Mad Folk News

Keeping the Music Alive

Wild Hog in the Woods Coffeehouse has been presenting folk and acoustic music almost every Friday night, September through May, for many years. Our venue has been the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center on Madison's east side. With the Covid-19 pandemic, live performances are not possible at this time. Time to think outside the box.

When the Wil-Mar shut down this spring, performer videos from the past were put together and webcast on Friday nights to finish out the season. What to do looking forward? We received permission to use the Wil-Mar Center during August and possibly beyond, to video performers on the stage with our Wild Hog quilt as background. The idea was to make the video look as close as possible to a live performance on our stage. As the usual 2 hour concerts were determined to be too long for viewing on small screens, these concerts will be about one hour in length. An intro and graphics will be added along with information about how to put tips in virtual Phillup the Pig.

Other performers with the necessary technical abilities will be live streaming from their homes or other locations on some Friday nights. A few may submit recorded video for us to use. We'll also try and dig up a few more performances from the past to put in the mix. Our season will start on September 11th with a live steam stream from Tracy Jane Comer. All concerts will start at our usual time of 7:30 PM.

Over half of the Wil-Mar Center's budget has come from the popular east side festivals. With those no longer happening this year, it's an extreme challenge to raise enough funds to keep providing needed programs to the community. The Wild Hog coordinators decided to split tips in Phillup 50/50 between the performer and the Wil-Mar Center. It's hoped that viewers will be generous in support of performers, many who have also lost income, and the Wil-Mar Center.

Performance schedules will be found on the Wild Hog website, www. wildhoginthewoods.org. Performers wishing to be involved should contact our booking person, Stephen Lee Rich at stephenr@wildhoginthewoods.org.

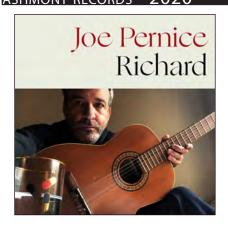
In support of both musicians and venues, let's all help in keeping the music alive.



During these times where we can't go out to listen to music, many musicians are putting concerts ever

During these times where we can't go out to listen to music, many musicians are putting concerts every week thru the web.

We at Madfolk are trying to post some of them on our Face Book page each week. So if you part of the Social Media world of Face Book, please "like" the page for Madison Folk Music Society and keep watch here for some great music. Looking forward to the future where we can all gather in public for music again.



Review by Kiki Schueler

This is what isolation sounds like. One guitar, one voice, and ten beautiful, delicate songs. It's easy to picture Joe Pernice, the curmudgeonly lead singer of the Pernice Brothers, cultivator of curious collaborations (Roger Lion with hip-hop producer Budo, the New Mendicants with Teenage Fanclub's Norman Blake), and occasional releaser of solo albums, barricading himself in his Toronto home at the start of the pandemic and penning this collection of sad, folky music. Richard is so immediate and intimate that I can see him in his home studio (which is actually just a basement bicycle shop), pressing "record" and counting himself in. On more than half the songs you can hear a whispered "one, two, three, four," before the first strummed note. He's credited as having written, preformed and recorded every song, with the exception of one recorded by Liam Jaeger (who also contributed heavily to the last Pernice Brothers record). According to the credits, Jaeger also plays guitar on two songs, though it is so subtle it does nothing to break the illusion of seclusion

In fact, only Joshua Karp's trumpet on "Sullivan Street" gives testament to the existence of the outside world. He shows up at the two-minute mark like a street corner busker whose welltimed refrain drifts in through an open window. It's a nostalgic memory of a time where a few vibrant recollections, "We got so high, when we kissed you split your bottom lip on me," can sum it up, "that was Sullivan Street." Reminiscence is a recurring theme, which isn't surprising given that there can't be much inspiration in a time where no one seems to know, or really care, what day it is. Opening track "Starry Crown" spins a rehab fairy tale, "Doctor in his white, like an angel from on high, tried to keep you whole and in this life." There are no happy endings here, "your pain it had to end, I don't want to blame you friend, for letting all this hurt crash at my feet," or in the title track. "Richard" asks forgiveness for standing by as bullies tormented a long ago classmate for being different. Pernice paints the picture with deft strokes, "He looked like Peter Murphy at the height of fame, they never called him Richard, never used his given name," leaving no doubt as to cause. He regrets never saying anything, especially now that "I've heard what you have done." It's hard to blame the narrator's inaction seeing as it could just as well been him, "Flip a coin of vou or me."

