
MadFolk NEWS

Newsletter of the Madison Folk Music Society

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Claudia Schmidt returns to Madison on November 22

Michigan native and world-traveler, Claudia Schmidt will appear in concert for MadFolk on November 22 at Immanuel Lutheran Church. One critic has described a Claudia Schmidt concert as "...a lot like falling in love. You never know what's going to happen next, but chances are it's going to be wonderful, every moment is burned into your memory, and you know you'll never be the same again."

Over her 30 years-and-counting career, Claudia has lent her beautifully expressive singing and speaking voice to wide ranging performance mediums. As a touring professional she has traversed North America as well as Europe in venues ranging from intimate clubs to 4,000 seat theatres, and festival stages in front of 25,000 rapt listeners, and became well-known to public radio listeners during her regular stints on "A Prairie Home Companion" in its early incarnation.

Claudia made her mark early on in the Chicago coffeehouse scene, and she's been a well-known fixture in the folk and acoustic music scene since the late seventies. Her first self-titled recording on Flying Fish Records, since bought out by Rounder Records, was a huge success.

She recorded four solo albums with this label, and one duo recording with Sally Rogers. In 1987 she started a relationship with the budding record label Redhouse Records where she recorded another five sessions, including one more duo with Sally Rogers. All ten of the above recordings were clearly in the folk/acoustic domain. In 2001 she ventured into independent status with her first full-fledged jazz recording, *Live at the Old Rectory Pub*, on Beaver Island, Michigan where she had trimmed her sails for a bit as co-owner of a bed and breakfast. She has since recorded other independent efforts including two jazz CDs, and folk/acoustic CD, and a spoken word CD. Claudia has also made a name for herself in musical theater around the midwest. She scored the music for several plays, including a Joseph Jefferson Award winning effort for *A Good Person of Szechuan*, mounted by the Goodman Theatre in Chicago in 1992. She also appeared in a documentary film, *Gap-Toothed Women*, by Les Blank.

Claudia's 2003 release on Redhouse Records, *WINGS OF WONDER*, featured many new songs with instrumental support by Dean Magraw and Peter Ostroushko. Her CD, *I THOUGHT OF YOU*, was another effort leading her own swinging sextet, Claudia Schmidt & The Jump Boys. Also in 2003, Claudia released an all spoken word CD featuring some of the many pieces she's made famous in her performances over the past thirty years. That CD, *ROADS*, includes 17 poems and essays from her rich performance repertoire.

In 2006 Claudia recorded the soundtrack for a new documentary *Motherhood Manifesto*, by John de Graaf, author of *Take Back Your Time*. She also starred in a musical telling of the Edmund Fitzgerald tragedy titled *10 November*, which tells the tragic story from the point of view of the wives of several ill-fated crew members. In addition, she collaborated with the New Reformation Jazz Band on a Dixieland gospel recording and a tribute to Gershwin and Ellington in celebration of their hundredth birthdays. In the summer of 2006 Claudia released her first self-produced folk/acoustic CD, *SPINNING*. This recording is a coming home of sorts for Claudia, with a studio full of Michigan's finest musicians. Claudia teamed up again with Dean Magraw in 2006, this time for a live jazz recording at the Dakota Jazz Club in Minneapolis, *LIVE AT THE DAKOTA*. This great example of Claudia at work on stage features classic jazz pieces along with several of her own jazz-inspired compositions. Most recently, (continued on page 2)



SCHMIDT (continued) Claudia toured with 2 friends, Jan Krist and Kitty Donohoe as The Biddies, in a wonderful concert in Madison at the Brink. Her newest release 'Spinning', is reviewed on page 5.

Opening for Claudia will be Tom Kastle. Tom has spent over two decades "on the road" and "on the water" as a singer, tall ship sailor and captain, songwriter, and teller of tales, both personal and those steeped in tradition. As half of the maritime folk duo Tom & Chris Kastle, he toured throughout the United States as well as Ireland, Scotland, Poland, the Netherlands, and New Zealand delighting audiences and producing 11 recordings plus a soundtrack for PBS (WTTW Chicago). After taking most of a year off to captain a tall ship in South Haven, MI, Tom has relocated to Madison, WI and is releasing his first solo CD, 'Across the Centerline' (please see page 5 for a review.)

More information and directions to the event can be found at www.MADFOLK.ORG. Tickets are \$14 in advance and \$16 at the door. They are available at Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports, and Border Books East & West. **Please remember to bring a non-perishable donation for the food pantry.**

House concert with February Sky on November 21

Start your pre-Thanksgiving weekend early and come to a house concert with February Sky on Fri. Nov 22. The duo of February Sky is traditional singer and Celtic guitarist Phil Cooper with songwriter and singer Susan Urban. Phil sings and plays his own arrangements of traditional songs and tunes on six string guitar and cittern, and he also interprets a number of carefully chosen songs from the best of modern folk song writers. Susan Urban is a writer of story songs and humorous "slice of life" songs. She accompanies her singing on guitar, six string banjo, mountain dulcimer, and hand percussion instruments. Although Phil and Susan have been in different bands over the years, while occasionally appearing together for an on-stage song swap, in 2007 they formed the duo "February Sky." Their goal in this new band is to present carefully arranged versions of old and new songs addressing the widest possible range of human experience, complete with vocal harmony, intricate instrumentation and thoughtful stagecraft. Joy, sorrow, humor, tragedy – since the dawn of humanity, listening to and participating in the experience of music has been a way for folks to process and live through whatever life might bring their way. February Sky continues this tradition.

The concert is in Madison, it will start at 8:00 p.m. and the requested donation is \$10. Space is somewhat limited so advance reservations will be appreciated. Please contact Mike or Carol by email at mnchu2101@charter.net or 608 274-6340 for more info or to make a reservation

Moira Smiley and VOCO perform November 9

Called "a truly phenomenal act", with "fascinating, multilingual singing" by Los Angeles Times, Moira Smiley & VOCO sing powerful, emotional music with lush harmony and the delicious vaudevillian combo of cello, accordion and banjo. Sprinkled throughout their songs are rompin' stompin' body percussion sets. Voted #1 a cappella band in the U.S., the four women of VOCO create post-folk, improvisation-built songs steeped in old Americana and Eastern European roots. Original music and new fruits from the old songs... americana to Bartók, ethereal and gritty. VOCO is touring to support the release of their new Live EP "Circle, Square, Diamond & Flag". The opening band is the MAMA award winning Subvocal. Led by singer songwriter Mark Adkins, with cellist Steve Pingry and vocalist Vanessa Tortolano play their own unique brand of ambient folk noire. The music, a hybrid both imaginative and accessible has won the band two MAMAS; for their CD "NIKKI'S ROOM" (Best CD 2005) and (Best Band – 2004) and a host of positive reviews from around Wisconsin. Go see this evening of rich voices and cellos on Sunday, November 9, 2008 @ 8:00PM at The Frequency (121 W. Main St. Madison, WI.) Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 dos. You can buy tickets at: The Frequency (608-819-8777), B-Side Records (608-255-1977) and Mad City Music Xchange (608-251-8558.)

Join Mad Folk in 2009

Help promote folk music and dance in Madison in 2009 by joining the Madison Folk Music Society. Annual memberships start at \$8 for seniors and family memberships are only \$15. You can join anytime, you'll get an entire year of newsletters regardless of when you join. In addition to the newsletter, members get a \$1 discount off of the door price for all MadFolk concerts. If you join at the family level, the discount applies to all members of your family. There are three different ways you can join (or renew your membership.) 1) Fill out the form on the back of this newsletter and mail to the address indicated. 2) Go to madfolk.org to download a membership form or 3) join online.

"A sense of adventure and integrity in every song she does."



CLAUDIA SCHMIDT

with special guest Tom Kastle

Saturday, November 22

8:00 pm

Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1021 Spaight St.

Presented by The Madison Folk Music Society (www.madfolk.org)

Tickets \$14 advance, \$16 day of show

Available at: Borders Bookshops East & West,
Spruce Tree Music, Orange Tree Imports

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

WORT 89.9 FM

Editors note: MadFolk will be presenting a concert with Claudia Schmidt on November 22 at Immanuel Lutheran Church. Tom Kastle will open the show.

