



Author, Songwriter and Storyteller, Rupert Wates, to Perform April 22nd

INTERVIEW BY MICHELLE HUGHES

Rupert Wates, recognized as "a prime figure in American music" by the Folk and Acoustic Music Exchange, will perform at **8pm on April 22** for the Americana/Folk Concert Series. Influenced early on by a variety of musicians, Rupert's song writing evolved to include storytelling while adhering to the principle that a song must most importantly be "a good piece of music".

Michelle Hughes: Rupert, you've had quite the incredible career — making music professionally for nearly 3 decades throughout the UK, Europe, and North America. When and how did you decide that music-making was the path for you?

Rupert Wates: I loved and listened to music from my early teens, but I loved other arts as well — literature, drawing and painting, stage acting — all of which I pursued in various forms at high school and at college (Oxford University). I wasn't sure what my path in life would be and while I was a young man I didn't really ask myself the question, but various events

[See Rupert Wates..pg.3](#)

All songs are stories...it brings us out of our own skin for a moment [and] puts ourselves in someone else's place.

-Rupert Wates

A Different Strummer Newsletter Highlights

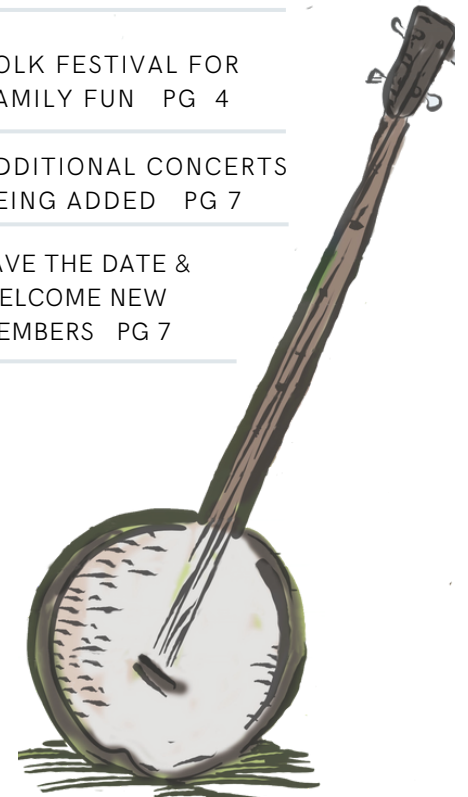
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Nefesh Mountain Will Headline This Year's Folk Festival

BY PETE INSABELLA

You don't want to miss the 26th annual edition of the Folk Music Society's Folk Festival, scheduled for May 6 and 7 at Highbanks Metro Park in Lewis Center (just north of Columbus). The Saturday night headliner is Nefesh Mountain, an internationally known, progressive folk/Americana band. Formed in 2015, Nefesh Mountain has played to sold-out audiences from Chicago to New York City and many places in between. The band features a mixture of Americana music, Appalachian bluegrass, old time Celtic folk and Eastern European music.

Nefesh Mountain has been hailed as one of the leading bands today pushing the boundaries of American roots music yet continuing the traditions of bluegrass, folk and country. Their latest album, "Songs For the Sparrows," is a testament to the unbridled imagination and extraordinary grace of their musicianship and creativity. They have recorded and shared the stage with Sam Bush, Jerry Douglas, Bryan Sutton, John Doyle, Noam Pikelny (Punch Brothers), Mark Schatz (Nickel Creek), Mike Gordon (Phish) and Tony Trischka among others. Their music continues to forge new paths in a world all their own. Rolling Stone says Nefesh Mountain provides "a master class in string music." And American Songwriter magazine hails their "thoughtful, introspective lyrics and world class musicianship." You can listen to samplings of their music here: [Nefesh Mountain Revival-Official Music Video youtu.be/KuzwomZqDfg](https://youtu.be/KuzwomZqDfg)



So mark your calendar for this year's Folk Festival. It promises to be one of the best ever. As a reminder, the Festival has now become a "free-will donation" event. We will position donation tents at the festival grounds entrance. You can donate whatever you are comfortable with.

There is no longer a ticket fee for the Saturday Night Headliner or for the Festival workshops. However, if you wish to reserve inside tent seating for the Saturday Night headliner, we encourage you to pre-donate. Here is the link to pre-donate: centralohiofolkfestival2023donate.eventbrite.com

The tent holds 200 and once its inside seating is filled there will still be lots of seating on the lawn. Save your Eventbrite receipt. You will need it (on your phone is fine) to gain access to the tent Saturday evening. And if you donated \$20 or more — we'll give you your free goodies (a "fun, flexible flyer" and some other useful stuff) at the entrance. Yep, the flyer can also be used as a fan and a shade for the eyes! Also look for the "I already donated" entrance for quicker entry.

