

Mad Folk News

Folk Ball Ready to Roll!

The Folk Ball Festival invites you to join folks from all over the Midwest and kick cabin fever to the curb at Memorial Union on January 23-24, 2026. This is the 36th time around for Madison's largest and liveliest participatory folkdance festival, featuring huge evening-long Great Hall dance parties Friday and Saturday (eight bands in all!), workshops and a Hungarian tanchaz during the day Saturday, plus a fine optional dinner Saturday evening. Workshops include sessions on Balkan, English Country, Carpathian, and Balfolk (European trad revival) dance styles, as well as Bulgarian Singing and Folk Ball 101, a quick-start introduction to live music line dancing. The Balkan Dance workshops will be presented by Featured Teacher Lee Otterholt who so inspired us at the 2015 festival, English Country Dance by Mady Newfield, Balfolk by Bob Walser.

Folk Ball parties highlight Eastern European dances in connected lines but full-strength Wisconsin Polka and Klezmer (East European Jewish) are also on offer this time around. Get in, give it a try! If you are new to the game, the Folk Ball 101 workshop is designed to prepare and encourage you to get in that line!

Friday bands are: DB POLKA EXPRESS (Madison), ORKE-

STAR SLOBODA (Milwaukee), YID VICIOUS KLEZMER (Madison). Friday's party includes cameo bits by instructors Lee Otterholt and Bob Walser. Bob plays his own glorious music on button-box!

Saturday party bands are: IZVOR ORCHESTRA (Milwaukee), SZASZKA (Twin Cities), BULGARIKA (Bulgaria), and ORKESTAR BEZ IME (Twin Cities).

All events are at Memorial Union, centered on the Great Hall ballroom on fourth floor where you'll find the Festival Info Table for welcome, registration, and donation. You can even reserve a fine Saturday evening dinner in Tripp Commons – convenient on a busy day.

Folk Ball welcomes everyone with open doors, but this amazing, free-flowing community celebration is funded entirely by voluntary donations, so please stop at the Info Table, check in, and contribute as you are able. It's a terrible business plan, but it allows us to honestly invite everyone – and it shows we value you and your participation above all else. Thanks for keeping the folk arts lively in the Midwest!

Up-to-date details including band schedules, online registration & dinner reservations (no money down!), suggested donation amounts, and all such are at madfolkball.org

and Michael (mkuharski@gmail.com) can answer your questions.

Come, learn, celebrate in community – DANCE ON!!

Thanks to sponsors & collaborators: Wisconsin Folk Arts Association, Madison Folk Dance Unlimited, UW Center for Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, The Nancy Yugo Memorial Fund, and WORT 89.9FM Community-Supported Radio – and to our all-volunteer staff.

~ Michael Kuharski





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



Save the Date - Details TBA

- March 6th James Keelaghan - North Street Cabaret - @7pm - \$27 adv / \$32 day of show
- May 7th Ganet Rogers - last U.S. tour



Don't forget!
Non-perishable donations of food are collected for local food banks at all Mad Folk shows!

On the Air

.....

Simply Folk on Wisconsin Public Radio w/ Síle Shigley, Jeff Durkey & Steve Gotcher



Sun 5:00-9:00pm

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 visit <https://wortfm.org> for more info!

- Sun 3pm - 5pm - On the Horizon (international, world, ethnic music) w/ Ford Blackwell, Paul Novak, Gloria Hays & Helena White
- Mon 9am to noon - Global Revolutions (folk music from the world over) w/ Dan Talmo & Martin Alvarado & Helena White
- Tue 9am to noon - Green Morning Radio (indie, folk, rock, alt, country, acoustic blues & singer-songwriters) w/ Brian Hirsh - Except Last Tuesday of the month - One Fine Morning w/ P.C. Allen
- Wed 9am to noon - Back to the Country (country music on a theme) w/ Steven & Marianne, Nate Gibson, Art Stevenson & Bill Malone
- Thur 9am to noon - Hejira (folk and international) w/ Jeff Spitzer-Resnick
- Fri - Mud Acres (bluegrass and acoustic) w/ Chris Powers



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

Stuart Stotts

Weekly new song Facebook Live event. Song Premiere on Tuesday (SPOT) at 11AM facebook.com/stuart.stotts

Misc

Sea Shanty Sing @Roxy's Restobar -- 208 W. Main St, Stoughton

No experience necessary. Songbooks provided and songs taught. 7pm every second Tuesday.

Open Mic @Cargo Coffee -- 750 E. Washington Ave.

Brave the stage or enjoy the show every first and third Sunday, 5-7pm. Sign-up starts at 4:30pm

Open Mic @Java Cat -- 4221 Lien Rd.

Check out local talent at the cafe's new location on the last two Sundays of each month.

Old Time Jam

Monthly - 3rd Saturday of every month, 2 to 5pm

Location: Brix Cider, Mt Horeb

Coodinator: Greg Jones, 7771jones@gmail.com

Al Wilson, adwilson@pediatrics.wisc.edu

Madison Area Ukulele Initiative -- Singalongs

3rd Sunday 11am - 1:30pm

- for location visit www.MAUMadison.com

MISSISSIPPI (UNPLUGGED) - JASON EADY

2025 - TORREZ MUSIC GROUP



Review by Kiki Schueler

Jason Eady has made a name for himself in the Texas music scene by embracing classic country and honky tonk, but that doesn't mean he's forgotten his roots. Born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi, he was as equally influenced by bluegrass as he was by Willie Nelson. In 2023, he released Mississippi, a love letter to his home state, produced by Band of Heathens Gordy Quist. It's a quiet rocker with electric guitar, drums, pedal steel, backing vocals, and even the occasional trumpet. Then, earlier this year he gave us an unplugged version of the record. What might seem at first to be indulgent or unnecessary is actually a captivating addition to his catalog. The difference isn't as dramatic as say Nirvana Unplugged in New York, but like that record it shifts the emphasis to the songwriting. And Eady's is solid. Stripping the record down to its essence of vocals and acoustic guitar shaves nearly ten minutes off the runtime, but doesn't lessen its impact.

The title track "Way Down in Mississippi" lays out how his upbringing led him to where he is today. From his earliest memories, "The very first thing that I remember is singing along to that country sound," to "Tuesday nights we'd all get together, singing Ralph Stanley and Bill Monroe," he gives us his road-

map. He admits in the last verse "I wouldn't be here making this music if it weren't for the sound of my younger days." The insistent invitation of the chorus, "Way down in Mississippi I've got the music in my bones, I'll take you there if you want to go with me," makes for an attractive offer. The narrator in the syncopated self-sabotage of "Burn It Down" knows the wrong choices are being made, but is powerless to stop it. "Every time things start to go my way," he sings on the record's catchiest tune, "I burn it down like a temple on Judgment Day."

Stripped of the original version's trumpet and backing vocals, "Once Upon a Time in New Orleans" turns darker, more voodoo, less jazz band, but that doesn't make his invitation to NOLA any less appealing. "So if you ever get the chance go and see it yourself. Take your inhibitions leave 'em up on a shelf." Eady's smooth vocals, reminiscent of understated singers like Don Williams, brim with remorse in the aftermath of a fight where no one wins on "Mean Time," "Breaking down like dominoes. Where we stop we don't know, do we baby." On the bluesy "Wayside" his throaty baritone "Mmm Hmm's" conjure delta blues singers. Meanwhile, the propulsive locomotion of "Whistle" is as soothing as an overnight train ride. The desolate cautionary tale "Mile Over 45" is perhaps the least changed from its "plugged" version, which was already hauntingly spare. The record closes with the gentle swing of "Misty." It brims with equal parts hope and dread as he waits for a call from a lover who's out of town, "Oh Misty say you've missed me so I can get to sleep tonight."

Mississippi (unplugged) is the kind of record that makes you long to hear Eady in good listening room. At least it did for me. Jason Eady plays Kiki's House of Righteous Music on March 8. Email righteousmusicmgmt@gmail.com for more information.

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/madisonfolkmusicsociety

How Can I Keep From Singing?

a podcast written, hosted & produced by Stuart Stotts

There's a new podcast from long-time area songwriter and musician Stuart Stotts. It's called How Can I Keep from Singing, and it explores the art form through interviews with song leaders, academics, improvisers, gospel choirs, prison ministries, children's singers, and more to see the sometimes surprising ways that group singing blooms throughout the world. Singing has been an integral part of being human for thousands of years. Choirs, choruses, sing-alongs, spontaneous celebrations, grief rituals, and other expressions of the human experience continue to this day in old and new forms.

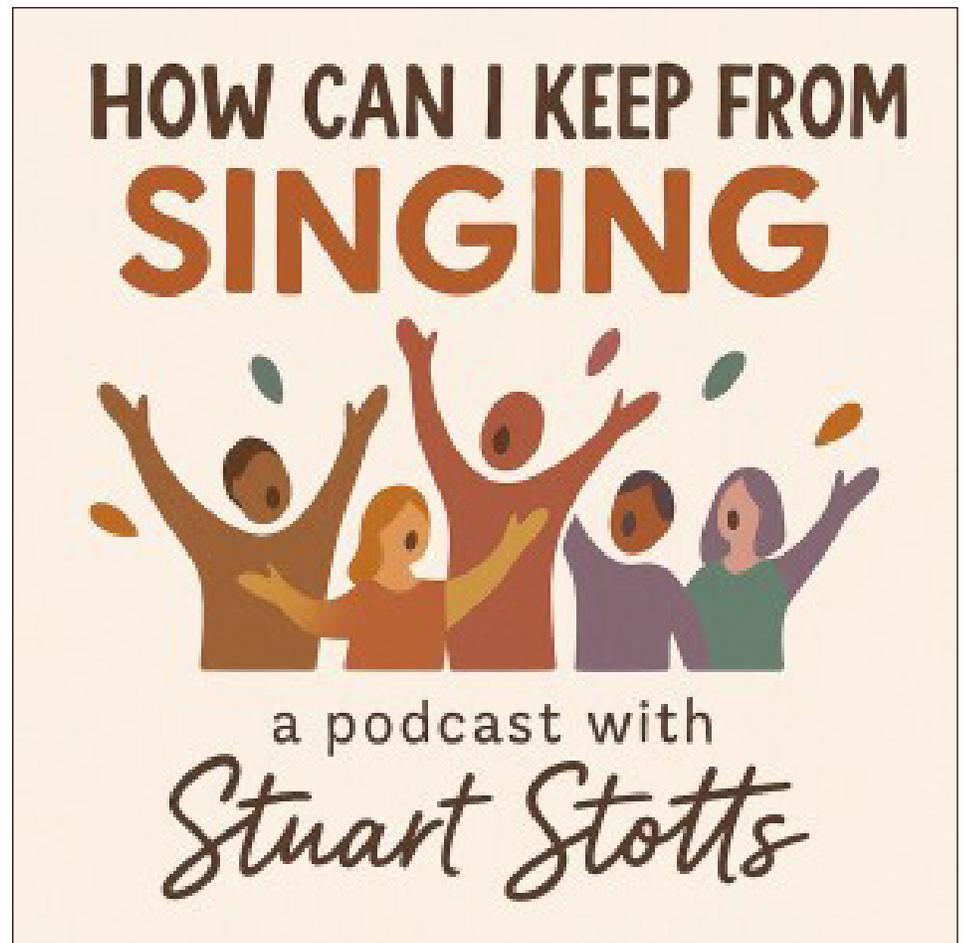
Stuart hosts these conversations, examining, reflecting, and hearing stories from those who are in the field, creating harmony and giving voice to anyone willing and able to join in. Some guests familiar to MadFolk include Reggie Harris, Sally Rogers, and Matt Watroba.

MadFolk has long known and nurtured opportunities to sing together. One of the surprising insights from interviews is how widespread group singing is throughout the world, and in particular, in the United States. Some guests tie this rising interest to the state of our country, where people hunger for connection and literally, harmony in the face of an increasing fractious world. The podcast frequently includes tips and strategies to make group singing more effective for everyone involved. There is an

art and a skill to a successful singing session. And although there is sometimes a political bent to the process, what remains at the center is the simple power of singing together, whatever the underlying message.

You can find the podcast here <https://howcanikeepfromsinging.podbean.com>

Or anywhere you listen to podcasts, like Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or YouTube.



Considered one of Canada's great singer songwriters, Keelaghan "displays a genius for finding his way deep inside big stories, building them outward from palpably intimate moments." ~ *The Boston Globe*



**Madison Folk Music
Society PRESENTS**

James Keelaghan

Friday, March 6, 2026

7:00 pm

THE NORTH STREET CABARET, 610 North St, Madison WI

Tickets \$27 advance, \$32 day of show

Available at: <https://buytickets.at/madisonfolkmusicsociety/1960134>

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



Back in My Day...

By Emily Beebe

Back in my day, winter started around the third week of August, so my four brothers and I had a week or two to cure last season's catgut and repair the webbing on our snowshoes before the first day of school. Pa worked at the gristmill seven and a half days a week. He went to church with us on his half-day off when he had a riskier week than usual at the mill. Pa was fond of cutting corners. Mama said that was how he won her heart, but she never did provide any specifics on that. When he did go to church, Pa was awfully good at atoning. When I tried to imitate him, I tore holes in the knees of my stockings which made Mama cross. Pa would more usually spend Sundays in the pool hall, where he would lose his paycheck to the men in the striped suits that sauntered over from the train depot and rode the steam engine to Topeka an hour later, Pa's wages in their pockets.

Mama earned pin money selling eggs from her backyard flock of 5,000 barred rocks. She always managed to put a little aside so I might have a store-bought gingham ski mask for the first day of school and Billy could get a new glass eye to replace the one he lost playing marbles in the school yard last March. Billy was just like Pa, corner-cuttin' and all, except Pa still had both of his eyes and Billy had all ten fingers. Good thing we all loved eggs.

Ezikajah was the oldest, and because he was thirteen, he was allowed to ride the mule to school. He was responsible for the rest of us getting to school every day. Mama gave us each a little flag to carry so when it was snowing hard, we could hold it above our heads, so Ezikajah knew where we were at. My little brother Boris had a hard time in his first year of school. He was so clumsy with his snowshoes that he dropped his flag and ended up getting himself buried in a snowdrift. He might have died but for the kindly badger who ate the hard-boiled eggs in his lunch pail in exchange for a visit to his cozy hole in the sod.

Ezi had to use a pair of dowsing sticks to find him. Boris was allowed to ride the mule behind his brother for the rest of the school year. He was the smartest of our clan, hands down.

Our teacher Miss Polly said we were starting a creative arts unit, and she wanted each student to play in the orchestra. We didn't have a lot of money, but Miss Polly knew we were resourceful. Clarinets and tubas didn't grow on trees in North Dakota like they did in River City. In fact, there weren't any trees to speak of. We loved music so when we got home that night Billy fashioned a little banjo out of one of our purple martin gourd houses, some left-over catgut, and a gopher hide. He bragged it was the best Martin banjo ever made. Ezi, not wanting to be bested by his little brother, fashioned a double bass out of our tool shed. Dad was too busy corner cutting to make much use of the contents anyways.

Ever fond of the birds on the prairie, I used a couple of cattails, some wooden shims, and cold oatmeal to make a diatonic harmonica. I adjusted the combs until the meadowlarks started lining up on the eaves to check out the newcomer. I kept the harmonica in my pinafore so the prairie dogs wouldn't chew on it.

Boris worked all night on his instrument. We woke in the morning to the lowing of thirsty cows. Boris had managed to disassemble the windmill and using the metal tubing, Dad's luckless dominos, and the fireplace bellows, made a pipe organ. Ezi was miffed not only because Boris had one-upped him but because the mule could only carry Boris' instrument and no riders. Ezi ended up bullying Caleb into pulling him to school in the double bass so he wouldn't lose face with the other upper grade kids.

Our first practice was pretty rough around the edges. Dotty Swanson kept hitting Caleb in the back of his head with her trombone slide. Her family owned the local pawn shop so at least she

could get the real deal. We all thought she was sweet on Caleb, but he looked sore the third time he dropped one of the rocks he was banging together on his big toe.

We did improve over time, and it was finally time for our big concert. Miss Polly was fond of the classics and thought we could impress our parents by playing the 1812 Overture. It was fun watching everyone's folks trying to look pleased when the jug section started up 'God Save the Tsar'. They stopped thinking about how froggy the music was getting when the Iverson twins started setting off their homemade cannons. 'What a delightful surprise!' Miss Polly said as she crawled out from under her desk after the concert.

Honestly, I don't know what you kids have to complain about. Your school has heat, indoor plumbing, a bus service, and those little plastic ukuleles they dole out in music class. You haven't had music education until you've experienced the classics through a cigar box fiddle. Now go fetch that washtub over there and I'll show you how it's done.

Venues

muso
2040 Winnebago Street
Madison WI
musomadison.com

muso

- Wednesdays, 5-7 pm Madison Song Circle
(From Rise Up Singing and Rise Again, folk instruments welcome)
- 1st and 3rd Sundays at noon: Sjungar Folket -Singing People (a capella group)
- 1st and 3rd Sundays, 5-7 pm Muso Slow Irish Sessions
- 2nd and 4th Saturdays, 2-4 pm Blue Grass Jam with Davey Harrison



Wil-Mar Center
504 S. Brearly St.
wildhoginthewoods.org
608-233-5687

Wild Hog in the Woods

- Friday, Jan. 9th, 7:30pm Tapestry String Band
- Friday, Jan. 16th, 7:30pm Andy Hanson
- Saturday, Jan. 17th, 2:00pm Hootenanny
- Friday, Jan. 23rd, 7:30pm Santiago Wells
- Friday, Jan. 30th, 7:30pm Farthest Field
- Friday, Feb. 6th, 7:30pm KG & The Ranger Trio

NORTH STREET CABARET

610 North St
Madison, WI
northstreetcabaret.com

- Sat, Dec 13th - Shauncey Ali Quartet - @7pm - \$22 adv / \$25 d.o.s.
- Sun, Dec 27th - Slipjig Trio & The Krause Family Band - @7pm
- Sun, Feb 28th - Shoman and Coole - @7pm
- Fri, Mar 6th - James Keelaghan - @7pm
- Sat, Mar 7th - Louis Michot - @8pm

The Malt House
2609 E. Washington Ave
Madison, WI
malthousetavern.com

The Malt House

- 1st Monday - Grandpa's Elixir
- 2nd Monday - The Kissers
- 3rd Monday - Material boys
- 4th Monday - Barley Brothers
- 1st Tuesday - Cajun Strangers
- 2nd Tuesday- Birds, Birds, Birds
- 3rd Tuesday - Onadara
- 4th Tuesday - Dollar Bill and The Bucks
- 1st Wednesday - The North Westerners
- 3rd Wednesday - Don't spook the horse

FOLKLORE VILLAGE...passing it on

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

Folklore Village

- Sat, Jan. 17th, potluck starts @6pm Jane Farwell's Birthday Celebration - \$10 adults / \$8 seniors / \$5 kids / under 5 free. \$25 cap for entire household



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

Cafe Carpe

- Sat, Jan. 31st - Joe Jencks / Lisa Medina - @8pm - \$25

"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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P.O. Box 665, Madison, WI 53701
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Madison Folk Music Society

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Choose membership category:

Senior / Student \$12 _____

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Friend \$25 _____

Contributing \$50 _____

Life \$500 _____

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Total \$ _____

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Send your check, payable to MFMS to: Mad Folk c/o

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