

MadFolk News

Ellis Paul returns to Madison April 4th

Although MadFolk is not sponsoring this show, we know so many of our members like Ellis Paul, and for those who have not seen Ellis perform yet, give this show a try. It has an early start time of 7:30 at the High Noon Saloon.

Ellis Paul currently has over 13 CDs out and is in the midst of cranking out another. Although it is fun to go to a CD and revisit his music, there is nothing compared to being at the live show. And it all started with a trumpet.... "Playing trumpet in the high school band, Paul won a summer scholarship to the Berklee College of Music, and he started putting down roots in Boston. He earned a track scholarship to Boston College, but a debilitating knee injury put him in bed for months, and he passed his time by working on his guitar playing. By the early 1990s, he was part of a Boston folk scene exploding with young talent." Let's just say I am glad he has exchanged the trumpet for a guitar.

Others have also recognized the talent of Ellis Paul, he has drawn a lot of his inspiration from Woody Guthrie and thru that has made the drive down to Okemah, OK to find the beginnings of young Woody. And from there was a great supporter of the Woody Guthrie Festival that takes place every year for over 10 years, missing only once due to the birth of his first daughter. And that is great dedication considering those festival days and nights are over 100 degrees each day. From the performances at The Woody Guthrie Festival it has lead to him having a part in the line-up for an all-star Guthrie tribute tour called "Ribbon of Highway, Endless Skyway" that has also been touring around the U.S. His love of Woody and his music

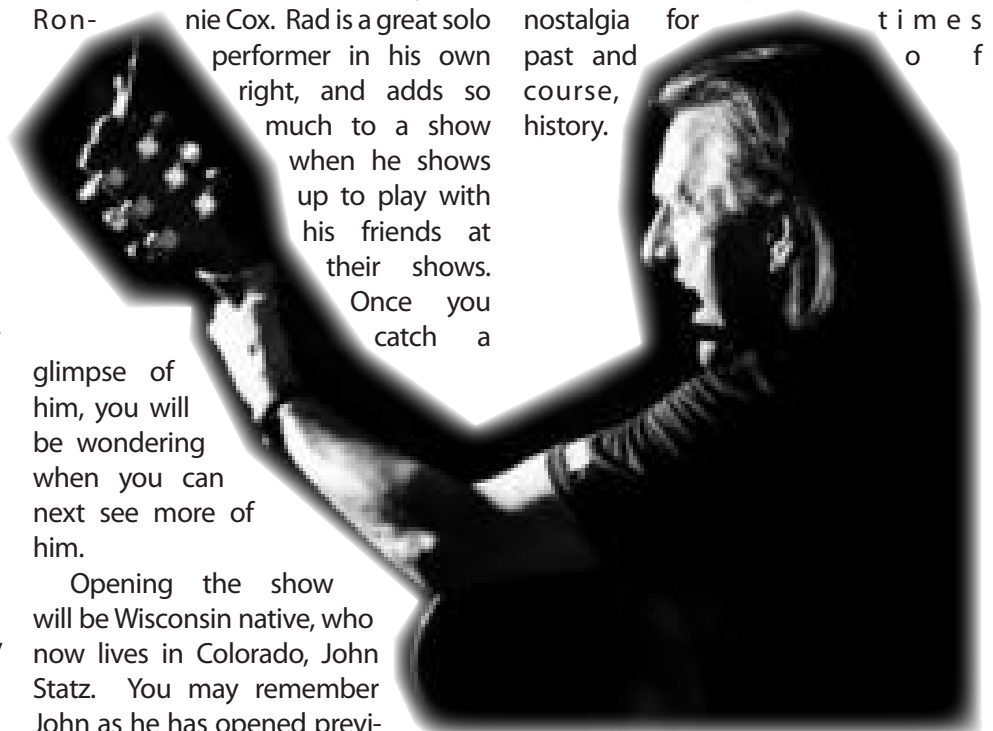
also brought him to the attention of Woody's daughter Nora Guthrie who is the keeper of the archives of Woody's lyrics that were never set to music. Thru Nora, Ellis was given the lyrics of "God's Promise" which he set to music and is on his 2002 release of *The Speed of Trees*. And perhaps not known to everyone, in still paying homage, or just liking having the thought of Woody around, is the Woody Guthrie tattoo that he wears on his arm. Ellis often draws on his own life for inspiration, but like Guthrie, he's not a confessional singer/songwriter. More than anything, he's a storyteller, and if his own experience happens to provide the best material, so be it.

