



## In-Person Americana Folk/Concert Series: Keith Larsen Performs on Oct. 30

**Note:** Keith Larsen is an Ohio singer/songwriter who has always been drawn to music that tells a story. His songs merge straightforward vocals with lyrics that resonate with simplicity and honesty. Keith Larsen will appear in person at the Mennonite Church, 35 Oakland Park Avenue in Columbus on October 30. There is an audience limit (pre-registration required) and you must be vaccinated and wear a mask.



Bill Cohen interviewed Keith Larsen for this issue of the newsletter.

**BC:** Your original songs have earned rave reviews across the country for their simple elegance and the way they spark deep emotions in people. How did you evolve from a musician into a songwriter?

**KL:** Thank you, that's very kind of you to say. I think my path into songwriting may have started with making up words and melodies in my head before I ever owned an instrument. I believe my first attempt at a song was when my mother was in the hospital giving birth to my younger sister. I guess I was seven or eight at the time and I wrote a song to "honor the event." My mom kept it and showed it to me years later, but I think it's long gone now, thankfully!

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**Keith Larsen in concert Saturday, Oct. 30, 8:00 pm at the Mennonite Church in Columbus. Limited in-person audience. To register, see link on page 2.**

# Keith Larsen Is the October Headliner



Continued from page 1

**BC: Where do you get the inspiration for your songs, and how do you go about creating an original song – does the general theme come first, or is it a melody and chords, or is it a short lyrical phrase?**

KL: The beautiful thing is that inspiration is truly all around, from conversations where someone describes something in a unique way, to situations that stir some kind of emotion. Ideas tend to percolate a long time with me, and then one day when I've got the guitar in my hand, sometimes a line and a melody will spill out at the same time and then I'm off and running. I like to see the movie or the snapshot in my head about whatever it is I'm trying to write. Usually, the first verse and chorus come relatively easy, then the real work starts! Keeping tapped into that original feeling and emotion all the way through and finishing the song is the hard part.

**BC: At your October 30<sup>th</sup> concert for us, it will be just you and your guitar on stage, and that's often how you perform. Tell us what that's like to be alone in such a simple setting.**

KL: It is such a privilege to play in that type of setting with a listening audience! As long as I can remember, I've always been fascinated by listening to singer songwriters. I love the stripped-down simplicity of it which I think it brings the artist and audience together in a way that can be pretty special. It seems as things become more impersonal and pre-programmed, people appreciate even more the intimate environment that an organization like the Columbus Folk Music Society provides. Playing your songs for people who are truly there to listen is the best gift you can get as a writer, and it's why I'm so excited to play your show.

**BC: What other singer-songwriters have energized and inspired you, and who are your musical heroes? Why?**

KL: Wow, the list is long and distinguished. First, I have to say there are a lot of amazing writers in Columbus that I really ad-

mire; the level of talent here is amazing. RJ Cowdery is a local artist who I think you have on the schedule in a few months. She writes, sings and plays as good as anyone in folk music; she has the whole package! Other people who have really inspired me and would fall under the category of musical heroes are Tony Arata, John Gorka, Gretchen Peters, Alan Shamblin, and Lucy Kaplansky. Then going back farther there is Brian Wilson, Bruce Springsteen, Bob McDill, Guy Clark, Townes Van Zandt, and the list goes on and on. When I feel the honesty in someone's writing, that's what seems to draw me in. I love writers where you can peel back the layers of their song. A good example of this is "Good Ol' Boys Like Me", written by Bob McDill. It's like reading a rich novel.

**BC: You've done concerts across the country, and you've appeared in prestigious venues, like "Songs at the Center," the TV show about singer-songwriters that appears on hundreds of PBS stations weekly. Tell us about some of your more memorable gigs.**

KL: Honestly, they are all pretty memorable to me. I love meeting new people and hearing their stories every bit as much as playing. That being said, an event that will be forever burned in my mind is one of my first real public performances. It was at a sold-out show at the McConnell Center in Worthington where my friends were performing. They invited me and another writer to each perform a song in the middle of their show. This sounded like a great idea two months out from the event but by the night of the show I was terrified! When it was my turn to perform it felt like my hands were disconnected from the rest of my body and no longer taking direction from my brain. I can still see the faces of the other guys on stage tilting their heads sideways looking at me like they were watching the beginning of a slow-motion train wreck. Somehow, I got through the song, and it seemed to go ok. The funny thing is, surviving that event gave me the little bit of confidence I needed to make me want to try it again!

