

Mad Folk News

Claudia Schmidt with special guest Dean Magraw at The Brink Lounge

♪ Claudia Schmidt is coming to town and bringing her newest CD along with her. Claudia is one of the rare performers -- though not so rare in the world of folk music as in some other worlds -- who is becoming more outrageously creative as the years go by. The name of her CD is *New Whirled Order* and in that name alone are clues to the nature of her continuing dynamic output.

"New," because Claudia is constantly reinventing her art, weaving her way between the jazz sound and the folk sound, poetry and spoken word, the 12-string guitar and the dulcimer, solo work and work with other musicians. The facility with which she moves from one of these facets to another is a dazzling aspect of her timelessness.

"Whirled," because her cyclonic onstage energy is legendary. With it, she projects a breathless excitement about everything she focuses on, even if it's not an intrinsically upbeat subject. A YouTube video of Claudia has her introducing her song "Winter Love." She's sitting with her dulcimer. With a sweeping hand gesture that seems to take in the whole room and surrounding county, and in her trademark strong, excited, and good-humored voice, she says:

"So I'm a big fan of winter. I'm a huge winter booster. And I know I'm in the minority. But it's important to speak out. About the plus side of winter. Because, I mean, for instance, one thing, it gets cold, you put on a layer of clothing, it gets a little colder, you put on another layer, and so on, and after a while, we're

all roughly the same shape. So for a little while, [you don't have to think about] that body image thing, you know... And then we get those nice loooong nights and those short days, and I look at that as cosmic permission to underachieve a little bit which all of us badly need... those are just two of the things, then the third thing is, I find that the options for warming up are more fun than the options for cooling off which leads me to this song called *Winter Love*."

Then she quotes a short bit of light verse to further introduce the song, all this with expansive and expressive hand gestures, endearing eye contacts with the audience, and a flashing smile.

The "Order" part of *New Whirled Order* can be thought of as representing Claudia's technical mastery of her vocal stylings, her 12-string guitar, and her dulcimer. Her singing can stand completely on its own which can be appreciated in her a cappella pieces. But her dulcimer and guitar playing is marvelously paced and controlled in ways that almost mystically avoid stepping on her voice while adding a powerful creative counterpoint to her vocal stylings. Not only that, the finger picking on these instruments is a marvel to behold in itself. The whole package taken together is astonishing. The enunciation of the lyrics is impeccable; every word comes through clearly, just like every note of Claudia's confident accompaniment.

And the basic wordplay joke of the title *New Whirled Order* is a perfect example of Claudia's desire to find good humor in even the bleakest of

humanity's moments.

Claudia's songwriting is as strong, as funny, as deep, as touching as ever. For example, this from her *Strong Woman* has a *Bad Day Polka*:

*Your beauty has a tarnished glow,
you're fading like a flower*

*The men think you're invisible,
what's happened to your power*

*The years have flown, but here's
the thing that sticks inside your head*

*Whatever doesn't kill you makes
you wish that you were dead*

...And this from *Make Peace*:

*It will take some courage just to
make these small choices*

*And maybe no one to tell you if
you've lost or won*

*Just the hum of your heart or the
sigh of your lover*

Or the cry of a bird in the rising sun

What will it take to make peace?

*Let's do what it takes to make
peace...*

These lyrics are from songs on the new CD. In a recent article in the *Chicago Sun-Times* by Mark Guarino, Claudia is quoted as saying, about being an older songwriter, that she feels she is better than she used to be: "I can say what I need to say in a more poetic and concise way. It is one of the most satisfying things I can imagine -- when you get those goosebumps of truth. I feel so lucky." Goosebumps of truth! That is what the audience feels when Claudia is on stage.

Claudia Schmidt grew up in Michigan and has lived in Chicago, Wisconsin

and Minnesota. She has put out nearly twenty albums of folk, blues, jazz, and spoken word, and has appeared many times on A Prairie Home Companion (Keillor says, "When Claudia sings a song, it stays sung."). She has scored the music for a number of plays, a documentary, and starred in a musical about the Edmund Fitzgerald.

Continuing in a tradition of playing with other fabulous musicians, she is bringing with her to the stage Dean Magraw, well-known twin cities guitar genius. The perennially popular and prolific Prairie Home Companion regular is one of a handful of musicians who can keep up with Claudia's wide range of styles and emotions. This will be a night to remember.