Joining on stage with Ellis we have heard rumor that Radoslav Lorković will be joining Ellis for this show. MadFolk members may remember Rad from when he last showed up to play with Ronnie Cox. Rad is a great solo performer in his own right, and adds so much to a show when he shows up to play with his friends at their shows. Once you catch a

glimpse of him, you will be wondering when you can next see more of him.

Opening the show will be Wisconsin native, who now lives in Colorado, John Statz. You may remember John as he has opened previ-

ously for a MadFolk show. John was one of a group of young up and comers that all lived in the Madison and shared many a shows and musical talents on each other's records. Although Blake & Jeremiah moved to Minnesota and Josh is touring around the country and John moved to Colorado, we are glad when the moments come where they are back to their old stomping grounds and we get to visit their music again. You'll enjoy John's newest record -*Old Fashioned*, he is bringing it back home. Whereas the previous album (*Ghost Towns*) was filled with worldly influences and subject matter, *Old Fashioned* brings us back to the heartland: Midwestern America. Recorded in Iowa City with revered producer Bo Ramsey (Lucinda Williams, Greg Brown, Pieta Brown) this album is all about deep love, hard-working Midwestern folk, nostalgia for times past and of course, history.



THE BEAST IN ITS TRACKS

JOSH RITTER ~ 2013 PYTHEAS RECORDS



Review by Kiki Schueler

I've been a Josh Ritter fan for a long time. With his intensely personal style, ridiculously catchy songs, and obvious joy in performing, it's impossible not to be. His last record, 2010's *So Runs the World Away*, was the first disappointment in a string of winners, notably 2003's career highlight *Hello Starling* and 2006's winning *Animal Life*. When I reviewed *World I* theorized that was due to his marriage to fellow musician Dawn Landes, who seemed to drain all the energy out of a performance the one time I saw them together. *The Beast in Its Tracks* gave me a chance to test that theory. Ritter and Landes parted in 2011, and *Beast* is his first post-divorce release. Yep, I think I was right.

Beast finds Ritter back on track, nearly returning to form. One listen leaves little doubt that he was quite definitely unhappy and now he's quite definitely happy. Many of the tracks are stinging indictments of a lover who's been untrue and a loveless relationship. In fact, these confessional songs can be a little uncomfortable to listen to—I can't imagine how Landes must feel. There are the little hints, "I'm happy for the first time in a long time," he says in the infectiously pretty "A Certain Light." And the backhand-


ed digs, "Then she went away and took all her love," the second verse of the keyboard-driven "Hopeful" says before continuing, "I could not believe how little there was." The positive title refers to the new love he's found, "I met someone new now I know I deserve." "New Lover" is perhaps the most brutally honest on a record full of personal admissions, "Hope you got a lover now, hope you got somebody who can give you love like I couldn't seem to do. But if you're sad and you are lonesome and you got nobody true, I'd be lying if I said that didn't make me happy too." Ouch. I have to say that outright bitterness does not suit him. In the same song he claims, "There are things I will not sing for the sting of sour notes." I'm not so sure that's true.

Especially since he seems genuinely happy now. "Finally, great enormous thanks to Haley, who took me home and saved my life," reads the penultimate line of the thanks section. ("Joy to the many" is the last, both a sentiment and a reference to the well-wishing track "Joy to You Baby.") For all the declarations of contentment, it does seem a little odd that he feels the need to mention in both "A Certain Light" and "New Lover" that "she only looks like you when she's in a certain light." The record would be little more than a thirteen-track therapy session with his fans if it weren't so terrifically listenable. Though the lyrics can get pretty heavy, the melodies are unanimously hummable and lightheartedly memorable. The acoustic guitar is front and center on many of the tracks, and you can hear his fingers scrape the strings on "Heart's Ease." "In Your Arms Again" and "Bonfire" feature a jangly guitar the Byrds would respect. The percussion is understated

throughout. In fact, only a few tracks actually list "drums" the rest just "percussion," perhaps a shaker or bongos, while some are unadorned. "The Appleblossom Rag" sounds like it was recorded in his kitchen, backed as it is by the rattle of dishes, silverware and gossip courtesy of Haley Tanner and Arianne Kassirer.

Now that he's gotten everything off his chest, maybe the next record will find a happier Ritter, one who's not burning up from the inside out as the cover art seems to suggest. Hopefully it will be the same one who wrote the glorious "Kathleen" from *Hello Starling*. I miss him.

MadFolk Concert Tickets

When you see this symbol  you'll know that you're reading about a Mad Folk sponsored event. Advance tickets for Mad Folk shows are available online at www.madfolk.org and at these outlets:

- Orange Tree Imports, 1721 Monroe Street

- Spruce Tree Music, 851 East Johnson

Purchase tickets ONLINE for Mad Folk concerts via Brown Paper Tickets:

<https://www.brownpapertickets.com/producer/10879>

You can also purchase advance tickets by mail. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope with your check payable to Mad Folk, PO Box 665, Madison, WI 53701. If all else fails, call 608-846-9214 for information.

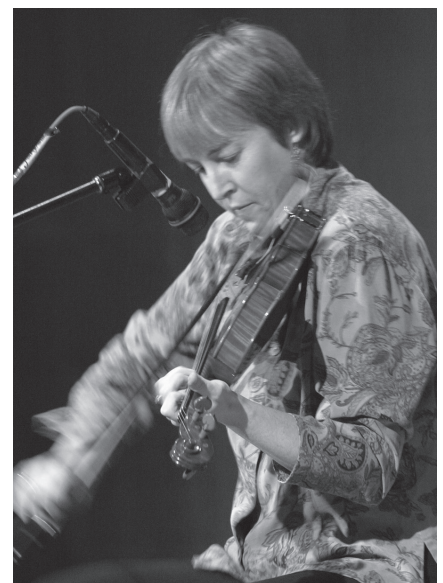
FOLKLORE VILLAGE *...passing it on*

Tim Eriksen and The Trio de Pumpkintown Friday, April 5th

Tim Eriksen is acclaimed for transforming American tradition with his startling interpretations of old ballads, love songs, shape-note gospel and dance tunes from New England and Southern Appalachia. The Trio de Pumpkintown will consist of Peter Irvine on hand percussion and voice, Zoe Darrow on fiddle and Tim on fiddle, banjo, guitar, bajo sexto (12 string acoustic bass) and voice. “Among the world’s finest folk practitioners” - Toronto Star
“At once sweepingly epic and as intimate as a lover’s whisper”-Boston Globe
“One of the best voices in music” - T Bone Burnett

Liz Carroll & Dáithí Sproule Saturday, June 29th

Join two luminaries of Irish traditional music for a special evening concert together of fiery fiddle tunes, Irish ballads and beautiful arrangements of traditional songs. Liz is a recipient of the National Heritage Fellowship Award (1994). In 2009 she became the first Irish-American musician nominated for a Grammy. Dáithí Sproule of Derry, Ireland is one of Irish music’s most respected guitar accompanists, and one of the first guitarists to develop DADGAD tuning for Irish music. He is also a fine singer in English and Irish.



Doors 7:00 PM, Concerts: 7:30

General Admission: \$15, \$13 members

Dodgeville, WI www.folklorevillage.org

Tickets: 608-924-4000



Almost Spring



Ah, spring! And speaking of spring, one common spring-shape is the helix. Often I picture a song as a helix. A helix is that geometrical figure formed when you wrap a wire around and around a cylinder. Think of a screen door spring, or a vine growing up around a broomstick. There are special helices (that's the plural) like the *conical helix* and the famous *double helix* of DNA, but today I'm talking about a regular helix, like a slinky, or like the coil spring pictured above.

So imagine a helix of maybe a dozen coils. But make it a psychedelic helix, with each coil a different bright color. Now paint a band of deep black, the width of a fifth of the helix's circumference, all the way down the helix's side, so that each colored coil begins and ends at the black band. In other words, if you were to slide along and around the coil from top to bottom, your trip would take you over red, then black, then blue, then black again, then yellow, then black again, etc.

That's the way I often picture a song. In my mind's eye, each coil equals one verse of a song, with its unique color representing a slightly different sub-theme, and its black section representing the repeating chorus (which is why it's the same — black — for every coil).

Now, take four different colors of transparent pastel paint, and paint four narrow stripes down the sides of the cylinder, equally spaced within the non-black area. On each coil, these bands would represent words in each verse that rhyme in one way or another. The paint is transparent, so the transparently painted areas on each coil are similar to those of its neighbor coils, but different because the bright colors of each coil show through the transparent stripes. This indicates that the rhyming words

occur at the same spot in each coil, but are different words.

So each uniquely colored coil has four tinted stripes equally spaced, representing its rhymes, and one black area, representing its chorus. You could also draw an appropriate number of equally spaced lines down the coil, each line representing a syllable. This way, each coil — each verse — would be shown to have the same number of syllables, as is often the case.

And so forth; the variations of this helical analogy are endless. And maybe pointless, too. I have no idea if other people form geometric pictures in their mind of such things as songs, but I find it helpful, because it gives me a grasp of the thing as a whole. Not only that, it seems to happen whether I consciously plan to think of such a structure or not. The helix figure also shows up on my brainboard when I think about other varying but basically cyclical concepts. A twelve-coil helix would make a great model of a year, with each coil being a month, each month a bright but different color. Four bands of transparent color going the length of the helix would represent weeks, and seven lines in each transparent band would be days of the week. With a really big helix and a sharp Sharpie I suppose you could do 24 hour stripes in every day, sixty minute lines in every hour, and so forth, until your trifocals ran out of gasoline.

Of course, for things to line up properly in the year-helix, you have to pretend that all months are of an equal number of days, which, for heaven's sake, they should be. How did months ever develop with slightly different numbers of days? What if each hour of any given day had differing numbers of minutes? From eight to nine AM, fifty-eight minutes; from one to two in the afternoon, sixty-three minutes, etc. A day-helix would look like a drunken tornado. Now, if all months had 28 days, thirteen of them would equal a nice 364 days, leaving only one day dangling. But this idea was abandoned by the same sort of committee that dreamed up the incomprehensible logic of daylight savings time, which is like helping the farmers by making drought illegal.

But back to the helix. What I really intended to talk about was how the multicolored and striped helix represents visually how, in a song, things work so well because they are ALMOST the same in each verse, but not exactly. When you think about it, that's what makes a rhyme: two words that have ALMOST the same sound. If they're the same word, it's not a rhyme. If they're NOT ALMOST the same word, it's not a rhyme. If two verses have all identical words, the song doesn't work, and if the verses have too dissimilar a structure, it doesn't work either. In many ways, the verses have to be ALMOST the same.

The more I look at this crazy helix, the more I think that ALMOST is one of the big fat secrets of not only songwriting, but of life itself; maybe somehow we're lucky that months are ALMOST the same length. After all, the mutations that make natural selection — and therefore, evolution — possible are nothing but reproductions that are ALMOST the same. When shooting astronauts to the moon, the only way they could do it was aim ALMOST for the moon, so they could settle into a nice loop around it. An impressionist painting is ALMOST a reproduction of a scene; if it were an exact representation (photo-realistic), it wouldn't be as wonderful (according to me). Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Satchmo, Janis Joplin, Leadbelly, Mother Nature: masters of the ALMOST.

A banded multicolored helix of a normal week, at one coil per day, would represent nicely the ALMOSTS of the situation. Wake up groggy, shower long, put on blue togs, eat Cheerios, bus to work, walk home, eat pizza, watch Big Bang theory, go to bed. Next day, wake up perky, shower fast, put on green togs, eat cold pizza, bike to work, bike home, eat tacos, watch CSI: Cleveland, go to bed. The pizzazz is in the ALMOSTNESS of days. Like someone said, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes." It ALMOST repeats itself.

That quote has been attributed to Mark Twain, by the way, but apparently it doesn't appear in his writings. Maybe he said something ALMOST like that.

The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

April 2013

Venues



High Noon Saloon

- Thu, 4/4 -- Ellis Paul w/ John Statz -- 7:30pm -- \$16 adv / \$18 d.o.s.

701A E. Washington
www.high-noon.com
608-268-1122



The Brink Lounge

- Fri, 4/12 -- Harmonious Wail -- 7:00pm

701 E. Washington
thebrinklounge.com
608-661-8599



Mad Toast Live!

- Tue, 4/2 -- The Don Stiernberg Trio (w/ Andy Brown & Jim Cox) -- 7pm -- \$15 adv / \$18 d.o.s.
- Tue, 4/16 -- 7pm -- Occidental Gypsy
- 8pm -- Harmonious Wail
\$5-10 sliding-scale donation
- Tue, 4/16 -- 7pm -- Elm Duo
- 8pm -- Graminy
\$5-10 sliding-scale donation

Folklore Village
3210 Cty Hwy BB
Dodgeville, WI
folklorevillage.org
608-924-4000

Folklore Village

- Fri 4/5 - Tim Eriksen and The Trio de Pumpkintown -- 7:00 Doors, 7:30 Concert, General Admission, \$15.00 -- Tickets: 608-924-4000
- Sat 4/27 - Charlie Parr -- 7:00 Doors, 7:30 Concert, General Admission, \$15.00 Tickets: 608-924-4000



18 S. Water St.
Ft. Atkinson, WI
cafecarpe.com
920-563-9391

- Fri 4/5 & Sat 4/6 - Sam Llanas -- 8:30pm -- \$20 adv.
- Thu 4/11- New Pioneers -- 7pm -- \$8
- Fri 4/12- Ernie Hendrickson -- 8pm -- \$8
- Sat 4/13- Bill Camplin & The Triskaidekaphiles -- 8pm -- \$8
- Fri 4/19- Piper Road Spring Band -- 8pm -- \$10
- Sat 4/20- Karen Savoca -- 8:30pm -- \$15
- Fri 4/26- Karen Johnson -- 8:00pm -- \$5
- Sat 4/27- John Sieger w/ Greg Koch -- 8:00pm -- \$9

