

# MadFolk News

## Special MadFolk Summer Concert Event

### Brother Sun w/ special guest Tom Prasada-Rao

♪ Think of it as a mini folk festival, right here in Madison: On a Thursday night in the heart of summer, four outstanding musicians will take the stage at the Brink Lounge to warm up for their weekend performances at the Shawano Folk Festival. The super folk trio Brother Sun, consisting of Greg Greenway, Joe Jencks, and Pat Wictor, will be joined by guest Tom Prasada-Rao for a special MadFolk summer event.

#### Brother Sun: Three Rich Voices Blended into Powerful Male Harmonies

The members of Brother Sun first played together at a conference in summer 2009. Many listeners in attendance were wowed by the powerful blending of voices on stage and suggested the three form a trio. The trio of Brother Sun was officially formed in spring 2010.

The individual members of Brother Sun are all extremely talented and accomplished nationally touring singer-songwriters with many solo albums to their credit, but the harmonizing trio of

Brother Sun has its own unique sound. The trio's musical style ranges from folk, Americana, and pop, to blues, jazz, and rock. The blended voices of Greenway (from Boston), Jencks (from Chicago), and Wictor (from New York) are accompanied by the sounds of acoustic and slide guitars, piano, ukulele, and bouzouki. Together, Brother Sun is "an explosion of musical diversity and harmony, in the finest of male singing traditions."

Brother Sun's diverse musical repertoire appeals to fans of both contemporary and traditional music. They have played main-stage performances with standing ovations at folk festivals across the U.S. and Canada, including Ker-ville, Falcon Ridge, Philadelphia, Old Songs, and Vancouver Island. Their live performances are marked by outstanding songwriting, ethereal harmonies, and off-the-cuff humor.

Brother Sun released their first self-titled album in 2011. The album debuted at #2 on the Folk DJ Chart and was named the #8 album of 2011 on FOLK-DJ. In addition, Brother Sun made the "Best of 2011" and "Best of 2012" lists for over a dozen radio stations in the U.S.

After two years of nationwide touring, Brother Sun released their second album, *Some Part of the Truth*, to great acclaim. *Some Part of the Truth* is cinematic in its sweep, with each song playing out

like a short film. The music takes listeners on an evocative and vivid journey through America's cities and heartlands, where unsung heroes struggle and sometimes win the daily battles of life and love.

*Some Part of The Truth* debuted at #1 on the Folk-DJ Chart, where it remained for two months. The album received strong radio airplay for the entire year, ending as the #1 CD on the chart for all of 2013. The album also rose to #2 on Sirius XM's Americana Chart. The lead track, "Lady of the Harbor," was the #1 song on Folk-DJ for 2013; "In the Name of Love" was #5, and four more Brother Sun songs landed in the top 50.



#### Tom Prasada-Rao: Soulful Vocals and Well-Crafted Lyrics

Also joining MadFolk's mini folk festival will be the extraordinary singer-songwriter and musician Tom Prasada-Rao. After a long hiatus from touring in which he spent his time teaching and producing music, "TPR" has returned to the stage to

continued from frontpage

perform his deeply moving and melodic songs. Prasada-Rao blends pop, R&B, and world music influences into soulful vocals and well-crafted lyrics.

Born in Ethiopia to two Indian parents, Prasada-Rao grew up in Washington, D.C. He studied violin and piano early on, and switched to guitar while in high school. After attending college in England and India, Prasada-Rao returned to the Washington, D.C. area and played with two local bands, Mantle and Traveler's Crossroads.

Throughout the 1990s, TPR was a popular performer in the Washington D.C. area and at folk festivals across the U.S. The winner of a 1994 WAMMIE (Washington Area Music Association) award as "Best Male Vocalist - Folk Traditional," Prasada-Rao was called by Billboard magazine, "the most compelling presence to emerge in the singer-songwriter genre."

Prasada-Rao was also a winner of the 1993 "New Folks" competition at the Ker-

ville Folk Festival in Texas. Together with two other winners, Tom Kimmel and Michael Lille, Prasada-Rao formed a "singer-songwriter supergroup," The Sherpas, that periodically toured throughout the United States.

From 2000 to 2007, Prasada-Rao was the songwriting instructor at the University of Virginia's Young Writer's Workshops, a program that was modeled after The University of Iowa's Writer's Workshop. Over the years, Prasada-Rao also served on the teaching staff at The Swannanoa Gathering, Summer Songs, Lamb's Retreat, and the Kerrville, Sister's, and Rocky Mountain Song Schools, as well as at Kerrville's Boys & Girls Music Camp.