Feb. 28 (Sat), 2015

7:00 pm
(Doors at 6:30pm)
The Brink Lounge
701 E. Washington Ave. Ste 105
Madison, WI 53701
608-661-8599

\$15 in advance
\$17 day of show

<http://claudiaschmidt-madfolk.brownpapertickets.com/>

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:

• Orange Tree Imports, 1721 Monroe Street

• Spruce Tree Music, 851 East Johnson


Purchase tickets ONLINE for Mad Folk concerts via Brown Paper Tickets (with \$1.62 service charge):

<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.

Tret Fure Returns to Madison Stage

By Darcy Greder

 Returning to Madison in March, Tret Fure brings four decades of experience to the stage and immeasurable miles of touring that gives gravitas to her status as a modern day troubadour. Her discography includes fourteen releases spanning forty years in a life dedicated to making good music in every aspect of music making. Fure is a talented musician whose guitar work is varied and proficient. Her confident instrumentation includes acoustic and electric guitars as well as the banjo, mandolin and elbow. She has a warm and expressive alto voice that creates an intimacy to her songs--a gifted songwriter who knows her way around a hook, Fure is adept at sharing the personal that also reflects the universal and avoids confessional self-indulgence. Love and loss are themes, but Fure's music goes beyond the polemics of the heart to look at the natural world, political realities and challenge for connection within families, relationships and the challenge that growing older presents. And while Fure has been a recognized talent within the industry for years, she has no interest in being tied to past efforts or accolades. She is able to deftly give certain legacies their due while continuing to grow as a musician gently

encouraging older listeners to come along on her evolving musical journey while actively inviting younger ones to come on in.

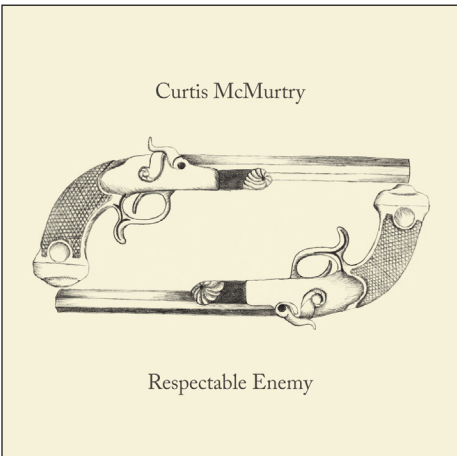
The Cris and Tret years were hallmarked by success within the genre and near-cult status as a committed couple at a time when there was little societal recognition or support for same sex couples. Their lives and music brought hope for a generation of women and while notable on a cultural level, it would do them a disservice to omit that the duo produced music that was textured hitting high notes musically and artistically. Though Williamson was always in the forefront--it was Fure's skills as an instrumentalist, writer, arranger and producer that pushed their sound beyond Williamson's more folky confines. When the personal break-up lead inevitably to the end of the musical partnership, Fure was left to heal her heart and to recreate her identity as a solo artist against the backlash of many fans who laid the blame of the demise of the couple on Fure. She also emerged free to independently express herself as an artist, true to her muse and creative spirit.

Given her stature within Women's Music, it is perhaps appropriate that Tret Fure

comes to town in March, during Women's History Month--but the universal appeal of her evocative songwriting coupled with her skilled instrumentations highlighted by her acoustic guitar mastery nuanced with skilled finger-style picking more than broadens her appeal. Fure has released six acoustic CDs on her own label and has been recognized for her contributions to Women's Music along with broader songwriting honors. When off the road, Fure teaches guitar and songwriting along with serving as Vice President of Local 1000, the Traveling Musicians Association which works to secure pensions and other benefits for touring musicians. Performing at the Brink Lounge on March 13, Fure returns to Madison with new music and old favorites in a warm and engaging performance supported by her attention to the sonic experience. Doors open at 6:30pm, and the show goes up at 7:00 pm.

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.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Madison-Folk-Music-Society/34497984835>



Review by Kiki Schueler

Curtis McMurry has a pretty imposing family tree. His grandfather is Larry McMurry, best-selling author of *Lonesome Dove* and *Terms of Endearment*, while his father, James, has been a critical favorite on the Texas music scene for over twenty-five years. They cast a long shadow, but the young man (just 24) manages to crawl into the light on *Respectable Enemy*, channeling their story- and song-writing talents on a record of “songs about villains who think they’re victims.” Genetics is a funny thing—while it often leads offspring down the same career path as their parents, it seldom gives them the same voice to do it with. For every Lennon son, there’s a Teddy Thompson, who sounds nothing like his distinctively voiced father, Richard, or a Rufus Wainwright, who chose piano grandeur over his father’s guitar folk. While McMurry lists his father and other Austin notables Matt the Electrician and Jon Dee Graham as influences, his hypnotic croon invokes yet another Texan. There’s more than a little Alejandro Escovedo in both his writing and his delivery—he never gets too excited, even when he knows he’s just delivered a line that will keep rattling around in your head until you puzzle it out.

