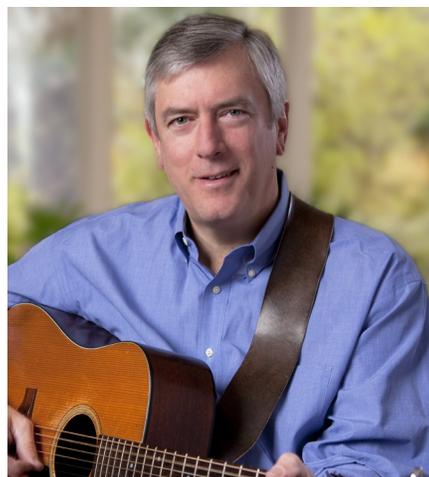


Columbus-based Parker MacDonell – Featured Artist at Oct 26 Americana/Folk Concert Series

Interview by Bill Cohen



About Parker MacDonell: A local music celebrity with Ohio roots and California influences, Parker’s original songs draw inspiration from the great singer/songwriters of the ‘70s.

You can probably expect stories from his days as a working songwriter in Los Angeles and songs from his project, *Miracle on Broad Street* amongst other gems.

A veteran of the Los Angeles club scene and college student unions across the United States, Parker was named “Best New Artist of the Year” in 1983 by the listeners of Pete Fornatale’s *Mixed Bag* show on New York City radio station WNEW. In August 2012, MacDonell released his first new recording since 1985, titled “The Present Tense.” He also released two albums on

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his indie label Fayerweather Records: “Home to the Heart” (1983) and “Looking For You (1985.)

What follows is an interview conducted by Bill Cohen with Parker MacDonell.

Bill Cohen: You’ve been a musician for decades but since this is your first

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appearance on a Columbus Folk Music Society stage, many of our members are not acquainted with you and your music, so please describe the style of music you do.

Parker MacDonell: I am a singer, songwriter and acoustic guitarist who was influenced by the great artists of the 1960s and 1970s. I try to write songs that have a story and that leave the listeners with more questions than answers.

B. Cohen: What are your earliest memories of music, and how did you wind up becoming a performer and song writer?

P. MacDonell: Both of my grandmothers played the piano, and my earliest memories are listening to them perform in their homes. My paternal grandmother was more formal and played classical music and show tunes on her Steinway grand piano, always with a sheet of music perched on top. My maternal grandmother alternated between her upright piano and Hammond B-3 organ; she played popular songs and could play by ear as well as read sheet music. She once said to me: “when you start writing songs, remember to write one for your Nana”. I did indeed make a song called “Age Old Sign” for her and my mother. Like many of my generation, I was inspired by watching the Beatles’ first appearance on

the Ed Sullivan show at age 9. That night I found my mother’s tennis racket and pretended to play it like a guitar in front of her full-length mirror. Five years later I bought a bass guitar and amp with my lawn mowing money, and a year later I got my first nylon string guitar. Mom got me a Martin D-18 my senior year of high school, but only because I agreed to trade in my bass

guitar and amp for it.

I was in the junior high and high school choirs and a cappella singing groups in my hometown of Lima and had a trio my senior year that did three-part harmony songs from CSN, the Beatles and the like. In college, I performed in campus bars with my guitar, majored in music, sang in the college glee club and directed the men’s a cappella singing group for two years.

My parents supported my dream to play music for a living, so after college I moved

to LA and did just that for nine years. After playing clubs for six years, I went onto the college student union circuit for another three years. I started a record company and made two records of my songs which I sold at my shows. They got a little bit of airplay in NYC and Washington DC and I started playing more clubs there. Then I turned 30 and decided to change careers to the family business, which was banking.

B. Cohen: Where do you do most of your performing these days, and what kind of shows are they?

P. MacDonell: I’m lucky to perform once a month at The Refectory in a trio with two great singers, one of whom plays guitar and the other the upright bass. We only do songs that people can sing along with. I sing twice a month at my church in Old

Town East and made a record there in 2017 with Matt Munhall of songs we were inspired to write by the sermons of senior pastor Amy Miracle. I performed at Natalie’s with a four-piece band from 2012 to 2015 after I released a CD of new songs in 2012.

B. Cohen: Who are the musician heroes and heroines that have influenced your music?

P. MacDonell: They are the Beatles, James Taylor, Jackson

“I try to write songs that have a story and that leave the listeners with more questions than answers.”

P. MacDonell

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Browne, Paul Simon, Crosby Stills & Nash, Joni Mitchell, Karla Bonoff, Carole King, Dan Fogelberg and many others. Another big influence is Bob Bennett, a Christian singer and songwriter whose music inspired my first three records, which are secular.

B. Cohen: Remind us of your long history with Six String Concerts, the Columbus group that sponsors shows here, starring up-and-coming singer-songwriters. How did Six String begin, what role did you play, and how has that series grown over the years?