In fall 2007, Prasada-Rao quit touring to produce records, raise two step-daughters, and teach music at White Rock Montessori in Dallas. He recently began touring again after being featured on the documentary television series Troubadour Texas.

## 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](http://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.

## Sugar Maple Festival Aug. 14-15

Only one month away, organizers have announced the lineup for the 2015 Sugar Maple Traditional Music Festival to be held August 14 & 15 at Lake Farm County Park in Madison, WI. In its 12th year, the Sugar Maple Festival continues to present a diverse lineup. This year's artists include performers Jesse Lége, Kelli Jones-Savoy and Joel Savoy; The Hot Seats; The Lonesome Aces; The Dead Horses; Hannah Aldridge, and Bluegrass guitarist Bryan Sutton.

Attending the Festival is more than just performances; guests take part in live workshops at the Roots & Rea-

son stage as well as informal jam sessions to join in (bring your string instrument!) or just listen. On Saturday we will once again feature the Wild Rumpus Circus and performer David Landau for the young folksters.

Rustic camping is also available at Lake Farm Park — the music historically continues far into the night at the campfire where all ages come together for shared songs and stories. Fest-campers will start Saturday with continued song before the gates open at our most recent tradition of the Saturday morning Bloody Mary jam. Available for purchase will be

tasty brews from our sponsor Tyrana Brewing, and food from several area mobile carts including for special dietary restrictions

The Four Lakes Traditional Music Collective is a non-profit organization supporting the art of traditional music and dance throughout the greater Madison community. We provide educational and performance opportunities that bring together people of all ages to celebrate diverse musical traditions. Tickets are available at their website [sugarmaplefest.org](http://sugarmaplefest.org), or at select ticket locations in Madison.

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

In the folk music world, and in music in general, there's an abundance of family bands. The husband-wife team is everywhere you look (well, at least until it ends badly). Sibling duos, trios, or more have the advantage of the "blood harmony," which despite a lack of scientific evidence is a palpable sound in groups from the Everly Brothers to the Minneapolis-based Cactus Blossoms, who have become Madison favorites. There are a handful of father-daughter line-ups, but the mother-son combo is much less common. In fact, the aptly named Madisen Ward and the Mama Bear might just be the first I've run across. Their unlikely setup might be part of the initial buzz that took them from Kansas City coffeehouses to the Letterman show in a matter of months, but their debut release, *Skeleton Crew*, justifies the attention. Ward's powerful voice propels these instantly memorable songs with inspired backing vocals from Mama Bear (also known as Ruth Ward). The production from Jim Abbiss (a Brit best known for working with Arctic Monkeys and Adele) is simple and lean; the Wards' twin guitar work provides the skeleton while simple snare and the occasional cello or violin flesh it out.

The Wards couldn't feel more

genuine—nothing about *Skeleton Crew* even hints gimmick. You can easily picture them working these songs out around their kitchen table, which apparently they did. Both the 26-year-old and the 63-year-old started playing in their teens, and Ruth was delighted when the youngest of her three sons decided to follow in her footsteps. And that happiness shows in toe-tappers like "Silent Movies" and "Yellow Taxi." The former contains some of the record's most smile-inducing lyrics, "Silent movies make more money, so how 'bout we make more money, girl? When you dance they call you funny, so how 'bout we get real funny, girl?" It's jangly, bouncy, and refreshingly intoxicating. The latter tells the story of a homeless man, a musician, sleeping in a taxi, dreaming of riding in the backseat. Unable to get by on what he earns by busking in the street, he bemoans, "A few licks I can play, now it's time to pay, but everybody's cheap and I'm sleeping in my taxi today." Its infectious melody lightens what could have been a depressing tale.

One of the best moments on the record comes on the true duet "Whole Lotta Problems" as Ruth answers Madisen's laments with some motherly advice, though I'm guessing she doesn't approve. "I bought her some flowers," he sings. "She don't need your petals," Mama Bear answers. "The car that I bought her..." "It's just a piece of metal." "I stole her some diamonds..." "She don't want a rebel." Though by far the best answer she gives is "Why don't you listen?" when he says "She's a thinker." He should

have realized by now that mother knows best. On the epic war ballad "Fight On," Mama gets a chance to step to the front, opening the song with the compelling line "I can hear your voice calling me amongst the crowd," and she sounds like an angel.

