



A Different Strummer

Scottish Band Mad Maudlin to entertain at Feb. 28 Coffeehouse

Interview by Bill Cohen

With the energetic vocals of Carter Jastram and the masterful piping of Glenn Mackie, the band Mad Maudlin will have you singing great Robert Burns songs, tapping right out of your chair, and dancing a Highland jig! Mad Maudlin is a 5 piece traditional Scottish band which brings more than just your normal Celtic fare. Mad Maudlin performs a great blend of traditional jigs, marches and reels, and great folk songs that are sure to entertain! Bill Cohen interviews a few of the band members in the following article.



Band members (clockwise starting at lower left): Glen Mackie – multi-instrumentalist; Dave Scardena – percussion; Rachel Motsinger – fiddle; Carter Jastram – guitar; Pete Dabaie (lower right) is currently not part of the performance due to health reasons.

Bill Cohen: For folks who've never heard Mad Maudlin before, how would you describe the kinds of songs you do?

Glenn: Mad Maudlin describes itself as a Trans Celtic Folk Band. The band, at its roots, is Scottish. However, we play Irish

and Cape Breton music as well. We are always looking for new music.

Carter: We tend to alternate between vocal songs and instrumental tunes, drawing on the Scottish tradition as much as possible, but utilizing the Irish material we also know. Along with the fast music, there are some lovely slow airs and songs that we also

enjoy. We consider the Tannahill Weavers to be the band for us to emulate.

Bill: Who is in your group? Tell us a little about their role and their background. You've all been playing music (perhaps separately or in other groups) for many years, right?

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Songs at the Center: Columbus based singer-songwriter program attracts quality talent



Article by Eric Gnezda

A song is usually sweetest when sung by the person who wrote it. And when that performance is stripped down to one voice with an instrument, the song often rings with rare – and raw - authenticity.

Bonnie Raitt's "I Can't Make You Love Me," for instance, may be among the greatest records of all time. Yet, we



hear an even deeper richness when the song is sung solo by either co-writer, Mike Reed, or Allen Shamblin, accompanied only by their respective keyboard or guitar.

Simplicity. Intimacy. Power that travels a straight path to the heart.

Over the past few years, Columbus has been providing growing

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Mad Maudlin - from page 1

Glenn: The band consists of Carter Jastram, lead vocals, guitars and bouzouki; Rachel Motsinger on fiddle; Dave Scardena on bodhran and Glenn Mackie, border pipes and whistles. Mad Maudlin has been a band for over eight years. The band has gone through personnel changes over the years; however, the current line up is by far the best yet.

Carter: Specifically, Glenn, Dave and

Carter have been together for six years this April, and Rachel joined us a year ago last December. Rachel, the one who lowers the average age of the band, has been playing Irish tunes for a number of

years and has a wealth of session experience. Dave's bodhran skills are substantial; he is our metronome. As a piper, Glenn has been involved in the local Celtic music scene for over 30 years, and is Pipe Major for the Cyril Scott Pipe Band, but his background also includes rock music. On the other hand, Carter (me) is new to performing Celtic music (a mere 10 years, although I have enjoyed it for a lot longer); [my] background is in acoustic folk music, having performed solo and with a couple of folk bands at and just after the end of the coffeehouse era.

Bill: Why do you all like to play and sing? It can't be for the money because we all know there's not a lot of it in folk music.

Glenn: Each member of Mad Maudlin has a keen interest in playing and performing traditional and contemporary Celtic music. We all seem to have the



Mad Maudlin performs at the Dublin Irish Festival

same sense of where we want to go with our music. There are no egos, just friends making, playing and enjoying music.

Carter: Music stirs the emotions and affects the soul in ways nothing else can, and sharing that experience with others – band mates and audiences – multiplies the effects. The challenge for performers is to find others of similar and complementary skills and tastes, in order to blend well together, enhance and challenge each other, and share in enjoying the overall results. We have certainly found that in one another.