Rupert Wates, from pg 1

conspired to bring me finally to commit myself to music. I wrote and performed some music for the funeral of my father, which took place when I was in my last year in college; a man who attended the ceremony happened to be a presenter of musicals for a youth theater; he liked what I wrote for my dad and asked me to write the music for a stage musical he was presenting at the Edinburgh Festival. I did so and it led to other commissions, and almost before I knew it I was a full-time composer and never really looked back. It wasn't until later, however, that I began to think of myself as a performer as much as a composer, and it's only in the last dozen years that playing live, and touring have become a way of life for me. In hindsight I can see that writing and performing music unites all the different interests and passions I had as a young man, because it involves 'literature' (my lyric writing), my interest in visual art (the artwork for my CDs, which is very important to me), and my experience as an actor (live performance, like any stage work, being a form of acting).

Michelle: There seems to be a lot of dialogue these days around what "Folk Music" is, and whether traditional understandings of what that term means need to be reevaluated to ensure the sustainability of "Folk Music" well into the future. As someone who has been lauded many times over by various folk music organizations — "a prime figure in American music" per the Folk and Acoustic Music Exchange, as an example — how do you define "Folk Music" and what are some steps you feel artists and

organizations alike should take to keep it alive?

Rupert: My most recent CD, 'For The People,' took its title from the line in Lincoln's Gettysburg address about the idea of democracy being government of the people, by the people and for the people. It struck me that was also a good definition of folk music — which we might call music by the people, of the people and for the people. In writing the album I used old English folk tales as a basis for many of the songs. However, folk music can take many forms. Blues and Gospel music are in a sense the folk music of the African American community, and they sound nothing like English folk music (though they do have certain things in common with Irish music). I guess folk music can be defined more specifically as music that is not elitist in any way, in the sense that it does not require its listeners to get an education in the form before they can enjoy it. As to what steps we should take to keep folk music, in all its forms, alive, the answer is always the same — promote live shows and make sure they are well attended. This is the only way that musicians today can hope to make a living.

Michelle: Who are some of your musical influences? How have they shaped your approach to songwriting?

Rupert: In my teens I listened to a fairly eclectic selection of music. There were the usual suspects such as The Beatles, The Kinks, Rolling Stones, and Bob Dylan. As I became more interested in guitar, I added

Central Ohio Folk Festival Gears Up to Mix Nature & Music for Family Fun May 6 & 7!

BY D. BOSTON

We are super excited to bring to you the 26th annual Central Ohio Folk Festival.

Among the highlights: a wonderfully diverse array of performers from midwestern and eastern US regions (and even one from Canada), some dynamite workshop presenters, four ongoing jam tents and a new Youth Folk tent. We're proud to present Nocterra craft beer in our beer garden area and we have some great food trucks lined up (Schmidts, NAICCO, Whit's, and Pitabilities). The setting is the great outdoors at Highbanks Metro Park (Big Meadows area), 9466 Columbus Pike (Rt. 23), in Lewis Center, just 4 miles North of Worthingto.

Dozens of top-notch performers will appear on 3 different stages, with acts changing every hour. Among them: Philadelphia based band, House of Hamill, will rip through some Irish jigs and reels, adding lush three-part harmonies into traditional folk ballads, and cracking up the audience with stories from the road. The Pairs, an extremely talented folk group from London, Ontario, CAN, is powered by three classically trained vocalists and a former punk rock drummer. You can expect a unique blend of music that will hug your eardrums and inspire you to dance. These are just a few; we have so many favorites!

There will be two drum circles — one 5pm Sat. and one 4pm Sun., an Opening Sing-

Along at 11am on Sat. and a Closing Song Circle at 4:30pm on Sun.

Learning opportunities abound. You can wander over to the workshop tents without paying a separate fee and learn how to play the ukulele (loaners available) or how to cultivate mindfulness — either as a musician or simply as a music lover. There are over 30 to choose from!

A storyteller slot on Sat. at 1pm, showcases the power of the long-existing art of storytelling and features Lyn Ford, a fourth-generation, nationally recognized, Affrilachian (google it) storyteller.

Our popular children's area will once again feature special songs, stories, projects, and crafts for the young and the young-at-heart.