The song “Chaplinesque” late in the record contains more than a few of these enigmas. The best of these is the album-title-containing chorus, a stream of consciousness where one thought tumbles into the next without pause, or even a

period. “What a respectable enemy you turned out to be, and here I thought you were just a bad friend,” he mulls, “though none of us chose to be cruel I suppose, when we have to we all learn to bend.” Cellist Diana Burgess accompanies him on vocals, though instead of a duet, she sings like she just happens to be thinking the same thing. “Foxhole” pulls off the nifty trick of being metaphorical and literal about love and war. “I saw you shining like a lighter in a foxhole and without delay I put you in my sights,” the story opens, “for many years I watched you dancing in my crosshairs but I couldn’t pull the trigger for my life.” He does, of course, and love blooms, but in the next verse he is called to serve his country. “And I went because I’d never been away.” He returns damaged and unable to love (PTSD I suppose) and eventually feels he has no choice but to leave, permanently. “So don’t go searching for my body in the cattails, just be happy that I’ve found a place to rest.”

There’s no shortage of relationships gone wrong here. Opening track “Ghost in my Bed” refers to a lover that’s been lost, only to be replaced with another, “she’s nothing like you but she loves me... sometimes it’s all I can do to remember her name.” I think I can see where he came up with the villains/victims tag line. “Down to the Wire” catalogs a physically as well as mentally abusive pair. Producer Will Sexton delivers an equally wicked electric guitar on the tune, channeling Graham’s rocker “October” on the opening licks. Sexton isn’t the only Austinite who contributes his talents to the record, though at 44 he’s likely the elder statesman in a cast that also includes former prodigy Warren Hood (he’s all of 31 now). Hood’s moving violin haunts these songs just like the ghosts these tales of hurt and heartbreak conjure.

A polished but not perfect effort,

“Lonely in the Beehive” suffers from affected vocals, while the occasional awkward phrasing or poor word choice can jolt you out of the moment. But those rough edges are sure to be smoothed with time. Seems he knows that too. “Don’t you see, we never grow up, we only get better behaved,” he observes in “Chaplinesque.” *Respectable Enemy* is an impressive debut from an artist who knows he better have more than just his name to offer.

Curtis McMurry appears at Kiki’s House of Righteous Music on February 27.

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.

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Me and the Kiki song, Part B

Now where was I? This is part B of a Google journey, about a song that has haunted me since boyhood. Sometimes you have to stop and ogle those old familiar songs that swim just below the surface of your life, breaching like whales now and then: the folk songs of your own personal mythology.

To summarize last month's column: My wife's nickname is Kiki; she is a francophile. My sister Mary, when we were kids, got hooked on a strange song called "Kiki." In high school I became interested in the artists of 1920's Paris. The name "Kiki of Montparnasse" kept coming up. Some of the song lyrics of my sister's song fit with the life of this Parisian Kiki, who was a model and lover for many artists, an artist herself, a charismatic and erotic focus of the artistic enclave of the time, and a cabaret singer. Recently I found a coffee table book called *KiKi's Paris* -- an exciting title for both me and my wife for reasons noted -- full of photographs of the scene and additional information about Kiki of Montparnasse (real name: Alice Prin). I also found, via Google, a recording of Kiki herself, singing six songs.

I covered a bit more about the song and included two verses, and promised a third verse this month. The third verse is not part of the version of the song I linked to last month, but since then, I have found the version idolized by my sister. Sung by Betty Clooney, sister of Rosemary Clooney, as of this writing is on YouTube (see link at end). Clooney sings the verse my sister and I remember that was not on the Winterhalter recording I quoted in the last WZ:

Then from Deauville a count named Louie

With a glint in his one good eye
He just flipped when he looked at Kiki
And he got on one knee and cried

I've got franks in the banks for you
And a castle in old Bordeaux
And remember at 82

Louie didn't have far to go

Merci merci beaucoup no no
Said Kiki to Louie and Mo Mo
But they both wouldn't take no no
It was Kiki they wanted so

Kiki, Kiki, there's nobody like Kiki

Though I haven't nailed down "Rene," "Louie," or the one-eyed count, it would be mighty strange if this song were NOT about Kiki of Montparnasse, as she died in 1953, and Clooney's recording -- lyrics by Charles Tobias -- was released in 1955. It mentions her cabaret singing, her "fiery charms," her being "Venus with loving arms," referring to the Venus de Milo statue whose pose was mimicked closely by Kiki in one of the many art photos taken of her by Man Ray.