The sexagenarian Ruth should be thinking about retiring, but they've just got started. "How 'bout we just sing forever?" they ask in "Silent Movies." Let's hope they do.

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](mailto:madfolk@charter.net). Learn about concerts, membership, scholarships, and volunteer opportunities at [www.madfolk.org](http://www.madfolk.org).

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“...an explosion of musical diversity and harmony,  
in the finest of male singing traditions.”



**Madison Folk Music  
Society PRESENTS**



# Brother Sun

with special guest Tom Prasada Rao

**Thursday, August 6**

**7:00 pm**

**THE BRINK LOUNGE, 701 E. Washington, Suite 105**

Tickets \$15 advance, \$18 day of show

Available at: [www.madfolk.org](http://www.madfolk.org),

Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports



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



**LONG-SONG SELLER**

"Three yards a penny!  
 Three yards a penny!  
 Beautiful songs!  
 Newest songs!  
 Popular songs!  
 Three yards a penny!  
 Songs, songs, songs!"

And so begins the title section of a great collection of writings available for free download on the Project Gutenberg site. In London in the 1800s, the streets must have been teeming with street-sellers and buskers of one kind or another. This book contains hundreds of selected examples of verse and prose written to be

sold as print, or sung, or read aloud, as a sort of precursor to the titillating pop craziness of info presentation on the internet. The title pages continue:

**CURIOSITIES  
 OF  
 STREET LITERATURE:**

Comprising  
 "COCKS," or "CATCHPENNIES"

A Large and Curious Assortment of  
 STREET-DROLLERIES, SQUIBS,  
 HISTORIES, COMIC TALES IN  
 PROSE AND VERSE

Broadsides on the Royal Family,  
 Political Litanies, Dialogues,  
 Catechisms, Acts of Parliament, Street  
 Political Papers

And so forth. According to the introduction, this business was pretty intense and frantic, with a few prominent publishers of "...productions written expressly for the amusement of the lower orders by street-authors." Apparently these "street-authors" would scramble to write a prose piece or a song or verse and would often rush of to sell their work to the publishers, who also had a staff of in-house writers cranking out much the same. Street venders would buy these productions and sell them as "penny broadsides." There were also poets who sang their own verses and, I assume, sold copies of the lyrics to make ends meet. Singer-songwriters, in today's lingo.

The introduction of this 1871 book includes a long quote from an 1861 article on the subject, which contains a touching take on the almost always anonymous works, giving a nod to the nameless (and dirt poor) street authors responsible for them:

*...we must be thankful...to be able to embalm and hand down to posterity a name here and there... In answer to our inquiries in this matter, generally we have been told, 'Oh, anybody writes them' and with that answer we have had to rest satisfied. But...we walk about the streets...peering into the faces...and saying to ourselves, "That man may be a writer of ballads."*

Another interesting note in the same article refers to the confines put upon

the authors by the same sort of considerations of marketing alive today:

*It must be borne in mind that the street-author is closely restricted in the quality of his effusions. It must be such that the patterers approve, as the chanters can chant, the ballad singers sing, and--above all, such as the street buyers will buy.*

Some of the titles: *Shocking Rape and Murder of Two Lovers. Dreadful Catastrophe. Railroad to Hell. Teasing Made Easy for the Ladies. Sailor Jack and the Queen. The Windham Lunacy Case.*

There is a whole section on what they call "Gallows" Literature of the Streets: *Execution of Five Unfortunate Sailors.*

Often there is a prose piece of wild news, followed by a long verse describing the same incident.

My favorite pieces are the comic and nonsense bits, which often remind me of Beatles lyrics for some reason. Here's part of something called:

**BATTLE OF PEA SOUP  
 Fought on the FIFTY-TWELFTH DAY  
 OF ROTTONSTICKS**

*This memorable battle took place on the Ocean of Sprats, situated on the Continent of Green Peas, within half a mile of a Donkey; where Bobby the Ratcatcher swallowed the Monument, and the poor old soldier was killed by being drowned in a bog of buttermilk: such an unseasonable battle was never known before...*

*Arthur Mc Kelly's nose was knocked into eighteen thousand pieces and converted into a cheese knife, and sold in Plum Pudding Court, going up to Christmas on the top side of little Bobby the Ratcatcher...*

I highly recommend downloading this peculiar book, which is free and available in Kindle, ePub, and text versions, and is also readable online. Go to [gutenberg.org](http://gutenberg.org) and search for "Curiosities of Street Literature," or head directly to:

[www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/49128](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/49128)

What fun!

