



# A DIFFERENT STRUMMER

## SPECIAL GUEST AT 17TH ANNUAL CENTRAL OHIO FOLK FESTIVAL

### SCOTT ALARIK *Interview by Bill Cohen*

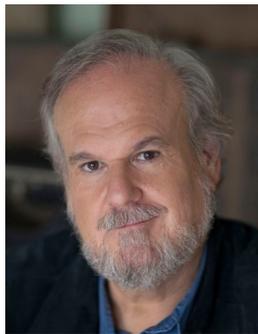
**AT THIS YEAR'S CENTRAL OHIO FOLK FESTIVAL, WE WANT TO OFFER A SPECIAL WELCOME TO AUTHOR, JOURNALIST AND SINGER/SONGWRITER: SCOTT ALARIK.**

For the past 25 years, Scott Alarik has been arguably the most prolific and influential folk music writer in the country. He covered folk for the Boston Globe, contributed regularly to public radio, including seven years as correspondent for the national news show Here and Now, and wrote for many national magazines, including Sing Out, Billboard, and Performing Songwriter. He has recently released his first novel, Revival: A Folk Music Novel. Scott is also a singer/songwriter and has produced 2 CD's.

**Bill Cohen:** *You've had such a long and wide-ranging career in folk music – as a singer, reporter, columnist, lecturer, and*

*author. How did you first fall in love with folk music?*

**Scott:** My mother sang folk songs, mostly British ballads and cowboy songs. I saw them all as my mom's songs, our family songs. After a trip to New York City, she brought home Joan Baez's first two albums. I can remember thinking how odd it was that this strange Baez woman knew so many of my mom's songs. Of our songs. That was a real light-bulb moment



*See Alarik- page 2*

## WHAT IS FOLK MUSIC?

FROM THE NEW ENGLAND FOLK ALMANAC

*by Scott Alarik*

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- Something for Everybody at 2013 Folk Festival - pg. 2
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**PETE SEEGER, ANI DIFRANCO, DAR WILLIAMS, TOM PAXTON, JACK HARDY, LUI COLLINS,, FOLK RADIO HOST DICK PLEASANTS, CONCERT PRODUCER ELLEN FRIEDMAN, SCOTT ALARIK.**

From 1991-1997, I had the pleasure of editing and writing for an odd, properly eccentric little bimonthly paper called the New England Folk Almanac. Hands down, the most fun I had was compiling a segment for every issue called "The Question." I wanted to get right at the

*See What is Folk Music - page 6*

## A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO NANCY CLINE-BAILEY (1934 - 2013)



*When Nancy Cline Bailey died on April 7th after a battle with cancer, it left a big hole in the Columbus Folk Music Society and a big hole in our hearts.*

*Nancy exemplified the word "leader." She did it in several ways – by honestly speaking her mind, by closely listening to the thoughts of others, by being passionate about folk music and by working tirelessly, giving her time and energy to promote our group.*

*See Nancy Cline-Bailey - page 2*

## THE CENTRAL OHIO FOLK FESTIVAL and THE METRO PARKS

Interview by D. Boston

*It seemed fitting to dedicate an article to those who have worked so diligently over the years in helping the Columbus Folk Music Society put on their annual folk festival. Many of you know these folks, but here is a chance to learn a little more about them as well as what they will have in store for us at this year's festival. Tim Taylor and Kevin Kasnyik are employed with the Metro Park system and work at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park.*

*See Metro Parks - page 4*



*Nancy Cline-Bailey - from page 1*

*Nancy helped found the Society in the early 1990's. In the early years, she served as President. Then, as an organizer of our yearly Central Ohio Folk Festival for a decade, Nancy helped it grow into the popular and well-attended event it now is. Although we often (and she herself) sometimes gave her the title of "she who must be obeyed," that simply showed that she wasn't afraid to make tough decisions and take responsibility for them.*



*The atmosphere during the visitation hours at the funeral home 3 days after Nancy's death symbolized her passion and her life. Dozens and dozens of people showed up to pay their respects, and many were members of the Folk Music Society.*

*Although there were somber moments, we sang together in harmony and played guitars, banjos, harps, flutes, drums, mandolins, dulcimers, and more.*

*It was just the kind of spirit Nancy had asked for. Her spirit.*



*"For the volunteers, who give so much, and give up so much, to keep folk music alive. You open the doors, turn on the lights, set up the chairs, put up the stage, bake the cookies, book the shows, spread the word, pamper the performers, fold up the chairs, take down the stage, switch off the lights and close the doors. You are . . . folk music's gracious and beating heart."*

*—Dedication to "Revival: A Folk Music Novel"*

*(Look for a more complete tribute to Nancy in the June Newsletter)*

## SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY AT 2013 FOLK FESTIVAL!

*Article by Bill Cohen*

**COME ON OUT** to the 17th annual **CENTRAL OHIO FOLK FESTIVAL** at the lush and green **BATTELLE DARBY CREEK METRO PARK** southwest of Columbus on **MAY 4 AND 5**. We promise something for everybody. And that means YOU!

**FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS**, we've got a special children's arts and crafts area, an instrument petting zoo where kids can pick up and play a drum, or



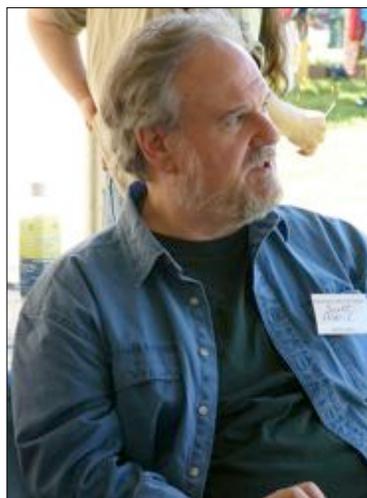
*See Festival - page 3*

*Alarik - from page 1*

for me, because I realized they really were our songs, the living-room music of the whole human family.

