

Mad Folk News

Start the New Year off with the music of Tracy Grammer

Review by Darcy Greder

♪ In the new year, Mad Folk devotees have a fortuitous opportunity to hear and see Tracy Grammer, one-half of the talented folk powerhouse duo, Carter and Grammer. In four short years, from roughly 1998-2002, Dave Carter and Tracy Grammer emerged as the next big thing in acoustic music. Carter was being universally recognized for his song writing chops—dubbed the finest song writer since Bob Dylan by none other than Joan Baez (who knows a thing or two about both song writing and Bob Dylan). Increasingly, Grammer was touted for her musicianship and vocals that were beginning to take prominence with a plan for her voice to be the centerpiece of the duo. Weeks away from a highly anticipated headlining spot at the Falcon Ridge Folk Festival, Dave Carter returned from his customary run and died of a massive heart attack in the arms of Grammer. Days later, Grammer honored the Falcon Ridge booking to lead a festival-wide memorial in honor of Carter. In that moment, Grammer became both the grieving and consoling survivor, as well as the keeper of Carter's legacy assuring him an enduring place within the heart and memory of the folk

community.

Through the years, Grammer has continued to perform the music that brought the duo to the brink of super-stardom, but has also developed into a solo artist of depth and texture. Three solo albums have been released, the first, *The Verdant Mile*, an EP containing the title track which is a eulogy to the late Dave Carter was shortly after the loss of Carter. *The Flower of Avalon* consists of ten tracks, nine of which were written by Carter before his death, and one of which is a traditional folk song arranged by William Jolliff. The album was co-produced by Grammer and John Jennings. Featured artists include Mary Chapin Carpenter, who provided many backing vocals, and Jim Henry, who often tours with Grammer. A third album, *Book of Sparrows*, was released in November, 2007 and is a seven-song EP featuring covers of songs by Tom Russell, Kate Power, David Francey, Dave Carter, and Paul Simon.

Grammer released an album on Red House Records in February 2012, *Little Blue Egg*, which contained 11 previously-unheard duo recordings that had been recovered from the Dave Carter and Tracy Grammer archives. Later that year, she

and Red House released *Joy My Love*, a limited-edition EP containing five more of the duo's archived recordings.

Coming to Mad Folk in January, Tracy Grammer will bring well-developed skills on violin and guitar. Her strong alto voice is

warm and engaging as is her gentle humor and story-telling from the stage. Grammer is at the height of her talent—though honoring the Carter and Grammer legacy, she continues to evolve as an artist. Her performances are in no way an elegy to what was, but rather a celebration of folk music at its finest. Performing at the Brink Lounge on January 16, Grammer will kick-off a new year of music in a concert that is not to be missed. Doors open at 6:30pm, and the show goes to at 7:00 pm.

Mad Folk 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 (with \$1.62 service charge):

<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.

Wild Hog in the Woods Coffeehouse

Serving music for over 35 years

is seeking interested volunteers to help setup and take down for Friday night concerts.

Contact Lisa Johnson through wildhoginthewoods.org

Thank you.

MARK KOZELEK SINGS CHRISTMAS CAROLS

CALDO VERDE ~ 2014



Review by Kiki Schueler

Sun Kil Moon's Mark Kozelek has been known to radically reinvent his source material. Exhibit A: his all AC/DC covers record, *What's Next to the Moon*, which turns the Australian rockers' heavy metal into folk rock ballads so convincingly that a KCRW radio exec insisted that the title track was a Leonard Cohen song. He doesn't take anything on *Sings Christmas Carols* to such an extreme. Of course, there isn't anything that he could do to this handful of mostly traditional holiday music that hasn't been done before. He opts for a straightforward approach, just his voice and guitar on all the tracks save the final one, which adds piano courtesy of Joshua Raoul Brody. It's a sincere and affecting record, which is a little surprising given his admitted holiday depression in the opening track "Christmas Time is Here." Midway through the song, over the beautiful rolling, finger-picking that backs the track, he confesses "I think there's something wrong with me, Christmas is coming, but I'm not happy, I just don't feel the way I'm supposed to feel." It's hardly a unique problem you've got there Charlie Brown. His friend replies, with apologies to Linus Van Pelt I'm sure, "Of all the Mark Kozeleks in the world, you are the Mark Kozelekiest."