New this year, is expanded informal jamming. Instead of one jam tent, this year will feature four, each with a different style: bluegrass, old-time, folk-mix, and one led by the Worthington Square Jam Group, dedicated to encouraging the very beginner. Jam tents run all day both days and are open to all. We also have a staffed instrument storage tent. For non-stage performing musicians, we have a roving golf cart to help transport you and your instrument from center field parking should you need it.

The legendary "Most Outrageous Song in the World Contest" occurs at 4pm on



Saturday. To participate in this quirky fun contest, email jvanauken@columbus.rr.com.

And we haven't even mentioned the high energy Saturday evening headliner, Nefesh Mountain!

Since 2022, the festival has become an all free-will donation event. There will be no other ticketing fees as in the past for the workshops or the Saturday night headliner concert. As people enter the festival grounds, we'll welcome donations. For donations of \$20 or more, you'll get a free "flexible frisbee" and other fun stuff. Festival staffers are all volunteers, so 100% of the donations will help support this festival.

The festival is produced by the Columbus Folk Music Society and is co-sponsored by WCBE Radio 90.5 FM.

For more info, visit:

www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/festival.html

PRESENTER	WORKSHOP TITLE AND LEVEL
KATIE DAHL	Revealing Yourself Through Music (ALL) Social Media for Musicians (ALL)
DAVE GASTEL	Harmonica: Different Styles for Different Songs (Sat workshop) (INT) Harmonica: Different Styles for Different Songs (Sun workshop) (INT)
HAYES GRIFFIN	Foundations of Mandolin Playing (ALL)
HARD TRAVELIN'	Get to Know Woody Guthrie (Sat workshop) (ALL) Get to Know Woody Guthrie (Sun workshop) (ALL)
JOHN HARROD	Fiddle Bowing: The Pattern-less Pattern (ALL) Cross Tuning Fiddle Workshop: AEAE and ADAE (INT-ADV)
HOUSE OF HAMILL	Learn Two Traditional Irish Tunes! (ALL)
JOANNA LI	Introduction to Guzheng (Chinese folk instrument) (ALL)
BRYCE MULLINS	Intro to Fingerstyle Guitar: Thumbpicking Basics (INT)
NA SKYLARK (CATHY WILDE)	Irish Tin Whistle 101 (Some loaners available) (BEG)
NA SKYLARK	Learn an O'Carolan Tune (INT & UP)
KATY OBERLE	Mindfulness for Musicians & Music Lovers (ALL)
THE PAIRS	Creating Harmonies (ALL)
HEATHER PIERSON	Singing for Everybody (ALL) Songwriting and Creativity (ALL)
PAUL D. RACE	Intro to Appalachian Dulcimer (Some loaners available) (BEG) Intro to Autoharp (Some loaners available) (BEG)
MICHAEL G. RONSTADT (FROM SHANNON CLARK & THE SUGAR)	Cello in Folk Music (ALL)
TODD SAMS (FROM APPALACHIAN SWING)	Easy Fixes for Better-Sounding Instruments (ALL) Banjo from Scruggs to Melodic (INT-ADV)
ADAM SCHLENKER	Flatpicking/Bluegrass Guitar (INT-ADV)
SHANNON CLARK & THE SUGAR	Songwriting as a Group (ALL)
BRIAN SZUCH (FEAT. WITH MARY MILLER & MIKE MALE DUD)	Accompanying Other Musicians (INT-ADV)
PAISHA THOMAS	Music & Social Change (ALL)
DEBORAH VAN KLEEF	Getting Started on the Uke (Some loaners available) (BEG) Getting Started on the Guitar (Some loaners available) (BEG)
GEORGE WELLING	Playing in a Bluegrass Jam (ADV BEG)

We hope to see you very soon!

Rupert Wates, from pg 3



Rupert Wates at Badger Mountain House

guitar wizards such as Leo Kottke, Ry Cooder and John Martyn to the list. I also listened to some classical music, particularly Stravinsky. Then because in my family I had many brothers and a sister, I was influenced also by their tastes. My sister used to listen to Joni Mitchell and Carole King; one of my brothers liked the Allman Brothers and The Grateful Dead. Later in my life I came across the music of Nick Drake. Among my contemporaries, I admire the music of my good friend and fellow singer-songwriter Ben Bedford. I would say all these artists have influenced my writing in their different ways. If I had to define my approach to songwriting in a single sentence, I would say that I believe a song should be above all a good piece of music. This may sound obvious but I don't hear many songs today that I would consider to be good music!

Michelle: In addition to an incredible solo discography and your work as part of The Nightwatchers duo, you're also a published author! Given that, I think it's safe to say that storytelling is important to you. What is it about storytelling that you are drawn to?

