

Mad Folk News

Bill Miller Plays Madison

November 22nd

On Friday, November 22 Threshold and The Wisconsin Room are hosting a concert with Bill Miller- one of a three part series, The Autumn Sessions: Americana Folk Traditions. This show is in honor of Native American Month and will take place at Threshold (2717 Atwood Ave.) at 7:30 (doors at 6:30). Tickets are \$20 (or \$30 as a "community sponsor") and can be purchased through wisconsinroom.org/concerts.

Bill Miller is an award-winning Native American recording artist, performer, songwriter, activist, painter, and world-class native flute player. Over the entirety, Miller has produced over a dozen albums, received three GRAMMY® Awards, numerous Native American Music Awards & Association (NAMA) awards (including a "Lifetime Achievement" Award) and led Wisconsin's La Crosse Symphony Orchestra.

A Mohican Indian from northern Wisconsin, Miller grew up amid the streams and woodlands of the reservation (his tribe is properly called Mahicanuk, which means "People From Where The Waters Are Never Still"). He has long been one of the most admired figures in the Native American arts and activist arenas, respectively, and beyond – a voice for the voiceless, a link between two great and clashing civilizations.

Bill Miller pursues an equally active career as a visual fine artist, constantly creating fresh works of visual art. His painted masterpieces and drawings have been shown and sold in prestigious galleries around the country, while several of his iconic paintings have been acquired by the Smithsonian Museum and other important collections.



Source: <https://billmiller.co>

Fall String Gathering Baraboo November 8th - 10th

If you are a musician interested in playing or learning to play traditional acoustic music, we invite you to join us at our 2019 Fall String Gathering, to be held November 8-10, 2019, at the Clarion Hotel and Convention Center in Baraboo, WI. We will have many individual spaces reserved (10 plus) for jams and workshops!! The hotel is working with us to provide a great venue for jamming!!!

Reservations--A special room nightly rate (Friday and Saturday night) of \$74.00 is available if you indicate that you are part of the "String Gathering." Call the hotel at 608-356-6422 to get this special rate when booking your room. Specific jams/workshops (including slow jams) for a variety of traditional

acoustic music including Gypsy jazz, old time, bluegrass, Irish, and Cajun. Check the weblink and facebook page below for more info:

Weblink:
<http://tiny.cc/FallStringGathering>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/361697058111691/>

Nov 8-10, 2019
Clarion Hotel and Convention Center
626 West Pine St
Baraboo, WI 53913
608-356-6422

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

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 608-225-0710 for information.

My Highway Home

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The Power of Melody

I was in Ireland for three weeks this summer. Being a dual US / Irish citizen, I endeavor to spend time there every year. And this is by no means the last time you will see me reference Ireland in my thoughts about music and culture. But in specific, I have been thinking a great deal about the role of melody in songs. What makes some songs really soar? Why do some songs seem to stay with us for days, and other songs don't stay with us, even though the lyrics may be remarkably well crafted? In short, I think it really is all about the melody.

As I sat in pubs, music sessions, and in concert halls in Ireland, I began again to note how deeply my own sense of composition has been shaped specifically by melody. Even American Country and Pop songs that some may find largely forgettable, often have some stellar moment of melody and words paired together in what some writers call a "hook." But a good hook as a mnemonic device, will only help you remember part of a song. When you listen to a song with a triumphant, soaring, melancholy, or haunting melody – it is usually the melody and chord changes combined that capture something of emotion that words alone cannot quantify. And that is why so many good melodies get recycled time and time again.

In the early days of the Labor Movement in the US and Canada, many of the writers of the day took existing melodies and wrote new words. Some prime examples from the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World a.k.a. Wobblies) songbook include Solidarity Forever, set to the Battle Hymn of The Republic, Dump The Bosses Off Your Back, set to the tune of Oh What A Friend We Have In Jesus, and Hallelujah I'm A Bum, set to the tune of the old Protestant hymn – Revive Us Again. These were melodies, well known and easily remembered. But it wasn't just because some of the workers would have remembered them from church meetings as children. It is because they are fundamentally memorable melodies.

A song like Oh Danny Boy, will have some people standing and placing a hand over their heart as if in patriotic fervor. And will chase some people out of the room. I think not unlike Stairway To Heaven (Led Zeppelin), or Wagon Wheel (Old Crow Medicine Show), Oh Danny Boy is a song that has just been worn out for some listeners. But this summer in Ireland, I heard a young Irish musician play that song on her fiddle in a way that had me in tears. The melody carries 90% + of the emotional content for me. One need not even know what the song is about to feel the mournful, wistful pull of the melody. I recently sang How Great Thou Art for the funeral of an elder friend. One of his favorite

hymns and one of mine as well. I think he was attached to the words and the theology they represented. Me, I just love to sing that melody. And paired with thoughtful words, it is a truly fine, fine hymn. It accomplishes its purpose remarkably well.

