



## Coffeehouse Concerts To Resume; Heather Pierson Will Headline Sept. 19

The Americana/Folk Concert Series that has been sidelined since last March because of the COVID-19 pandemic will resume on Saturday, September 19, at 7:00 pm. To keep concertgoers safe and to comply with state pandemic guidelines, the coffeehouse events will be virtual only for the rest of 2020. To support our artists, we will ask for the regularly suggested donation amount. To check on the status of January through April concerts, watch for news and developments on our website : <https://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/events.html>

Bill Cohen caught up with Heather Pierson recently for this interview.

**Bill Cohen:** It's been 4 years since you performed a great in-person show for the Columbus Folk Music Society, so please remind us of the style of music you play. It's actually a mix of genres, right?

**Heather Pierson:** You're right, it's been a while since I've been to Columbus, and though I'm sad that we won't be together in person this year, I'm hopeful about returning in person down the road. What little time I've spent in Columbus has been really enjoyable! And yes, I perform music from several different genres—folk, traditional jazz, blues, Americana, as well as vocal chants and instrumental piano.

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## Heather Pierson on Sept. 19

**Bill Cohen:** What have you been doing musically these past 4 years ? Tours, concerts, recordings, workshops?

**Heather Pierson:** A lot has happened since I was in Columbus! In 2017, the Acoustic Trio (with Davy Sturtevant on strings, brass, and vocals, and Shawn Nadeau on bass and harmony vocals) released its first full length CD, called *Singin'*. That same year, I launched my Musical Meditations project on my website ( <https://heatherpierson.com/musical-meditations> ), freely sharing original instrumental piano for download on my website every three days.

In 2018, my friend and colleague Rev. Bernice Martin and I released a songbook and CD called *Heart Songs & Circle Songs*, which is now in use in UU congregations, hospice choirs, and community choirs around the world and, during this pandemic, has become an online singing community. We were also a featured presenter at this year's virtual General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association..

In 2019, I released *Lines & Spaces*, a 12-song original recording that features performances from the Acoustic Trio as well as several other full band members: Craig Bryan on drums, Mike Sakash on reeds, and George Wiese on trombone. The recording reflects my multi-genre songwriting. The title track is about my childhood piano, and is woven throughout with bits of the classical pieces that I learned as a young piano student, and updated to include my adult flourishes.

On Earth Day of this year, I released a free digital recording, called *Be Here Now*, a collection of original songs inspired by and offered for meditation practice.

The Acoustic Trio has been touring quite a lot in recent years, all over the US, including performing on the main stage at the Kerrville Folk Festival in 2018. We were halfway through a six week tour this spring of the southeastern US when the pandemic started, so we played our last show in Florida on March 14 and came straight home (Shawn and I live in New Hampshire, and Davy is in Maine).

**Bill Cohen:** Obviously, you have your own unique style, but for folks who've never heard you, could you tell them if they will hear traces of other well-known musicians in your voice, your themes, and your performance style? I guess another way to phrase the question might be: who are your musical heroes and heroines who have influenced your work?

**Heather Pierson:** Piano and voice are my primary instruments, and I also play acoustic guitar, tenor banjo, ukulele, and melodica. Many folks have compared me with Susan Werner, in that I write and perform in many genres. I'll take that, I love Susan! I have a wide variety of musical heroes that have, in one way or another, been a huge influence on me, including Joni Mitchell, Oscar Peterson, Ella Fitzgerald, The Allman Brothers Band, Ani DiFranco, and John Prine, just to name a few. And the city of New Orleans and its musical traditions have been incredibly impactful on every aspect of my life!

**Bill Cohen:** Before the virus hit, you did a lot of touring, right? Tell us how extensive that was, and then tell us how you've adapted to this new world where in-person concerts are limited or, in some cases, non-existent.

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[www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org](http://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org)



## Heather Pierson on Sept. 19

**Heather Pierson:** Yes, I was touring a lot throughout the US with the Acoustic Trio in recent years, and as I mentioned, right up until the moment that the pandemic burst into our collective awareness.

As soon as we got home, Shawn (my partner and bassist) and I started doing a weekly livestream on my Facebook page, "Saturday Afternoon Special." Every Saturday at 4:00 pm ET, we stream for about 90 minutes, taking requests, answering questions from the comments, and it's been really fun connecting with folks this way!

I also moved my Musical Meditations offerings to a livestream format on Monday evenings at 7:00 ET on my Facebook page, and then more recently, Shawn and I started offering a weekly "Wednesday Evening Standard Hour" at 5:00 pm ET, performing an hour of some of our favorite jazz standards. Each live stream is different from the others, and it allows me to share different sides of what I do with folks, and a core group of followers has formed around each of these weekly offerings, and that has been really exciting and gratifying to see!

In addition, I'm still writing new songs, doing more home recordings, and I've released a couple of singles, including "The Toilet Paper Song" (which we recorded as soon as we got home from the cut-short tour in March, and went semi-viral!!) and "Beside The Firelight," which I wrote almost immediately following the murder of George Floyd. I'm also creating teaching videos of my *Heart Songs & Circle Songs* repertoire with a fun app called Acapella, breaking down all the harmony parts in such a

way that it's easier to learn the parts.

I have done a few private concerts on Zoom, and I do have a couple of in-person shows coming up in Maine in August that I am both excited and anxious about, haha! It'll be really wonderful to see and play for folks again in person, even if it IS outside in very-well-spaced-out lawn chairs!!

I'm also finding time to paint, and I do have paintings available for sale on my Etsy shop.

All of these things are accessible through my website, <https://heatherpierson.com/musical-meditations>.

**Bill Cohen:** Your September 19<sup>th</sup> concert for us will be over the internet. Without the usual contact of an in-person concert, what do you expect it will be like?

**Heather Pierson:** I expect it will be similar to other online concerts that I have been doing in recent months, with the exception being that it will be a fun and special opportunity to reconnect with the folks in Columbus! I'm always grateful for a chance to share what I do with others, and hopeful that it will form and maintain the bonds of community. I've been thinking of this whole time as *physical* distancing rather than *social* distancing. *Social strengthening* seems more like what we're all trying to do now—innovating ways of maintaining our connections with one another. I look forward to doing just that on September 19th!

### Heather Pierson

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## Member Profile: Dan Clarke

Interview by Peter Insabella

**PI: When did you first get involved with the Folk Music Society?**

**Dan:** When I moved to Columbus in 2009 I did some online searches and found a Jam session at the Areopagitica book store on High Street. I met Tom Nagel there and he told me about the Columbus Folk Music Society. He invited me to the Saturday Worthington Farmers' Market jams. They were a welcoming group and it was a good place to get your feet wet. There were normally 4-5 players when I first started. Now we get as many as 20 musicians.

**PI: Talk a little about some of the people you've met through CFMS.**

**Dan:** Memorable people....They are all so memorable....not one bad apple in the bunch. I have spent a lot of time with the Worthington Squares - a very inviting group. In the beginning there was Charlie Hummel (on washtub bass), who was a fun person with a good sense of humor. Then there was Tom Nagel with his banjo and washboard drumkit. Hugh Farthing and I had a desire to expand the jamming opportunities, to offer the entertainment to other parts of the community. One summer Hugh, Mike, Zajano, Linda McDonald, Pete Insabella, Jennifer Cohen-Jordan and I were doing 3 - 4 market jams every week. Then we started to add nursing homes and memory units to the schedule. The goal was to have fun, play some music and expand the Columbus Folk Music Society outreach mission. Pete and I even had some paid gigs!! Some of our playing has exposed children to music. When you see their eyes light up, it's a reward in itself.

The nursing home and memory care unit jams have been fun and rewarding experiences. No matter how bad your day may be going, you walk out of one of those jams with a smile

on your face. When the music starts, blank faces start to remember the songs and the beat of the music and soon they are singing or toe tapping or rocking back and forth. To bring a few moments of joy to the residents' life is very rewarding. Just maybe for a moment they smile with pleasure as they enjoy the music.

**PI: Are you a native Ohioan?**

**Dan:** Yes. I graduated high school in 1965 in Cleveland. Then I joined the Air Force for four years. Working on aircraft, I discovered a passion for planes. My service took me to Vietnam twice but only for a total of 12 days. Most of my time was spent stateside. I bought my first plane when I was 40. I worked in management with UPS for 32 years and found the company to be a good place to work. I retired 18 years ago and have been really enjoying my retirement

**PI: You live in Clintonville now. Clintonville seems like the natural home for folk music in Columbus.**

**Dan:** Yes, this is where the folk music renaissance got its start. It is a community that is open, liberal and diverse.

**PI: Who are some of your favorite artists?**

**Dan:** The artists that stand out would be Bob Dylan, Woodrow Wilson Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Nancy Griffin, Joan Baez, Mary Black, John Prine, John Gorka, Van Morrison, Patty Griffin, John Hurt, Howlin' Wolf, Greg Brown, Bill Staines, David Hawkins, Rob McNurlin and on and on... Right now I would say John Prine - with his passing and listening to recordings about his life and realizing how much he had accomplished in his life. His song *Summer's End* is a favorite. One song that jumps out is Leadbelly's *Good Night Irene* - the song the CFMS jammers have used to close the Worthington jam every Saturday. Other favorites are Kate Wolf's *Red Tail Hawk* and Merle Haggard's *Sing Me Back Home*. And always, *Will the Circle Be Unbroken*.



## Worthington Squares Keep Playing Despite Pandemic

Last March, when the COVID-19 virus forced the cancellation of just about all face-to-face activities, Mary Finney had an idea: "I had a Zoom professional account and had been using Zoom many times a day for 5 years as a leader in my professional organization." So she called Hugh Farthing and suggested continuing the group's jam sessions and nursing home visits virtually, via computer. He liked the idea and it took hold among other Squares players. It wasn't long before daily jam sessions and weekly nursing home concerts became a regular feature of their pandemic shut-in lives.

As Hugh Farthing explains the Zoom jams: "They're more like open mikes than jam sessions. Everybody's a soloist and when it's your turn, it's **Your Turn!**" Jennifer Cohen-Jordan agrees. "It's frustrating not hearing others play along with you, but as a soloist you have more freedom to try different songs and different chords."

The feeling of community is another positive aspect of the Zoom sessions, Jennifer says. "The Zoom jams allow me to maintain a sense of community I've developed over time with

these folks, and I appreciate that the Zoom jams allow me the opportunity to maintain those connections."

Mike Zajano was a Worthington Squares player for years, before moving to New Hampshire earlier this year. But the virtual sessions have enabled him to keep playing with his friends in the Columbus metro area. Mike commented: "The biggest positive for me is selfish: I get to join my old jam buddies from 800 miles away, here in New Hampshire. Another positive is that we are exploring songs well beyond the usual jamming repertoire. We're playing for ourselves, not for our usual audiences who want to hear the basics like "This Land Is Your Land" and "Blowin' In The Wind."

Everyone who has taken part in Mary Finney's Zoom sessions has found their musicianship much improved as a result of performing solo. Mary also videotapes each weekly nursing home concert. Seeing yourself perform on the videotape is great for critiquing your performances and making needed adjustments and improvements.

If you would like to get on Mary Finney's Zoom e-mail list, please send an e-mail to [vanaukj@gmail.com](mailto:vanaukj@gmail.com).

## 2020 Kirby Scholarship Winner

Bob Kirby supported folk music in central Ohio and believed in the importance of honoring and preserving musical traditions. In harmony with our mission, The Columbus Folk Music Society in 2009 established The Bob Kirby Scholarship In Folk Music in his memory.

The goal of this scholarship is to assist young musicians from the central Ohio area by offering opportunities they may otherwise not experience. One of the benefits for the winner is \$500 to help enhance musical skills, and to acquire a greater knowledge and appreciation for folk music. Perhaps the most important and challenging experiences for a Kirby Award Winner might be the chance to experience live concert performances. Next year, we hope to be back to our regular schedule of live music in person!

Winners can use the \$500 award to purchase a new instrument, take music lessons, attend music workshops, etc.

Recipients also have the opportunity to perform at and attend workshops at the Central Ohio Folk Festival.

The 2020 Bob Kirby Scholarship award winner is Marcus Beaty from Grove City

### Following is his award winning letter:

My name is Marcus Beaty. I am almost 14, and I am home-schooled. I got interested in music a year and a half ago when I went to Southside Baptist Church for their Bluegrass

Music Program. I immediately wanted to try out the guitar and I just fell in love with music. Since then, I started to play more stringed instruments like the guitar, fiddle, banjo, and mandolin. I also enjoy playing the piano and harmonica. My favorite types of music are Mississippi Delta Blues, Folk, and Bluegrass. I've been mentored by Carolyn Osborne and Ron Rhodes since I started playing music, and I've been taking private lessons with Carolyn for almost a year. I am looking forward to going to the Augusta Music Festival in West Virginia for the Bluegrass week this summer. If I am awarded the Kirby Scholarship, I will use it to help pay for music camp or an instrument.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Marcus Beaty





## 2020-21 Americana/Folk Concert Series Offers Wide Variety of Performers

We are excited to announce the 2020-21 season of the Columbus Folk Music Society's Americana/Folk Concert Series!

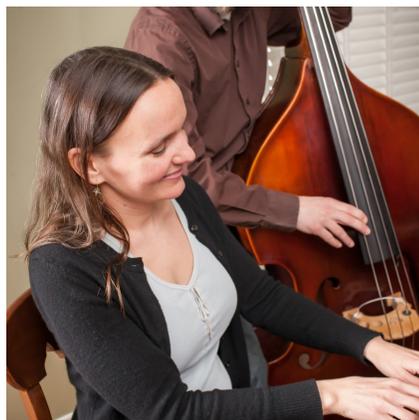
Due to COVID-19, beginning with the fall line-up, we will be conducting the concerts virtually for the time being — to ensure the safety of all. Our September through November performers will be doing a LIVE-STREAM performance specifically directed to our Columbus audience. It will be broadcast on the CFMS' Facebook page and we encourage you to tune in at [www.facebook.com/pg/Columbus-Folk-Music-Society-280420671020/events/](https://www.facebook.com/pg/Columbus-Folk-Music-Society-280420671020/events/) for these live streamed concerts. You need not be a Facebook user to be able to view the concert. Of course if you are and you are logged into Facebook, you can greet your fellow concert goers in the chat line.

Since we literally have no "door," a donation link will be put up during the concert. We are recommending concert attendees (if they can) donate what they would have if the concert was in person (\$10 for members/\$15 non-members) in order to best support our artists, whose livelihoods have been greatly challenged by our times.

Please note that some of the concerts occur on a different Saturday than the last Saturday of the month and while the October concert begins at 8pm, the September & November ones begin at 7pm. All will run approximately 90 minutes.

We invite you to pull up your favorite chair, snacks and drinks, and enjoy the show along with your other fellow concert-goers! We all know how important music is in our lives, fostering its continua-

tion, AND supporting artists who work hard to write, sing and by their creative "song-crafting," communicate through music things that make us laugh, cry and maybe even think in new ways. So mark your calendars now and we hope to see you there!



**Sat, Sept 19, 7pm, Heather Pierson Duo.** Heather is a gifted and prolific songwriter, pianist and vocalist hailing from New Hampshire's Mount Washington Valley. The acoustic duo collectively bring their skills, quiet charm, and down-to-earth honesty to bear on songs that harken to the sounds from New Orleans' streets to the valleys of Appalachia to everywhere in between. Visit: <https://heatherpierson.com> AND <https://heatherpierson.com/listen> to get a sampling.

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# 2020/21 Americana Folk Concert Series

Continued from p. 6

**Sat, Oct 31, 8pm, House of Hamill.** This Celtic folk duo is from Philadelphia, PA. Together they write original fiddle tunes, exciting AND unpredictable songs, at the same time breathing new life into traditional and contemporary cover tunes. Whether playing songs from their 2016 debut album "Wide Awake" or stomping through a set of original jigs and reels from their 2018 "March Through Storms," their chemistry onstage is always engaging and often hilarious. In 2018, their quirky all-violin cover of "Sweet Child Of Mine" went viral, amassing over 15 million views and more than 400,000 shares on Facebook in just a few weeks. Visit: <https://houseofhamill.com> AND <https://houseofhamill.com/videos>.

**Sat, Nov 28, 7pm, Gaines & Wagoner.** An Americana/blues/jazz duo from Madison, WI, these artists are talented, seasoned AND hilarious all at the same time. They have been the recipients of several WAMI (Wisconsin Area Music Industry) nominations and awards for their work with *Harmonious Wail* and *The Common Faces* and several MAMAs (Madison Area Music Awards) for *String Player of the Year* (Violin and Cello), *Specialty Instrument* (Lap-steel), *Best Male and Female Vocalist*, and a *Lifetime Career*

*Achievement Award*. They have also done session work on numerous recordings that have received MAMAs awards. From 2015-2017, they recorded incidental music for the award-winning PBS and BBC series "American Epic," which shines a light on the evolution of roots music in America. Visit: <https://gainesandwagoner.com> AND <https://gainesandwagoner.com/av/>

The beginning of the year brings other talented artists. Look for more information about them along with concert details (e.g., whether they will be virtual or in-person concerts) in our January issue of *A Different Strummer*. They include: **Sat, Jan 30, Sarah Kate Morgan** (Sharps Chapel, TN) presenting Appalachian/old-time music (<https://www.sarahkatemorgan.com>); **Sat, Feb 27, Buffalo Rose** (Pittsburgh, PA) presenting an evening of Folk/Americana/bluegrass (<https://www.buffalorosemusic.com>); and **Sat, Mar 28, Dan Weber** (Rochester, NY) presenting Americana/country-folk style music (<https://danwebermusic.com>).

## Save the Date

### 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 e-mail request to Jane VanAuken [vanauki@gmail.com](mailto:vanauki@gmail.com)

## Welcome New and Returning Members

*Christiane Buuck*  
*Jerry and Kathy Duke (family)*  
*David Johnston (family)*  
*Angie Rine*

## Your CFMS Membership

**By becoming a member of the Columbus Folk Music Society, or renewing your membership (membership fees due Sept. 30), you show your appreciation for and enjoyment of folk music, song, dance, story telling, and other folk arts. You will also experience the pride of knowing that you are bolstering the growth and perpetuation of the folk arts in the Columbus area.**

**As we all work our way through this time of uncertainty CFMS will continue to provide you with entertainment, information and support. We hope you will, in turn, support us in these efforts. Please renew your membership. If you are not already a member, please consider joining us and showing your support for the exciting folk community here in Columbus. And don't forget to spread the word, and encourage your friends to join as well. You can access membership forms on our website, or in our newsletter. You may use the following link to directly access a membership form.: <https://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html>**

**Your patronage is valuable to us and we look forward to seeing you at our events as soon as we are able to again share in each other's company. Enjoy your membership, and enjoy the diverse folk culture that thrives in Central Ohio! Be well,**

**The Columbus Folk Music Society**

P.O. Box 20735  
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**We're on the web!**

www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org

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October 2020**

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**Membership renewals are due annually on September 30th.** Check 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 |

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!**

- |                                       |  |   |
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