Irish Cultural & Heritage Center
2133 W Wisconsin Ave
Milwaukee, WI --
ichc.net
414-345-8800

Fri, Apr 5 -- The April Verch Band
7:30pm -- \$18 adv. / \$23 d.o.s. -- Students \$10 w/ ID

Gigs

Jim Schwall

- w/ Corinne McKnight
Chief's Tavern, 300 Cottage Grove Road
Friday, April 26, 6:30 pm

Misc

Madison Ukulele Club -- Singalongs 1st and 3rd Weds 7:00-9:00pm -- call for location -- 246-8205 (Andrew)

Bob's BBQ Emporium's Open Mic - Thu, Apr 18 -- 7pm -- 8164 Hwy. 14 Arena, WI

Cajun jam held every first Sunday 2 p.m.-5 p.m.
At the Froth House: 11 N. Allen St., Madison We welcome all levels of experience with instruments and Cajun music.
kcholden@wisc.edu for more info. www.prairiebayoucajun.com

On the Air



Simply Folk on Wisconsin Public Radio w/ Stephanie Elkins, Host

Sun 5:00-8:00pm

Concerts recorded in Wisconsin, music and dance of people the world over. For playlists, calendars, station listings, and more, visit www.wpr.org/simplyfolk.



WORT 89.9 FM community radio

Sun -- 3:00-5:00pm

- On the Horizon (world music) w/Ford Blackwell, Paul Novak & Dan Talmo
- Weekdays 9:00am-noon
- Mon -- Global Revolutions (folk from the world over) w/ David & Martin Alvarado & Eugenia Highland
- Tue -- For the Sake of the Song (traditional American folk) w/ Jim Schwall
- Wed -- Back to the County (country music on a theme) w/Bill Malone
- Thur -- Diaspora (folk and international) w/Terry O'
- Fri -- Mud Acres (bluegrass and acoustic) w/Chris Powers

Madison Dance

African/African-American Dance classes with live drumming -- Sun, 7:00-9:00pm -- Metro Dance, 3009 University Ave. -- 255-3677 / 251-4311

SpiritMoves Ecstatic Dance 2nd and 4th Weds, 7:00-9:00pm -- The Center for Conscious Living, 849 East Washington Ave. -- \$7 min. donation

English Country Dance taught -- 1st and 3rd Mon, 7:30-9:30pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 238-9951 or 238-9951

International Dancing -- Wed and Sun; classes 7:30-8:30pm, request dancing 8:30-11:00pm -- The Crossing, 1127 University Ave. -- 241-3655

Irish Dancing -- Monthly Ceili and set dance events are posted at celticmadison.org/dance

Italian Dancing -- Tue, 7:00-9:00pm, no experience or partner necessary -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 838-9403 (Philana)

Madison Contra Dance Cooperative -- Tue; 7:30 jam band practice, intermediate level dancing 7:45-9:40pm -- \$5 for non-members -- Gates of Heaven, 302 E. Gorham -- 238-3394 (Steve)

Morris Dancing -- Wed, 7:00pm -- call for location -- 238-9951

Scottish Country Dancing -- Sun, 7:00pm -- Wil-Mar Center, 953 Jenifer St. -- 835-0914

Is this your last copy of *Mad Folk News*?

There are two ways to renew your **tax-deductible** membership

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Way #2 – unplugged

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Madison Folk Music Society

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GOING GREEN - Send my newsletters electronically by email

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Tracy Comer, P.O. Box 930446 Verona, WI 53593-0446

While we have the summer season off, please keep an eye on our web-site and newsletter for upcoming house concerts that are hosted by our Madison Folk members. Also, we'll do our best to keep you posted on other shows and festivals thru out the summer. The concert committee is working hard on the line-up for our next season. We have thoughts of bringing in a few folks that may be new to you.. how about taking a look at a couple of performers and letting us know if you would like to see a full concert of them....Just tossing out a couple this month and we'll give you a couple more to investigate next month....But for now, take a look and listen to "The Milk Carton Kids" and to a solo performer Joe Crookston, we are hitting both the west coast and east coast with these performers. And please let us know of performers you would like to see either come back to the MadFolk stage or perhaps someone you have not seen for awhile, or suggest someone new that you would like us to consider. Please email your suggestions to: darlene@madfolk.org

UPCOMING MADFOLK SHOWS.....

Madison Folk Music Society

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