When I am asked to judge song-writing contests, the first question I ask myself is whether or not the writer and song in question, hit the mark they are aiming for? There is absolutely no single rubric that defines what a good song is. What you think is a good song, I might think is just so, so. And vice versa. But I ask myself, did the writer hit the target they intended to hit. Why as writers they aimed in a specific direction is anyone's guess. I can't always tell you why I shoot at some of the targets I aim for in my writing. It is a combination of musical literacy and instinct. But I can tell you why I write the way I do.

I always start with melody, and/or a short phrase of lyric paired with a specific set of chord changes and melody. It captures in a musical-snapshot some quintessential aspect of what I am feeling and trying to convey. From there, the melody and chord changes usually flow with swiftness. Sometimes with improvisational speed and laser like precision. And then I spend hours, days or even weeks sorting out the words that fit into the melody that has by now thoroughly possessed me, and that conveys the meaning I intend with as much clarity and linguistic ergonomics as possible. There is something about certain melodies that for me, carry the heart of the meaning and therefore = good melodies. And they MUST be paired with well-considered words, even if one is aiming for some ironic compositional dystopia. Melody walks hand in hand with good lyric writing and solid chord changes, to create a memorable song. All due credit to the poets among you who are more clever than I will ever be. We do walk hand in hand, and with respect for each other's craft and art.

But I believe that over the centuries, we have as a species, crafted more memorable melodies than lyrics. It is why generation to generation we continue to recycle the melodies of old, with new words that speak to the needs of the moment. Somewhere in our DNA, there is a secret code that responds to certain types of melody. And it is not just specific to one culture. We can hear music from many other human cultures and recognize significance in it's melodic and chordal structure that moves us emotionally even though we do not grasp fully the lyric subtlety. If we do ever get to hear a Klingon Opera (Star Trek reference FYI), who knows if our sense of musical aesthetic will coincide with another form of life, from another planet? But

my guess is that there will still be commonalities between any sentient life form that knows death, pain, loss, joy, and wonder. I hope I live to see the day I get to trade tunes with a musician from another world.

In the meantime, I will keep listening to Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, The Pathétique. And marveling that songwriter Bill Caddick wrote such amazing words to the melody from late in that symphony, and turned it into the often presumed "Trad." Irish song, John O'Dreams. Tchaikovsky's melody and changes are deeply moving. If Bill Caddick had not borrowed them and built on them, I would have. It is a melody that lingers. Notable recordings of the song have been done by Gordon Bok, Jean Redpath, and Garnet Rogers.

At the end of the day, in deference to gifted poets world-round, I will say that the written language of every culture, and poetry in particular have their unique and undeniably marvelous place. And thanks be for that! Where would we be without the writings of Maya Angelou, Mary Oliver, Rabindranath Tagore, Rumi, Homer, Ovid, Shakespeare, Gill Scott Heron, or William Butler Yeats? But what makes a good song is fundamentally a different question. And in my experience, the ones that stay with me are the songs that are primarily melodically driven. Those are the songs, combined with the right lyrics, that last for generations.

~ Joe Jencks

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 new addition to the MadFolk newsletter. For more information please visit: www.joejencks.com.

In addition, Joe Jencks hosts a once 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 ET/ 6:00 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 Kerrville Folk Festival, Old Songs Festival, The Great Labor Arts Exchange, Ireland, and coming up November 6th and 10th – an interview with Sonny Ochs – Folk DJ, concert producer, educator, and sister of Phil Ochs.

Listen in online via: www.folkmusic-notebook.com



Review by Kiki Schueler

Despite the fact that I have been writing about music for nearly twenty years, I am remarkably bad at describing what a band “sounds like.” That has never been a problem with Hiss Golden Messenger. Over the course of the last four records on Merge (five if you count bonus album Vestapool included with 2016’s Heart Like a Levee), going back to 2014’s Lateness of Dancers, I’ve always been able to sum up their sound as “Eighties Bob Dylan.” Anyone who disagrees likely hasn’t listened to Eighties Bob Dylan. (I’ll admit they weren’t all winners, but Infidels and Oh Mercy are underrated gems.) Terms of Surrender, on the other hand, has drifted from that template, and that descriptor doesn’t quite cover it anymore. HGM has always been MC Taylor and whoever is playing with him (it’s telling that the Wikipedia page lists Taylor as the band’s only member), but up until this point his Court & the Spark bandmate Scott Hirsch has been involved in some way. I can’t help thinking his absence is the difference. With Brad Cook (Megafaun) stepping in to handle bass and production duties, the result is that Surrender is more about a feeling and less about an idea.

