



The Mighty Troubadours featured at CFMS' Concert Series on Sat, Jan 28

INTERVIEW BY BILL COHEN

The Mighty Troubadours, playfully aka "**The Troubz**", perform "new grass" with a "whimsical intensity...soulful harmonies and foot-tapping instrumentation". See them in the new year at **8pm January 28** for the Americana/Folk Concert Series at the Mennonite Church.

Bill Cohen: We know the Mighty Troubadours perform bluegrass music, but how do you define bluegrass?

Joseph Gardina: This is always a fun question to answer because there tends to be an inherent ambiguity about the genre. The explanation can be a little lengthy, but I'll do my best to be concise . . . haha.

There are definitely different styles of bluegrass music and it's important to point out the distinction between them because there are preservationists of the traditional style that want to keep the integrity of its history and proper form. Traditional bluegrass originated with the godfathers of bluegrass: Bill

[See Mighty Troubadours..pg.3](#)

*The truth is there's always a hum of
people playing folk music in cities.*

- Johnny Flynn

A Different Strummer Newsletter Highlights

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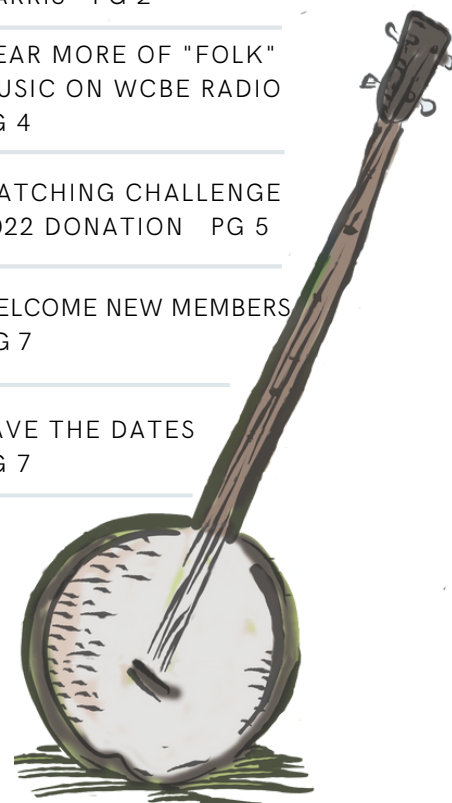
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CFMS Welcomes New Board Members - Part II

BY PETE INSABELLA

*"New to the Board",
Marian Harris. A
long-time resident
of the greater
Columbus area,
one of her desires
is to educate the
public about CFMS'
mission and its
contributions to the
cultural life of
Central Ohio.*



In October's newsletter we introduced three new members of the Columbus Folk Music Society's Board of Trustees. In this issue we welcome the fourth new member, Marian Harris. Marian is a 40-year resident of the greater Columbus area. She became interested in folk music way back in the 1950s by listening to Pete Seeger, the Weavers, the Limelighters, and other classic folk groups.

In her spare time, she enjoys listening to jazz and Broadway musicals. She is also a binge reader. ("If I like a book, I'll finish it in a couple of days.") She's also a fan of murder mysteries and detective series on TV and will binge-watch those as well. She became interested in the Folk Music Society after attending some of the monthly Folk/Americana coffeehouse concerts, the folk festivals, and the concerts featuring Bill Cohen. She has three children and six grandchildren, all of whom, she says, "are old enough to drink legally."

Marian Harris was quite active in politics during her working years. She worked on behalf of Howard Metzenbaum's primary and general campaigns in the mid 1970s and for Jimmy Carter's 1976 presidential campaign. In 2006 she ran for the Ohio House of Representatives in a losing campaign. But in 2008 she ran again and won. Over the years she has worked as both a volunteer and a paid staff member on a number of federal, state, and local campaigns.

On the subject of politics, Marian was asked for the one issue about which she feels most strongly. She responded, "I'm passionate about curbing gun violence and have worked and volunteered for several gun safety organizations."

When it comes to her ideas for improving the Columbus Folk Music Society, her first thought is that educating the public about CFMS' mission and its contributions to the cultural life of central Ohio would be a good way to boost the membership. She strongly supports the concept of volunteerism and is enthusiastic about volunteering her own time and energies to further CFMS's mission of promoting the appreciation of folk music, song, dance, storytelling and other folk arts in Central Ohio.

The officers and trustees of the Columbus Folk Music Society are pleased to welcome Marian Harris to the Board.



Mighty Troubadours, from pg 1

Monroe And The Bluegrass Boys, the Carter Family, Doc Watson, etc.

To play traditional bluegrass you want to emulate the style of these godfathers, such as: playing mandolin using the Bill Monroe technique, playing banjo with the three finger roll pattern style that Earl Scruggs patented, and using the flat/cross-picking method of Doc Watson.

But it's also fun to research the history that led to this style of music coming to fruition. All of these beautiful stringed instruments came together from different parts of the world. The banjo originated in Africa as the sheep skin banjo, the violin and mandolin originated in Italy, and the guitar originated in Spain.