**You must pre-register at:** <http://bit.ly/KeithLarsen-CFMS>

## It's Renewal Time

# membership MATTERS

It's THYME . . .



To renew your Columbus Folk Music Society membership.  
**Dues for the 2021-22 year (Oct 1 to Sept 30) are due annually by September 30.**

To renew or join, you can simply send a check to CFMS, P.O. box 20735, Columbus 43220 along with the completed membership form on the back of this newsletter. Or you can renew via our website at: [www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html](http://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html)

You can also bring a check and renew or join at the October Americana/Folk Concert Series.

We look forward to your continuing membership!

**Renew membership via our website:**

[www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html](http://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html)

**Reminder: Upcoming  
FUN, Folk/Americana  
Concert: Sunday,  
October 10 (3-5 pm)**

Join the **Avalon Nine** trio outside on the great patio space at El Vaquero's — to celebrate the “roots and branches” of folk and Americana music. Expect vocal harmonies, a showcasing of band member Brian Szuch's instrumentals, and songs by favorite artists: Gillian Welch, Joni Mitchell, Nanci Griffith and John Prine to name just a few!

We'll pass the hat (suggested donation \$10-\$15) with proceeds benefiting the Columbus Folk Music Society's 2022 Central Ohio Folk Festival.

El Vaquero is located at: 3230 Olentangy River Road, Columbus, OH. They have a great outdoor patio space. Their food is good and reasonably priced, and at the same time you'll get to enjoy some fine music and hang out with others of like mind!

Seating is first-come, first served on the patio. We hope to see you there for a fun October afternoon!



The Avalon Nine band (from left to right) Brian Szuch, Linda Blaine and Dave Clutter

# Why Didn't the Music Industry Jump on the *O Brother Bandwagon*?

By **Scott Alarik**, —June 24, 2001. From *Deep Community: Adventures in the Modern Folk Underground*. Reprinted with permission.

INTRODUCTION to article: The *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* CD (released in December 2000) is the soundtrack album of music from the 2000 American film of the same name, written, directed and produced by the Coen Brothers and starring George Clooney, John Turturro, Tim Blake Nelson, and John Goodman.

The film is set in Mississippi during the Great Depression. The soundtrack, produced by T-Bone Burnett, uses bluegrass, country, gospel, blues, and folk music appropriate to the time period. The *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* CD won the "Grammy Award for Album of the Year" in 2002 as well as the "Album of the Year" Award (only the second soundtrack to ever do so) at the Country Music Association Awards. Four years later, the album ranked No. 38 on "CMT's 40 Greatest Albums" in Country Music. In 2009, Rhapsody ranked it No. 8 on the "Country's Best Albums of the Decade" list. In 2010, "All Songs Considered," a program on NPR, included the soundtrack album on their list of "The Decade's 50 Most Important Recordings." Irregardless if the main-stream music industry caught on to its value, folks who bought the CD did. If you're interested in reacquainting yourself with the productions mentioned in the article below, you can stream the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou* and *Songcatcher* on Amazon Prime video and elsewhere.

## Why didn't the music industry jump on the "O Brother" bandwagon?

With the stunning success of the soundtrack to Coen brothers [2000] film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*, a lot of industry people, both in Nashville and Hollywood, have their eyes on a quiet little ballad of a film called *Songcatcher*.

But they are not interested in the success of the film about a musicologist who discovers folk music and romance in 1910 Appalachia. Rather, they are watching to see how the Vanguard soundtrack does, believing its success may reveal whether *O Brother*, which [in 2001] has sold more than 1.2 million CDs and spent nine weeks at No. 1 on the country chart (longer than any other CD . . .), is a fluke or the bellwether of a trend toward American roots music. With the recent video and DVD release of the film [in 2000], the soundtrack jumped back to No. 1 on the country chart.