Songs like “Whip” and “Old Enough to Wonder Why (East Side-West Side)” bury Taylor’s always welcome falsetto, and the occasionally inconsequential lyrics (the latter consists of just six lines), under organ and swirling synths. They both make

you nod your head, and maybe shake your groove thing, slowly, but you can’t really sing along. Unless, of course, you are Jenny Lewis. The eternal indie it girl has sung with everyone from The Postal Service to Paul Shaffer, and makes her HGM debut on Terms of Surrender. Her backing vocals here are sublime; elevating the record’s best tracks another level. Opening track, “I Need a Teacher” isn’t the plea for better education you might expect, but instead a call to arms for a broken American dream. “Another year older, debt slightly deeper, paycheck smaller, goddamn I need a teacher,” Taylor sings before Lewis joins in, “Rock me daddy, happiness ain’t free. I see where you’re at, I know you can see me.” On “Bright Direction (You’re a Dark Star Now)” she’s the voice of reason, asking, “Did you cross that line?” Phil Cook’s organ bubbles under the song’s bouncy acoustic guitar melody.

The moody invitation “Cat’s Eye Blue” brings the vocals on the verses all the way forward over spare piano and syncopated toms, while the chorus fuzzes and buzzes. The joyous “Katie (You Don’t Have to be Good Yet)” would be one of the record’s best tracks if it didn’t feel so cluttered. Scoring The National’s Aaron Dessner to play piano was a coup (the album was recorded in his upstate New York studio), but here it feels like he’s battling Cook’s organ. It’s a song destined to sound better live. The ballads “Down at the Uptown” and the somewhat anti-climactic title track in the final spot do better. Piano is featured on the latter, while the former relies on a bluesy slide guitar. Family has been a constant theme in Taylor’s work, so it’s no surprise that the best and most heartfelt song here is “Happy Birthday Baby,” written for his daughter on her fifth birthday. Its counting game chorus is as catchy

and memorable as a children’s song, and begs you to sing along. “One, was a lonely number. Two, you were born in thunder. Three, it was lightning quick, you lit up the house like a matchstick.” The rest of the song is equally infectious. While young lone might not appreciate it now, it’s a gift that gets better with age. Perhaps just like Hiss Golden Messenger.

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. www.facebook.com/pages/Madison-Folk-Music-Society/34497984835

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If you are on Facebook, please consider (if you have not already) “friending” or is it “liking” this page. Then when you are on this page you can invite others to “like” this page.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Madison-Folk-Music-Society/34497984835>

The Mad Folk Refrigerator Cover

November 2019

Mad Folk Events



• See madfolk.org or our facebook page for latest show postings

Stay tuned for more folk!

Gigs

Bill Miller

• Friday, November 22nd - at Threshold (2717 Atwood Ave) - @7:30pm (doors 6:30) - \$20 purchase through wisconsinroom.org/concerts

Dave & Anne Host Folk

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.

For full details or to request an invitation, contact Dave & Anne at annedave@chorus.net - 608-256-2958

- Friday, November 15th @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7) Yazmin Bowers w/ Beat Zero - \$20 / \$17 under 18
- Tuesday, December 31st @ 7:30 pm (doors at 7) The Acoustic Charlies - \$20 / \$17 under 18

The Holden Home

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.

For full details or to request an invitation, contact Karen Holden at kcholden@wisc.edu - 608-238-6039

- Thursday, November 7th @ 7:30pm (doors at 7) David Greely - \$15

Sly Dog Madtown

Invitation & Advance RSVP required.

For full details or to request an invitation, contact Will & Robin and Jan at IrishBox42@gmail.com - 608-609-6308

- Friday, November 8th @ 7:30pm (doors at 7) Gerry O'Beirne - \$20

Common Chord

- Friday November 1st, @6:30pm - Common Ground, Middleton
- Saturday November 2nd, @2:30pm - Bos Meadery, Madison
- Saturday November 9th, @4:30pm - First Unitarian Meeting House
- Sunday November 17th, @2pm - Brix Cider, Mt. Horeb
- Friday December 13th, @6:30 pm - Common Ground, Middleton
- Thursday December 19th, @7pm - The Brink Lounge, Madison - Holiday Show benefitting the Luke House Community Meal Program Lounge, Madison- Benefit show for Luke House Community Meal Program

Louka Patenaude

Bandung's Nutty Bar - 600 Williamson St.
Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday 7-9pm - Free!