Bill: Tell us about one of the best experiences that Mad Maudlin has had and why you consider it to be so good.

Glenn: Wow, the best experience? For me, it would be a toss up

between playing the Shamrock Club Music Festival or the Dublin Irish Festival this past year. For both shows we had some of the best audiences we have ever experienced. People were really getting into what we were doing. I looked out at the audience, then at Rachel and said, "Man, this is it!"

Carter: In addition to what Glenn said, I really enjoyed our trip to Parkersburg, W.Va., last April for their Scottish/Celtic Festival. We played well together, we had a good and responsive audience, and I was able to stay longer and enjoy the good weather and meet other musicians.

Bill: Have you had any big disasters while performing? What happened?

Glenn: The biggest disaster happened two years ago after our St Patrick's Day gig at Brazenhead when I pulled the plug on the band. We were a five piece band and it just wasn't working because tensions within the band were killing the fun. So, I said that was our farewell performance. Thankfully, Carter and Dave wanted to keep going. So, we played as a trio for about a year, then Rachel came into our little group and, well, here we are.

Carter: Musically we follow each other very well, so if someone makes a mistake, we can all cover it and keep playing together – and we have had such times. But when I had been with the

band for a short time, we played one afternoon at the former Espresso Yourself Music Cafe, and we could not quite get in tune with each other. We also were not as tightly together as we are now, so those two conditions led to a less than satisfactory afternoon, at least for us.

Bill: What can people expect to hear and see from you when they come to the February 28th CFMS coffeehouse?

Glenn: The folks at the CFMS coffeehouse can expect to have a great time. They'll hear a lot of solid traditional jigs, reels and a hornpipe or two as well as a few Scottish ballads and an original song written by me and arranged by Carter.

Carter: We like to tell a few jokes along the way, as well as every so often provide an introduction and some background to our material. Our finale should lift your spirits as it does ours.

Details for the upcoming Coffeehouse:

Date: Saturday, February 28

Place: FolkSide Coffeehouse held at *The Columbus Mennonite Church*, 35 Oakland Park Ave., Columbus, OH

Time: 8 p.m. – Mad Maudlin. 6-7 p.m. Open Jam; 7-8 p.m. Open Mic

Suggested donation: \$7.00; CFMS members \$5.00; Students \$5.00; under 12 free

Reminder Note for March Coffeehouse:

Our annual Live Auction will be held at the March 28th Coffeehouse and is for better quality items. In the past we have had some great musical instrument contributions. If you have items for the live auction, please contact Sharon Mittenbergs @ rbaron49@aol.com. You also need to arrange to get the items to us at least two weeks before the March coffeehouse.

Songs - from page 1

opportunities to present singer-songwriters to live, listening audiences. Among the latest such projects is Songs at the Center, a Columbus-based television program that features 3-4 songwriters performing in the round, sharing the stage with their audience. It is taped at the McConnell Arts Center of Worthington (MAC).

The half-hour show airs weekly on WOSU TV, late-night Saturdays, immediately following Austin City Limits.

As the co-creator and host of the program, I have discovered the new, unexpected joy of introducing artists to audiences. While the in-the-round format has been a staple of the Nashville performance scene for decades, it is new to Central Ohio. And club audiences (and hopefully our TV viewers!) are taking to it in a big way.

In the singer-songwriter genre, there's a "contract," if you will. The audience and artists share equal responsibility in the success of the performance. Songwriters agree to an appropriate level of vulnerability, while the audience invests itself in the process by remaining engaged, attentive and responsive.

Looking back on the road to fruition for this project, I see the concept evolving from a merging of the countless songwriter rounds I have performed and observed in Nashville, with, oddly enough, a corporate gig at the Vern Riffe Center years ago. The purpose of the event, "The Spotlight is On You," was to recognize employees.

To make its point, the company put their employees on stage.

Somewhere in the muse, the idea emerged to present both the performers and the audience on the Songs at the Center stage, thereby playing out the unwritten agreement between artist and listener.



