



## Folk Festival 2022 = A Resounding Success

BY BILL COHEN

The Central Ohio Folk Festival returned to a fully in-person event at Highbanks Metro Park. More than 9,000 people attended and contributed to its success!



For the first time in three years, folk music lovers by the thousands streamed into the Highbanks Metro Park to celebrate the joy and fun of folk music, as the Central Ohio Folk Festival made a triumphant post-Covid return to a fully in-person event. They watched dozens of performers, sang along to familiar folk tunes, were delighted by hearing totally new acoustic tunes, learned about many aspects of folk music in workshops, and jammed in informal play-alongs – all of it wrapped up in a natural setting that seemed to green up before our very eyes.

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## A Different Strummer Newsletter Highlights

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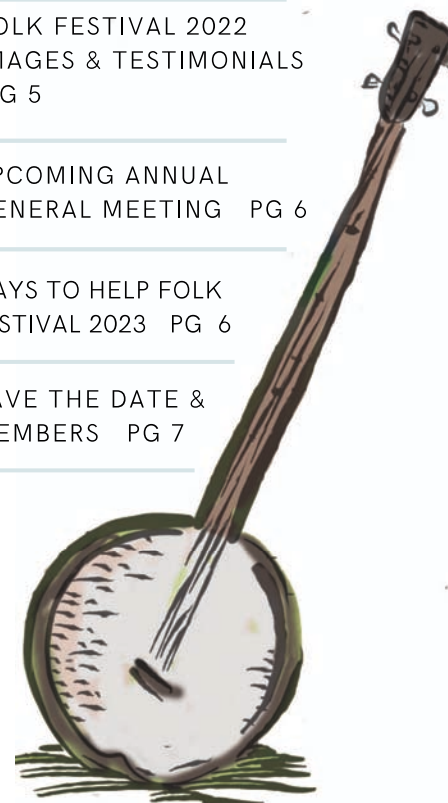
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Saturday was chilly with temps in the low 50's, and the park grounds were a little soggy from earlier rains, but hundreds of festival-goers, obviously hungry for an in-person musical party after more than two years of isolation, still braved the elements on opening day. Then, on Sunday, the sun "poured down like honey" (as Joni Mitchell once wrote), temps hit the mid-60's, and the crowd size seemed to at least quadruple. The party-like mood was symbolized in the fact that some children and adults alike were spotted with hand-made headbands laden with flowers from the children's arts and crafts tent.

This year's fest, perhaps more than ever, showed how culturally diverse the folk arts are. Children younger than 10 amazed the crowd by playing intricate melodies on table-top Chinese zithers called Guzhengs. Native American performer Alexa Dawson delighted audiences with her original songs and educated people about her people's history. The Columbus International

Children's Choir, made up of children from many different ethnic backgrounds, opened up the Showcase Stage on Saturday singing songs from Ukraine and other international songs. Activist and musician Paisha Thomas used a workshop to highlight how folk music has been used in the racial struggle for equal rights. The soothing sounds of the Scottish harp wafted over the festival grounds on Sunday morning. African-American drummer Jubal Harris led an energizing drum circle each day, as several children and parents, led by festival mascot Darby Duck, marched around the circle to the mesmerizing rhythms. Appalachian and bluegrass music was featured at all three of the performing stages and also at the jam tent.

**“ This year's fest, perhaps more than ever, showed how culturally diverse the folk arts are... ”**

– Bill Cohen





The festival opened with an audience sing-along of classic 1950's and 60's folk songs, and it ended with a similar song circle. But even more modern folk-style music was also celebrated, as several singer-songwriters performed from one end of the festival site to the other. One performance paid tribute to singer-songwriter John Hartford and another memorialized John Prine. This brief listing of festival activities could go on and on and on, because there were so many other activities.

How popular was this year's festival, celebrating its 25th birthday? Very popular, as evidenced by several things. A long line of customers was a constant at one of three food trucks, and another truck had so many fans, it ran out of food both days. The beer garden, a first-time experiment by the festival and the Metro Parks system, also sold out its supply of craft brew. The children's arts and crafts area used up its whole cache of flowers on Saturday and had to have it replenished on Sunday.