P. MacDonell: When I moved to Columbus in 1987 to start a career in banking, I looked for a place to attend concerts by up-and-coming songwriters in a smoke-and alcohol-free environment. (My memory of CFMS at the time was that it was focused on artists who collected and performed traditional folk songs.) When I couldn't find such a place, five friends and I decided to form our own organization. We promoted our first two concerts in the fall of 1988 (Livingston Taylor and Christine Lavin). Although Six String Concerts was my idea, it only prospered because of the co-founders and all of the volunteers over the years. The best thing that happened was when I got transferred out of town two years after it started and Kim Rice Wilson took over as board president. I'm pleased to say

that the organization is still alive and well 31 years later!

B. Cohen: At your program for us on October 26, you'll be singing some classic folk songs from decades ago, but you'll also be introducing us to many of your original songs. Just to give us an example, could you talk about one of your favorites, explain the theme, and tell us about the creative process that went into it?



P. MacDonell: A friend from my childhood called one day to ask me to sing at the graveside interment of the ashes of his older brother. On the drive over to Canton for the ceremony, we listened to a recording of the memorial service for his brother a week earlier. His sister was in the van with us and whenever the pastor said something about their deceased brother that she didn't like, she'd say "no, he wasn't like that"! It made me

say to myself "I wonder what they will be saying about me when I'm gone?" At that time, I was getting together with Matt Munhall almost every week for songwriting sessions. I brought him the line "what will they say when I'm gone?" and he immediately sang a melody for it. We went back and forth on the music and the rest of the lyrics and had ourselves a song after two sessions. As much as

I like my 2012 recording of it, I like Matt's even better. And it's the song I performed when Tony Arata invited me to sit in on his round at the Bluebird Café.

B. Cohen: Tell us about your song writing. What sparks you to write a song? Is there a particular theme or thrust that seems to run through many of your songs?

P. MacDonell: Almost all of my songs are inspired by a

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Tribute to Doug Rutledge, Life member and supporter of Columbus Folk Music Society

Doug Rutledge, a longtime and loyal supporter of the Columbus Folk Music Society and many other arts and music projects, left this earth on Sept 1, 2019. Doug did so many things to support CFMS, especially creating the Areopagitica Book Store with his wife Rebecca, which was home to many musical, story-telling, and poetry events for a decade.

Below is an extract from an interview Bill Cohen did with Doug and Rebecca a number of years ago. For those who didn't know Doug, the interview speaks to the depth of character he had. For those who did know him, it is a gentle reminder of many past memories.

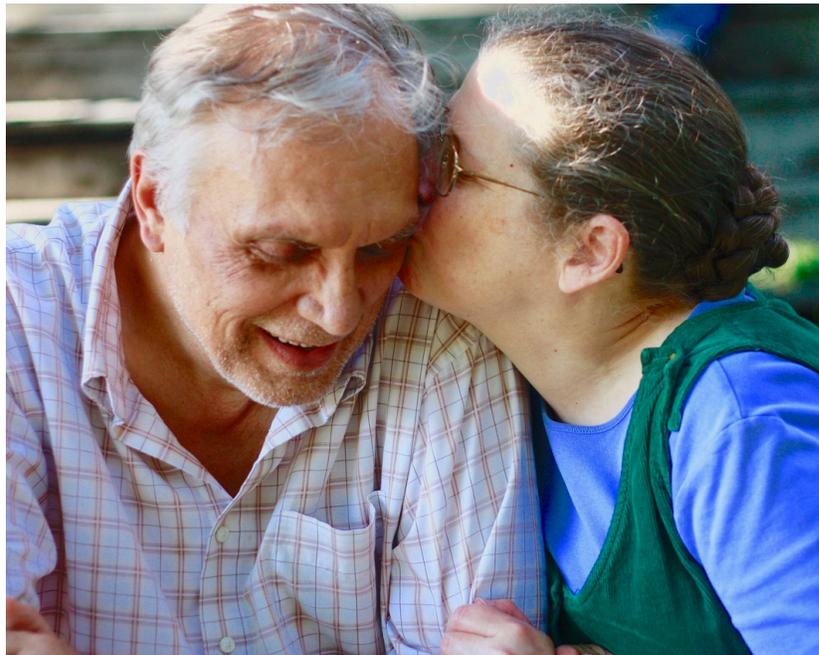
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Doug (on Folk Music): Folk Music is not abstract as classical music and even Jazz can be. Instead, it is always a narrative of human life. . . .

That human narrative is made even more tangible, when the songs are sung by friends and people one knows. Then you know the story of the song and the story of the singer, or why the song's story is meaningful to the singer. The experience is not simply entertainment; it

is moving.