Even among true believers such as *O Brother* directors Joel and Ethan Coen, who describe their Depression-era comedy as a valentine to American roots music, there is skepticism about how much the soundtrack's success says about the music's commercial viability.

Although they are convinced they tapped a genuine consumer interest, they're not sure that an increasingly conservative and youth-obsessed music industry can exploit it.

"A million records is a lot for this kind of music," said Joel Coen, "especially since country stations weren't interested in playing it, and we couldn't get venues like VH1 interested, either. Nobody claimed it as their own; everyone said, 'It's not what we do.'"

Ethan Coen added, "It's not just country radio. Most commercial formats are locked into very mainstream pop formulas, and so much of it is, well, just bad. So if they say this music is not exactly their thing, they're right. I don't know if the people who made *O Brother*, the No. 1 country record are people who traditionally buy country music records."

Emmylou Harris is a tireless champion of roots music, and she lent her heart melting soprano both to the *O Brother* soundtrack and to the smartly conceived *Songcatcher* CD, which mixes music from the film with contemporary treatments of folk ballads by Harris, Roseanne Cash, and Patty Loveless. Dolly Parton wrote the song "When Love Is New" especially for the soundtrack, as a duet to sing with marvelous teenage *Songcatcher* actor Emmy Rossum. Of these cuts, only Harris's achingly lovely version of "Barbara Allen" is heard in the film. Calling herself "the poster child for life after radio," Harris said her brilliant and critically acclaimed new Nonesuch CD, *Red Dirt Girl*, was not even sent to country music stations for consideration.



Javier Bardem (left) on set with the Coen Brothers

# From Deep Community: Adventures in the Modern Folk Underground

Asked why country radio was so resistant to playing *O Brother*, even after its success had proved there was listener interest, she said she honestly didn't know.

"See, you're asking the wrong person. I've never understood that. They're still selling millions and millions of records with their own very narrow format, so I think change is a bit frightening. But ultimately there is going to be some kind of reckoning; you can't ignore the success of a record like *O Brother*, and eventually I think they're going to have to deal with it. But the most important thing is that this music is finding an audience without country radio."

*Songcatcher* is an historical film designed to present folk music as it existed in the lives of the ordinary people who created it. Beautifully directed by Maggie Greenwald, it is the lyrical love story of a musicologist, played by Janet McTeer, who travels to Appalachia in 1910 and records the centuries-old British ballads the people there still sing.

Like the Coen brothers, Greenwald said the film was always meant to create a context for presenting the music.

"The main character, Lilly Penleric, is really just an excuse for a movie about ballads." Greenwald said. "Throughout the whole project, we'd look at each other and say, 'A cappella ballad singing—what are we doing?' But we all just had faith that if we loved it so much, other people would, too."

"I think there's really a hunger for this kind of music by a significant number of people in our culture; something about the simple purity of the human voice, and music that is so real and raw. It taps a desire to strip away all the mechanics and discover something simpler, more human."

*Songcatcher* soundtrack co-producer Christopher Covert shopped the CD to labels. Even with talent such as Harris and Parton on board, however, and even with the *O Brother* CD topping the charts, no major labels were interested.

"The big question was, 'How are you going to market this? How are you going to get it on the radio?'" he said. "I mean, if I were a label executive, I would have said the same thing. It's a hard sell, and it all comes down to radio. There's just nowhere to go today with music that's in any way traditional. And unless it's easy to hear, most people aren't going to find it. The hope is that film may be the medium that can break music and artists who are getting lost in the shuffle."

Timothy White, editor in chief of the music-industry bible *Billboard*, has written glowingly about both soundtracks. He also believes movies may play an increasing role in introducing the public to roots music.

"There's a sense of wonder in both these films, in the way they present us this music as it really existed, but through the eyes

of characters who are seeing it for the first time," he said, "Both these soundtracks and films point people back in the right direction, not only presenting this music again, but the stories behind the music, rekindling what went on back then that brought American music to this place. Both of these films sell music in the finest sense."