Park officials estimated total attendance at the festival tallied more than 9,000, close to an all-time high. The audience for the Saturday night headliner act, the Way Down Wanderers, numbered around 300, the largest crowd anyone could recall for a folk fest here. The six youthful Wanderers, five of them in their twenties, energized the crowd with a volley of original "newgrass" songs that prompted several audience members to dance in the aisles. With animated facial expressions, lightning-fast fingers plunking strings, and stomping feet that nearly crushed one end of the wooden stage, the musicians from Illinois embodied the idea that great music is joyful. They also proved what their website had already observed: "They sing like angels but play songs with guts that are definitely earthbound."

Dozens of Columbus Folk Music Society members and some new friends were a key to helping the festival run smoothly. They worked for free as volunteers, contributing a total of several hundred

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# Music Is Good for Your Brain

BY PETE INSABELLA



We all listen to music for entertainment. But you should know that music can also boost your overall well-being, whether you listen for enjoyment or you actually learn to play music. Researchers at Johns Hopkins Medical School have found that listening to music can reduce anxiety, blood pressure, and pain and it can also improve your sleep quality, your mood, your mental alertness, and even your memory. If you want to keep your brain engaged throughout the aging process, music can be a great help by providing a total brain workout. A Johns Hopkins researcher said in a recent podcast, "Music is structural, mathematical and architectural. It's based on relationships between one note and the next. You may not be aware of it, but your brain has to do a lot of computing to make sense of it."

It shouldn't come as a surprise that music can affect your brain emotionally. We all have a favorite song or two that can bring us to tears. There are also up-tempo songs

that can pump us up and really get us going. Music can have a massive effect on our emotions, and that's one of the reasons why composers add music to films – they want you to feel sad, happy, angry, or scared at exactly the right time.

In the same way that music can make you happy, the same reaction and release of dopamine can be considered a natural antidepressant. When we talk about the way in which music can be used clinically, we're talking about music therapy.

So we know that listening to music has many benefits. How about learning a musical instrument? Here are just a few of the benefits you can unlock by learning to play an instrument:

- Increased Brain Function – Playing an instrument leads to increased cognitive ability and memory capability since it engages almost every part of your brain.
- Sharing and Connecting with Others – Playing an instrument helps you express yourself and connect with others. You'll make new friends when you learn an instrument.
- Confidence Boost – Playing an instrument helps boost your confidence as you will probably end up playing in front of other people at some point.

Whether you're listening for entertainment, therapy, or to learn new skills, music brings "a score" of benefits!





### TESTIMONIALS FROM SURVEYS

"What a lovely surprise! Please continue offering this festival. Well-organized, great location, perfect weather (Sunday); excellent talent! Thank you for making this a free event."

"Very beautiful setting and great music."

"Jam tent was awesome. Magical how various musicians just 'walked up' and started playing — including the 'bluegrass' horn! Very enjoyable. Thank you!"

"1st time - really having a great time. Look forward to next year."



## Upcoming CFMS Annual General Meeting, Noon, Saturday, June 18

The Columbus Folk Music Society will hold its annual meeting at this year's yard sale on **June 18th at Linda McDonald's house, 444 Oakland Park. Please arrive by noon** so that we can hold a brief business meeting that will include selecting next year's board members and officers and make some updates to our bylaws. Below you will find the proposed slate of board members and officers for 2022-23.

### Officers

Charlie Flowers, President  
Diane Boston, Vice President  
Barbara Wright, Secretary  
Greg Denby, Treasurer

### Trustees

Mike Hale  
Steve Ing  
Randi Cohen  
Jennifer Cohen-Jordan  
Jane VanAuken  
Jan Flory  
Pete Insabella  
Bill Cohen  
Mary Finney  
Marian Harris  
Bob Lipetz

## Too Soon to Look for COFF 2023 Volunteers? NOPE!

We are already planning ahead for the Central Ohio Folk Festival, May 6 & 7, 2023 and we need your help! Join us now to get your name on our list to volunteer your time and energy. We will reach out in March 2023 to start things rolling for May.