While not lyrically dense, "Lonely People" is equally affecting. The repeated phrases "Lonely people live together in their houses without love," and "It's the devil that you know," weave together like Eleanor Rigby's internal monologue. He channels his inner Glen Campbell on "If We Were Better Friends," working a distinctly "Wichita Lineman" feel into the heavy melancholy of lyrics like, "If we were better friends, would you still pretend you'll stop start loving me tomorrow." He updates the relationship status of Jackson Browne's "Somebody's Baby" with a knowing smile on "Everybody's Baby," where excellent similes like "She disappeared just like a catastrophic flight" and angelic backing vocals are good for extra credit. Also of note are his whistled solo on "You Should Have Came" that would give Andrew Bird pause, and an instrumental ("We Both Know") so rich you don't even miss lyrics. There's no doubt that this changing world will change the way records are made. In which case, I look forward to more records from Pernice's basement.

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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My Highway Home

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Why We Sing Labor Songs

Labor Day is an intriguing holiday. It is inextricably tied to music, and yet we do not sing Labor carols, Labor hymns, Labor anthems or just plain Labor songs as a regular part of our society's practice around celebrating this holiday. In fact, we don't really celebrate this holiday much at all except for taking a three-day weekend. And ironically, many Working-Class people especially in the service sector, end up working overtime on a weekend that was designated as an homage to workers. Why is this? It's not like there are no Labor songs to sing, there are thousands. So why don't we give Labor Day gifts? Labor Day greeting cards? Why can't I go into Target and buy worker-themed wrapping paper for all of the Labor Day gifts I give out each year? Why no Labor Day gift market, like a Crist Kindle Markt honoring workers? I promise I will get around to the musical part of this narrative, but bear with me while I delve into a little bit of backstory.

In October 1884, The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions of The United States and Canada (FOTLU) decided that May 1st, 1886 was the date by which the standard 8-hour workday should be implemented. That organization became the American Federation of Labor a.k.a. the AFL. And later still joined with the Congress of Industrial Organizations to form the AFL-CIO.

But back in 1884, there was a growing interest in improving the lives of workers. An increase in industrialization was taking a toll on worker's health and safety, and working conditions were tragically poor in many places globally. As part of a larger global effort of working people, the FOTLU started to organize throughout North America in an effort to create a better situation for workers everywhere, in all trades and industries. May 1st 1886 was the designated day for international action. And in Chicago, various sources report that over 40,000 workers went on strike, marched in solidarity, and sang songs like the Labor hymn, Hold The Fort.

Hold the fort for we are coming Unionists be strong Side by side we battle onward Victory will come

We meet today in freedom's cause And raise our voices high; We'll join our hands in union strong To battle or to die

Look, my comrades, see the union Banners waving high. Reinforcements now appearing, Victory is nigh.

See our numbers still increasing; Hear the bugle blow. By our union we shall triumph Over every foe. Fierce and long the battle rages But we will not fear. Help will come whene'er it's needed. Cheer, my comrades, cheer.

In their book Songs of Work & Freedom, Edith Fowke & Joe Glazer report that this song's origin is in the US Civil War. Other sources say it was specifically written as an inspirational hymn in 1870 by Phillip Paul Bliss, a composer and evangelist who was inspired by the story of how Union Brigadier General, John M. Corse held his garrison at Allatoona Pass in Georgia, after receiving word form General Sherman to, "Hold the fort!" Mr. Bliss was moved by the story and saw corollaries in his own spiritual beliefs that he interpreted as "signs" telling him to "Hold the Fort" for his faith. Fascinating to me is that Mr. Bliss heard this story as told by Major Daniel Webster Whittle at a lecture given in Rockford, Illinois (my childhood home).