Everyone interviewed believes that a genuine consumer interest is being tapped by these films. But commercial radio is too tightly formatted to allow the experimentation it would take to bring roots music to mainstream audiences. White believes that those who are bold and creative enough to find ways around the radio roadblock, and bring roots music to the general public, will be extravagantly rewarded—as were the Coens, and before them the creators of the Cuban roots film *Buena Vista Social Club* and the Irish musical *Riverdance*. At Lost Highway, the new roots division of Mercury that was launched with *O Brother*, people have been watching industry reaction even more keenly. On July 24, they released a CD soundtrack of *Down From the Mountain*, a charmingly intimate and musically breathtaking D. A. Pennebaker documentary film about a recent Nashville concert of *O Brother* musicians.

"There's a lot of people in the industry wanting to hop on the bandwagon," said Lost Highway vice president Kira Florita, "but there's also a lot of people just sitting back and waiting. They clearly see it as a phenomenon, but many think it was a one-time happening. If the *Songcatcher* soundtrack does really well, and if the American Roots PBS series next fall does anything like what Ken Burns's jazz series did—then I think industry people will pay attention."

Like so many corporate businesses today, White said, both major labels and commercial radio are under constant pressure to deliver maximum profits on a quarterly basis. Even as both industries lose customers—and are aware that their increasingly narrow formats are to blame—they seem incapable of taking the long term chances needed to expand those formats.

"I think Nashville is having some difficulty with *O Brother*," said White. "It's not what they're about right now, so its success is a little bit like swallowing a doorknob for a lot of people in country music. It really is a strong signal that people like roots-based music and will respond to it. So what I know is that the artists are there, and they're not going to stop, and they are finding audiences. But will this become an industry trend? That's up to the industry."

# CFMS Notes

## Veteran Ohio Singer/Songwriter Dave Hawkins Has New Album and New Concert

Dave Hawkins recorded his first song in 1977. Since then, he's created 9 albums, appeared in hundreds of concerts, and toured the nation, sharing his original songs. Now, with his latest album out, Dave is celebrating with a live, in-person concert, complete with a full backup band, on October 30 at 3 p.m.

A 40-minute drive from Columbus, Dave's outdoor concert will be under a canopy of old-growth trees next to a lake at Sand Hollow Winery, 12558 Sand Hollow Road, Heath Ohio 43056.

Tickets are available at this Eventbrite link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/dave-hawkins-and-the-perfect-men-with-peg-buchanan-at-sand-hollow-winery-tickets-169022245085>

Dave describes his music as being in the styles of John Prine, Johnny Cash, and Kris Kristofferson, with a touch of Celtic influence from his "Irish Catholic upbringing."

Dave's new album is titled "Bottlerockets and Broken Dreams." He says it looks "back on my life, as I face the sunset years of my career." The album has mostly original songs, including tributes to his late father and his brother, Steve. Some tunes are introspective, but others are upbeat toe-tapping songs, Dave says, and he plans to highlight songs from the new album at the live concert. "Long-time fans are telling me the album is my best one yet," he says.

Dave calls his latest recording a "Covid album," because safety precautions made it impossible for him and 6 other backup musicians to work together in person at one recording studio as usual. Instead, Dave recorded his musical tracks first, and then electronically channeled them to the others, who each added their own tracks from their own studios. The final mix was done later.

Many CFMS members have seen Dave perform at our monthly coffeehouses, special fundraisers, and annual folk festivals over the past 3 decades.



Dave Hawkins

## It's That Time of Year; Have Your Donations to CFMS Doubled!

The Columbus Folk Music Society is reaching out to all those who have enjoyed our programs over the years. As an organization we seek to bring you engaging and thoughtful experiences of folk music performances throughout the year. Our annual festival at the beginning of May includes folk music, dance, story telling, and other folk art experiences.

For the past five years, we've had an anonymous donor come forward towards the end of the year and offer to match all donations to our organization beyond regular membership dues that are 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 member to a grand total of \$2,000.

As we enter new territory for the immediate future anyway, your contributions will certainly help our efforts! You will also experience the pride of knowing that you are bolstering the growth and perpetuation of the folk arts in the Columbus area.