“ I guess folk music can be defined... as music that is not elitist ...it does not require its listeners to get an education in the form before they can enjoy it. ” – Rupert Wates

What types of stories are you most interested in sharing, whether that be via the written word or music?

Rupert: All songs are stories. Even if they don't tell a story from beginning to end, they always invite the listener to imagine a certain situation — e.g., 'my lover is gone and I'm unhappy' — and to share the feelings that the situation and the song evoke. This is healthy because it brings us out of our own skin for a moment, requiring us to put ourselves in someone else's place. In my own case, these days I'm not so interested in telling a complete story in a song, as in the old ballad form, so much as I am in capturing a moment, a freeze frame as it were, within the story, describing what the character is seeing and hearing and what is going on around them, leaving the listener to complete the story in his or her own mind. As for the kind of stories that interest me most, they are those that for whatever reason move me — and which I hope will also move the listener.

Michelle: Ok, final question — of the 12 albums you've released to date, which do you recommend to someone who is hearing your music for the first time? Why that one in particular?

Rupert: I would recommend my most recent CD, mentioned above, 'For The People'. I think it's the most organic of all my CDs, and is the most consistent in terms of style, sound and theme. It's also received the best reviews of any of my albums, and because it's my most recent it's the most representative of the kind of thing I'm doing now. But wait a couple of months, and there'll be another CD that's newer still!



Welcome NEW Members

Chuck Blazer Carol Orr
 Chris Gillen Kevin Johnson
 John Karnes The House
 Angus McKay String Band
 Claudia Powell

...and Welcome Back RENEWING Members!



Save the Date!

Americana/Folk Concert Series

Wrygrass

Friday, April 14, 5 - 7pm

Free-will Donation

Venue: Reeb Center, 280 E Reeb Ave.
 (just around the bend from Tara Hall)

Rupert Wates

Saturday, April 22, 8pm

Open Mic: 7pm, Open Jam: 6pm

Donation: \$15 / \$10 for members

Venue: Cols Mennonite Church, 35
 Oakland Park Ave.

Zoom Jam Sessions

Offered to nursing homes Thursdays
 10am -12 noon. If you wish to
 participate, please contact Jane at:

vanaukj@gmail.com

In-Person Jams

Mondays 6-8pm at 4th Ave
 Christian Church, 296 W. 4th Ave.

Saturdays 9:30-11:30am through
 May 20 at Whetstone Community
 Center, 2nd floor, 3923 N. High St.
 Free learning class.

NEWSLETTER TEAM

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A note to all Folk Festival Volunteers:

Remember to earmark the dates of May 6 & 7 on your calendar for the festival! Randi Cohen will be sending out your volunteer schedule the end of the first week of April.

Additional Concerts Being ADDED to CFMS' Americana / Folk Concert Series

The Columbus Folk Music Society is pleased to introduce and extend our Americana/Folk Concert Series into other areas of the city to spread the joy of folk music throughout our community. The **first of these concerts will be held on the southside at Reeb Center, 280 E. Reeb Ave, Cols, OH on Friday, April 14.** The concert will run from 5-7pm and it is an entirely free will donation event. **Enjoy an early evening concert by Wrygrass,** a band of veteran Columbus musicians whose specialty is bluegrass and who have a combined century worth of experience making audiences happy. **We hope to see you there!**

Information about the Americana/Folk Music Concert Series can be found here: www.columbusfolkmusicociety.org/events.html



The Columbus Folk Music Society

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BECOME A MEMBER OF THE COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY

Date _____ New Renew Preferred Newsletter Format: Digital Hard Copy

Name(s) / Band Name (if applic) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

General Age Range – Born: 1930s-40s 1950s-60s 1970s-80s 1990s-2010s

Phone _____ (Cell) _____ If Band, website _____

E-mail Address _____ Additional e-mail (if a household or band) _____

We are also a growing, vibrant community of volunteers; the awesome force behind our work! Please at least 1 box.

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> May folk festival | <input type="checkbox"/> General Help | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CFMS concert events | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Musician | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking / Baking | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Instructor | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing / Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal | Instruments: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Musician | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> None |

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE ANNUALLY ON DECEMBER 31. one of the membership levels listed below.

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Household \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Good Friend \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$200 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$500 |

To join/renew by credit card, visit CFMS' website: columbusfolkmusicsociety.org (About Us/Join)

OR click here: <https://tinyurl.com/CFMS-Join>

To join/renew by cash or check, please mail completed membership form with payment to: *Columbus Folk Music Society, PO Box 20735, Columbus, OH 43220.* Membership amounts may be tax-deductible.

My place of work matches donations:

