

LOCAL LORE

*Your Folk Music
Connection*

Celebrating fALL SONG

With the popularity of Virtual Song Circles and the success of the March 2021 Singtime Frolics online, PFS launched a new tradition in the form of an annual virtual event, the fAll Song Festival. fAll Song drew participants from 110 cities in 24 US states and 9 different countries, allowing a large variety in the community and singers who came together to create the 3-day weekend. All Songs were welcomed!

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110 cities in 24 US states and
9 different countries**

The weekend launched with a panel discussion on inclusion in folk music by local musicians and Portland FolkMusic Society members.

Arietta Ward, Sarah Clarke, Jon Dickman, and Nancy Gendel shared their insights and experiences operating in a world of intrinsic and systemic bias. The conversation covered a manner of topics including where and when they feel safe in the music world, accessibility to events and social aspects of being in a music community, and how they relate to the content and stories carried in lyrics. A video of the

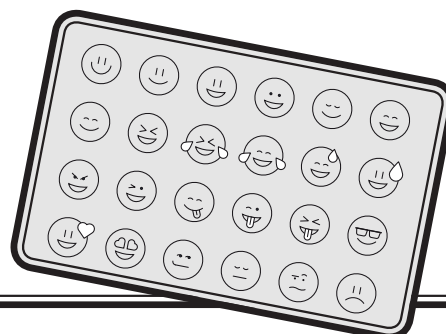
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PFS Song Circles Have Gone

VIRTUAL

For many years, we have met in people's homes every month to sing together. In the face of the pandemic we are getting together on-line. Check the PFS website for all the details. See page 11 for update on in-person song circles



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panel discussion will be available on YouTube soon.

The festival also included six live (online) concerts by folk musicians. Portland-local Michelle Alany kicked off the series with a trio lead by her violin and voice combination of haunting music from the near and far east. She was followed by Arietta Ward's foot-tapping and hip-swaying original and classical blues, streamed live from Artichoke Music. On Saturday, Irish singer Rita Gallagher graced our virtual stage with Celtic ballads and traditional Irish songs. Newcomers to Portland, William Seiji Marsh, current guitarist for Pink Martini

and Edna Vasquez, and his partner, cellist Caleigh Drane performed as newly minted duo The Bird's Eye, featuring cello-guitar-voice arrangements of pop and folk songs. Sunday saw Cindy Kallett and Grey Larsen take the stage, to absolutely charm the audience with old and new folk music and many stories from their own lives. New Oregon Hall of Fame inductee, LaRhonda Steele wrapped up the weekend with a soulful round of songs in the gospel tradition, telling the stories that lead her to a life of music. All the concerts will soon be available to stream from YouTube as well.

Volunteers presented 26 Song Circles and 15

Four of the Fall Song Concerts (as seen on Zoom!)

Top to bottom: Arietta Ward; Cindy Kallett and Greg Larsen; Michelle Alany; and LaRhonda Steele

PFS wants to help support artists to be able to make a living through their music. We split 100% of the donations among the performers. Big thanks to the many of you who did contribute!



Comments from some of the FALL SONG Attendees::

"In deepest of gratitude of the way the weekend deepened all our connections."

"I wondered about the state or future of folk music, folk societies? How does the idea of folk traditions travel beyond Scotland and Ireland, and by extension, the diasporas of each? The Sephardic, Turkish example, of course, offers an example. But I wondered about countries in SE Asia, more eastern European (remembering the Penny Whistlers). I appreciate the society's effort to draw the net wide."

"It was wonderful! I loved singing with people from all over the world!"

"I stayed to the end even though I was up all night and sang through breakfast!"

"I got to 'meet' Joe Hicker-son, famous as the co-author of 'Where Have All the Flowers Gone?', via Zoom, and he told me a joke."

LaRhonda Steele wrapped up the weekend with a soulful round of songs in the gospel tradition

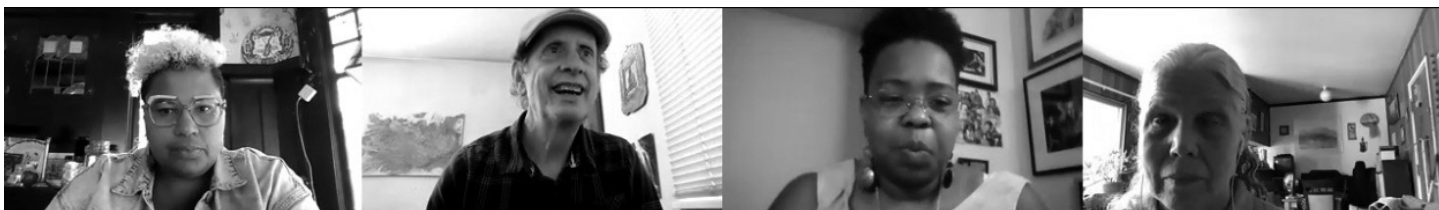
workshops over the course of the weekend. Song Circles had the themes of Parodies, Richard Thompson Songs, "Domestic Bliss, Or Not", Protest Songs, Songs In Other Languages, Opposite Gender, Songs of Royalty, Nobles, and Leadership, Songs of the Future, Wooden Boats, A-Hunting We Will Go, Doo Wop, Conversation Songs, Dylan and Cohen, New Songs of Joy, Growing Brains, Sea Songs and Chanties, Irish Songs, Songs From Both Sides, Myth and Magic, Coping With Covid, Music In Song and Story, Newfoundland, Love Songs, Hank Williams, Camp

Songs, and Songs With A Sense of Place. Workshops were Open Guitar Tunings, Writing Your First Song, Harmony Singing, Folkifying Pop Songs, Learn A French Song, Vocal Versatility, The Craft of Song Interpretation, Organic Google, Learn Song Accompaniment, Modern Labor Songs, Waulking Song, Guitar Backup: Bass Runs & Fills, Gaelic Lullaby, and Irish Song Traditions. Some of the workshops will be featured on YouTube, but if you're sure you don't want to miss next year, make sure you're on our mailing list (or that you're a PFS member).