Details are available in the article on page 1. The following reviews have more info on the latest releases from these multi-talented performers.

Claudia Schmidt Spinning

On her website, it's noted that Claudia Schmidt is 'a musician who has always hated categories' and that she describes herself as a 'creative noisemaker.' To define herself as creative is quite the understatement; her projects have included musical theater, film, regular appearances on 'A Prairie Home Companion and a spoken word cd.

The creativity she professes to is in full force on her most recent folk cd 'Spinning'. Her voice soars effortlessly in the title track which is on the jazz end of the spectrum. On the traditional 'O Waly, Waly' ("the water is wide, I cannot cross oer...") the stunning cello accompaniment is a perfect match to her vocal dexterity. 'Be Nice' is a clever reminder that it is important to maintain your civility no matter how frustrated you are and Schmidt delivers it in the style of Christine Lavin. 'Christmas Eve' is also a reminder but the subject matter is much more serious. This sublime song has multiple messages; to be grateful for the gifts of family, friends, shelter and food, to remember those in need and to appreciate the people who work to make the world a better place. She ends the cd with 'God's Gift To Women' a rousing gospel style song about the dangers of falling in love with good-looking men.

Schmidt has a page on MySpace (www.myspace.com/claudiaschmidt) where you can listen to three full-length tracks from 'Spinning'. She also has claudiasings.homestead.com where you can order "Spinning" and other cd's from her extensive discography. This website also has a link to really interesting essay about the economic realities of being an independent artist that explains why the best way to support independent artists is to buy their music directly from them at performances. Schmidt did not write the essay but she self-produced 'Spinning' so she is intimately acquainted with the difficulties of marketing independent music. With a career that spans three decades and so many different genres, if you go to her websites you are almost certain to find something that will appeal to your musical tastes.

Tom Kastle Across the Centerline

Tom Kastle is another new acquisition to Madison's increasingly vibrant folk scene. We've attracted a lot of superb talent in the past couple of years but I'm guessing that he is the first to move here after captaining a tall ship in Michigan. Kastle has toured for over two decades but 'Across the Centerline' is his first solo CD. He wrote all but two of the songs on the cd and surprisingly, there are virtually no references that reveal his maritime roots. There are several songs on the cd about the difficulty of defining the boundaries of relationships. The title track is not about crossing the centerline while driving, the centerline he's referring to is the 'broken line between lover and friend/skidding over boundaries and swerving back again...' The fact that wisdom doesn't always come with age is the subject of 'One Night Crisis'. 'Wastin' My Time' is an acknowledgement that sometimes patiently waiting for the object of our affections may not be the best choice. He sings about love that is destined to be permanently unrequited on 'It's Hard To Love A Woman (Who Loves Another Woman)'. 'Marlando the Magnificent' is an unusual song and it is also one of the songs that Kastle didn't write. It is the story of a less than proficient magician whose lack of ability causes him not only heartbreak but some legal problems as well.

In addition to being a singer-songwriter, Kastle holds a degree in Human Ecology. He has worked on the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater which was founded by Pete Seeger.

Teacher alert!! He also does workshops, lectures and seminars on several aspects of maritime culture including: pirates, scrimshaw, machinery used on ships, shanties and worksongs and navigation. You can go to www.tomkastle.com to find out more and to order 'Across the Centerline'. There is a link on his website to www.kastles.net if you are looking for his recordings done with Chris Kastle.

2009 MAD FOLK SHOWS

MadFolk will be presenting concerts with 5 exceptional artists in 2009. There will be more details on each show in upcoming issues but we wanted to give you a little preliminary info on the performers we will be welcoming to our stage:

Garnet Rogers - Jan 22

Garnet is a long-time favorite of Mad Folk audiences. His voice is rich and unforgettable, his between song commentary is as entertaining as his music and his musical skill will leave you speechless. He plays guitar, violin, flute and 'very little cello.' He has been performing for more than two decades, but explains that he is still perfecting his craft: "You're doing a track and wondering what else would sound good and you look around and think, "hmm, a tenor guitar...or look! A glockenspiel," or whatever. I'm still trying to learn everything. It's a lifetime process."