Doug (on the Areopagitica Books and CFMS concerts held there): I remember being profoundly moved by Fred Bailey's guitar and Nancy Bailey's friendship. . . [and] I will always treasure the memory of Halfway Home playing at the bookstore. It is very difficult to express how talented



those people are and what a complicated range of emotions they bring to any room.

Doug (on the CFMS): CFMS is one of the few places I know that actually makes art come alive. When a play was performed in Ancient Greece, it was a community event. People knew the actors as neighbors and community members, so the meaning of

the play was reflected through the complications of one's neighbor's life. Most art, until recently, was a community event, not a picture, hung in a gallery, unrelated to one's friends and relatives. CFMS makes art alive in that way.

Tributes to Doug Rutledge:

ROCHELLE SMITH, CFMS Member

I remember with special fondness his encouragement of music at Areopagitica. His and Rebecca's generosity for making the space available was a great boon to the music scene in Columbus.

I finally remember the warmth and tenderness he spoke of when he was near Rebecca and how perfect a couple they were together. It was just lovely to watch.

MIKE HALE, CFMS member

Doug was an incredible supporter of live music. After we (Columbus Folk Music Society) relocated our

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monthly coffeehouse to his and Rebecca’s Areopagitica Books, he enjoyed the music so much they started hosting live music at least once every weekend. A gentle soul lost but not forgotten.

THERESA SCHLEIFER, CFMS member

I enjoyed participating in the Thursday evening music jams at Areopagitica. Eventually I got the itch to perform at one of the Saturday night concerts. . . There was enthusiastic talk among the musicians about such a concert, but plans remained in limbo. To get the ball rolling, I invited myself over to Areopagitica for an audition – I have a feeling that no one else ever auditioned to play there! But Doug went right along with it.

Doug and I sat across from each other toward the back of the store. He settled in and made himself comfortable, and I played some tunes. Finally, I asked, “Is that okay?” He smiled and said, “Of course! I’m just enjoying the music. Play some more!” And we had ourselves a mini-concert.

Thus I found Doug to be kind, gentle, and just a bit of a trickster!

LARRY DRAKE, CFMS member

Many years back I was doing a solo set at Areopagitica. One of the songs I did was Richard Thompson’s “1952 Vincent Black Lightning”. Afterward

Doug, who I hardly knew at the time, told me how much he liked the song, and gave me a calendar with motorcycle pictures at each month. I was really touched by his thoughtfulness.



DR. SELESHI, Co-worker, one of the refugee organizations in Central Ohio

I knew Doug when we were doing this Somalia project. I had heard so many good things about Doug because of our common interests – welcoming refugees. . . . Doug and Rebecca were really twins I could say for their welcoming nature. . . very passionate people. I think they are really true sons of America because the foundation of America is really to welcome and embrace the strangers. . . . welcoming to those who have been beaten, pushed and tortured and they welcomed them so they can be contributing members of society. [Our program] for

teaching English was from his scientific study and was put together by him for us on how to make – successfully and quickly – refugees learn English in order to get a job. We remember him in our refugee community.. . He really was an ‘exemplary’ man in every way.

ROCHELLE SMITH, CFMS Member

Most of us try to do what we can to make the world a more friendly place – a smile, a greeting go a long way to improving our corner of the world. Doug’s corner of the world encompassed the entire globe. . . . Doug’s advocacy for numerous displaced persons and his hard work in helping so many to assimilate in this area will impact generations.

CHUCK SALMONS, President of the Ohio Poetry Association

Doug took over as President of OPA and started to host some really terrific workshops. He had a very specific vision in trying to connect membership and poets-at-large with more well known poets around the state and having academic poets – published, highly-awarded poets – come in and work with us. Maybe we were just beginning to learn how to write poems. He saw that that was an important connection to establish. . . . I know our members, our current leadership and any poets that had a chance to interact with

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personal experience or an observation of one had by someone close to me. My songs almost always start with a phrase and piece of music that turn into the song title

and hook line. Early on I wrote a lot about going home and about unrequited love. When I moved back to Ohio and got married, I wrote about family, getting older and the endlessly fascinating mysteries around

the end of life. Now I'm off on a new chapter in my life as a soon-to-be single person whose children are grown, and that is likely to inspire some new songs.

D. Rutledge - from page 5

him are going to miss that vast literary knowledge he brought — in writing poetry and interpreting it.

ROCHELLE SMITH, CFMS Member

Through his poetry and his support of poets, the earth is a richer and more beautiful place. I'm personally a fan of his poetry and his prose. His words were spiritual to me; like everything he did and talked about during his many conversations.

RANDI COHEN, CFMS member

Of the many things that were so wonderful about Doug and Rebecca, their sense of community, generosity of spirit and space, kindness to others, one thing stands out for me was their care and concern for each other. They respected,

loved and liked each other. Their knowledge of books and poems and literature was (and still is with Rebecca) astounding and humbling! Doug will be missed greatly. I still hear his deep laugh!