# The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

August 2015

## Mad Folk Events



### Brother Sun w/ Tom Rasada Rao

Thursday August 6 -- 7pm  
The Brink Lounge 701 E. Washington Ave. Suite 105  
\$15 adv, \$18 d.o.s.

KG & The Ranger and the Family Sidekicks  
Sunday, August 23 - 7:30pm  
Rural Musicians Forum "Music in the Fields"  
Wyoming Valley School Cultural Center, 6306 Sate Hwy 23,  
Spring Green, WI - free will donation.  
info: <http://ruralmusiciansforum.org> or 414-239-7952

## Venues

### FOLKLORE VILLAGE ...passing it on

3210 Cty Hwy BB  
Dodgeville, WI  
[folklorevillage.org](http://folklorevillage.org)  
608-924-4000

### Folklore Village

- Tue, August 4 -- Open Mic - @7pm
- Wed, August 5 -- Memory Cafe - @1pm
- Sat, August 8 -- Saturday Night Ice Cream Social w/ Callers Deborah Hyland & Greg Winz



18 S. Water St.  
Ft. Atkinson, WI  
[cafecarpe.com](http://cafecarpe.com)  
920-563-9391

### Cafe Carpe

All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise

- Saturday, August 1, Nicholas Kehoe & Johnny Kermott - \$5
- Friday, August 7, Marianne Flemming - \$8
- Saturday, August 8, Count This Penny / Jill and the Jax - \$10 adv.
- Thursday, August 13, The New Pioneers - @7pm - \$10
- Friday, August 14, Matthew Francis Andersen / Josh Harty
- Saturday, August 15, Bill Staines - \$15
- Friday, August 21, Bill Camplin Band in Fraction - \$10
- Friday, August 28, Dave Ramont

### Mother Fool's

- Fri, August 7, Merideth Axelrod - 8pm - \$6

Mother Fool's  
Coffeehouse  
1101 Williamson St.  
[motherfools.com](http://motherfools.com)  
608-259-1030

## Gigs

### Dave & Anne Host Folk

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.

For full details or to request an invitation, contact Dave & Anne at [annedave@chorus.net](mailto:annedave@chorus.net)

- August 5th @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7) Claudia Schmidt & Sally Rogers-- \$18 / \$17 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](mailto:righteousmusicgmt@gmail.com)

- September 5th @ 9 pm (doors at 8) Sam Llanas -- \$20
- September 8th @ 8 pm (doors at 7) Tommy Keene & Band -- \$15
- September 9th @ 8 pm (doors at 7) Chuck Prophet -- \$20
- September 23rd @ 8 pm (doors at 7) The Figgs -- \$15
- September 25th @ 9 pm (doors at 8) Erin McKeown -- \$30

### The Home of Mike & Carol

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.

For full details or to request an invitation, contact Mike at [maddog-210@charter.net](mailto:maddog-210@charter.net)

- August 12th @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7) Carolyn Carter -- \$15

### Tracy Jane Comer & Friends

Friday, August 14 - 8:00pm - The Brink Lounge

Dave Schindele will open the show.

701 E. Washington, Madison - No Cover!

### Goitse

Saturday, August 22 - 7:30pm - McCluskey's ~ Drea's Bar  
S7863 Hwy. G, Loreto Ridge (Hillpoint), WI  
\$20 adv / \$25 d.o.s.

## Misc

### Old Time Jam

Monthly - 3rd Sunday of every month, 4 to 6pm

EVP West 3809 Mineral Point Road

Coodinator: Al Wilson

cell: 608-572-0634

[adwilson@pediatrics.wisc.edu](mailto:adwilson@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](http://www.prairiebayoucajun.com)

## On the Air



[wpr.org](http://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](http://www.wpr.org/simplyfolk).



[wort-fm.org](http://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 (contemporary singer-songwriters) 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](http://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

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

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

## Way #1 – online

Visit [www.madfolk.org](http://www.madfolk.org) and click on "Join MFMS"

## Way #2 – unplugged

Complete, clip, and mail this form

Madison Folk Music Society  
P.O. Box 665, Madison, WI 53701  
Address Service Requested

.....  
.....  
Renew your membership today at  
[www.madfolk.org](http://www.madfolk.org)

Nonprofit Org  
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Madison, WI  
Permit No. 2278

### Madison Folk Music Society

join  renew

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

Send your check, payable to MFMS to: Mad Folk c/o  
Tracy Comer, P.O. Box 930446 Verona, WI 53593-0446