Mom was also a big Pete Seeger fan, though she disapproved of his politics. Among her favorite records were Pete's 1950s Folkways series, "America's Favorite Ballads." When dad was entertaining business clients, mom would bribe me to stay in my room by letting me take her Pete Seeger records—and a big bag of candy—to my room. Years later, I realized they needed to remove those albums from the record stacks, because Pete was blacklisted at the time. But honestly, leaving a kid alone with Pete Seeger and a big bag of sugar? What did they think was going to become of me?

**Bill:** *Although many folkies know you best as a columnist and author who focuses on folk music, you've also been a folksinger yourself for decades. Hopefully, we'll hear you singing during our festival. What are we likely to hear from you? How would you describe your singing style and your thrust?*



**Scott:** My core repertoire is still banked in my family's folk music, Anglo-American ballads and cowboy songs, mixed with my own songs. As a little girl, my mother spent time on a cattle ranch in Montana, and learned from the last of the cowboys who created the great cowboy songs. And I learned them from her; they've been a part of me as long as I can remember.

I've always had a penchant for classic folk songs, standards that are often neglected today because they're seen as chestnuts. But as Norman Blake said to me in an interview once, "Songs become chestnuts for a reason, and the reason is that everybody loves them."

As to my singing style, I think it's the same as my writing: I'm a storyteller. I want people to go

*See Alarik - page 3*

*Festival - from page 2*

guitar or kazoo, and a series of 12 half-hour mini-concerts just for kids.

**FOR FOLKS WHO WANT TO LEARN HOW TO PERFORM IN THE FOLK GENRE**, we've got more than 50 workshops on everything from yodeling and song-writing to guitar, banjo, washboard, ukulele, dulcimer, bodhran, spoons, and bagpipes.

**JUST WANT TO SIT BACK, RELAX, AND ENJOY GREAT FOLK MUSIC PERFORMERS?** We'll have that too with hourly showcase concerts featuring bluegrass, sea shanties, jug band, Americana, and other types of music.

The festival will also feature two drum circles, where the whole family can enjoy a mesmerizing outdoor session, banging on drums, sticks, tree stumps, and anything else that adds to the rhythm.

Want to try your hand at jamming? Or just listen to some **INFORMAL JAMMING** that's bound to pop up? We'll have that too.

Plus, there's a special **SATURDAY NIGHT CONCERT FEATURING NATIONALLY-KNOWN MUSICIANS – DAVE PARA, CATHY BARTON, AND ED TRICKETT.**

And for the die-hard folkies, please join us for the humongous potluck dinner and meet-and-greet kick-off on Friday May 3rd. It will feature our yearly competition to see (and hear) who can perform "the worst song in the world."

Except for the special Saturday night concert and the workshops, all the festival events are **FREE !!!!!!!**

So – walk the nature trails, sit in the grass, and let the sunshine warm your spirits as you enjoy this perfect mixture of nature and music.

For all the details, google up "Columbus Folk Music Society" and click on "Central Ohio Folk Festival."

For a 90 second lively video promoting the festival, go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hPgtbxct0U>. Spread the word to those you know!

*Alarik - from page 2*

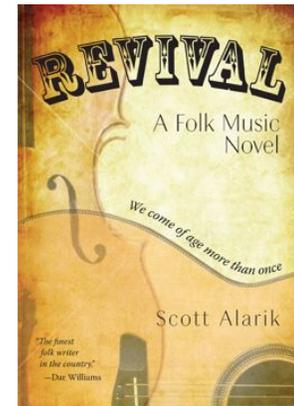
inside a song, hear the emotion in the melody and the story it's telling. I want to put the focus on the song, not the singer. My favorite singers, from my mom to Joan and Pete to Gordon Bok and—oh, yeah—Ed Trickett, Mustard's Retreat, Cathy Barton and Dave Para, are all in that tradition. Nathan Warren, the main character in my folk novel, *Revival*, is like that, too. It's one of the things that first attracts the other main character, Kit Palmer. Comparing him to more show-offy musicians, she says, "To them, it's all about the singer; to you, it's all about the song."

**Bill:** *Who are your top 3 "heroes" of American folk music and why?*

**Scott:** Well, Pete Seeger tops the list, of course. He taught us so much about the human heart that beats within those old songs and makes them so timeless. When you look at folk music today, and how it exists in small, vibrant communities like yours, it's so close to Pete's vision of how it should be. After the blacklist destroyed his group The Weavers, which had been the top music group in the world, Pete traveled from town to town, playing house concerts and colleges, laying the groundwork for much of the folk circuit that exists today. He showed us how to thrive outside the mainstream—and infected legions of young people with the idea that you could sing folk songs for a living, igniting the '60s folk revival. "That's the most important job I ever did," he told me.

After him, it gets difficult because most of the folk musicians I know or have interviewed qualify as heroes to me. My songwriting is influenced more by Tom Paxton and Gordon Bok than anyone else, and I was delighted to find that they are the same lovely people you meet in their songs. Jean Ritchie is a huge hero of mine, for the gentle way she taught us

that folk is family music, community music. And Robert Burns. He



*Cover of Scott's recent novel, Revival*

sacrificed so much to save—and serve—Scottish folk music.