From top to bottom: Josh Krajcik, Tim Easton, and Jamie Sagle. Photos courtesy of Dan Mitchell, Mitchell Multimedia, LLC.



An additional benefit, we hope, will be to bring our TV viewers literally into the center of the intimate music circle.

Songs at the Center was created with Andy Herron, who also serves as Director of Operations at the MAC, and

Alan Beavers, owner of Alba Productions.

"This is a music show presented in a new way," Andy says, "unlike anything Columbus has seen. The in-the-round format really highlights the songs and the performers who created them."

Stacia Hentz, TV Program Director at WOSU Public Media, says, "We immediately felt the show would be a great local program to pair with Austin City Limits. We're thrilled WOSU TV will be giving viewers access to the musical talent in the Columbus area on Songs at the Center."

Among the show's 27 featured songwriters are Tim Easton, RJ Cowdery, Cliff Cody, Hannah Aldridge, Mark "Brink" Brinkman, Angela Perley, Happy Chichester, Hebdo and Jesse Henry.

The show's first season is scheduled to air for 13 weeks, followed by a repeat run. It is also available on the WOSU Public Media website; [just click on the link]: <http://video.wosu.org/program/songs-center/>.

To join our mailing list, please visit <http://songsatthecenter.com>.

Eric Gnezda performs regularly at Nashville's Bluebird Café. He is the 2006 recipient of the Ohioana Citation for Music Composition, and received an Emmy nomination as a broadcast journalist. In

addition to Songs at the Center, he created and produces the bi-monthly Songwriter Showcase at Natalie's Coal-Fired Pizza and Live Music, featuring the finest singer-songwriters in the region and nation.

All of your best loved folk songs

by Nick Wall Reprinted with permission.

The following was extracted from an internet blog found at: <https://musictodiefor.wordpress.com> by Englishman, Nick Wall who lives in Merseyside, UK. He started the blog in late 2007 for something to do and it quickly became a labour of love. In 2010 he started doing regular broadcasts for [Vintage Radio](#) (Merseyside based community radio station broadcasting daily on the internet). We have selected just some of the songs voted for by means of Nick's research project, along with his commentary and a link to the actual performance. While perhaps it was not a large scale formal "poll"; the results nevertheless give a wonderful look back at favorite various folk or folk type songs over the past decade in addition to giving an intimate glimpse of different takes on the same songs by different artists. So pull up the file, carve out a relaxing hour and enjoy the musical stroll. If you are reading this in paper form, visit the link to the digital version posted on line at: www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/newsletter.html.

12th May 2013

These are the 32 best loved folk songs of all time, as voted for by you. These were the most popular of hundreds of songs which received nominations.

A few people have questioned already whether some of these are actually folk songs at all: "perhaps I'm behind the times in thinking that when someone specifies 'folk songs,' they mean traditional songs, not necessarily songs written to sound like traditional folk songs". Perhaps the first thing to say about this is that the overwhelming majority of responses I had came from within the folk community, who out of anyone should be well able to recognize folk music when they hear it.

The folk world may not be able to agree on a definition of folk music, so people resolve the question in their own way. If you recognize a song as part of your culture, maybe you've heard your parents sing it or you've heard it performed in folk clubs, then it's folk music. And if we were to ask why did people nominate these particular songs, in many cases the answer's probably as simple as this.

The fact that songs like these are regularly performed at folk clubs should in itself tell us something, because an important feature of folk music is supposed to be that it's community music as opposed to studio music; music capable of being sung and performed by people who aren't professional musicians.

Before the advent of studios, the defining feature of traditional music was that it wasn't committed to paper for people to learn and play. The music was rooted in local areas, made use of both real and improvised instruments, and was passed on through oral tradition. The world has changed, and oral tradition will never be of such primary importance again in the future. But folk music has survived, and it's done so mainly thanks to the efforts of many many people who've sought to preserve and revive what's valuable from traditional forms of music.