Regardless, in the 1880s the Knights of Labor was a progressive worker's fraternal order that had over 700,000 members in the US alone, and they adopted the above-mentioned Labor-oriented version of the hymn. The Knights of Labor were radical in their day for wanting to organize across lines of color, race, ethnicity, and gender. Not unlike the later Industrial Workers of the World, they hoped to see One Big Union emerge from a more partitioned movement of the day. Their goal was for all workers to have the right to bargain collectively for better treatment, wages, and working conditions. They were singers, too!

In 1882, the Central Labor Union (CLU) of New York and its Secretary, Matthew Maguire put forth an idea that we should have an annual national day of celebration for workers on the first Monday of September. On September 5th of that year, while the Knights of Labor held a General Assembly in New York, the CLU organized a large and peace-

ful public parade as a demonstration for worker's rights. This is important to note as it set up a precedent for opposing ideas about when we should celebrate Labor Day.

But in 1886, the various Labor Movements across North America were poised for a General Strike on May 1st, and Chicago was the epicenter of the movement in the US. Workers had participated in well-organized events in many parts of the city on May 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. But on May 4th at Haymarket Square, things got ugly. It is asserted that one of the workers threw a pipe bomb at the police. But a corroborating preponderance of evidence in historic records suggest that it was one of the police themselves or possibly a private security guard like a Pinkerton, who instigated the violence. And then they opened fire on a crowd of protesters, ostensibly in retaliation. Sounds a little like Portland, Oregon... only just last month.

In the wake of The Haymarket Massacre as it came to be known, May 1st was henceforth declared International Workers Memorial Day. And globally, workers have celebrated May 1st as International Worker's Day/ Labor Day ever since. It is a national holiday in many countries. And in spite of widespread advocacy to make May 1st the official US Labor Day, President Grover Cleveland was concerned that any acknowledgement of May 1st would only lend support to radicals and "unsavory elements" of society. As such, Column continued on next page

Joe Jencks is 20-year veteran of the international Folk scene, an award winning songwriter and vocalist, and a contributing writer to numerous publications. His column **My Highway Home** is a recent addition to the Mad-Folk newsletter. For more information please visit: **www.joejencks.com**.

Joe Jencks continues to host a monthly radio show called My Highway Home on the new Folk Music network – Folk Music Notebook. This show features interviews with people Joe meets in his extensive travels along with music by many artists from the big tent that is Folk Music. Tune in on the first Monday of the month at 9:00 PM ET/6:00 PM PT. And rebroadcast on the following Sundays at 1:00 PM ET / 10:00 AM PT. Several past episodes are archived through Folk Music Notebook including shows about the Kerville Folk Festival, Old Songs Festival, The Great Labor Arts Exchange, Ireland, and an interview with Sonny Ochs.

Listen in onliné via: www.folkmusicnotebook.com he pushed hard for the first Monday in September to be the US Labor Day, and declared it a national holiday in 1894. But his proclamation only affected Federal workers. It was not until The Great Depression of the 1930s, a time when the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) led repeated strikes and calls for solidarity, that all 50 states recognized Labor Day as a truly national holiday. President Cleveland also put substantive pressure on Canada, which had been celebrating a May 1st Labor Day, to honor the September Labor Day. A footnote, Oregon State was the first to officially recognize a September Labor Day in 1887, as a statewide holiday. And it was not until 1916 that the 8-hour workday was adopted in the US.