But I also count as my heroes the people who work behind the scenes to keep this music alive, from 19th-century ballad collector Francis Child to the volunteers who make the Central Ohio Folk Festival possible. In fact, I dedicated my novel, *Revival*, to the volunteers. I see my heroes all around me, every time I step on a folk stage.

**Bill:** *You served 19 months in prison for refusing to register for the draft during the Vietnam War. And we know there are hundreds of folk-style songs that celebrate peace, civil rights, human rights, the fight against poverty, and social change. As a historian of folk music and an activist yourself, can you give us any insight as to why folk music, when it does take a political stand, has usually proclaimed what are usually thought of as left-wing causes?*

**Scott:** Great question. While I don't think folk music is inherently political, I do think it is inherently about our real lives, as we actually live them day to day. And politics is part of that. So it's the only modern music form that includes political music in its core repertoire and mission. There are political songs in

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*Alarik - from page 3*

other forms, but they are exceptions, and disappointingly rare.

I don't think folk belongs to any political ideology, but I do think it is, by definition, a populist music, because it's the music of ordinary people. And that's generally true, whether it's an ancient ballad, a 19th-century sea chantey, or a modern song. Ellis Paul, who helped ignite the urban songwriter revival of the 1990s, told me that "Our deal is not to be larger than life. Our deal is to be life."

"I BELIEVE WE GOT LUCKY WITH THE "FOLK" LABEL, BECAUSE IT PRECISELY POINTS TO THE MOST ESSENTIAL, DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC THAT CONNECTS ALL THE DIFFERENT STYLES OF TRADITIONAL, ROOTS, AND SINGER-SONGWRITER MUSIC: IT'S ALL PEOPLE'S MUSIC, FOLK'S MUSIC."

-- Scott Alarik

In doing that, folk shows us the decency, equality, and genius of the poor, the ordinary, and the oppressed. When we hear their music, it naturally makes us like them, and want to see them treated fairly. And that tends to lead to a more liberal, humanist outlook.

**Bill:** *When adults attend activities of the Columbus Folk Music Society, we often lament the absence of those in their teens and 20's. We worry that the future of American folk music is bleak because it seems as if the over-50 crowd is the most enthusiastic about it and that could mean that support for folk music will figuratively and literally die off. What is your take on this? Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of folk music? What do you suggest for keeping folk music alive and thriving?*

**Scott:** I'm beyond optimistic; I'm certain that this music is here to stay. Thanks to the decades of work done

collecting, preserving, and recording folk repertoires all over the world, it's never been more available.

Amazon has a Lead Belly store, and lists nearly 500 recordings by Woody Guthrie alone. Their music is more available now than it was in their lifetimes, or during the '60s. And it continues to inspire generation after generation: Woody's never been more popular than he is today.

My guess is that the young people embracing folk music in Ohio are simply doing it among themselves—like us boomers did—finding their own venues and hangouts. Jams and open mikes are very popular with young people all over the country. The whole idea of playing music socially, instead of professionally, is as hip today as it was in the hootenannies of the '60s. In Boston, there's a vibrant young trad scene, as well as a steady stream of new songwriters. And many of the best young folk musicians are 2nd-generation folkies who literally grew up in the music. My latest CD, "All That Is True," has only one musician on it over the age of 30. I'll let you guess which one.

**Bill:** *Sometimes, people who are active in any movement, interest, or hobby are so close to it that they "can't see the forest for the trees." Or they think they're so expert in it that they cling to misconceptions. Can you point to any major misconception that some of us in the folk music world might have about this love of ours?*

**Scott:** If I could wave a magic wand and change the folk world in just one way, it would be for everybody to embrace that term "folk music," and apply it to all the myriad styles of people's music that exist around the world, from traditional ballads to Cajun music, Afro-pop to sea chanteys, urban songwriters to bagpipers, Celtic fiddlers to folk-rockers like the Civil Wars.

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*Metro Parks - from page 1*

**D.B.:** *This will be the 10th Anniversary of the Columbus Folk Music Society (CFMS) holding its annual folk festival at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park; indeed a special milestone. Can you tell us what the mission is of the Metro Parks system, how long you have been with the Metro Parks and what made you decide to serve in the park system?*

**Tim Taylor:** The Mission of the Metro Parks is to conserve open spaces, while providing places and opportunities that encourage people to discover and experience nature.



In September I will be celebrating 20 years at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park and 22 years with the Metro Parks. During my first two years with the park system I was stationed at Sharon Woods. I came to the Metro Parks because they offered the opportunity I was searching for. The opportunity to share my love of natural history with the community and to make a difference in the world I live in.

**Kevin Kasnyik:** I have been with Metro Parks for 12 years. I knew from a very early age that I wanted to work in the field of Natural Resources. I fell in love with Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park while working here as an intern when I was attending OSU. I began working full-time with Metro Parks in 2000, worked in different capacities at Blacklick Woods and Sharon Woods before making it back to Battelle Darby Creek in 2005.

**D.B.:** *Can you recall how the folk festival originally became something that the Metro Parks was interested in hosting/co-sponsoring? We know that CFMS member, the late Jan Staats, was involved, but if you can help fill out the history for us. . .*

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**Tim:** Jan was a long time Volunteer with the Metro Parks, specializing in preschooler education. Jan especially loved reading to the children during our programs for the tots. Jan approached me one day and explained that she was also a member of the Folk Music Society and they were looking for a new venue for their annual Folk Music Festival. I thought this was a wonderful idea. Besides natural history education, another one of the missions of the Metro Parks is cultural history education; I also grew up listening to my parents playing folk music (mostly Irish) on the stereo and have been a fan for years. Jan gave me some background on the festival and how the Festival Committee thought it would be wonderful to take the festival outside. I approached our administration with the idea and ten years later I'm telling the story of how it got started in the park.