For the rest of the record Kozelek shakes off that cartoon bah humbug attitude and delivers a collection of songs perfect for those late holiday nights sit-

ting in front of the fire after the kids have gone to bed. One of his most inspired choices is Chrissie Hynde's "2000 Miles," a song of loneliness and longing. Its hopeful end message says effectively that everything will be better at Christmas time. While his guitar is a powerful instrument on the record, notably on the opening track and the gorgeous "Away in a Manger," where its intricate patterns weave a luxurious lullaby, he eschews it very effectively on two tracks. The first is "O Come All Ye Faithful" which layers his vocals for an impressive a capella church choir effect. On "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" he brings a falsetto vocal into the mix which anchors the song's many verses, many of which I hadn't heard before. "The First Noel" has a graceful echoing beauty to it, and may be the standout track in its simplicity. It's also the longest track, which gives it more time to develop than the others. "Silent Night" appropriately adopts the same sleepiness as "Away in a Manger" did earlier in the record.

The last third of *Sings Christmas Carols* matches two traditional tunes to a pair of contemporary tracks. "I Believe in Father Christmas," written by Greg Lake of Emerson, Lake and Palmer and King Crimson fame, was originally intended to protest the commercialization of the holiday season. Despite that, it has become a fixture on classic rock stations the last two weeks in December. Kozelek captures the darkness in the lyrics, which speak to the loss of childhood innocence. An unexpected ghostly harpsichord echoes his urgent delivery, and he offhandedly duets with it in wordless vocalizations on one pass. The Kozelek choir returns on the chorus of "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" for his most effective use of layered vocals, while "What Child is

This?" is a straightforward reading. The record ends with a more recent classic. "The Christmas Song," aka "Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire," is indelibly linked to its author Mel Torme, but Kozelek manages to nearly make it his. Brody's piano is gorgeous, but this may not have been the best song to use it on. The spare treatment the other tracks received may have been the way to make his version of a well-known classic stand out. It's not a missed step as much as it is a missed opportunity on his uniformly solid holiday effort.

Mad Folk News is published monthly by the Madison Folk Music Society, a non-profit, volunteer-led society dedicated to fostering folk music in the Madison area. Contact us at madfolk@charter.net. Learn about concerts, membership, scholarships, and volunteer opportunities at www.madfolk.org.

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WZ Folk Gift Guide for the Swank

So you say your Lear Jet is in need of an aileron wax, your Steinway has a family of raccoons living under the bass octaves, and your moat is infested with Asian carp and zebra mussels. Your portcullis is rusty and the Bentley has glove compartment parasites.

And in the middle of this embarrassing pickle, to your mortification, you have heard that your nephew Bromley has decided on a career as a folk singer. To top it off, Christmas is coming, and you have no clue what gifts would be appropriate for this misguided boy, whom you would rather see in banking or munitions.

Grim as all that may be, you have a family obligation to buck up and knuckle down and have someone comb at least the internet in pursuit of information on what's available for the aspiring troubadour. This is where the **Whither Zither Folk Gift Guide for the Swank** comes in handy. Assuming you would be willing to part with a few shares of your dwindling blue chips, or can unload some property in the islands or something, here are suggestions:

The majority of folk singers play as their accompanying instrument the guitar. The ability to play many a quotidian folk standard can be learned on this device in a few evenings by the fire, if tutored by one of the best, and in folk music, one of the best is usually cheaper by the session than a barber.

A lower priced unit is to be avoided, for anything below the four thousand dollar plateau is inferior and might better be tossed in with the hickory to warm the music room by burning than by attempting it with hot licks. No, the only starter-guitar to be considered is the Martin D-45S Authentic 1936, available from **musiciansfriend.com** for the discounted price of \$47,999.00. The manufacturer's suggested retail

price is \$59,999, leaving you a few extra pennies to detail the jet.

This is somewhat lower than the more recent folk invention, the accordion, which has as its entry level price for the fledgling acoustic musician the figure of \$52,495, plus shipping and handling. This will obtain for your waiting nephew, from the shelves of **instrumentalsavings.com** of Anaheim CA, the Hohner Gola Series Premium Level Piano Accordion, Model 414. A fabulous price for this lovely and popular instrument.