Donations may be made via our PayPal link on our website at: <https://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/contact-donate.html>

or via a check made payable to Columbus Folk Music Society and mailed to: CFMS, P.O. Box 20735, Columbus, OH 43220

We thank you in advance for your consideration!

# Annual Darby Days Event With Music!

**Annual Darby Days**  
**Sunday, Oct 3: 1-4pm**  
**2705 Darby Creek Dr, Galloway, OH**  
**Indian Ridge area**

An event along the banks of the Big Darby Creek at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park to enrich the public's appreciation for nature. The Battelle Darby Creek event organizers always love to include folk music in the mix and invite willing participants from the Columbus Folk Music Society to provide music. Shade tent provided.

**Consider coming out and sharing your music with event attendees!**

Contact if you have questions: Jane VanAuken  
[vanaukj@gmail.com](mailto:vanaukj@gmail.com)

# Folk Festival: Call for Volunteers

**Too Soon For Folk Festival Volunteers? NAH!**

It's never too soon to start thinking about how you might get involved with the annual Central Ohio Folk Festival held in May 2022! We hope to have this up and running with everyone attending in person this coming year. If that's the case, we will need as many helping hands as we can find. Most of the work is not too physical. It does require a smile and a kind word sometimes, though. So if you can find those in your post-COVID closet, pull them out and see if your smile and your kind words still work. You can volunteer with us! I have a list already started with people who want to be a part of something bigger than themselves! We need people to help set up chairs, safe-guard instruments, do errands via golf cart, or help people find the correct tent. Email me at [randi@randicohen.com](mailto:randi@randicohen.com) if you want to get on this list.

# Save the Date

## Concerts

**Saturday, Oct. 30, 8:00 pm Keith Larsen in Americana Folk Concert Series.**  
Held at the Mennonite Church space, 35 Oakland Park Ave, Cols. Audience limit and you must be vaccinated and wear a mask. Donation at door: \$15 (non-members) / \$10 (members). You must pre-register at: <http://bit.ly/KeithLarsen-CFMS> so we can keep track of the count.

**Sunday, Oct. 10, 3-5:00 pm COFF fundraiser at El Vaquero's featuring the Avalon 9 Trio.**  
The event is first-come, first-served with seating on the patio. Suggested donation \$10-15 per person. El Vaquero's is at 3230 Olen-tangy River Road, Columbus

## Jam Sessions

### Daily Zoom Jam Sessions

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, 10:00 am to noon; Wednesday, Friday, Sunday: 2:00 to 4:00 pm. To see the current link to these sessions, send an e-mail request to Jane VanAuken [vanaukj@gmail.com](mailto:vanaukj@gmail.com)

Saturday morning jam sessions from 9:30 to 11:30 continue at Whetstone Park and some Saturdays at Worthington Farmers Market.

## Welcome Our New and Returning Members

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Avalon Nine Band | Dave Hawkins        |
| Linda Blaine     | Martin Hertzendorf  |
| Diane & Kathleen | Larry Less          |
| Boston           | Tom & Patti Liszkay |
| Mary Lynne Carr  | James &             |
| Keith Chapman    | Ellen McDonald      |
| Lee Cherney      | Wanda Short         |
| Holly Downing    | Jane Van Auken      |
| Charles & Denise | Barbara Wright      |
| Flowers          | Carl Yaffey         |

**The Columbus Folk Music Society**

P.O. Box 20735  
Columbus, OH 43220



**We're on the web!**

www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org

**Next issue:  
November 2021**



2415 N. HIGH STREET  
COLUMBUS, OH 43202

[www.campusprinting.net](http://www.campusprinting.net)

[info@campusprinting.net](mailto:info@campusprinting.net)

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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): \_\_\_\_\_

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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.

- Individual \$20
- Band Membership \$25
- Sponsor \$100
- Silver \$250
- Household \$25
- Good Friend \$50
- Patron \$200
- 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!**

- May festival
- Leadership
- Cooking / Baking
- CFMS events
- Writing/Communication
- Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Legal
- Desktop Publishing
- Database
- Organizational Tasks
- Musician
- Music Instruction

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

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