It's a fool's errand to set out a definition of what folk music should sound like today – not least because every single country has its own traditional forms of music, most of which have different names. (This list represents quite a narrow take on folk music from within the English speaking world.) I would suggest that if we're to call it folk music there should be some relationship with traditional music; and that the manner in which it's made and performed should somehow mark it out as music of the people or of the community and not purely studio music. These are shifting, fluid concepts, and in practice it's very difficult to draw a line.

Here's the top 32, in alphabetical order. [Ed. Note: Due to space restrictions, only 13 titles are listed. You can find the remaining 19 on his blog]. Song authors are credited in brackets. Thanks to the Mudcat Forum for helping me to eliminate the more glaring errors from my notes. If you want to know which song won the poll, it was *This Land Is Your Land* – and it would have come top even without the votes from the Woody Guthrie Folk Club! And if you want to know my favorite, at the moment I think I'd have to go for *Goodnight Irene*.

[In alphabetical order]:
Angel From Montgomery (John Prine 1971)

The poet Ted Kooser compared Prine to Raymond Carver, whose stories about "ordinary people elevated them to almost

heroic status. John Prine has taken ordinary people and made monuments of them, treating them with great respect and love. . . . He is a truly original writer, unequaled, and a genuine poet of the American people." . . .

John Prine – *Angel from Montgomery*
musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/john-prine-angel-from-montgomery.mp3.

Blowin' In The Wind (Bob Dylan 1962)

"I wrote *Blowin' in the Wind* in 10 minutes, just put words to an old spiritual, probably something I learned from Carter Family records. That's the folk tradition. You use what's been handed down." The melody actually came, as Dylan later acknowledged, from the song "No More Auction Block." It wouldn't have been the Dylan song that I'd have picked, but of all his songs this has maybe had the greatest resonance with the most number of people.

Bob Dylan – *Blowin' in the Wind*
www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWwgrjIMXA

Seth Lakeman – *Blowin' in the Wind*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HccLSWIBoGg>

Bridge Over Troubled Water (Paul Simon 1969)

Paul Simon may have served his time playing British folk clubs. But this wasn't written with folk clubs in mind. The album of the same name took some 800 studio hours to record, and the heavy production on this track was crucial to its success in topping the US and UK charts at the same time and winning two Grammy awards. To me, this makes it more of a pop song than a folk song. Yes, it has a timeless quality and many people have covered it, but it's always been more of a singers song than a tune which anyone can get up and perform.

Simon and Garfunkel – *Bridge Over Troubled Water*
musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/simon-and-garfunkel-bridge-over-troubled-water-live-1969.mp3

Davy Graham – *Bridge Over Troubled Water*
musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/13-davy-graham-bridge-over-troubled-water-les-cousins.mp3

Bury Me Beneath the Willow (Traditional)

"Traditional" means that it's old, and we don't know who wrote it. And when

See *Best Loved* - page 6

SAVE THE DATE. . .

☀ The **Saturday Music Jam** at the **Worthington Farmers' Market 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.** – every Saturday at *The Shops at Worthington* mall (the location of the market and jam during the winter months). All are welcome to play. Consider bringing a chair.

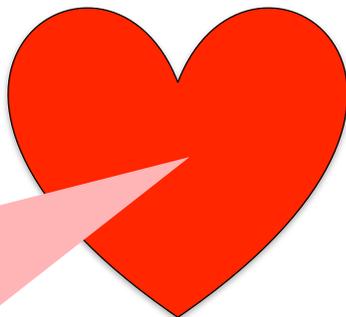
☀ **Saturday, February 7:**
Valentine's Concert with Bill

Cohen: 7-9 p.m. At *Overbrook Presbyterian Church*, 4131 N. High Street on the Fellowship Hall. Benefit for Central Ohio Folk Festival. \$10 suggested donation at the door.

☀ **Saturday, February 28:**
FolkSide Coffeehouse featuring **Mad Maudlin**
6 p.m. Open Jam

7-8 p.m. Open Mic
8 p.m.: Mad Maudlin. Held at the *Columbus Mennonite Church*, 35 Oakland Park Avenue (just East of High St. & one block North of E.N. Broadway), Cols, OH. \$7.00 donation; Students \$5.00; CFMS members \$5.00; under 12 free.

Candlelight Valentine Concert



✧ **Bill Cohen** on piano and guitar – singing songs about the joys and sorrows of love

Featuring tunes made famous by John Denver, Bette Midler, Bob Dylan, James Taylor, Simon & Garfunkel, Tom Waits, Dan Fogelberg, Beatles, Eagles, Nat King Cole, Johnny Mathis, & Sam Cooke

✧ **FUN** with trivia questions about **FAMOUS AND INFAMOUS COUPLES**

✧ **CAMEO APPEARANCE** by a new all-female vocal trio, **THE HARMONETTES**

✧ **REFRESHMENTS**

All this for a **\$10 donation per person at the door;**
Proceeds support the annual Central Ohio Folk Festival in May

WHEN: Saturday Feb. 7 from 7 to 9 p.m.

WHERE: Fellowship Hall @ **Overbrook Presb. Church**
4131 N. High - free parking

Questions? Call Bill at (614) 263-3851

FOLLOWING OUR OWN. . .

Friday, Feb. 6:
Halfway Home – 8 to 11 p.m. – Shamrock Club Music in the Pub, 60 W. Castle Road, Cols, OH 43207 No cover.

Friday, Feb. 7:
Valentine Concert with Bill Cohen & The Harmonettes – 7-9 p.m. *Overbrook Presbyterian Church*, 4131 N. High St., Cols, OH. \$10 donation at the door. Benefit for Central Ohio Folk Festival.

Thursday, Feb. 12:
Grassahol – 7-8 p.m. – *Upper Arlington Library Concert Series*, 2800 Tremont Rd., (Main Library – Friends Theater), Upper Arlington. Free.

Saturday, Feb. 21:
Folk Ramblers – 10 a.m. – *Columbus Winter's Farmer's Market*, Whetstone Community Center, 3923 N. High St.

Tuesday, Feb. 24:
Folk Ramblers – 12:30 p.m. – *Heather Pick Memorial Concert Series*, James Hospital, 3923 N. High St.

Sunday, Feb. 22:
Social Action Song Swap – 1- 3 p.m. – (hosted by Joanie Calem & Leslie Zak). If you are a musician and have songs you would like to share or if you are a music fan and have songs that you would like to sing along with, come along! And if you just feel like listening, come along as well! Run as a "Round Robin" with everyone getting a chance to share a song as we go around the room. Northwood High Building, 2231 N. High St, Artspace Rm. 100. Questions? Contact Joanie at: jcalem@columbus.rr.com

Best Loved - from page 4

we're talking about songs passed down through oral tradition in various versions it may not be very helpful to think of it as being the property of a single author. The song's narrator wants to die and be buried under a weeping willow tree so that her former lover who left her for another will perhaps weep for her under the tree. Not exactly the kind of message that would be encouraged these days, but a beautiful song nonetheless.

The Carter Family – *Bury Me Under The Weeping Willow Tree*
musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/the-carter-family-bury-me-under-the-weeping-willow-tree.mp3.

Rosanne Cash – *Bury Me Under The Weeping Willow*
musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/rosanne-cash-bury-me-under-the-weeping-willow.mp3.

Chris Thile and Michael Daves – *Bury Me Beneath The Willow*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kh2J-c7VZAc>.

Catch the Wind (Donovan 1965)

He wrote this when he was 18, and was immediately hyped up as the new Bob Dylan. It didn't work out that way, and his career took a different course, but this remains a classic folk song.

Donovan – *Catch the Wind*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8hjEYTpwe8>.

Down In The River To Pray (Traditional)

The song appears in the book *Slave Songs of the United States* published in 1867. At some point it seems to have been coopted into white Christian culture with a subtle change in its meaning: the word 'valley' is replaced by 'river', and the theme becomes one of Christian redemption. Then in 2000 the song gained a new lease on life again thanks to Alison Krauss's performance of it from the soundtrack of the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*.

Alison Krauss – *Down In The River To Pray*
<https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/alison-krauss-down-in-the-river-to-pray.mp3>.

Harmony Creek String Band – *Down In The River To Pray*
<http://www.allmusic.com/album/down-in-the-river-mw0002096311>

The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face (Ewan MacColl 1957)

Simon Cowell apparently thinks this is a Roberta Flack song – and thanks to him a lot more people now believe this to be

true. In fact MacColl hated the slow paced Roberta Flack chart topper. Here's all two minutes 25 seconds of the original.

Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger – *The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face*
<https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/18-the-first-time-i-ever-saw-your-fa.mp3>.

Four Strong Winds (Ian Tyson 1963)

Part of the appeal of this song is that it's so rooted in the idea of a footloose 1960s lifestyle – "If a good time are all gone, and I'm bound for moving on, I'll look for you if I'm ever back this way." Which makes it ironic that Ian Tyson went on to buy his own ranch and live the life of a cowboy, helped at times along the way by the royalty cheques from *Four Strong Winds*.

Ian & Sylvia – *Four Strong Winds*
<https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/ian-sylvia-four-strong-winds.mp3>.

Goodnight, Irene / Irene Goodnight (Lead Belly 1933)

Alan Lomax: "The Archive of American Folk Song, which now numbers some 60,000 songs in its files of field recordings, came into actual being one broiling summer day in the State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana. The first recording we took on our new portable equipment was of the state's prisoner, Lead Belly, singing *Irene Goodnight* ... My father and I had come to the penitentiary hunting folk songs. In Lead Belly we found a great folk artist, who not only stamped the songs with his own strong personality, but at once involved us in his life. Before the recording session had ended, Lead Belly had what he wanted from us—the promise to ask the Governor of Louisiana to pardon this two-time murderer ... Whether because of this song or for another reason, Lead Belly was paroled to my father a year later ... In the years that followed Lead Belly recorded his songs for a number of companies, though never so beautifully as he had first sung them for us in Louisiana." ...

Lead Belly – *Irene Goodnight*
<https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/leadbelly-goodnight-irene.mp3>.

The Weavers – *Goodnight Irene*
https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/goodnight_irene_pete_seeger.mp3.

Mississippi John Hurt – *Goodnight Irene*
<https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/goodnight-irene.mp3>.

If I Had a Hammer / The Hammer Song (Pete Seeger and Lee Hays 1949)

The lyrics were considered subversive. As Seeger commented, "In 1949 only Commies used words like 'peace' and 'freedom.'" Already by 1950 the Weavers were forced to stop playing this song in concert because of the threat of blacklisting. They were blacklisted anyway. In 1962 Peter Paul & Mary changed the words, livened up the song, and made it relevant to a whole new generation of radicals.

Peter Paul and Mary – *If I Had A Hammer*
<https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/04-if-i-had-a-hammer-peter-paul-mary.mp3>.

John The Revelator (Traditional)

Incredibly powerful piece of religious mumbo jumbo. Blind Willie Johnson first recorded this call and response gospel blues in 1930.

Blind Willie Johnson – *John the Revelator*
https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/john_the_revelator.mp3.

Son House – *John the Revelator*
<https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/son-house-john-the-revelator-version-estudio.mp3>.

Taj Mahal – *John the Revelator*
<https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/john-the-revelator.mp3>.

The Last Thing On My Mind (Tom Paxton 1964)

Holly Near: "Every folk singer I know has either sung a Tom Paxton song, is singing a Tom Paxton song or will soon sing a Tom Paxton song. Now either all the folk singers are wrong, or Tom Paxton is one hell of a songwriter."

Tom Paxton – *The Last Thing On My Mind*
<https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/the-last-thing-on-my-mind-tom-paxton.mp3>.

The Dubliners – *The Last Thing On My Mind*
musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/the_dubliners_the_last_thing_on_my_mind_paddy_2002_e6a270af59.mp3.

Make Me A Pallet On the Floor (Traditional)

... The earliest written version of the song that exists – from 1911 – is very basic. The understated elegance of the song we know today probably owes much to Mississippi John Hurt.

Mississippi John Hurt – *Make Me A Pallet On the Floor*
<https://musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/mississippi-john-hurt-make-me-a-pallet-on-the-floor-wmv.mp3>.

Gillian Welch – *Make Me Down A Pallet On Your Floor*
musictodiefor.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/gillian-welch-make-me-down-a-pallet-on-your-floor.mp3. ❖❖❖



**WELCOME TO
OUR NEW AND
RETURNING
MEMBERS:**

Jeremy Beachy
Dan & Jennifer
Levenson (new)
Steve Wamsley (new)

Pat Mirada (new)
Tom Schneider (new)
Buren & Carol Carter
John and Deb Perry

Frank and Rhonda White (new)
Kay Smith
Linda Siefkas

The inside of Llewyn Davis.....is Empty

by Bill Cohen

If you want to experience the momentum-filled hopeful spirit of the folk music revival in Greenwich Village in the early 1960's, do not – I repeat – do NOT see the film “Inside Llewyn Davis.”

Some say the movie drama is about folkie Dave Van Ronk who was indeed a fixture in the folk clubs and jams in that era when much better-known musical geniuses were about to burst forth: Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Peter Paul and Mary, Tom Paxton, Phil Ochs, and many others. But it doesn't matter whether or not Van Ronk was the model for the title character, because it's doubtful that you'll care about his fate one way or the other.

In this film, Davis is portrayed as a self-centered, irresponsible, thoughtless, in-debt, and generally lazy young man. He keeps trying to break through with his fairly good singing voice, but there's little evidence that he has much passion for what he's doing. He keeps getting ignored and knocked down, figuratively



and literally. The thing is – I didn't empathize with the character because he didn't seem to have any redeeming traits. The film's director never made me care about Davis, so I didn't. I didn't applaud for Davis when he made a little progress, and I didn't mourn for him when he failed. He evoked little emotion in me.

Right near the end of the movie, there's a very short scene of a 1961 Greenwich Village coffeehouse, where a curly-haired young guy is singing with a twangy, off-key voice. Hmmmmmm. I wonder who that's supposed to represent? So much for subtlety and nuance. This is like hitting the audience over the head with a hammer.

I don't care if the film was produced by the Coen Brothers, who are probably related to me from the years when Moses was around. The movie is still mediocre.

If you want to see a movie that sparks emotion, teaches a little about history, and gives you a real sense of what the Greenwich Village folk music scene was all about, let me suggest a film that's totally based on reality. Mainly because it's a documentary, using real film footage from the very early 1960's.

The film is called “Greenwich Village: Music that Defined a Generation.” No actors. No script.

Instead, you see memory-sparking still black-and-white photos and film of dozens of the folkies jamming and performing in the Village five decades ago. Then, you see many of them in modern-day, looking back and analyzing the scenes from their youth. Especially revealing and fascinating is the story of a 1961 protest, where the folkies and their followers, many of them wearing coats and ties, demonstrated against an arbitrary police ban on singing in Washington Park and then got hauled off to jail, while singing patriotic songs.

You can find the film on Netflix and Amazon. Heck, it's even available for free at the Columbus Public Library.

Unlike “Inside Llewyn Davis,” this documentary will make you feel something. Something good.

THE COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

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The Columbus Folk Music Society

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Next Issue in March

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In an effort to be both fiscally and environmentally responsible, we will send a full-color, interactive newsletter via e-mail unless you request a hard copy be mailed to you.

I enjoy the annual Central Ohio Folk Festival (early May): Lots 5 4 3 2 1 Not (please circle one)