Also, there is the immeasurable melting pot of genres' influence here as well! Such as: Gospel, Celtic, classical, folk, Ol' Timey blues, rock 'n' roll, etc. Throw a bunch of these genre-influenced instruments into the hands of music loving folks from the

hills of Appalachia... alas... bluegrass has been born! Phew! Ok – got that out of the way!

Bill: How do you describe the kind of bluegrass music you play?

Joseph: The thing I've always admired about these godfathers of bluegrass is their choice as individuals to create and innovate with their music. Meaning, coming up with their own style of playing and not conforming to what other styles of music may have told them they were supposed to sound like.

The Troubadours define our music as being “new grass” or “contemporary” or “progressive.” All the terms are interchangeable.

A band by the name of New Grass Revival was a pioneer of new grass. The band was founded in 1971 and composed of Sam Bush, Courtney Johnson, Ebo Walker, Curtis Burch, Butch Robbins, John Cowan, Béla Fleck, and Pat Flynn. They broke the rules of traditional bluegrass by using the same instrumentation, but . . .

experimenting with different playing styles. Hence, the term “New grass” was formed!

In my personal opinion “new grass” is just a fun term to use interchangeably with “progressive”. And I would say that it's defined by doing any style of music with bluegrass instruments that is ‘outside the box’ of the traditional style.

Bill: What is it about bluegrass that makes you so passionate about it?

Hear Even More “Folk” Music on WCBE Radio!



More about WCBE can be found at: www.wcbe.org where you can also view the daily schedule, playlists and directly stream content.

BY BILL COHEN

Public Radio Station WCBE (90.5 FM) has just expanded its music programming several hours each day. By dropping National Public Radio news programs like “Morning Edition” and “All Things Considered,” the station can now devote nearly its total programming schedule to the kinds of music it’s been playing part of each broadcast day for years. The format is called AAA — Adult Album Alternative. And that means a broad range of music, much of it related to the category of “folk” music.

Take a look at this list of musical genres that are included:

Singer/Songwriter – Roots Rock – Bluegrass – Folk – Blues – Soul – Traditional Country – Outlaw Country – Honky Tonk – Alt. Rock – Psychedelic Rock – Gospel – R&B – Jazz – Acid Jazz – Boogie Woogie – Rag – Reggae – Dancehall – Afropop – Afrobeat – International World – Zydeco – Cajun – Native American – Klezmer – Polka – Regional American – Celtic – Celtic New Age – British Folk.

Among the WCBE hosts are Mike Foley, Maggie Brennan, Jim Maneri, and Mike Taylor. They’ve now got even more air time to play songs from not just nationally

known musicians but also local musical artists.

For more than a decade, WCBE has been a co-sponsor of the annual Central Ohio Folk Festival, and WCBE music host Mike Foley sees even more partnerships ahead:

“The relationship between WCBE and the Columbus Folk Music Society has been wonderful. WCBE's expanded format will take that partnership to another level. I've enjoyed seeing the growth of the Central Ohio Folk Festival over the years and having the opportunity to interview some of the performing artists. I'm grateful to have a role in this music-intensive format. It will help shine an even brighter light on events like the Folk Festival, help talented artists and expose listeners to a variety of music. I had a musician reach out to me from Ireland recently, so the word is getting out about WCBE and its commitment to music.”

The station has been supportive of other projects of the Columbus Folk Music Society. Now, with the station cementing its reputation as a leader in eclectic, folk, and acoustic music, it’s possible that WCBE and the CFMS can work together even more in the years ahead.

Matching Challenge: Your 2022 Year-End Donation Doubled!

To date, your contributions have landed us almost half way there; THANK YOU!!

As an organization we seek to bring you engaging and captivating folk music performances and other opportunities every year. Our annual festival at the beginning of May is just one of those experiences!

For the past six years, an anonymous donor has come forward with an offer to match all donations to CFMS beyond those of regular membership dues, received before December 31, up to a total of \$1,000. That means if we are able to raise \$1,000, it will be matched by our generous donor to a grand total of \$2,000!

Donations may be made in several ways:

- by credit card via our website (you need not have a PayPal account to donate):
<https://www.columbusfolkmusicociety.org/contact-donate.html>,
- via the Columbus Foundation's Giving Store:
<https://columbusfoundation.org/the-giving-store/nonprofit-directory-listing/ColumbusFolkMusicSocietyInc/6505>
- or by check payable to Columbus Folk Music Society and mailed to: CFMS, PO Box 20735, Columbus, OH 43220.

Please write "matching challenge" on your check or online donation note. And thanks!



Mighty Troubadours, from pg 3

Joseph: I'm sure this answer has a commonality enjoyed by most that play this type of music. I would say it's the diversity of how many different styles of music you can play and all the fun of different stringed instruments melded together in such a really cool way. It's often said how there's a certain purity to a piece of wood and some steel strings. And you don't need much more to make a very down-to-earth music style come together. It's about singing harmonies and picking/bowing your instrument. And you can do that anywhere — from a really big stage to a humble front porch. When a musician who plays bluegrass sits in a circle for the very first time, with the many different instruments and sings harmonies with dear friends, it's a very, very powerful and therapeutic experience.