We will need folks to lend a hand in several different ways - helping load and unload the truck, safeguarding instruments in our lock-up tent, helping children enjoy the arts and crafts or the instrument "petting zoo", greeting workshop attendees, welcoming various groups and singer-songwriters to their special tents, and more.

To volunteer, contact Randi Cohen at [randi@randicohen.com](mailto:randi@randicohen.com) or text/call (614) 563-3331.

As folk duo  
Mustard's Retreat  
proclaims in its  
beloved tribute to  
the unsung heroes  
who make folk  
festivals happen:  
**"Let's hear it for  
the volunteers."**



## Another Way to Help - Save Items for 2023 Central Ohio Folk Festival Craft Tent

We're always looking for oatmeal canisters and coffee cans for the kids to make and decorate little drums. We're also always looking for "fake" flowers for making flower headbands! Materials can be dropped off at the home of Linda McDonald, 444 Oakland Park Ave, Columbus, Ohio. Thanks in advance!





## Welcome NEW and RETURNING Members

Lauren Barnett	Tony Miller
Richard Brant	Tom Nagel
Diane Casey	Diane Rogers
Doug Crandall	Laura Seed



## Save the Date!

### Annual CFMS General Meeting / Elections at Yard Sale Fundraiser

**Sat, June 18**, Noon, you are encouraged to attend!

### Concert Series & Fundraiser Concerts

**Watch for future announcements.**

### Zoom Jam Sessions

**Mon, Tues, Sat:** 10am-Noon; To get the current link to the sessions, contact Jane at: [vanaukj@gmail.com](mailto:vanaukj@gmail.com)

### In-Person Jams

**Saturday mornings** from 9:30-11:30am at Whetstone Park Picnic Area, 3923 North High Street

**Mondays** from 6 to 8 pm, 4th Ave Christian Church, 296 W. 4th Ave.

**Sat, June 18**, 9 am to late afternoon, COFF Yard Sale Event

**Sat, June 25**, 9:30 am to 11:30 am, Franklin Park Conservatory

**Sat, June 25**, 10 am to 4 pm, 10TV Outdoor Adventure Event, Highbanks Metro Park



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work hours," doing a variety of tasks. Among them: setting up and tearing down tables, chairs, stages and tents, setting up and operating sound equipment, selling brew at the beer tent, watching over everyone's musical instruments, welcoming folks at the festival entrance and taking in their donations, staffing the instrument petting zoo and arts/crafts area, and so much more.

The financial bottom line also proved the festival's success and showed how satisfied and generous festival-goers were. For the very first time, the festival abandoned its previous fees for workshops and for the Saturday night headliner concert, and the event relied on donations only. It was a gamble, but it paid off, literally and figuratively, because it resulted in a rare phenomenon – instead of running at a small deficit, the festival now has an unpretentious nest egg that can go to help produce next year's celebration.

**For the very first time, the festival relied on donations only and thanks to the generosity of festival-goers "now has an unpretentious nest egg that can go to help produce next year's celebration".**



## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell): \_\_\_\_\_ If Band, website: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address(es) (if a household / band membership): \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership renewals are due annually on September 30th.** Check one of the membership levels listed below.

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Band Membership \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver \$250      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household \$25  | <input type="checkbox"/> Good Friend \$50     | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$200  | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$500 |

For credit card transactions, visit CFMS website at: <https://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html>

Membership amounts may be tax-deductible. My place of work matches donations: ☐

**Like to volunteer? Please click all that apply. We are an all-volunteer driven organization!**

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> May festival | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership            | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking / Baking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CFMS events  | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal        | <input type="checkbox"/> Desktop Publishing    |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising  | <input type="checkbox"/> Database              |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General Help | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Tasks  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Musician     | <input type="checkbox"/> Music Instruction     |   |

*Please send completed membership form  
with payment to: Columbus Folk Music  
Society, P.O. Box 20735, Columbus,  
OH 43220*