**Kevin:** I would add that performing and enjoying Folk Music in a natural setting adds another dimension to the experience. This cultural and historical relationship makes the experience more special.

**D.B.:** *Can you tell us what festival goes can take advantage of at the park while they are there? Also, will there be any special programs that the Metro Parks will do in conjunction with the folk festival?*

**Tim:** Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park offers a wide variety of opportunities for our visitors that include hiking, picnicking, nature study, areas for field sports, fishing and hunting. In the winter we also have sledding, cross-country skiing, and ice-skating. Our newest attraction is the Nature Center with its 58-foot living stream stocked with many of the creatures that call Big and Little Darby Creeks home. Several hands on exhibits will also greet the visitors to the Center. One of the biggest attractions in the park is our Bison. Six cow bison were introduced over two years ago and can be seen from the Nature Center. These ladies have been a big hit in

the park while helping balance the ecology of our prairies. The Nature



*The "ladies" at Battelle Darby Creek*

Center is located 1 ½ miles north of the Indian Ridge entrance on Darby Creek Drive.

Between 1 & 4 p.m. each day of the Festival we will have a natural history display somewhere in the middle of the festival field. Also at 8 a.m. on

**" . . .ORIOLES AND TANAGERS SINGING THROUGHOUT THE DAY. . .THEY SEEM TO LOVE THE HABITAT OF THE AREA IN WHICH THE FESTIVAL IS HELD."**

*-- Kevin Kasnyik*

Saturday morning, meeting at the Indian Ridge picnic area bulletin board, we will be offering a bird hike. This is a wonderful time of year to enjoy many of the beautifully colored songbirds that are migrating through the park along with our nesting species. The songs of nature will abound as these creatures establish territories throughout the park.

**8 A.M. SAT. - "BIRDING AT ITS BEST," HIKE LED BY PARK NATURALIST (MEET AT THE INDIAN RIDGE PICNIC AREA BULLETIN BOARD)**

**D.B.:** *Can you tell us what is unique about the Battelle-Darby Metro Park?*

**Tim:** Battelle Darby Creek is an extremely unique park. Besides being the largest Metro Park in the state of Ohio (over 7,500 acres), through the middle of the park flows Big and Little Darby Creeks, dedicated State and National Scenic Rivers. Biodiversity is the reason the creeks are so special. This diversity includes 100 species of fish and 44 species of

freshwater mussels. Many consider the creeks the most biologically diverse streams of their size in North America. To give you an idea what 44 species of freshwater mussels means, there are more mussels in Big Darby Creek than all of Europe and Australia combined.

The park is also diverse; woodlands, meadows, prairies, and over 600 acres of newly established wetlands can be found in the park. Several endangered species can be found at Battelle Darby Creek, including the federally endangered Indiana Bat.

**D.B.:** *Do you have any special memories of interactions with festival participants in past festivals?*

**Tim:** The children's instrument zoo has always been a favorite of mine. Tots with no musical experience at all pick up an instrument and begin playing and dancing to whatever sounds they make. This can be comical in some ways and inspirational in others. But it's the pure pleasure they derive from the experience that pleases me most.

**Kevin:** I agree. Watching our visitors young and old being exposed to not only the music, but the art of performing it, is extremely gratifying for the park staff and members of the CFMS. I take time every year to soak in the views of visitors enjoying music being performed in front of the backdrop of the park's hills and trees, as well as hearing orioles and tanagers singing throughout the day as they seem to love the habitat of the area in which the festival is held.

**D.B.:** *What makes you look forward to the folk festival each year?*

**Tim:** I look forward to the people who organize, run, and work the festival more than anything. I've gotten to know many of these people over the years and it's always a pleasure to spend time and work with such wonderful individuals. The music is always an attraction also. Growing up in a folk music loving family I don't get to hear it played live

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*What is Folk Music?* - from page 1

community nature of folk music today by doing a roundtable interview in which I asked a variety of different artists and folk-biz people the same question. It took me five years to summon the nerve to tackle the Big Question: what is folk music? By then, several performers had told me if I ducked answering that one myself, they would. . .well, let's just say the threats were dark, fearful and highly creative. Seriously, I took up the challenge, and it was the only Almanac Question I ever answered.

-- Scott Alarik



**Pete Seeger:** I think I'd preface my statement by saying I'd just as soon the term was no longer used except by professional folklorists who know what they're talking about. But if it is to be used by journalists, I always point out it's music that has more of the traditional element; whether it's gospel music or Chinese or Jewish music or even Appalachian music with a Scotch-Irish background. . . .



Photo courtesy of Anthony Peppone



**Ani DiFranco:** “. . . I think folk music is sub-corporate, community-based music o' the people. . . The form it takes doesn't speak to me as much as the whole context in which it's created. It just tends to be unpretentious music that's uncommercial, made by unpretentious people who are not interested in moving units. . . .”



❖ ❖ ❖ **Dar Williams:**

First of all, folk music is something that gives me more freedom than any other name. People think that's funny, because you'd think it was defined by its limitations. But for me, it just means people let me do whatever I do. I'm sort of guided by what I observe, but that can take any form I want.



Photo by Amy Dickerson

I want to say this includes the singer-songwriter phenomenon as well. Folk as a term obviously serves me better if I abstract it from its technical roots, because then I have more freedom as a sort of sound sculptor. But what Lawrence Lazare, who was a booking agent at Fleming-Tamulevich, said, I think is really true.