A huge thank you to our volunteers, performers, and community members, we couldn't do it without you. We look forward to seeing you next year! ♦

By PFS Volunteer and Board Member Alana McKenzie

Some highlights from the Inclusion panel:



The opening panel on Inclusion and Diversity featured four speakers of diverse demographics. Each one generously shared their experiences, both about the constraints and attitudes that sometimes have minimized, threatened or excluded them, and also about times when friends and allies have been particularly kind, protective, empowering and inclusive.

Sarah Clarke said that she keeps looking for ways to move the dialog on equity and inclusion forward; she said that people who have privilege get to decide what equity looks like. She wants to get more BIPOC people woven throughout the entire music business, not just as performers. She says, one of the hardest parts for her of being a touring musician is, once you're in the venue, people know who you are and why you're there. But otherwise, in between venues, she has to think about, "How far can I make it on this tank of gas?"

Jon Dickman said that when he was growing up, being gay was considered mental illness, and while he feels included by Portland FolkMusic Society, he feels excluded by many of the song lyrics, even of the songs he loves to sing. There isn't a huge repertoire of songs about men being romantically attracted to men, so when he sings

the songs he loves, he has to pretend that he is attracted to women, or sing it from a woman's viewpoint, or try to change the lyrics.

Arietta Ward said that when she is negotiating with a venue, she gets questions that a lot of her white male colleagues don't. She's not taken as seriously. It's kind of hard being a black woman band leader! It's heartbreaking, but it's also promising because we are having these conversations now. She says, "We just want to be included, have a level playing field so we can spread the joy!" Asked where she felt unsafe, Arietta said, "Out of Portland city limits, especially after dark!" Certain places you just don't go. "Going towards Idaho? Oh boy!"

Nancy Gendel said that she was a lucky blind person. She found a job despite the widespread assumption that blind people can't do anything. She worked as a telephone service representative with Social Security, but this happened because the agency was forced to be an equal opportunity employer. To get the job, she had to show that she could type, count money, cut an onion, and take a bus by herself! She is welcomed in folk music circles, but has to confront other people's fear and discomfort of being around a blind person.

What's In A Name?

Dear Folk Music lovers,
Fall is officially here and we've just finished our first (annual?) Fall Song Festival. And that means that Thanksgiving is just around the corner. On my mind as I sit here pondering what to say are two main things: Naming and Thanksgiving. Let me start with Naming.

Our Fall Song Festival was named fAll Song Festival. When we named it, we thought that emphasizing "All" was important, because we celebrate ALL musical traditions. But "fAll" was just a little too confusing, so we'll probably revert to "Fall" next year. At least that's my vote, but like everything with PFS, it will be a committee decision, not one person deciding. Naming also brings to mind our organization's name, the "Portland FolkMusic Society". That's "FolkMusic", one word, two capital letters. There's a long tradition of what are

That's "FolkMusic", one word, two capital letters

called "Camel" words, because they have two humps, and that's who we are. As I read our correspondence, I see "Folk Music" (two words instead of one); I see PFMS instead of PFS, (which is the corollary of the first error); I see "Folkmusic" (one word but only one capital), as the most frequent errors with our unusual name. I prefer to assert "FolkMusic", and I ask you to do the same in your correspondence.

November also makes me think of Thanksgiving. I'm extremely thankful for the host of volunteers that make PFS run. The recent Fall Song Festival is just one example. I can't even count the total number of volunteers because we had volunteers recruiting, training, and coordinating volunteers. Thanksgiving also brings to mind another National Holiday that is less well known. The Tuesday after Thanksgiving (Nov. 30th this year) is known as Giving Tuesday, where people

PORTLAND
FOLK MUSIC
SOCIETY

*f***All Song**
Festival

financially support their favorite local charity or non-profit. I'm grateful that we have a generous membership. I'm also grateful that we have a prudent reserves savings account, because we've now had to dip into it to pay our bills. I encourage you to recognize Giving Tuesday and support a charity or non-profit of your choice. I'd especially appreciate it if you made

PFS that non-profit. I'd like to raise \$2,000 to replenish our prudent reserves. If you could help us in that, we'd be most appreciative. Also consider recommending

I'd like to raise \$2,000 to replenish our prudent reserves.

membership to your families and friends, and also consider upping your membership from "regular" to "sustaining". All of these will help us weather these covid times and emerge financially stronger than ever. Looking forward to seeing all of you at some future event! ♦

Brian Warner

president@portlandfolkmusic.org

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Board Elections Coming Up in December

Dear PFS Members,
Every year we all get to vote to fill the expiring seats on the PFS Board of Directors, and some of us get to actually Be A Member Of The Board!

Our bylaws call for seven board members to hold staggered terms. Last December 2020, we filled four seats. This year we fill three. In December 2022 it will be four again. And so on.

The Board of Directors sets policy, manages the budget, and oversees the affairs of PFS. The Board avoids micromanaging its committees' activities – concerts, song circles, online events, Local Lore, the website, Singtime Frolics, the Annual Meeting, membership, the Strawberry Social... Instead, the Board's job is to make policies that help all the committees work together to achieve the goals of PFS. At its monthly meetings the Board reviews committee reports and is available to help our strong and healthy committees in any way it can. Here are three areas where the Board is working:

Membership: Since our founding in 1976, our membership has grown from a few handfuls of people to 350. And it has changed: we know it is not very young and not very diverse. Increasingly it includes people in other states and other countries. How do we attract members whose homemade music is different from what most of us now listen to? How do we help younger and BIPOC musicians and singers feel welcomed by our older folkies? How do we use the internet to effectively reach people around the world who come to make music with us online?

Stability and growth: PFS is run by volunteers. How do we continue to interest members in sharing the fun

of working together without burning out from taking on too many tasks? We have created an endowment fund and a capital fund; we need to keep filling them, and we may need other new financial models in the future.

Can you imagine yourself on the board of PFS?

Activities: We love our group events, as participants and performers. We would love to do more: creating more opportunities for local performers, offering music classes in Portland schools, and having a stronger online presence. We need you to help us decide the who, what, when, and where!

Does the challenge of answering these questions speak to you? Can you imagine yourself on the board of PFS? If you would like to explore this, please send us an email to BoardElections@portlandfolkmusic.org and we'll get right back to you. If you already know you would like to run, send a short statement saying who you are and why you'd like to be on the Board, no later than December 12, along with a photo to the same email address above.

If you don't want to run for the board, be sure to vote. All members and only members can vote. The online polls will be open from December 16 to midnight, December 31. We will send you an email or two as reminders. Your involvement will make a stronger, more exciting PFS!

Thank you!

Paul Rippey and Deborah Lee
Nominating Committee



Take 5 with David Jacobs-Strain

1. Since debuting at the Oregon Country Fair when you were 12 years old you must have witnessed many changes to the Northwest music landscape. What is the one biggest difference you've seen over the years?

It can be hard to differentiate between the changes in the scene and changes in my own perspective. I've gone from being a street singer to a full time performer; in that time some of the generation that I looked up to has passed on, while a new crew has come up. I'm not the youngest performer on the stage anymore!

2. You've been performing with harp player Bob Beach for more than a decade. What does having Bob on stage mean to you as opposed to performing solo?

Bob Beach is an incredible player; he can play fast

and fiery, or just sit back and let a song speak. He's played hip-hop at the Apollo in Harlem, and been invited onstage with Levon Helm and the Avett Brothers. Playing with Bob gives me a foil--someone to have a musical conversation with on stage. We never really play a song the same way twice!

3. Among your recordings with Bob is "Live from the Left Coast." What is your definition of Left Coast Blues?

We like to mix our bluesier, more instrumentally driven pieces with stories and songs that reflect the land and people of the west. We're trying to honor the great Afro-American originators of the blues (like Skip James and Charlie Patton), and at the same time tell stories that come from our own experience.

4. In addition to performing you are also a producer. What is the best advice you can give to musicians who are going into the recording studio for the first time?

I love recording, and the interplay of musical, social, technical, and spiritual elements. The studio can be magical, but even in a home studio setting the range of options can be overwhelming. Many first time recording artists end up over-producing their own music, while trying to achieve the sound they hear in their heads! With each sound you add, other sounds have to get smaller to make room. Try to find an engineer/producer who can help you to focus on the essence of each song; ask yourself, "what is the least we can add to make this song speak? It doesn't have to be elaborate, or technically perfect to be moving. With most songwriters I try to avoid click tracks; I'd rather have them play like they do at home or around a campfire. A little pre-production time can help you to feel less on the spot in the studio; hashing out arrangements ahead of time means you can assimilate the ideas that really work. The recording method will always affect the feel of the music, and feel is what it's all about--but there really are no rules! Great records have been made in beautiful studios, and great records have been made in garages!



5. The pandemic has played havoc with the live music industry for the past year and a half. How do you envision the touring landscape for independent musicians for 2022 and beyond?

I think there's going to be some instability in the live music world for a while. Some artists will pull off major tours, others will keep things pared back. There are going to be frequent cancellations. I'm feeling really grateful for every show we were able to play this year! I'm especially appreciative of all the folks who hosted us for backyard house concerts; folks really went the extra mile to make sure that everyone was safe--and having a great time! Without wading too much into the political fray, I do want to say that getting vaccinated is one of the best things we can do to help our health care workers, our families, and our touring artists. As a new parent I have to think about our son's health too! I also think streaming may continue to evolve, both as its own form, and as a way of supplementing live in-person performances. Thank you to everyone who has stuck their neck out to support artists! ♦

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Look for David Jacobs-Strain in future performances through his website: davidjacobs-strain.com

By Kevin Nordlie. Kevin is based near the other Washington (DC) and works with independent musicians in the folk music community. Kevin.Nordlie@gmail.com

What local/regional musician would you like to see profiled in Local Lore?, Send your suggestions to LocalLore@PortlandFolkMusic.org