Fall String Gathering

Traditional Music Jam -
November 8th - 10th - Clarion Hotel and Convention Center
626 W. Pine St. Baraboo, WI

Venues

FOLKLORE VILLAGE

Folklore Village

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

- Sat, Nov 2nd - Harvest Moon Gala - Fall Fundraiser - @6pm
- Tue, Nov 5th - Free Senior Concert: Bob Bovee - @2pm
- Tue, Nov 5th - Open Mic - @7pm
- Sat-Sun, Nov 9th-10th - Folk School Session VI
- Sat, Nov 9th - Healthy Hoedown - 6pm potluck; Dancing @7:15 \$8 adults, \$6 seniors & teens, \$4 kids (<5 free)
Music by The Lakeview Ramblers

Cafe Carpe

All shows at 8:30pm unless indicated otherwise.
Please call 920-563-9391 to reserve.

- Fri, Nov 1st, CANCELLED (James Lee Stanley)
- Sat, Nov 2nd, Ernie Hendrickson - \$10
- Sat, Nov 9th, Bill Camplin Band - \$12
- Fri, Nov 15th, The Boston Imposters - \$10
- Sat, Nov 16th, Johnsmith - \$20
- Sat, Nov 23rd, Bill Camplin w/ Barry Riese & Steve Tesmer - \$12
- Fri, Nov 29th, Hayward Williams / Coyote Brother
- Sat, Nov 30th, Dave Cofell / Mark Dvorak - \$12



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

Wild Hog in the Woods
953 Jenifer St.
wildhoginthewoods.org

- Fri, Nov 1st @7:30pm Casey Day
- Mon, Nov 4th @7pm Coordinators Meeting
- Fri, Nov 8th @7:30pm Song Circle - Lisa V. White, Nancy Rost and Ingrid Frances Stark
- Fri, Nov 15th @7:30pm Accoustic Collective
- Sat, Nov 16th @2pm Hootenany!
- Fri, Nov 22nd @7:30pm Wild Hog's 41st Birthday Party

Misc

Old Time Jam

Monthly - 3rd Sunday of every month, 4 to 6pm
EVP West 3809 Mineral Point Road

Coodinator: Al Wilson

cell: 608-572-0634

adwilson@pediatrics.wisc.edu

Madison Area Ukulele Initiative -- Singalongs 3rd Sunday 11am - 1:30pm
- for location visit www.MAUImadison.com

On the Air



wpr.org

Simply Folk on Wisconsin Public Radio w/ Dan Robinson, 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.



wortfm.org

WORT 89.9 FM community radio

Sun -- 3:00-5:00pm

• "On the Horizon" w/ Ford Blackwell, Paul Novak, Gloria Hays & Helena White

Weekdays 9:00am-noon

- Mon - Global Revolutions (folk from the world over) w/ Dan Talmo & Martin Alvarado
- Tue -- Another Green World with Katie & Tessa
- Wed -- Back to the Country (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



98.7 FM - THE VOICE OF MONONA

WVMO The Voice of Monona - Promoting the best in Good Music - Roots Music - Americana Music Plus Community Members Hosted Shows Streaming Live and on your mobile device through tunein radio

• Cajun Jam - 4th Sunday of every month 1pm-4pm
Ziggy's BBQ Smokehouse & Ice Cream Parlor - 135 S Main St. Oregon -- 608-238-6039

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, 3rd (and 5th) Mon 7:30-9:30pm - Wil-Mar Center 953 Jenifer St - 238-9951 or 231-1040

• International Dancing -- Thurs nights @7pm The Crossing, 1127 University Ave. and Sun, 7-9pm at Oakwood Village University Woods, 6205 Mineral Point Rd

• 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 -- 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 - Neighborhood House 29 S Mills St. - casey.garhart@tds.net or John at 238-3847

• Scottish Country Dancing -- Sun, 7:00pm -- James Reeb UU Church 2146 E. Johnson -- 358-4478

• Israeli Folk Dancing -- Tues, 7:00pm -- Email for location
Melissa Marver — mdmarver@gmail.com

"WHEN IS MY RENEWAL DUE?"

(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!

Way #1 – online

Visit www.madfolk.org and click on "Join MFMS"

Way #2 – unplugged

Complete, clip, and mail this form

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Madison-Folk-Music-Society/34497984835>

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Choose membership category:

Senior / Student \$10 _____

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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

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