Anyway, so not only did I find this recording, but I located a copy of Kiki's memoirs -- with the Venus de Milo-like pose on the cover -- written mostly in the 20s. The little book has a weird intro by Hemingway, said to be the only introduction he ever wrote. It's in the Madison Public Library, if you're in the area and interested. The book was banned for many years, though these days it only seems charmingly suggestive in places.

I also found a RECORDING of Kiki singing, accompanied by an accordion. As of this writing, this is available on Amazon as an mp3 album, or as individual tracks (see footnote). She's a good singer, and, with the accordion accompaniment, reminds me of a subdued Edith Piaf, who was fourteen years younger than Kiki. I wonder if they ever met...

So. This may all have seemed a little tedious, I'm afraid, but two things about the exercise have struck me.

One, how lucky we are to have the internet; that with meager research skills, it is easy to find a digital recording of this obscure song, to find a used copy of a glorious book about the song's subject and her environment, to find her actual memoirs in the local library via a digital library catalog, and then to locate and download tracks of the woman herself singing, to locate and view dozens of her artworks and hundreds of portraits of her by scads of artists of almost a hundred years ago, to find articles about her in old magazines and newspapers online, to view footage of Kiki in vari-

ous surrealistic films of the day, why, it's absurdly wonderful to a geezer like me who has thumbed through many a paper card catalog of yore.

The second but more diffuse point is how folk music, in my mind, has much to do with the songs that haunt us throughout our lives, that butt in conveniently as musical answers to mundane daily questions, that bubble up for no good reason in the shower or on a walk, that trigger odd memories of days gone by or places we've been, that are, in other words, lodged in our craw ready to spring forth appropriately at a moment's notice, sometimes welcome, sometimes not. I guess by that definition any music could be thought of as folk music, which renders the term pretty useless, I suppose. Ah well.

Incidentally, for anyone interested in these wild and creative years in Paris in the first third of the 1900s, the book *KiKi's Paris*, subtitled "Artists and Lovers 1900-1930," by Kluver and Martin, is truly spectacular.

Betty Clooney singing Kiki:
<http://youtu.be/M83ZqCdLiTE>

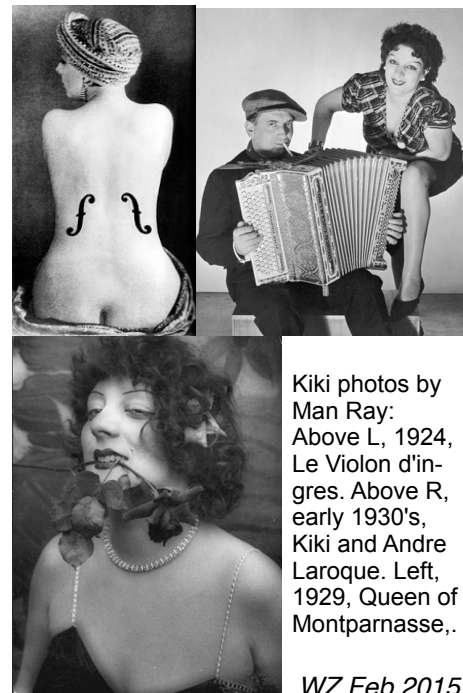
Kiki singing: Go to Amazon.com and search for "Kiki Chante"

Book: *Kiki's Memoirs*, edited by Billy Kluver and Julie Martin, Ecco Press

Book: *Kiki's Paris*, by the same Kluver and Martin, Harry N. Abrams Inc., pub.

Kiki in film: Go to YouTube and search for "Alice Prin"

Artwork OF Kiki and artwork BY Kiki: search Google Images for "Alice Prin."



Kiki photos by Man Ray:
Above L, 1924, *Le Violon d'ingres*. Above R, early 1930's, Kiki and Andre Laroque. Left, 1929, *Queen of Montparnasse*.

WZ Feb 2015

“...a true artist – she has talent AND the fire of genius.” *The Boston Globe*



**Madison Folk Music
Society PRESENTS**

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



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

The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

February 2015

Mad Folk Events



Claudia Schmidt

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



Tret Fure

Friday March 13 -- 7pm
The Brink Lounge 701 E. Washington Ave. Suite 105
\$15 adv, \$17 d.o.s.