KHRYSSO HEART LEFEY, CFMS member

Vivid in my memory is the day in 2007 when the water heater deteriorated in the apartment . . . causing immense chaos in our basement. Had I been church-ed, I might have sought refuge in some quiet time in a church sanctuary, but I was not, and the first place of serenity that came to mind was Areopagitica, the gathering-place of my spiritual community of folkies. I went there, and Doug and Rebecca met my need for a place to recover a measure of peace. Doug was a gentle soul who always made space

for people to be who and how they were, and it is a great loss to have to have a world without him.

Bill Cohen, CFMS member

What many of us love about CFMS is the feeling of community it often provides us, and Doug Rutledge was the epitome of community. For a decade, the Areopagitica bookstore he founded with wife Rebecca was a community home to many folk music, story-telling, and poetry events. His advocacy and book-writing for the Somali immigrants who settled in Columbus is another example of how Doug radiated the idea of community. His leadership of poetry and live theater groups is further proof that Doug wanted all of us to feel fully alive and "at home".

CFMS Puts C-Bus on the Map in Unique Music Event

"What if one day, everything stopped and we all just listened to the music?"

That was the idea August 31 as organizers of international "Play Music on the Porch Day" asked people around the world to simply play music for their own

neighbors. And the Columbus Folk Music Society didn't need much prodding to participate.

While bargain hunters perused the goods at the CFMS yard sale at the home of active member Linda McDonald, musicians gathered on Linda's porch to entertain.

They were among thousands across the globe to participate in an estimated 700 cities in 55 countries. The Columbus event, though, was probably the most



unique. After all, how many other porch concerts featured a yard sale?

Next year, the porch concerts are expected to grow even more widespread. In fact, the date has already been set: August 29.

Save the Date

MUSICIANS INVITED to play at Darby Days Event: Sun, October 6, 1-5pm, Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park (Indian Ridge area). 2705 Darby Creek Dr.

CONCERT: Sun, Oct 6, 2-4pm. Featuring Starlit Ways (aka Chris & Rose). Benefit for Central Ohio Folk Festival. Held at Byrne's Pub, 1248 W. Third Avenue, Grandview Hts. \$10 donation.

CONCERT: Oct 26, 8pm. CFMS' Americana/Folk Concert Series - featuring Parker MacDonell. Held at Columbus Mennonite Church, 35 Oakland Park Ave, Cols, OH. Jam 6-7; Open Mic 7-7:45; Community Sing 7:45-8pm. \$7 CFMS Members, \$10 for non-members.

JAM: Saturday Music Jam at Worthington Farmer's Market 9:30-11:30am - S.E. quad at Worthington Square.

JAM: 1st & 3rd Tues every month at Claremont Retirement Village, 7041 Bent Tree Blvd, Cols. 1st Tues at Memory Care Unit, 2-3pm. 3rd Tues at main Dining Room (independent living), 2-3pm.

JAM: 2nd & 4th Tues every month at Worthington Christian Village, 165 Highbluffs, Cols, 2-3pm.

JAM: 1st & 3rd Thurs every month at Wesley Glen, 5155 N. High St, Cols. 1st Thurs at Health Center, 2:30-3:30pm. 3rd Thurs at Special Care Unit (best accessed from rear entrance), 1:30-2:30pm.

JAM: 2nd & 4th Wed every month at Laurels of Worthington (Memory Care Unit), 1030 N High St, Worthington, 2-3pm. Contact Mike Zajano (mikezajano@aol.com) for info-all jams.

It's THYME . . .



To renew Membership Dues if you already haven't done so. Thanks to all who have renewed OR are new members! Simply submit the membership form on the back, OR bring payment to the next CFMS coffeehouse (Sept 28) OR renew online at: <https://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html>

Want to find out more about the Columbus Folk Music Society and its events?

Visit: www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org

OR you can become a member. Benefits include: camaraderie with fellow folk music lovers in town, discounts on certain admissions, this newsletter and the comfort of knowing that all events are family friendly!

A membership form can be found on page 8.



Welcome to Our New and Returning Members

- Heidi Sherer
- Barbara Wright
- Mary Finney
- Carol Kane Family
- Larry Staats
- Bob Liptez
- Ed & Erin Tatum Family
- J Halada
- Mark Evans
- Carl Yaffey Family
- Joanne Blum Family
- Nancy Belcher Family
- Marilyn Mars
- Leigh Lynch (NEW)
- Joanie Patterson Family
- Jill Cook (NEW)
- Nancy Kovacs (NEW)
- Gayla Foote
- Beth Scherer
- Michael Harris (NEW)
- Lee Cherney Family
- Carter Jastram Family (NEW)
- Andy Rudy
- Larry Myers
- Greg Denby
- Mike Hale
- Joanie Calem
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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 | |
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