And that is that folk music is really defined by its listener's; it's the way people come to a concert, the way they want to listen to things, and the way they want to feel at the end of a concert. People come to coffeehouses, and there is the certain framework of a certain kind of show that they are prepared to be part of. They don't talk, they're all facing you, it's generally a nonalcoholic event. And I think there's some hope that there will be words that will be uplifting, as opposed to just entertaining or clever or numbing.



**Lui Collins:** “[Folk music is]. . . something passed along from generation to generation. Folk music in its purest sense can only be



Photo courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

*sustained where you have a nation. . . But in this present-day technological society, folk music, if it can exist at all, has to take on a whole new meaning”*

*A definition? Number one would be “music that comes from the heart and that speaks of and to the world as the musician experiences it. . . .Number two is music that deals with what is real. . . as opposed to doing what might be commercially viable. Three, I think folk music is primarily acoustic. . . I would include electric basses, pickups, p.a. systems, but I think of it as primarily acoustic. I see it as music that's primarily simple. . . . The fourth thing. . . is music that's open to interpretation by other performers – what we call the folk process. It's music that changes and grows, depending on who is playing it, and when it is being played. . . The final thing. . . folk music is music that encourages the development of community. . . encourages people to come together.”*



**Ellen Friedman:** . . . Part of it, I think, has to do with presentation. Part of it is that a folk song has a narrative vein in some way or another, though that vein is certainly not restricted to folk music. Another part is the simplicity of it. But a larger part is the presentation, the ability to perform it with just a guitar, or in your basement for people to sit around and sing it. So both the simplicity and the accessibility of it is important. We're looking at what makes something folk music, rather than a folk song, because a song can be treated in such a way that it's not a folk song, or that it leaves the realm of what most of us would think was folk.

See *What is Folk Music* - page 7



**ANNOUNCING THE 2013 WINNERS OF THE BOB KIRBY SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS!**

From the Dearth family: Benjamin, age 10; Christopher, age 14; Justin, age 17. From Dublin, OH, all are members of the Shamrock Club Pipes and Drums. **AND** Tami Kankia, age 13, from Columbus, OH (Hastings Middle School).

**SATURDAY @ 4 P.M. – KIRBY SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS AT BOB KIRBY STAGE – MEET OUR WINNERS!**

*What is Folk Music - from page 6*



**Dick Pleasants:** *One of the ways I'd like to describe folk music as I know it these days - and this is only in my terms - is by listing a few people I consider folk musicians: Utah Phillips, Bob Franke, Rosalie Sorrels, Bill Staines, Ramblin' Jack Elliot. These are people that, to me, really represent what I call troubadours of folk music today. These people really understand what bringing music to communities today is all about.*

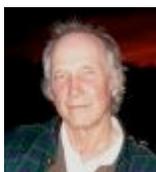
*And I guess the center of what folk music is today is community. If you take away what I think now is an archaic description of it - the music traveling down through generations - as we have to describe it today, it represents something quite bigger. It represents a community where music is grown, changed and adapted - and traditional music is sustained as well. But it now covers a much wider spectrum than it has been in the past three or four hundred years.*

*We don't have front porches to play on anymore; we generally don't have picking sessions and dances in the kitchen. Generally, things are organized outside the home, and you need audiences to pay for it. When I represent folk music on the radio, I try to stretch it as much as possible, because I like to see different influences on it. I think folk music is something that is roots-based, but then taken from there.*

*And I would also say folk music is Flatt & Scruggs, Tommy Ferrol, Muddy Waters, Professor Longhair, Dr. John. Those are people I think represent music particular to different areas of the country. That's another thing folk music is now. . . .*



**Jack Hardy:** My definition is always where the song is more important than the singer or the style. And the song I



define as stripped down to its bare essentials, a wedding of melody and lyric. In an ideal world, the melody must be something you can and would like to whistle going down the street, and the lyrics would be something meaningful to yourself, and somewhat memorable in their own right. Everything else - whether it be style, production in terms of recording - is gravy. If you don't have the stripped-down beginning of it that could actually be done a cappella, then you don't have a song.

That's my definition of folk music, where often in rock'n'roll you know the style, you can identify the singer, you know the personality, you know whatever he or she wears. You know everything, but you can't think of or whistle a single song they do.

These things are not mutually exclusive. Applying this definition, I would consider most of the early Beatles folk music; applying this definition, a lot of what passes for folk music these days I would not consider folk music. Because they rely too heavily on pretension.

But I consider what is folk music to be the true poetry. I mean, poetry was never meant to be on a written page; it was meant to be sung. It's only in the last several hundred years that the conceit of putting poetry on the printed page, and the subsequent control of it by academia, has taken it out of the realm of things that were a), memorized and b), sung. I think the best poets writing today are folk singers. The rest is all categories, and category is something that was sort of perpetrated on us by academia.