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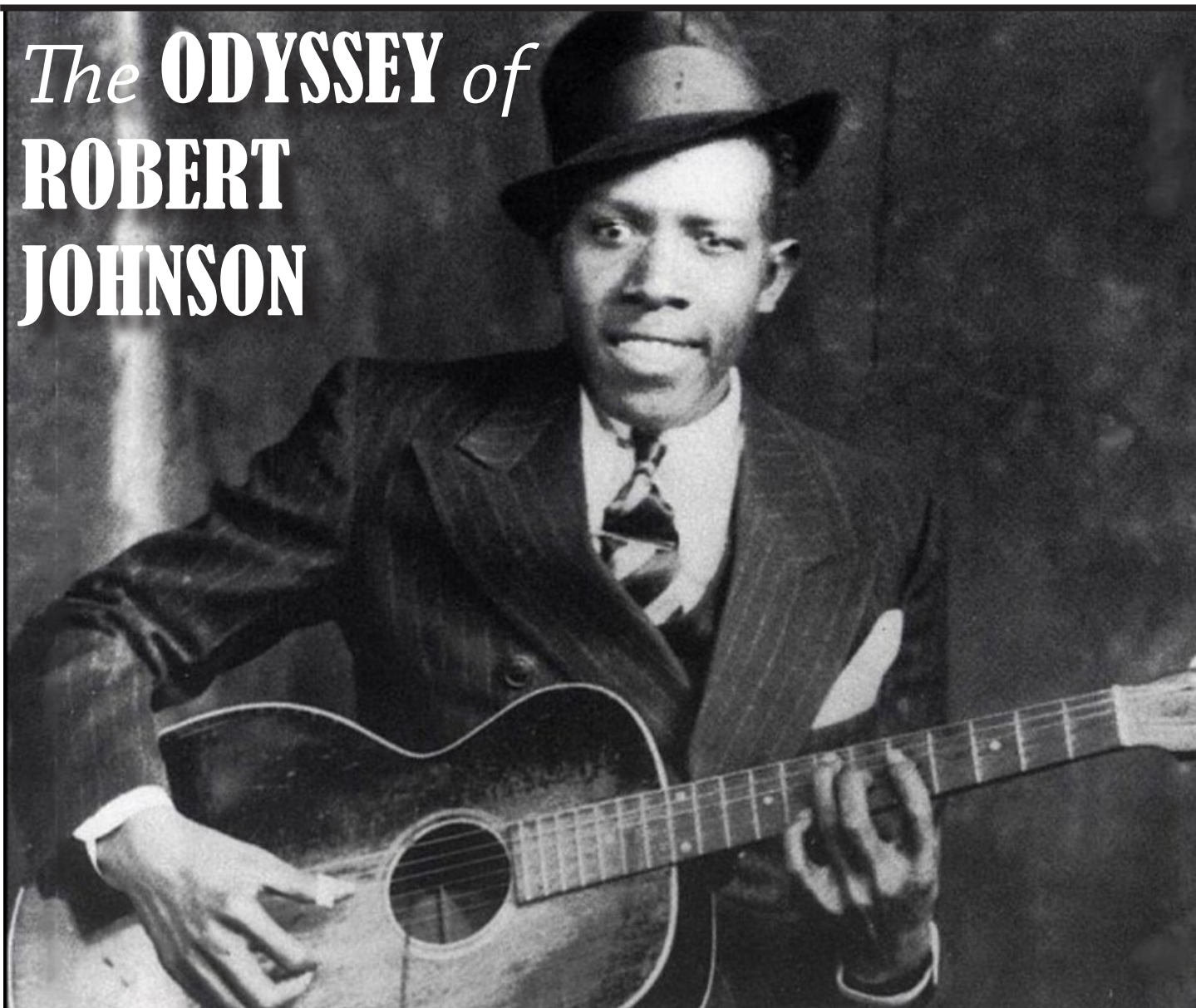
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The ODYSSEY of ROBERT JOHNSON



Numerous blues scholars and fans have written books or articles about Robert Johnson. The obvious question is why did such an obscure musician become catapulted into celebrity status, largely by white authors who never knew him, but who have combed every cranny of the Mississippi Delta and interviewed any musician or person they could find who knew or claimed to have known him. The answer reveals a great deal about the role of image, mythology and greed in the creation of what scholar Patricia Schroeder has described as the "Robert Johnson industry."

Johnson is part of the Mississippi Delta tradition of blues guitarists. He was a younger contemporary of Son House and Willie Brown in a tradition that at least partly evolved through the music of Charley Patton. A number of aspects of Johnson's life and career have contributed to his rise to legendary status in the history

of the blues. Scholars agree that Johnson died at the age of twenty-seven, poisoned by a jealous husband. Shortly after Johnson's death fabled record producer and talent discoverer John Hammond sought to find Johnson to enlist his participation in Hammond's 1938 Spirituals to Swing concert at Carnegie Hall. When

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Hammond discovered that Johnson was dead, he played two of Johnson's obscure recordings at the concert. Since all the rest of the music was performed live

and the concert became regarded as a historic event, this brought Robert to the attention of many blues and jazz fans.

The legend gathered steam when Hammond encouraged the re-issue of Johnson's music. Columbia had acquired the rights to Johnson's Arc recordings, and enlisted Frank Driggs to produce what became two long playing records of Robert's music, one released in 1961 and the other in 1970. These albums were snapped up by numerous white blues singers in the United States and they heavily influenced a number of British rock-blues enthusiasts, including Eric Clapton and Keith Richards. Meanwhile blues author Samuel Charters wrote about Johnson and noted author Peter Guralnick wrote a short book called *Searching For Robert Johnson* in 1989. Blues researcher Mack McCormick contacted Johnson's half-sister and his half step-sister and obtained some rare photographs from them. He also worked on a never-completed biography of Johnson for years, but abandoned the project.

The legend gathered steam when Hammond encouraged the re-issue of Johnson's music.

The two long-playing records sold reasonably well, better than any of the recordings issued in Johnson's lifetime. By 1982 the compact disc format became available to consumers, and Columbia kicked around the idea of issuing a CD boxed set of all of Johnson's recordings. It was at this point that the "industry" aspect of Robert's career began. Blues collector Steve La Vere made an agreement with the sisters, but Mack McCormick insisted that he owned the rights to Johnson's music and photographs. When McCormick abandoned his plan to write Johnson's biography, La Vere convinced John Hammond that the CD project should be issued. He had acquired the publishing rights to Robert's songs, and for reasons that have never been entirely clear, Columbia agreed to pay royalties for the songs, even

though they probably could have claimed that the songs were not copyrighted by Johnson, Arc Records, or any of the heirs. The CD set was issued, and to everyone's surprise it quickly sold over a million copies. Suddenly every scrap or souvenir of Robert's life attained considerable commercial value. In a few paragraphs I'll return to the economics of this picture.

As scholars unearthed some of the details of Robert Johnson's life, a number of issues emerged that fascinated blues scholars and fans. The story (or rumor) spread that Robert was initially an ordinary guitar player whose abilities were far below the skills of Son House and Willie Brown. He then left town and according to legend, mythology or facts (the reader can choose) met the devil at a crossroads and made a deal to give up his immortal soul in exchange for developing extraordinary guitar skills. Robert then returned to the Delta and showcased his skills by essentially cutting House and Brown at a gig.