Preceding the Colliery songs of the Welsh, Irish, and Scottish miners who emigrated to the American continent well before the US Revolution, we have had work songs, whaling songs and sea songs. songs of the spinning wheel and loom, field songs and other traditions that firmly anchor the Labor Movement to the arts in North American culture. And we know that the displaced indigenous peoples of North America also had work songs of their own. It is a centuries old tradition here, and likely even older in other parts of the world. It is my honor both as an interpreter of Folk traditions and as a modern songwriter, to dedicate some portion of nearly every concert I give to these songs, and the rich human legacy they represent.

In early 2019, I received a marvelous phone call from my friends Derek Black and Mitch Podolak in Winnipeg. In 1919, Winnipeg was the location of the most successful general strike in the history of North America. Workers seized the city for weeks, and more workers all over Canada, the US, and parts of Europe went out on strike as an act of Solidarity. Organizing tactics from Winnipeg were employed in Ireland during their war of independence, 1919-1921. The Winnipeg General Strike is perhaps the most important Labor event that most people have never heard of.

Mitch invited me to come to Winnipeg and sing, as he had many times before. But this event was to be extra special. Hosted by the May Works Festival, it was to be a huge celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike. The day would start with a march of thousands, leading into a music festival at a park across the street from the provincial capital building. And I was one of only two US artist asked to travel to Winnipeg to perform in that festival. I told Mitch that I would write a new song just for the occasion. And I was honored to do so. I love Winnipeg. If you ever get a chance to go

to the Ukrainian Labor Temple there, by all means do so. It is an under-appreciated city to be sure. And I think the reasons why it is not celebrated more are tied to the same reasons why we don't sing Labor carols widely on Labor Day.

We are collectively (though not necessarily individually) ashamed of our Working-Class heritage. There is such a profoundly consistent message in our society that we should all aspire to "escape" work and reach for a "country club" lifestyle. I was not made aware of the idea that I could be proud of being Working Class until I met my friend Phil Amadon who inspired my composition, Song of The Rails among others. And then later in my 20s I learned about the Labor Heritage Foundation and The Great Labor Arts Exchange, founded by a community of artists dedicated to celebrating the trades including Labor's Troubadour, Joe Glazer. In attending this conference several years in a row, I found immense pride, joy, catharsis, and hope. I realized I could be proud of being a worker. Even if I was successful in life and finance, I did not need to leave Solidarity behind. The people who have lifted me up, the good working people who raised me, they are still my people. Always will be.

And so, I sing Labor hymns. I write Labor songs. I give people Labor greeting cards, and many years I give presents on May 1st or on Labor Day. I am by no means alone. Many of my colleagues and fellow musicians care deeply about our proud working past and want to advocate and organize for a more hopeful future for those who follow in our footsteps. I am a proud member of the American Federation of Musicians of The United States and Canada – AFM Local 1000. I am always happy to talk with people about workers, labor history, about the songs, and most importantly about the actual dimensional people the songs are written about. It is because of centuries of Labor songs that we have insight into the history of many trades, as well as the very existence and partial narrative of people whose stories are not otherwise written down in history books. Songs preserve Working Class culture and have done so for centuries. It is an honorable musical tradition. And one we can all carry forward in some way.

So, here is what I wrote for Mitch Podolak and Derek Black, and the workers of Winnipeg past and present. For those of you familiar with the Industrial Workers of The World a.k.a. The Wobblies' songbook – Songs to Fan The Flames of Discontent, you will note several "Easter Eggs" in this piece. Happy hunting.