**Tom Paxton:** . . . *For me, it's a subjective judgment. I have certain criteria that I automatically apply: The song has to be around for awhile and, while I'm not rigid about it, I have to sense that the song was written for other than pecuniary motives. It's probably not a song that was*



Tom Paxton

*written first of all for the market. Now, there are just a thousand exceptions to that.*

*But for me, a song like "Green, Green, Rocky Road" that the Kingston*

*Trio did - this was a song that was written to get recorded by a hit folk group. Yes, there are some people you might hear singing it now and then, but it's not a folk song. Whereas, Bess Hawes' "Charlie on the M.T.A." is to me a folk song. It was written to help get someone elected mayor of Boston, and did it by telling a funny story. I mean, who remembers George O'Brien besides his family, but everybody knows that song. It's still the most requested song in the Kingston Trio's repertoire.*

*So I think the song has to have been around for awhile, or be one that gets in the tradition. A perfect example of that would be Michael Burton's song "Night Herder's Lament." Don Edwards, the great cowboy singer, did an interview where he said that no sooner did that song appear than every cowboy in America knew it and sang it. Burton, apparently, is an Englishman, but that song was instantly adopted by the guys who punch cows.*

*A song like that, in my unscholarly way, is an instant folk song; it is sung by people who don't know Burton and never will. They have no idea who the guy is. People take the trouble to learn a song that feels like their own thoughts turned to song. . . .*



**Scott Alarik:** I've found that by beginning with the historical definition, many of folk music's modern aesthetics make more sense. Why is it more of a real-life music? Why more community-based? Why more intimate and honest? Why more political?



Photo by Asia Kepka

*See What is Folk Music? - page 8*

*What is Folk Music - from page 7*

The term was originally coined to distinguish this music not by style or content, but by class. "The folk" was a term that referred specifically to the lower classes, peasants, the poor and working people. And folk music was the music they created for themselves, for their own use in their own lives.

For nearly all our history, folk music was the only music of, by and for the vast majority of ordinary people everywhere in the world. Only the nobility and the wealthiest elite could afford to have what was called "art music;" that is, music composed and performed by formally trained professional

musicians. There were exceptions - itinerant folk musicians gifted enough to have careers playing for other folks, or even hired by the gentry. In the main, though, folk music was made nonprofessionally, by the same people who listened to it. It was then passed on in an endless creative cycle called the folk process, passed from singer to singer, player to player, generation to generation, culture to culture.

Technology changed all that, first with published song sheets called broadsides that were sold to the masses; then with sheet music for parlor pianos; and later with records, radios and television. With mass-market technology, it became

possible for music to be profitably sold to the folk, and that industry became known as popular, or pop, music.

What were once functional and precise definitions that distinguished folk, pop and art music have now become aesthetic ones. People are still drawn to the real-life qualities of folk music, whether it is made by a cowboy-turned-singer, or a rich'n'famous singer-songwriter. The songs tend to be about more than just dating and mating, like so much pop music is, because life itself is about more than that. The folk sang songs about courtship, of course, but also

*See What is Folk Music - page 11*

## YET ANOTHER YEAR OF OUTSTANDING CFMS COFFEEHOUSES !

*Article by Bill Cohen*

Wow! What a great line-up of talent we've had at our monthly coffeehouses, thanks to the organizing talent of our coffeehouse booking agents, Pam Raver and our late Nancy Cline Bailey. Think back over the year and recall what musically diverse acts we've heard:

September brought us **Larry Drake and Friends**, highlighting Larry's original songs with a bluesy twist. Larry's high tenor voice was complemented by a solid back-up band.

**Whinestopper** was our featured act in October, spinning a unique blend of traditional folk, plus standards from as far back as the 1930's and 40's. Beautiful harmonies too.

The November coffeehouse was totally open stage, and we heard some delightful groups and solo acts, most of them our own members.

After a December hiatus, we were rewarded with a double, late holiday gift. First, the long-time friends of the CFMS, **Mustard's Retreat**, treated us to a special mid-January concert at a special new place -



the cozy social hall at Maple Grove Methodist Church. As usual, many of us couldn't help but sing along, especially on their classic original anthem, "Simple Faith."

Then, another star of the Yellow Room Gang of singer-songwriters, **Matt Watroba**, was our featured performer at our regular end-of-the-month coffeehouse at the Mennonite Church. He told endearing tales, set to music.

**Terry Keller and Friends** were the "rock stars" of our February coffeehouse. Proving that the CFMS defines folk music in the broadest sense, Terry belted out originals, blues, and even Elvis tunes. And the band's instrumental solo-breaks drew their own applause.

**Halfway Home's** performance in March symbolized why we're so thankful the group has reunited. Their repertoire helped us understand what Americana music often is - a gritty, no-holds-barred look at the human condition, sparking laughter, smiles, and tears.

As this is being written, we're looking forward to hearing our April 27 featured act - **Second Wind**. The female duo, Wolf and Raven, wowed us during their brief set on the open stage in March, so the April coffeehouse, the last until next fall, should be outstanding.

## MAY HAPPENINGS, SO SAVE THE DATE . . .

 The **Saturday Music Jam** at the **Worthington Farmers' Market 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.** The southeast quad on Worthington Square. All are welcome to come play. Every Saturday through Fall Festival in October. It's good to bring a chair.

 **May 3, 4, 5 - Central Ohio Folk Festival.** Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park. Take I-270; exit at US40 West; go 6 miles, then follow signs. For park map: [www.cfms-inc.org/images/](http://www.cfms-inc.org/images/)

[0903MapBattelleDarbyPark.pdf](#)

**Friday: Meet & Greet 6-10 p.m.**

**Cedar Ridge Lodge**

**Saturday: 8:30 a.m. to ~10 p.m.**

**Indian Ridge area**

**Sunday: 10 a.m. to ~5:30 p.m.** or ? (park closes at dark).

**Don't miss the Meet & Greet on Friday evening.** There will be lots of food—it's a potluck and we have some really good cooks in this group. If you want to bring something, please feel free, but don't stay away

if it's not convenient. The annual and delightful "**Worst Song in the World**" contest will start about 7 p.m. There will be jamming all around—in the Lodge, on the back deck, outside on the patio—you won't miss an opportunity to jam! You can also pick up your registration packets.