Another aspect of Robert's life that fascinated blues fans was his tragic death at age of 27, poisoned by a jealous husband. Scholars interviewed Johnny Shines, who traveled with Robert Johnson, and he relayed information about Johnson's wandering nature, his womanizing, his endless travels, and his ability to reproduce music without even appearing to be listening closely to it. Tommy Johnson, an unrelated blues singer, had a brother named LeDell and the latter repeated the crossroads story, though he told it in regard to his brother and not Robert. Robert Lockwood Jr. was almost like a younger brother to Robert, and his mother and Robert had a long-term relationship. Lockwood, himself a fine guitarist, also offered testimony to Robert's extraordinary musical abilities. When Son House was re-discovered,

he corroborated these stories, and he seemed to waffle as to whether the crossroads incident really occurred.

It turned out that when Robert disappeared, he was mentored by the mysterious Ike Zimmerman, who liked to practice while sitting on a tombstone in a cemetery. It was after this tutelage that Robert returned and showcased his guitar skills to House and Brown. Although blues scholars Bruce Conforth and Gayle Dean Wardlaw located Zimmerman's granddaughter, no living per-



son can describe exactly how Zimmerman played. In other words, we have no idea exactly what Zimmerman's tombstone lessons included.

Recently I listened carefully to the CD re-issue albums. In my opinion Robert's best music contains an emotional intensity and musicality that sets him apart from many, though by no means, all blues guitarists and singers. The music was quite well recorded for its time, and Columbia has lavished considerable time and effort in re-mixing and mastering the music.



Just when it appeared that Annye and her half-sister would reap the benefits of the royalties from Robert's music, a new heir to the estate emerged in the form of Claude, who claimed to be Robert's illegitimate son, and thereby his sole heir. After considerable legal turmoil, the courts declared Claude to be the sole heir to the estate.

This is my attempt to summarize the odyssey of Robert Johnson. Robert was the illegitimate son of a sharecropper named Noah Johnson.

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None of the tracks use any accompaniment, and at his best, Robert masterfully combines rhythm and lead on a single guitar. There are also some recurring and formulaic figures that appear in a number of the songs. It is sad that we have no recordings of Robert playing in more casual and spontaneous situations. We will never really know to what degree he improvised, and what he sounded like when he did other people's music.

The legend was spread not only through the endorsement of British rock stars, but because two of Robert's songs, *Dust My Broom* and *Sweet Home Chicago*, were popularized, respectively, thorough Elmore James' recording and in the case of *Sweet Home Chicago* by numerous performances in Chicago blues clubs by various musicians. The movie *Crossroads* was not literally about Robert Johnson but was inspired by his story, and includes a guitar duel between the devil and a young white blues man, played by Ralph Macchio.

This was followed by a stream of plays, novels, biographies, a book of poems, and a recent book by Robert's half-sister, Annye Anderson. Robert lived on and off at Annye's house, where her father lived, joined from time to time by his ex-wife, who was Robert's mother. Robert died when Annye was twelve years old. Because she knew him as a relative and not as a posthumous white researcher, the reader grasps him as a personality, rather than a subject for research and speculation.

His father had left Hazlehurst, Mississippi because of a dispute with a white landowner. Robert and his mother Julia were taken in by her ex-husband, Charles Dodd Spencer in Memphis.

Robert lived there, learned some

guitar from his half-brother, and then moved with his mother to the Delta, where she was living with her new husband, Dusty Willis. Robert never met his real father, married early, and lost his wife in childbirth while he was on the road playing music. Robert played with Delta guitarists Son House and Willie Brown in Robbinsville, Mississippi, but they saw him as a raw amateur. He then disappeared south of the Delta, was tutored on guitar by Ike Zimmerman, and returned to Robbinsville where he exhibited his newly-found guitar skills to astonish and overwhelm House and Brown. Along the way to meeting Zimmerman, Robert did or did not meet the devil at the crossroads. He got to record for Arc Records in two long recording sessions, but his best-selling record sold less than five thousand copies. He continued his endless ramblings and was poisoned by a jealous husband, dying in 1938, barely missing the opportunity to play Carnegie hall, at the invitation of John Hammond. As discussed earlier, by 1990, Robert's music, and any photographs of him became very valuable to blues collectors and scholars.

In 2005, guitar salesman and aficionado Zeke Schein discovered a photo on-line that he believes shows Robert Johnson with his friend Johnny Shines. When the photo was revealed, various blues scholars either confirmed or denied that the person in the photo was Johnson. Schein was the subject of some strongly-worded attacks in the blues community. What he seems to

have done “wrong” was to have trespassed on the turf of white blues scholars. When Annye Anderson’s book appeared, she also was strongly criticized for alleged factual errors by at least one blues scholar.

Internally there was indeed a hellhound on his trail

Will we ever learn a substantial body of facts about Robert Johnson? Given that he died close to ninety years ago, it seems unlikely. Here are a few thoughts and questions of my own about the man and the myth. Why didn’t Robert move to Chicago? A number of Mississippi blues artists including Muddy Waters, Dave “Honeyboy” Edwards, and Tommy McClennan all moved to Chicago, because there was work and recording opportunities available to blues singers. Robert was ambitious enough to seek out a recording contract by auditioning for H.L. Speir in Jackson, Mississippi, and he traveled widely by train or by hitchhiking, so why didn’t he migrate to Chicago? This is a question that Johnny Shines might have well been able to answer, but it seems that no one ever asked him. Why did Don Law continue to record Johnson when his best-selling record sold five thousand records?, if it sold that many copies. Several other releases sold even worse. Did Law sense that there was something unique about Johnson, or did

he think that if he continued to record him, sales would increase?