Winnipea 1919

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The year was 1919 and all around the world

People started marching with their victory flags unfurled

We've shed our blood on battle fields and slaved in deep dark mines

We rally to the banner, bread and roses it's our time

Chorus

Come gather Fellow Workers and raise your voices strong

We rise today in Winnipeg to sing our victory song

In Europe and in Canada, across the USA

We cry out for justice and for fair and equal pay

All sisters and brothers and all races here unite

We strive for One Big Union and defend our common rights

From Halifax and Thunder Bay, to the Fraser River's shore

Seattle, San Francisco, and Chicago hear us roar

From Boston on to Dublin town, are heard the people's cries

No more to drudge and idler, when the workers organize

Though some of us were born of means and others not a dime

We spend our lives in service to a cause we hold sublime

All laborers in commonwealth, now let our voices say

That one way or another we will bring the greater day

So here's to Big Bill Haywood, Mother Jones, and Eugene Debs

Along with Emma Goldman and Joe Hill and all the Reds

And all those Fellow Travelers who beckon to the call

An injury to one of us, is an injury to all

We may not win our struggle here, but sure as hell we'll try

For the future of our children we are steadfast by and by

It's only when our minds are joined with muscle we can stand

And bring to birth a new world, arm and arm and hand in hand

Column continued on next page

And so I say to you, Happy Labor Day! (Even if it is past Labor Day when you read this.) Celebrate the work you do in the world, and celebrate the work of others. Let us sing forth a value through our music that says we have the right to be proud of the labor of our hands and the labors of our ancestors. Let us learn, write, celebrate, and sing songs that help us find hope and joy in how we spend our days. My friend Phil Amadon said to me once, "If you cannot be proud of the work you are doing, either you need to do different work!"

It is we who plowed the prairies, built the cities where they trade Dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad laid Now we stand outcast and starving midst the wonders we have made But the Union makes us strong

Solidarity Forever, Solidarity Forever, Solidarity Forever, For the Union makes us strong

In our hands is placed a power greater than their horded gold

Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand-fold

We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old

When the Union makes us strong

The "union" that this anthem of the Labor movement is talking about is not a specific trade union. Rather it celebrates the Union of Workers internationally, collectively; and the power of collaborative and collective effort. I remain proud of the cultural work I do, and I am inspired by the many people I encounter who are diligently doing their work, especially now during the era of Covid-19. I go out of my way to thank workers in grocery and drug stores and in other essential services. I hope you do as well. I hope that you are proud of how you spend your time, talent, and days. And I wish for you to be comforted in the knowledge that you are part of a community of workers who claim you, even if you don't claim them. You are a worker. In some way, at some time in your life, you have been a worker. You have earned a wage in exchange for vour labors, talents, and ideas; and vou have done so to the best of your ability.

Celebrate that!

~ Joe Jencks 8-21-20

For more information on the Labor Heritage Foundation or The Great Labor Arts Exchange, please visit: www.laborheritage.org

the Air

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- Weekdays 9:00am noon "On the Horizon" w/ Ford Blackwell, Paul Novak, Gloria Hays & Helena White
- Mon Global Revolutions (folk from the world over) w/ Dan Talmo & Martin Alvarado
- Tue Another Green Morning w/ Mac Robertson & Brian Hirsch
- Wed Back to the Country (country music on a theme) w/ Bill Malone
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Conversation Songs

During this weird pandemic pandemonium the art of conversation has taken some odd turns. For one thing, I feel I'm out of practice with conversational variety in that I only talk face to face with my wife Kristi and a very few others who are willing to sit eighty five feet away in a diving bell. The telephone helps, and then there are the awkward, delayed, glitchy video conversations. So I've been thinking about the art of conversation in general and, due to my job, how it relates to music.

I would guess there are hundreds if not thousands of conversation songs. Many are only half-conversations, with the respondent not commenting, like Chuck Berry's chat with the information operator in the great 1959 song **Memphis Tennessee**: "Hello information, give me Memphis Tennessee; Help me find the party trying to get in touch with me..."

There are half-conversation songs that aren't necessarily phone calls, like 1950's **Why Don't You Love Me** by Hank Williams: "Why don't you love me like you used to do; How come you treat me like a worn out shoe?" There are zillions of conversation folk songs, half-conversations like **Go Tell Aunt Rhody**, and full conversations like **There's A Hole In The Bucket** which started as a 1700 nursery rhyme: "There's a hole in the bucket, dear Liza, dear Liza..." "Well fix it dear Henry, dear Henry, dear Henry..." etc. There's Silver Dagger from around 1800: "Oh, Katy Dear, go ask your father, if you might be a bride of mine..." "I cannot go and ask my father; for he is on his bed of rest..." etc.