 **Bob Kirby Scholarship Awards - 4 p.m., May 4,** at the main festival stage. (Details, pg. 6)

## Bulletins

### To our musicians:

If you can spare a musical instrument that would be a fitting one (and not your best) for the Children's "**Instrument Petting Zoo**" at the festival, please bring it along for the benefit of our younger ones. Instrument can be retrieved anytime.

**Please save your empty 1 gallon milk jugs and coffee cans (with lids) for use at our folk festival!** You can drop them off at Linda McDonald's. (444 Oakland Park Avenue, Clintonville) or bring them to the festival. You'll make the kids happy with drums and help "light up the way" on Saturday evening!

## FOLLOWING OUR OWN. . .

**Wednesday, May 1, 2013: Scott Alarik** performing at **Woodlands Tavern, 8:30 p.m. (come at 7 p.m. for good seat & open mic);** 1200 West Third Avenue, Columbus.

**Tuesday, May 7, 2013: The Hardtackers** -- *Pub Polaris*, Evening informal sing -- **7:30 - 9:30 p.m.** (East side of Mall)

**Saturday, May 11, 2013: The Hardtackers** -- *Gallaria Evangelia*, **7-9 p.m.** 4269 N. High St, Clintonville. \$15 per person/\$25 per couple. Refreshments included.

**Sunday, May 12, 2013: Joanie Calem** -- *Intergenerational Sing Along* - Moms & toddlers from Clintonville Mom's Club & seniors -at the Senior

Residence, 120 Morse Rd., behind church. Public is welcome. If you love singing & dancing & building community come out & join us. **2nd Sunday of every month. 4-5 p.m.**

**Saturday, May 18, 2013: Halfway Home** -- *Delaware Arts Festival*, downtown Delaware. **5-6 p.m.** [www.delawareartsfestival.org](http://www.delawareartsfestival.org)

**Sunday, May 19, 2013: The Hardtackers** -- *Pirate Weekend*, Santa Maria [www.santamaria.org](http://www.santamaria.org)

**Friday, May 24, 2013: Grassahol** -- *Westerville Ohio Health 4th Friday Celebration*, uptown Westerville. **6-9 p.m.** Community event - free.

**Friday, May 24, 2013: Loosely Strung** - *Cheshire Market, Pizza, &*

*Bait Store, 7-10 p.m.* Corner Cheshire & Africa Rds, Galena. Free.

**Tuesday, May 28, 2013: Grassahol** -- [Natalie's Coal Fired Pizza & Live Music](#), 5601 N. High St., Worthington. **8-11 p.m.** 436-2625

**Friday, May 31, 2013: Loosely Strung** -- Clifton Opera House, 5 S. Clay Street, Clifton, **7:30-9:00 p.m.** 937-767-2343

**Friday, May 31, 2013: Grassahol** -- [Byrnes' Pub](#), 1248 West 3rd Ave., Columbus. **7-9 p.m.** Free.

**Tuesday, June 4, 2013: Randy & Gina Clepper & John Sherman** -- [Natalie's Coal Fired Pizza & Live Music](#), 5601 N. High St., Worthington. **8-10 p.m.** \$5.00 cover.

“THIS HAS ALWAYS BEEN REAL PEOPLE’S MUSIC. THAT’S WHERE IT GOT ITS NAME: MUSIC ABOUT REAL FOLKS, REAL LIFE. YOU LOOK INSIDE THE SONGS AND YOU SEE PEOPLE JUST LIKE YOU, WITH THE SAME TROUBLES AND WORRIES AND DREAMS AND FEARS. WHETHER THE SONG WAS WRITTEN LAST WEEK OR A THOUSAND YEARS AGO. IT’S LIFE-SIZED.”

*From “Revival: A Folk Music Novel” by Scott Alarik*

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW AND RETURNING MEMBERS:**

- Mary Lee Raines
- Marie Smith
- Mike Hale
- Sonia Kovitz



**HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY AND ITS FUTURE EVENTS?**

Visit our website for information at: [www.cfms-inc.org](http://www.cfms-inc.org). Even better, **sign the sheet at the bookstore table** that will get you on our mail list, which will keep you informed of our upcoming events as well as other folk events. Best of all, **join as a member** and get this monthly newsletter and a few other little perks!



**SCHEDULE OF CONCERTS AT 2013 CENTRAL OHIO FOLK FESTIVAL**

*Thank you for coming out!*

**Saturday, May 4**

All concerts are on the Bob Kirby Stage (main tent) unless indicated otherwise.

**11 a.m.** – *Hardtackers*

**Noon** – *Joe LaMay & Sherri Reese*

**1 p.m.** – *Second Wind*

**2 p.m.** – *Smokin’ Fez Monkeys*

**3 p.m.** – *Grassahol*

**4 p.m.** – Kirby Scholarship presentation, then *Dave Hawkins*

**5:30 p.m.** – *Drum Circle* led by Michael Hough of Mustard’s Retreat (in center field)

**7 p.m.** – **Headliner Concert** featuring **Cathy Barton, Dave Para and Ed Trickett** (tickets required)

**Sunday, May 5**

**10 a.m.** – *Celebration of Life* led by Mustard’s Retreat and Bill Schilling

**11 a.m.** – *Joanie Calem*

**Noon** – *Whinestopper*

**1 p.m.** – *Mustard’s Retreat*

**2 p.m.** – *Butch Ross*

**3 p.m.** – *Halfway Home*

**4 p.m.** – *Closing Drum & Song Circle* led by Mustard’s Retreat (in center field)

**NOTE:** There are also ongoing performances every half hour in the **Children’s Tent**.



**THE COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES**

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**Central Ohio Folk Festival directors:**

Art and Sharon Mittenbergs

Membership Chair: Larry Drake

Newsletter Co-editor: Diane Boston

*Metro Parks - from page 5*

very often & the festival offers this opportunity to get back to my roots.