As for the crossroads, from my point of view it is a metaphor. Robert was haunted by his inability to ever met his father, and as a young child going back and forth between his mother’s two husbands, it seems safe to assume that he lived with a lack of security and an on-going quest for acceptance. Internally there was indeed a hellhound on his trail. Many blues singers saw blues as the devil’s path for those who left church music and chose a secular, sinful life. We will never know whether Robert carried those thoughts with him.

Finally, a little humorous note. There is another artist who himself has the last name of Zimmerman. That, of course, is Bob Dylan. In my fantasy life, I imagine spreading a rumor that Bob’s mother and Ike Zimmerman’s father had an illicit affair, crowned by the birth of Ike. I can only imagine the flurry of books, magazine articles, movies and scholarly research that such a story would stimulate. ♦

By Dick Weissman is a composer, performer and author who writes books about American roots music, music and politics, and the music industry. He is an inductee in both the Colorado Authors Hall of Fame and the Music Hall of Fame. His most recent book is A New History of American and Canadian Folk Music, and his most current CD, No Ceiling, was mostly recorded in Portland. www.dickweissman.com

PFS SONG CIRCLES

In-Person Song Circles Canceled

Now it is time for us to go inside, which brings a whole new level of difficulty for in-person song circles to meet safely.



At this time, the PFS Board feels it would be most prudent to cancel in-person song circles. They are going through the hard discussion of deciding the criteria that will enable us to again meet in person at some better future time, and how to recognize if that future is better, or here yet. It’s still pretty tricky to tell.

In the meantime, we are still meeting EVERY SATURDAY at 6pm on zoom at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87176553766>

If you have good thoughts on the topic of opening in-person song circles, and would like to help the board along with this endeavor, please email your reflections to board@portlandfolkmusic.org ♦

By Holly Hoffnung, PFS Song Circle Coordinator

PFS Concerts Return in January 2022

We are really excited to announce that our PFS Concerts will be restarting in January. Based on the results of a survey, we have moved the concerts to the 3rd Saturday of the month; this should make it easier for audience members to get to the venue rather than getting stuck in Friday evening traffic.



Saturday, January 15, 2022

John Reischman & The Jay Birds

Like the powerful mandolinist and composer at its helm, John Reischman and the Jaybirds fashion a stylish take on bluegrass; seamlessly blending original songs and instrumentals with Appalachian old-time music for a truly unique sound. Having created music together for over 20 years, The Jaybirds are simultaneously innovative and unadorned, sophisticated and stripped-down, happily old-fashioned and 21st-century contemporary.



Saturday, February 19, 2022

Robin & Linda Williams

With musical careers spanning four decades, duo Robin & Linda Williams have enjoyed performing the acoustic music they love; a blend of bluegrass, folk, old-time and country. As gifted songwriters, they have earned the deep respect of their musical peers and a huge body of fans. The 23 CD's they've recorded are compilations of original tunes, songs by contemporary artists and numbers from the Appalachian and blues tradition.



Saturday, March 19, 2022

Kristen Grainger & True North

The acoustic quartet True North is anchored by the wife and husband duo Kristen Grainger and Dan Wetzel who both happen to be award winning songwriters. The group's complex sound of folk, Americana and bluegrass are accentuated by Kristen's smooth vibrant vocals and supported by the group's tight instrumentation. Their energetic live performance shines a brilliant spotlight on their incredible songwriting.



Saturday, April 16, 2022

Pat Donohue

Grammy winner Pat Donohue is one of the most listened-to finger pickers in the world. His devotion to acoustic guitar has made him an American standard as he echoes the tones of Robert Johnson, Blind Blake, Merle Travis or Muddy Waters. Chet Atkins called Pat one of the greatest fingerpickers in the world today; Leo Kottke called his playing "haunting." As the guitarist for the Guys All-Star Shoe Band of Minnesota Public Radio's A Prairie Home Companion, Pat got to show off his savvy licks and distinctive original songs to millions of listeners each week.



Saturday, May 21, 2022

The Texicana Mamas

Songs of sisterhood, family and celebration. Songs of love and desperation. Songs of borders, walls and the yearning for a new life. The Texicana Mamas mix the best elements of two musical cultures to forge a vibrant bilingual fusion of Tex-Mex songs and stories. These three gifted Latina singer-songwriters: Tish Hinojosa, Stephanie Urbina Jones and Patricia Vonne all grew up in and around San Antonio, Texas and have carved out distinguished solo careers. Making music together the three women harmonize and play off one another flawlessly.

We have five concerts in early 2022 (January through May). Ticket prices will remain as they were prior to the pandemic stoppage.

In addition, we have a mini-season season ticket package with a discounted price.

Ticket Prices	On Line	At the Door
General Admission	\$21	\$25
PFS Members	\$18	\$22
Ages 12-18	\$10	\$12
Under 12	Free	Free

.....

Season ticket packages are \$80 for the five performances. Season tickets and tickets for individual concerts may be ordered on the PFS website: www.portlandfolkmusic.org under events/PFS Concerts 2022.

.....

Concerts are held at the Reedwood Friends Church
2901 SE Steele St, Portland. All concerts start at 7:30 PM. Doors to seating open at 7:00 PM

HELP LIVE MUSIC HAPPEN!

The Portland FolkMusic Society is ending our pandemic pause!

Join us as a volunteer when we start our live concerts again. It's a great way to meet other people who enjoy listening to and watching artists perform in an intimate listening room atmosphere.

Volunteers arrive at 5pm and prepare the church for the evening performance, including setting up tables for CD sales, tickets, and local partners. During intermission, we have a few tasks. Post-concert, everything is returned to where it belongs, we clean things up, and we're done. And, as a thank you for your skills, talent, and time, you'll see the concert for free!

If you're interested or have questions, please contact Barbara, our concert volunteer coordinator, at

pfscv@gmail.com -

Artichoke Music Nominated for Cascade Blues Association Muddy Award

Navigating the Pandemic

After 18 months, Artichoke Music begins to reopen again for the fourth time with the news that we nominated for our first Muddy Award for virtual livestream production from the Cascade Blues Association (CBA).