Musical comedy is a great source of conversation songs like **Anything You Can Do I Can Do Better** by Irving Berlin for <u>Annie Get Your Gun</u> in 1946, which boils down to: "I can do anything better than you." "No you can't.""Yes I can. ""No you can't.""Yes I can. ""No you can't.""Yes I can, yes I can..." The 2015 Broadway Musical <u>Hamilton</u> by Lin-Manuel Miranda is rich with hip-hop conversation. Jazz has its examples, a popular one being **Baby It's Cold Outside** written in 1944 by Frank Loesser: "I simply must go (Baby it's cold outside)The answer is no (But baby it's cold outside)..." This song is sometimes banned because it's taken as a man not accepting "no" from a woman. Anyway the list goes on and on and on.

But I don't know of many songs that actually talk ABOUT conversation. One of my favorite songs, **Ode To Billie Joe** by Bobby Gentry (1967), is the *recollection* of a conversation. One example of *what to talk about* is 1959's **Happy Talk** by Rogers and Hammerstein from the musical <u>South Pacific</u>: "Talk about the moon floatin' in the sky; Lookin' like a lily on the lake; Talk about a bird learnin' how to fly; Makin'

all the music he can make ... "

In an effort to help the sometimes lame conversations we end up having on Zoom, we put together this corny conversation-starter song, and have actually used it to rekindle the chatter. The simple melody is mine; don't blame my partner Lou. You can also sing this to the **Sink the Bismarck** melody in a pinch. Give it a try next time the yakking flags:

Conversation Starter Song by L&P Berryman ©2020

What food did you used to like but now don't like at all? What nickname would you prefer if you were ten feet tall? What were family dinners like when you were seventeen? Which one is more beautiful, the color blue or green?

What's the most annoying sound that you have ever heard Where would you have built your nest if you had been a bird Who's a famous movie star that you would like to know Who would you have paint your portrait, rembrandt or van gogh

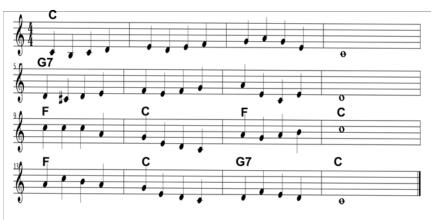
What would be your charity if you were filthy rich Would you rather clean a motel room or dig a ditch Have you ever eaten something just to be polite What's your fondest mem-or-y of staying up all night

Say you owned a restaurant; so what would be its theme What was your worst nightmare like? What's your fav'rite dream? Is the point of life the same for humans and for bugs? What's the strangest thing you've ever done because of drugs?

Atlantic or Pacific ocean, which one smells the worst You're elected president, so what would you do first What invention changed the world but not by very much Are there friends from childhood with whom you've kept in touch

Are you more like Rocky Squirrel or Bullwinkle the moose Let's say you were Einstein's barber, what is your excuse? Have you ever gotten lost while riding on a bike If we had no knees what would our furniture be like

Would your life lose its pizzazz if all your dreams came true Who's the first to tell you it's annoying how you chew When you eat a haggis lunch what time is it in Maine Will today be dry or do ya think it's gonna rain



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(Hint: It is NOT the date on the mailing label!)

The date shown on the mailing label is NOT your membership expiration date! There has been some confusion lately, and we apologize for that. The date is just the date the labels were printed, as new cost-saving postal procedures do not allow us to include expiration dates there anymore. When it is time to renew, we will send you a personal notice by mail or email. At that point you will be able to either mail a check or renew online at www.madfolk.org. If you have questions about your membership in the meantime, send email to info@madfolk.org.Thanks for your membership and support of Mad Folk!

Madison Folk Music Society

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