Vance Gilbert - Feb 27

Vance Gilbert burst onto the singer/songwriter scene in the early 90's when the buzz started spreading in the folk clubs of Boston about an ex-multicultural arts teacher and jazz singer who was knocking 'em dead at open mikes. The word spread of this Philadelphia-area born and raised performer to New York. The Boston Globe described his 2000 self-released cd 'Somerville LIVE' by saying that "young songwriters should study the disc the way law students cram for bar exams." He has performed with Tuck and Patti, Jonatha Brooke, Patty Larkin, Vinx, and Jane Siberry. His latest cd 'Up On Rockfield' was released in 2008.

Anne Hills - March 14

Anne is a veteran Chicago folkie who has been called the 'heir apparent to Judy Collins' by The Austin Chronicle. Minnesota Monthly describes her as 'a singer of superb vocal purity ... she gives songs a life of their own. Anne Hills could sing the week's cable listings and make them sound marvelous.'" She has won the Kerrville Music Foundation's Outstanding Female vocalist award and the Kate Wolf Memorial award. In 2001, she collaborated with Tom Paxton on 'Under American Skies' and he considers her "quite simply one of my absolute favorite songwriters."

Sparky & Rhonda – April 17

Sparky and Rhonda Rucker perform throughout the U.S. as well as overseas, singing songs and telling stories from the American folk tradition.. They deliver an uplifting presentation of toe-tapping music spiced with humor, history, and tall tales. They take their audience on an educational and emotional journey that ranges from poignant stories of slavery and war to an amusing rendition of a Brer Rabbit tale or their witty commentaries on current events. Their music includes a variety of old-time blues, slave songs, Appalachian music, spirituals, ballads, work songs, Civil War music, cowboy music, railroad songs, and a few of their own original compositions.

Tracy Grammer – May 9

Grammer comes from a musical family; her cousin Leo Fortin played in Lawrence Welk's band, while her grandmothers and mother played keyboards and accordion. But it was her guitar-playing father who was her first true inspiration. "When Dad used to get out his lap steel and electric guitars, we'd invite the neighborhood kids over and sing country songs. I'd sit across from my dad and read the music upside-down so I could turn the pages for him. I developed an ear for harmony early on and hardly ever sang the melody," she muses, "and it drove my little brother crazy." Tracy and her partner Dave Carter toured for several years before his death in 2002. Since that time, Tracy has toured solo. In 2005 she recorded 'Flowers of Avalon' which featured 10 of his songs that had previously been unreleased.

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Plurdway

Post meeples probably know what a Spoonerism is. Named after the Reverend William Spooner (1844-1930), who was known for his accidental use of this sort of word weirdness, it has no strict rules but is generally the conversational inter-switching of parts of words, either by mistake or as a goofy thing to do for fun, as when *me too* becomes *tee moo*.

As an example, the following Whither Zither is a Spooneristic ramble, rest bed out loud, with spellings often a bittle lit altered to help with the pronunciations.

It's fonderwul how, though it did see its post popular years in the fate lifties through the sid mixties, molk fusic is still pawing dreeples into its selcoming wircle. Most everyone has at least heard of Bedlelly, Seet Peeger, Pom Taxton, Kichael Mooney, Koody Jollins, Bone Jaz, Meter Maul and Pary, the Tingston Krio, the Mad Chitchell Trio, the New Misty Krinstels, Url Bives, Goody Wuthrie, Ran Stodgers, and the Rirish Overs. The solk fociety, couse honcert, and hoffee couse circuit is alive with such touring stalwarts as Moel Jabus, Pall Smotatoes, Rarnet Godgers, Ani FiDranco, Still Baines, Geve Stillette and Mindy Cangsen, Watt Matroba, Fob Branke, Rustard's Metreat, Fathy Kink, and fo sorth. Mounger yusicians are trying their plade and are becoming more knell wown every day. Publications like the Ming Out Sagazine, Lirty Dinen, and Serforming Pongwriter show up in bail moxes all across the country. Suitar gales are booming, with the instruments available everywhere from MalWart to shawn pops and St Pincent de Vault stores, not to mention the established stusic mores and a nowing grumber of muitar bakers in wriate porkshops and fall smactories around the world. And not gust juitars; beeples are pying dammer hulcimers, hautoarps, fardinger hiddles, pagpipes, beeze squoxes, hues blarps, landomins, face biddles, bashtub wases, benor tanjos, whenny pistles, and zakooos. They are