Throughout the pandemic the response from our community has been overwhelming. Our first appeal in April 2020 was beyond our expectations. All new and increased donations were matched by the James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation. We reached our match goal by June 2020 and received an emergency payout of the 2021 grant in July 2020. At this point, we wanted to put the money to good use. Gary Furlow and I decided that we would start editing and publishing our archived videos of the shows we staged at Artichoke pre-pandemic. We began each newsletter with a featured video of appearances that we produced. This was well received, but as the case numbers appeared

Shelley's colleague, Marie Walters, the CBA general secretary added, "We so appreciate our partnership with Artichoke Music, being so instrumental in allowing the CBA to pivot and continue to bring blues music to a new and appreciative audience!" The artists were thrilled too: Louis Pain said, "You've done a great job, Bob. Thanks to you and the CBA for including me and Renato Caranto in the series. James Clem offered, "Thanks for having me and kudos to the video production crew who did a great job. It was a pleasure to be a part of this."

Artichoke owes this nomination all to Gary Furlow. Michael Henchman, worked with Gary on many of these shows, observes "people like Gary and his experience, are the behind-the-scenes wizards who bring television programming into our homes year after year." Tom May adds, "I feel privileged to work with him on the live broadcasts of my national radio broadcast 'River City Folk,' his 'can do' attitude is contagious and raises the level of every project."

"Kate Power & Steve Einhorn insist on Gary for sound for every show they perform, "We love Gary Furlow. Plain and simple. His work is brilliant, he never loses his cool,

We produced 13 videos that have generated over 5,000 views. And now a nomination for a Muddy Award for Virtual Livestream Production.

to be improving, they spiked and forced another shutdown. After that, we reached out to each of the music associations in Portland to brainstorm how we might support each other as the pandemic continued. The Cascade Blues Association (CBA) responded immediately.

This was a godsend. They offered to pay us a monthly honorarium and we produced the first meeting at on November 5, 2020, featuring Kim Field and the Perfect Gentlemen. It was a big success, and the series was born. We produced 13 videos that have generated over 5,000 views. And now a nomination for a Muddy Award for Virtual Livestream Production. Shelley Garrett, the interim President of the CBA told us that the program came at a great time, "When you reached out to us it was like a lifeline. The program provided excellent exposure for the artists who were able to play, getting music into the homes of people who couldn't get out and hear it, and new friendships! I am so flipping happy that you guys got nominated for the new Muddy Award for virtual livestream production. Excellent job!"

he's friendly and kind and on and on...Did we mention that we love Gary Furlow?!" Matt Miner plays percussion in Gary's band "The Loafers" adds, "Gary cares about how the music sounds because he's spent so much time on both sides of the microphone and understands the pride involved in both performance and presentation." Sarah Wolff, who just joined the Artichoke production team says, "Gary is a wealth of knowledge and is always willing to share it with anyone interested in learning. I love hearing his stories about those massive productions he oversaw before the digital age."

Here's the link for the playlist <https://www.youtube.com/artichokemusic/playlists> We are so grateful to the Cascade Blues Association. Thank you to Greg Slim Lively Johnson, Shelley Garrett, Marie Walters, and the board of the Cascade Blues Association who embraced this project. And thank you to the board of Artichoke Music and our community who made this all possible by their support. ◆

By Bob Howard, Executive Director, Artichoke Music.

We Are Many – They Are Few



While the plague years have been a detriment to live music, the world of music has opened up in a way that has not happened before. The COVID virus has taken away live music but has offered the world.

The success of Singtime and the fall Festival has led us through a new door into what can be called the virtual festival. These kinds of festivals are springing up everywhere. Performers can perform in their own home and get paid for it. People all over the world can sign up for concerts, workshops, and classes. Existing live festivals like the Tumbleweed Festival have gone virtual without literally skipping a beat.

You can see and hear recordings of these festivals on their websites:

For the Tumbleweed Festival: <https://tumbleweedmusicfestival.org>

For the New England Folk Festival: <https://www.neffa.org/folk-festival/new-england-folk-festival-online-2021/>

For the Festival of the Living Rooms: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1606369249486666/events>

While this phenomenon is still largely limited to the English-speaking world, Filk music has already spread to Continental Europe. While we still have many rivers to cross, folk music, while still a movement of distinct local and ethnic cultures, is beginning to have links that are world-wide.

This is a small victory for a music that has always been, in some way or another, an art made by and for the common people, that suffers their defeats and celebrates their victories. There are more of us than there are of

them. From protest songs to the anthems of the civil rights movement, our music has been about freedom and democracy. And even today, the right to vote is still not secure.

Writing about the Peterloo Massacre of 1815, a monument to the struggle in England for voting rights, the revolutionary poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote these words:

*Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you --
Ye are many -- they are few* ♦



The Old Time Gathering

The 23rd Annual Portland Old Time Music Gathering is in the planning stages for Jan. 12 (or 13) – Jan. 16, 2022. We don't yet know how things will be because of the Co-vid Delta variant but we hope to have an in-person Gathering. At this point we are planning for a "get back to basics" smaller Gathering in case we aren't able to gather in large numbers.