Bill: What's the history of your band?

Joseph: The Mighty Troubadours started in 2009 as a duo with founding members Joseph Gardina and Christopher Swanson. They joined forces with others after realizing they had a mutual love for harmonious singing and certain musical styles. Heavily influenced by the band

[See Mighty Troubadours, pg 6](#)

Mighty Troubadours, from pg 5

New Grass Revival, they selected songs that showcased their unique ability to pull off some of the fun, acrobatic harmonies they loved so much by artists like Sam Bush and John Cowan.

Around this time, Dicks Den (a bar in Columbus' Old North neighborhood) began doing a Tuesday night bluegrass jam. The jam was the idea of present day co-owner, Aaron Snyder, a bartender at the time. This bluegrass jam was not just any ordinary jam. It was something that became an outlet and breathed life into both the city and hearts of musicians and music lovers all over Ohio. Not only was it a rip-roaring, intensely fun night of music from 10pm till 2am every Tuesday, but it allowed a lot of musicians to meet and form bands, a number of whom are now notable ensembles in Columbus' local music scene.

Aaron Snyder had a strong front man presence both vocally and on rhythm guitar: he was the missing link for Chris Swanson and Joseph Gardina's vocal arrangements. Over the many years of playing at this bluegrass jam, The Mighty Troubadours continued to add some of Columbus' most talented string band musicians namely, James Hendrickson (upright bass), Isaiah Sparling (banjo), Mark Gonzalez (dobro and guitar), and Skotty Brown (fiddle).

Bill: What venues have you played in over the years?

Joseph: Dick's Den, Natalie Coal-fired Pizza (Worthington), Natalie's Music Hall

(Grandview Heights), Midland Theater (Newark), The Bluestone, The Refectory, Brothers Drake Meadery, Woodlands Tavern, and Nocterra Brewery, amongst numerous other venues, including private events and weddings.

Bill: What do you want your audiences to experience when they see and hear The Mighty Troubadours?

Joseph: Plain and simple, we want the audience to have a joyful experience. The Troubz (band's nickname) have been reviewed as "A whimsical intensity offered by soulful harmonies and foot-tapping instrumentation!" We feel it encompasses a truly authentic Americana style. We're a band of brothers united by a collective passion for making music with one another, and believing in the incredible power of healing that music offers us all throughout the fleeting moments of life.



Come and enjoy the music of the Mighty Troubadours Saturday January 28, 2023 at 8pm at Columbus Mennonite Church, 35 Oakland Park.



Welcome NEW Members

Alyce Rauchenstein

Michelle Hughes

RENEWING Members - Welcome back!
Please see Editor's Notes.



Save the Date!

Concert Series

The Mighty Troubadours

Saturday, January 28, 8pm

Open Mic: 7pm (pre-signup)

Venue: Columbus Mennonite Church
35 Oakland Park Ave, Cols, OH
Donation at door: \$15 / \$10 for
CFMS members.

No Series' Concerts in December.

Zoom Jam Sessions

Thurs, 10 am-noon, Nursing Home,
contact Jane VanAuken at:

vanaukj@gmail.com

In-Person Jams

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

Thursdays 11:30am-12:30 pm at
Gillie Community Senior Center,
4625 Morse Centre Dr. Play for
folks coming in for lunch.

Saturdays 9:30-11:30am at
Whetstone Community Center, 2nd
floor, 3923 N. High St. **Free**
learning jams. Swipe your
Leisure Card at the desk. If you
don't have a Leisure Card, register
for one before going upstairs.
vanaukj@gmail.com

NEWSLETTER TEAM

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Renewing Members: "Look for a thank-you e-mail acknowledging your recent membership sign-up or renewal. Rather than list the many names of you who have renewed, we wanted to allow the newsletter to bring you more story content instead!" **All members:** "We are changing our membership calendar so that it now runs from January thru December. If you have not already paid your membership, please do it now and that will carry you through December 2023. If you already paid, you will get a few free months because your membership will not be due until December 2023. For those who are considering joining or haven't yet renewed, I'm "noodging" you to join now, save \$5 per monthly in-person concert and support a great cause for such a low cost! Thanks!" Randi Cohen, Membership Coordinator

For Sale: *Bowed 25 string psaltry*, dark wood with a tree of life rosette over the sound hole. Includes: bow, soft case, tuning instrument. Made by Terry Kirby (now Spring Creek Psalteries). Never been played; excellent-brand new condition. Asking \$225 - contact Karen: kmnrn98@yahoo.com

Our next issue – Feb: Due to the upcoming busy holiday season, as usual, we won't publish a January issue. That is why the interview with our January concert performer appears in this issue. Look for our next newsletter in February!

Happy Holidays from us to you and warmest regards for the New Year!



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

- | | | | |
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| <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"/> Musical Instrument _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing / Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Musician | | <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 |

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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.

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