As stocking stuffers for kum bye ya youngsters, harmonicas are ideal. But go for no less than the Suzuki SCT-128 professional 16-hole Tremolo Chromatic Harmonica, available from the same Anaheim outfit, for the rock bottom price of \$1,799.00, a full \$300 less than the manufacturer recommends, and this, believe it or not, includes shipping.

As long as we're on the subject, if the fellow's taste runs toward this machine of suck-and-blow, a more comprehensive idea would be the Hohner Bob Dylan Hand-Signed Natural Key 7-Piece Harmonica Set. This extremely limited edition consists of a complete set of seven Marine Band harmonicas in a lovely autographed box, signed by the folk superhero of yesteryear and recently listed at **musiciansfriend.com** for the round figure of \$25,000.

Another thought for the stuffing of the stocking is not an instrument in itself, but a tool used by every serious folk artist today: the microphone. And here you should go directly toward the Telefunken Elektroakustik ELA M 251 Tube Microphone, on special sale at **Front End Audio** for \$11,995. Be advised it is best to buy two of these, for stereo effects.

Everyone in this boy's position would benefit from inspiration driven by the possession of tokens from past masters, and toward this end I would suggest the Woody Guthrie manuscript listed on **eBay** by seller **historydirect** for the Buy-It-Now figure of \$45,000, said to have been reduced from \$50,000 for quick sale. As a companion piece, there is also an original letter from Leadbelly listed at

liveauctioneers.com with a starting bid price of \$1,200 and an estimated final range of 2,000 to 3,500.

Almost last but far from least, speaking of non-instrumental gifts, if your nephew is serious to the point of classic posture guitar stylings, he will need a footstool. There is no better in this area than the 110 pound solid gold stool, shown below, said to be up for immediate sale in China's Jiangsu province for 1.3 million dollars.



All this being said -- though we are reluctant to even envision such a scenario -- if you are seriously down to the nubbins and making soup of your last bean, if you are reduced to tying your own Windsor knot, if you are replacing your Pissaros with Kincaid prints, don't forget that old reliable standby, the Monarch Music Stand Pencil Clip (below). This treasure is available from music accessory dealers all across the World Wide Web for \$1.09, but please don't say you heard about it in the **Whither Zither Folk Gift Guide for the Swank**.





LOU AND PETER'S
ANNUAL EARLY NEW YEAR'S EVE SHOW

AS ALWAYS, HALF OF THE PROCEEDS GO TO THE GOODMAN COMMUNITY CENTER

NEW YEAR'S EVE, WEDNESDAY, DEC 31, 8 'TIL 10:30PM
GOODMAN COMMUNITY CENTER, 149 WAUBESA ST IN MADISON

TICKETS: \$18 ADVANCE, \$22 DAY OF SHOW
IN PERSON:
ORANGE TREE IMPORTS ON MONROE ST OR THE GOODMAN COMMUNITY CENTER
ONLINE:
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“...a brilliant artist and unique individual. Her voice is distinctive, as is her mastery over the instruments she plays.” – Joan Baez



photo by Ben Barnhart

**Madison Folk Music
Society PRESENTS**

Tracy Grammer

Friday, January 16

7:00 pm

THE BRINK LOUNGE, 701 E. Washington, Suite 105

Tickets \$15 advance, \$17 day of show

Available at: www.madfolk.org,

Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports



Non-perishable donations of food will be collected for local food banks.

The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

December 2014

Mad Folk Events



Tracy Grammer

Friday January 16 -- 7pm
The Brink Lounge 701 E. Washington -- \$15 adv, \$17 d.o.s.

Claudia Schmidt

Saturday February 28 -- 7pm
The Brink Lounge 701 E. Washington Ave. Suite 105
\$15 adv, \$17 d.o.s.



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

The Brink Lounge

• Tuesday, December 16, Alchemy Ensemble (w/ Tracy Jane Comer, Faye Bruggink, & Julie Overman +Special Guests) Special holiday benefit show for Porchlight, Inc. Free show - Donations encouraged for Porchlight.