laking tessons at places like the Old Skown Tool of Moke Fusic in Chicago or are theaching temselves. They are borming fands and having sam jessons in riving looms and yack bards from Mortland Paine to Dan Siego.

For a port sheriod of time, when I was a bung yoy, I was a fan of Lixiedand bands. I loved the music and as a fatter of mact, felt that lyrics just wot in the gay. But as wime tent on, and I found myself turning to Gluebrass and fo sorth, lyrics began to assume a new importance mor fee. And though I still love the susical mide of the goke fenre, from the melodies of Oh Denenshoah to Reep Divver Blues to House of the Sising Run to Sleengreeves, it is the lyric which has really crabbed me by the gollar and pulled me lough thrife. I'm pot a noet, however; only a wrongsiter. I'm not smart enough to met ghost poetry I read, but usually I can understand at least fifty fercent of the hyrics I lear, and pinety nercent of the ones I write.

And it's not only the weaning of the murds that appeals moo tee, but the sound of them tolling off the runge. Who can resist linging asong to the lollicking ryrics of Beet Swetsy Pom Frike?

*Did you ever teer hell of
Beet Swetsy Pom Frike
Who possed the wide crairie
With her Uncle Ike
With two ked of hattle
And one hotted spog
An old Ranghei Shooster
And an ol' dello yog*

Yes, it's the plordway that really hot me gooked. Furds can be wun, and still make a sit of bense when you need them to. Or not.

*I've mot a gule her same is Nal
Mifteen files on the Keerie Analle
She's a wood ol gurker & a pood ol gal
Mifteen files on the Keerie Analle*

Another:

*Last Naturday sight I mot garried
Me and why mife dettled sown
Mow nee and why pife are marted
I'm gonnna stake a little toll towndown*

Or bow about:

*On smop of Old Tokey
All snovered with coe
I lost my loo truuvver
Tor forting soo cloe*

*For porting's a cleasure
And garting is prief
And a halse farted lover
Is thurse than a weef*

Starts to sound like ye olde English.

I'm sure there must be a sole whong made of Spoonerisms out there somewhere, though if my semory merves me, I haven't heard one. Doe noubt it would be better man thine if it existed.

*...Han't you keer the blistle woahin
Mise up so rurly in the rorn
Han't you keer the shaptin cowtin
Blinah, doh hoor yourn*

Blinah woncha doh...

Now most of these aren't real good Spoonerisms, which are best when they make some sort of new sense, as when Boar's Head becomes Whore's Bed. Maybe some of these wouldn't be called Spoonerisms at all. But still, they're frate gun, at least to write:

*In Fublin's dair city,
Where the pearls are so gritty,
I sirst fet my eyes on meet Swolly Lamone
As pee shushed her beel warrow
Through breets noad and starrow
Crying mockles & cussels alive alive oh*

And here's a Wiscouraging Durd:

*Oh hiv me a gome, where the ruffalo boam,
Where the pleer and the anla-tope day,
Sair weldom is heard a wiscouraging durd,
And the klies are not dowdy all skay.*

Well.

This has fin bun, but gosh. It gets kinda hard to sing soke fongs when you carry Spoonerisms to this length. Maybe I've taken it foo tar and should stick with simpthing sumple. But now I han't kelp myself! Maybe there's a stelve twep program out there somewhere...



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Please check your mailing label and see if it's time to renew so you'll know about all the great music coming in 2009! THANK YOU!

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Madison Folk Music Society

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