563-9391

### Cafe Carpe

All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise

- Thursday, January 1, Robin Pluer w/ Juli Wood & Chris Hanson -\$40 food music package/ \$25 show only - @6:30pm
- Thursday, January 8, The New Pioneers \$10 @7pm
- Friday, January 16, Lonesome Bill Camplin @8pm
- Saturday, January 17, Steve Forbert \$22.50 adv.
- Saturday, January 24, Jim & Vivian Craig and Fred Campeau & Mitch Thomas - \$10 - @8pm



701 E. Washington thebrinklounge.com 608-661-8599

## The Brink Lounge

- Sat, January 3 Harmonious Wail \$7 @8pm
- Tues, January 6 Daniel Anderson Trio @6pm
- Thurs, January 8 Emerson D'Vortex @7pm
- Sat, January 24 Eugene Smiles Project @8pm
- Sat, January 31 Undercover @8pm



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Monthly - 2nd Sunday of every month, 4 to 6pm

EVP West 3809 Mineral Point Road

Coodinator: Al Wilson cell: 608-572-0634

adwilson@pediatrics.wisc.edu

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- "On the Horizon" w/ Ford Blackwell, Tracy Lawrence, Paul Novak, Gloria Hays & Jason Rowe Weekdays 9:00am-noon
- Mon Global Revolutions (folk from the world over) w/ Dan Talmo & Martin Alvarado
- Tue -- For the Sake of the Song (traditional American folk) w/Jim Schwall
- Wed -- Back to the Country (country music on a theme) w/Bill Malone
- Thur -- Diaspora (folk and international) w/Terry O'
- Fri -- Mud Acres (bluegrass and acoustic) w/Chris

Madison Dance

## Kiki's Righteous House of Music

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.

For full details or to request an invitation, contact Kiki at righteousmusicmgmt@gmail.com

- January 9 @ 8 pm (doors at 7) Bobby Bare Jr's Young Criminals Starvation League
- January 23 @ 9 pm (doors at 8) Paul Cebar Tomorrow Sound -- \$15

## Dave & Anne Host Folk

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.

For full details or to request an invitation, contact Dave & Anne at annedave@chorus.net

- January 10 @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7pm) Beth Kille and The Stellanovas (Mary Gaines and Chris Wagoner) -- \$15 / \$12 < 18
- February 21 @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7pm) Bill Staines -- \$18 / \$15 <18

- African/African-American Dance classes with live drumming -- Sun, 7:00-9:00pm --Metro Dance, 3009 University Ave. -- 255-3677 / 251-4311
- SpiritMoves Ecstatic Dance 2nd and 4th Weds, 7:00-9:00 pm -- The Center for Conscious Living, 849 East Washington Ave. -- \$7 min. donation
- English Country Dance taught -- 1st and 3rd Mon, 7:30-9:30pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 238-9951 or 238-9951
- International Dancing -- Wed and Sun; classes 7:30-8:30pm, request dancing 8:30-11:00pm -- The Crossing, 1127 University Ave. -- 241-3655
- Irish Dancing -- Monthly Ceili and set dance events are posted at celticmadison.org/dance
- Italian Dancing -- Tue, 7:00-9:00pm, no experience or partner necessary -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 838-9403 (Philana)
- Madison Contra Dance Cooperative -- Tue; 7:30 jam band practice, intermediate level dancing 7:45-9:40pm -- \$5 for non-members -- Gates of Heaven, 302 E. Gorham --238-3394 (Steve)
- Morris Dancing -- Wed, 7:00pm -- call for location -- 238-9951
- Scottish Country Dancing -- Sun, 7:00pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 233-2956

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