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

The Brink Lounge

- Tue, February 3, Daniel Anderson Trio - @6:30pm
- Wed, February 18, Aaron Williams and the Hoodoo - @8pm

Venues

FOLKLORE VILLAGE ...passing it on

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

Folklore Village

- Tue, February 3 -- Open Mic - @7pm
- Wed, February 4 -- Memory Café - @12:30pm
- Sat, February 7 -- Healthy Hoe Down Dance - @6:30pm
- Fri, February 27 -- Beverly Smith & John Grimm In Concert - @7pm
- Tue, March 3 -- Open Mic - @7pm



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

Wild Hog in the Woods

- Friday, February 6, Jeff Larsen - @8pm
- Friday, February 13, Eddie Danger - @8pm
- Friday, February 20, Stephen Lee Rich - @8pm
- Friday, February 27, Bobby Bullet - @8pm
- Saturday, March 28, Sound Setup and Mixing Workshop - Sign up online.



18 S. Water St.
Ft. Atkinson, WI
cafecarpe.com
920-563-9391

Cafe Carpe

All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise

- Friday, February 6, Dan Navarro - \$15 adv. - @8pm
- Saturday, February 7, The Pines - \$15
- Thursday, February 12, The New Pioneers - @7pm
- Friday, February 13, Bill Camplin Band - \$10
- Saturday, February 14, LJ Booth / Chris Kokesh
- Friday, February 27, Ernie Hendrickson - @8pm

Irish Cultural & Heritage Center
2133 W Wisconsin Ave
Milwaukee, WI -- ichc.net
414-345-8800

- Saturday, February 7, Norah Rendell - 7:30pm - \$21 adv / \$25 d.o.s. - \$10 for students w/ ID

Gigs

Dave & Anne Host Folk

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.

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

- February 21st @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7) Bill Staines -- \$18 / \$15 under 18
- April 17th @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7) Dave McGraw and Mandy Fer -- \$18 / \$15 under 18

Kiki's Righteous House of Music

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.

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

- February 27th @ 9 pm (doors at 8) Curtis McMurtry -- \$8

Misc

Old Time Jam

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

EVP West 3809 Mineral Point Road

Coodinator: Al Wilson

cell: 608-572-0634

afwilson@pediatrics.wisc.edu

Madison Ukulele Club-- Singalongs 1st and 3rd Weds 7:00-9:00pm
- call for location- 246-8205 (Andrew)

Cajun jam held every first Sunday 2 p.m.-4 p.m. At Cargo Coffee 750 East Washington Ave, Madison We welcome all levels of experience with instruments and Cajun music.

Call Karen at 608-238-6039 for more info. www.prairiebayoucajun.com

On the Air



wpr.org

Simply Folk on Wisconsin Public Radio w/ Stephanie Elkins, Host

Sun 5:00-8:00pm

Concerts recorded in Wisconsin, music and dance of people the world over. For playlists, calendars, station listings, and more, visit www.wpr.org/simplyfolk.



wort-fm.org

WORT 89.9 FM community radio

Sun -- 3:00-5:00pm

• "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 Powers

Madison Dance

• 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

FOLKLORE VILLAGE *...passing it on*



Friday February 27th

From the mountains of North Georgia and with one of the most respected guitar players of old-time music today:

**Beverly Smith &
John Grimm**

\$15.00 7:00 Doors, 7:30 Concert

An intimate concert of country duets and both raucous and haunting fiddle/banjo tunes.

“they display an ease that sounds nothing but genuine”

Tickets available at www.folklorevillage.com

Class B Beverages allowed. 3210 Dodgeville, WI

This concert is supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment of the Arts

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Creativity. Culture. Community. Commerce.



Women's music legend. She offers us her open heart ...it is hard not to reach in and find a song that speaks directly to you.



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Tret Fure

Friday, March 13

7:00 pm

THE BRINK LOUNGE, 701 E. Washington, Suite 105

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Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports



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Is this your last copy of *Mad Folk News*?

There are two ways to renew your **tax-deductible** membership

Way #1 – online

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Way #2 – unplugged

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P.O. Box 665, Madison, WI 53701
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Renew your membership today at
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Choose membership category:

Senior	\$8	_____
Student	\$10	_____
Regular	\$12	_____
Family	\$15	_____
Friend	\$25	_____
Contributing	\$50	_____
Life	\$500	_____
Scholarship fund donation (optional)	\$	_____
Total	\$	_____

GOING GREEN - Send my newsletters electronically by email

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