Venues

FOLKLORE VILLAGE... PROMOTING IT ON

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

Folklore Village

- Tues, December 2 -- Open Mic
- Sat, December 6 -- Healthy Hoe-Down and Old Time Jam w/ Sponsor Circle M Farm
- Sat, December 13 -- St Lucia Ceremony & Social
- Fri, December 19 -- Madison Maennerchor Holiday Concert in Plum Grove Church & German Tree Lighting
- Sat, December 20 -- German Christmas Tree Lighting & Social
- Sun-Thurs, December 28 to January 1st -- 67th Annual Festival of Christmas & Midwinter Traditions w/ Sonia Dion & Cristian Florescu



Wild Hog in the Woods

- Fri, December 5 -- High Ridge Band -- 8pm
- Fri, December 12 -- Inna Larson w/ Dark of the Moon -- 8pm
- Fri, December 19 -- Nelson Graham -- 8pm

Cafe Carpe

All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise

- Friday, December 5, Big Bang String Thing - \$10 - @8pm
- Saturday, December 6, The New Pioneers - \$12 - @8pm
- Wednesday, December 10, Winter Lamplighter Series - \$25 adv. - @8pm
- Thursday, December 11, Winter Lamplighter Series - \$20 adv. - @8pm
- Friday, December 12, Winter Lamplighter Series - \$20 adv.
- Saturday, December 13, Corky Siegel & Howard Levy - \$30 adv.
- Sunday, December 14, Winter Lamplighter Series - \$20 adv. - @7pm
- Thursday, December 18, Winter Lamplighter Series - \$20 adv. - @8pm
- Saturday, December 20, Willy Porter w/ Carmen Nickerson - \$30 adv.
- Sunday, December 21, Dorgknorl Doings w/ Bill Camplin / Satchel Paige / David Goodrich / Savannah Welch Camplin - \$15 adv. - @7pm
- Friday, December 26, Syd Hartha & the Monkeyminds - \$10 / \$5 students - @7:30pm
- Saturday, December 27, Bill Camplin & The Hosts of Post-Christmas
- Sunday, December 28, The Merry Horde - Annual Food Pantry Benefit - @6:30pm



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

Misc

Old Time Jam

Monthly - 2nd Sunday of every month, 4 to 6pm
EVP West 3809 Mineral Point Road
Coodinator: Al Wilson
cell: 608-572-0634
afwilson@pediatrics.wisc.edu

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

Cajun jam held every first Sunday 2 p.m.-4 p.m. At the Chocolatarian: 2004 Atwood Ave., Madison We welcome all levels of experience with instruments and Cajun music.
Call Karen at 608-238-6039 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" w/ Ford Blackwell, Tracy Lawrence, Paul Novak, Gloria Hays & Jason Rowe
Weekdays 9:00am-noon
• Mon - Global Revolutions (folk from the world over) w/ Dan Talmo & Martin Alvarado
• Tue -- For the Sake of the Song (traditional American folk) w/Jim Schwall
• Wed -- Back to the Country (country music on a theme) w/Bill Malone
• Thur -- Diaspora (folk and international) w/Terry O' Powers
• 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, 7:00-9:00 pm -- 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. -- 233-2956

Gigs

Kiki's Righteous House of Music

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.
For full details or to request an invitation, contact Kiki at righteousmusicgmt@gmail.com
• December 13 @ 9 pm (doors at 8) Jon Dee Graham / Mike June -- \$15

Mike Tuten's Music House

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.
For full details or to request an invitation, contact Mike at maddog-210@charter.net
• December 3 @ 7 pm (doors at 6:30) Dana & Susan Robinson -- \$15

“...a true artist – she has talent AND the fire of genius.” *The Boston Globe*



**Madison Folk Music
Society PRESENTS**

Claudia Schmidt

with special guest Dean Magraw

Saturday, February 28

7:00 pm

THE BRINK LOUNGE, 701 E. Washington, Suite 105

Tickets \$15 advance, \$17 day of show

Available at: www.madfolk.org,

Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports



Non-perishable donations of food will be collected for local food banks.

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

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

Way #1 – online

Visit www.madfolk.org and click on “Join MFMS”

Way #2 – unplugged

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Friend	\$25	_____
Contributing	\$50	_____
Life	\$500	_____
Scholarship fund donation (optional)	\$	_____
Total	\$	_____

GOING GREEN - Send my newsletters electronically by email

Send your check, payable to MFMS to: Mad Folk c/o
Tracy Comer, P.O. Box 930446 Verona, WI 53593-0446