**Kevin:** The festival has become a personal, annual spring celebration of sorts. Visitor attendance to the park is increasing after a long winter, wildflowers are blooming, and the birds are singing. The Festival caps this all off for me, and is kind of a kick off to a very busy time of year for the parks.

*Alarik - from page 4*

All the labels we attach to music are imperfect. The term “classical music” has done great damage to the art music it describes, because it implies that all this music was created in the past. No one really knows what “rock’n’roll” means, or what defines its boundaries. And the term “jazz” is so nebulous that in the ‘60s, the Newport Jazz Festival wouldn’t hire Louis Armstrong because they thought he no longer played jazz. The story I’ve heard is that Miles Davis, then the king of jazz, was consulted. “You’re putting it wrong,” he said gruffly. “Louis Armstrong doesn’t play jazz; Louis Armstrong IS jazz.” Satchmo was hired the following year.

But I believe we got lucky with the “folk” label, because it precisely points to the most essential, defining characteristic that connects all the different styles of traditional, roots, and singer-songwriter music: It’s all people’s music, folk’s music. That’s exactly what connects Dewey Balfa to Dar Williams, Lead Belly to Mumford & Sons, and Robert Burns to Steve Earle. And that connection is very real. When I covered folk music for the Boston Globe, I found that people outside the music often sensed that connection more easily than us folkies did. We were blessed when that moniker was applied to this music—but only if we accept it as a blessing.

**D.B.:** *How can people can find out about other events going on at the park?*

**Tim:** The best way is to visit our website: [www.metroparks.net](http://www.metroparks.net). Or, when in a Metro Park stop by any of our brochure racks where you can also pick up our quarterly magazine called the Parkscape. Besides the articles, the program schedule for every park can be found in this periodical.

**LET’S GIVE A BIG THANK YOU AND SHOUT OUT TO THE METRO PARK FOLKS!**

**Bill:** *If there’s one thing you want people to understand about folk music, what is it?*

**Scott:** That it is not something that happened in the 1960s. When you look at the long history of folk music, what happened in the ‘60s was the exception, not the rule. It was the only time that folk was accepted as part of the commercial music mainstream. For example, I hear many people lament the lack of political music in our culture today. There are as many political songs being sung today as ever, and probably more than in the ‘60s. They’re just not being sung on commercial radio or major-label records, the way they were back then. Using the ‘60s to judge folk music is like using a solar eclipse to judge the sun. Yeah, that’s how it looked once, but you’re missing what the sun actually is.

In the most important ways, folk is healthier, more vibrant, and more popular today than it was then—except that it is invisible to our commercial music industry and media. It exists today as it always has, in grassroots community venues like college halls, coffeehouses, house concerts—and your festival. These are our our cathedrals today, our Carnegie Halls. And I couldn’t be prouder to be part of that.

**TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SCOTT’S RECENT BOOK, GO TO:**  
[www.scottalarik.com](http://www.scottalarik.com)

*What is Folk Music - from page 8*

about work, their community, history, children, parents, pets, politics. Music was made for dances and wedding and funerals, to mark the changing of the seasons, celebrated holidays, and to worship.

Much of folk music retains a topical, populist edge, because it was originally a class-defined music. Since it so honestly and movingly portrays the hard lives of poor people throughout history, it naturally draws listeners to a desire for social justice. It may not be innately a political form; but I believe it is an innately populist one.

It also tends to be more personal when it speaks of matters of the heart, because the old folk love songs were not written to sell to other people, but to express deep and private feelings. Then as now, people used the vocabulary of the love song to examine their interior lives; to express their deepest feelings about both love and life. The songs were not crafted to conform to any market trend or commercial taste, but simply to express the individual heart, and perhaps explain that heart to those closest to it. The songs that lasted did so because they somehow touched something in all hearts. Those that expressed only a mood of the moment were soon forgotten.

Of all the definitions of folk music I have heard over the years, my personal favorite came from my niece Caitlin Park. She was 10 at the time, I believe, and I had sent her Suzanne Vega’s first album as a Christmas present. She told me how much she liked it - and that she could tell right away it was folk music. “How could you tell it was folk music? I asked her.

“Because all the songs are *about* things.” She said.

February, 1996, from The New England Folk Almanac. Used with permission.

**The Columbus Folk Music Society**

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**Next Issue in June**  
(back to our 8 page edition!)

**We're on the web!**  
[www.cfms-inc.org](http://www.cfms-inc.org)

**BECOME A MEMBER OF THE COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I am new to this     I'm back for more

**MEMBERSHIP LEVEL** (all memberships renew on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Feel free to pro-rate if you wish):

Individual \$20       Household \$25       Good Friend \$50       Sponsor \$100

Patron \$200       Silver \$250       Gold (lifetime)\$500

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Yes! Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities within the organization

In an effort to be both fiscally and environmentally responsible, we will send a full-color, interactive newsletter via email in pdf format unless you request a hard copy to be mailed to you.

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I enjoy the annual Central Ohio Folk Festival (early May):  
Lots 5 4 3 2 1 Not (please circle one)