By Barry Gorden, PFS Calendar Editor and volunteer

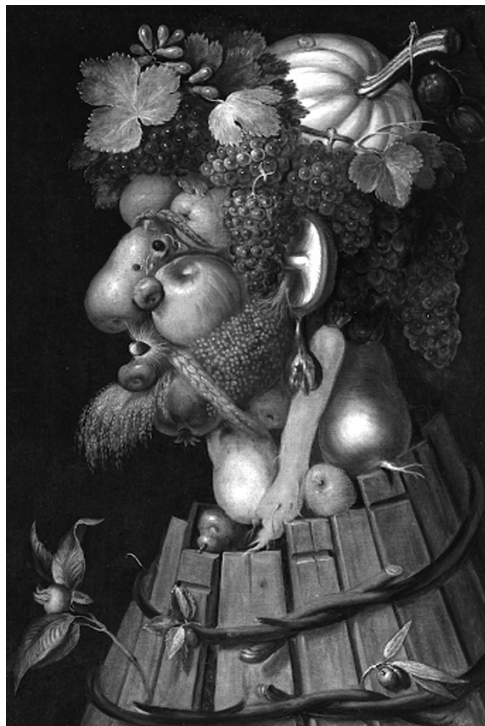
Songs of the Harvest

Thanksgiving days were declared by United States Presidents at various times in American history, beginning with George Washington making November 26, 1789, a day of thanksgiving, but Thanksgiving was not established as a regular yearly Federal holiday until 1870. So there are not a great many songs specifically for American Thanksgiving, and these were composed in the 19th century or later.

The autumn feast of Thanksgiving is later in the year than many feasts celebrating the kinds of foods we might eat at this time of year. So I thought it might be fun to look at some songs related to summer and autumn harvest celebrations.

An example of an early American Thanksgiving song that many people know today is "Over the River and Through the Wood," by abolitionist Lydia Maria Child, who published it as "The New-England Boy's Song about Thanksgiving Day" in a collection of short writings, poems, and songs, *Flowers For Children*, Part II in 1845. This song, though it was published and has a known lyricist, has some characteristics in common with a folksong in that many people learned it in oral tradition as children and it consequently has many variations. One common variation is to substitute "Thanksgiving Day" in the lyrics for "Christmas Day," and so some people know it as a Christmas song. Also, most of us learned that the journey was "to Grandmother's house," but the original song was about a trip to Grandfather's house.

Perhaps the most widespread harvest celebrations among American Indian cultural groups center around the first harvest of green corn (maize). The time of this



varies depending on the latitude where people live; from early summer to late summer. The surrounding traditions vary as well. Often squash and beans are grown along with corn and so the early varieties of squash and young beans may be ready as well.

Among the earliest ceremonies celebrating the ripening of green corn is that of the Seminole in Florida. In 1940 folklorists Carita Doggett Coarse and Robert Cornwall were able to record some of the songs used by the Seminole in their green corn ceremony with the assistance of Billy Bowlegs III, who was the tribal historian who came to have a long history working with folklorists in presenting Seminole customs. He is one of the singers.

In northern European tradition there are many harvest celebrations. Late summer to fall sees celebrations of the harvesting of grain and hay at the beginning of August, celebrations around the fall

Songs about the grain harvest are used as feast songs from August into fall.

equinox, and celebrations of the conclusion of the major harvesting period, usually in October.

The late summer harvest of staple grains is a time for harvest feast songs. You will see that some of the songs below use "corn," as "grain" was the original meaning of the word. Maize came to be called "corn" because

it became a staple for American settlers. Grain harvests mean bread, porridge, beer, and whiskey. Stores of grain would become low by harvest time in the time before grocery store chains, and so a cause for celebration. The centerpiece of the feast called Lammastide or Lammas Day on the first of August is the first loaf of bread made from newly harvested grain. The completion of the work of mowing and stacking hay to ensure that animals have food for the winter was a major yearly task, and so completing that at around the same time of year was a great relief. Songs about the grain harvest are used as feast songs from August into fall.

There are various songs with the phrase "Harvest Home" celebrating the grain and hay harvest. The earliest I have found is "Your hay it is mow'd, and your corn is reap'd" with lyrics by John Dryden and music by Henry Purcell for the opera King Arthur. The opera debuted in 1691, and this is a memorable drinking song from the performance. The full lyrics can be found in Bartleby's at this link. There are so many variations on this song it seems possible that Dryden drew from traditional songs for his lyrics. A list of songs containing the lyrics "harvest home," can be found in the Roud Folksong Index at this link. Dryden's lyrics begin:

*Your Hay it is Mow'd, and your Corn is Reap'd;
Your Barns will be full, and your Hovels heap'd:
Come, my Boys, come;
Come, my Boys, come;
And merrily Roar out Harvest Home.*

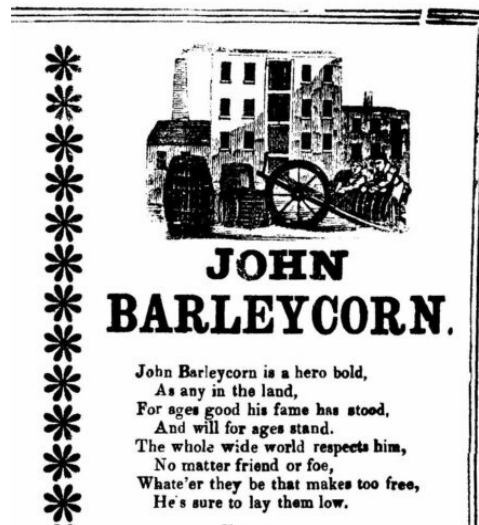
The lyrics for John Barleycorn with a drawing of men loading or unloading barrels from a cart in front of a building. The full text of the song sheet are available in the item record at the link.

The concept of a "harvest home" is so appealing that it is understandable that it is picked up and appears many autumnal songs. "Come, ye Thankful People Come," by H. P. Danks, is an example of a nineteenth century hymn that draws on the traditional song and is often sung at Thanksgiving.

"John Barleycorn" is another song celebrating the harvest of grain and particularly its use in the making of beer (and in some versions, whiskey). It is still familiar to many because it has continued to be recorded by performers such as Martin and Eliza Carthy, Maddy Prior, and

the group Traffic, among many others. It is traditionally used at autumn feasts, and tells the story of the life, death, and rebirth of John Barleycorn as if he were a great hero of England. Barley is an ancient grain, once a staple grain used in all kinds of cooking, but with the rise of cultivated wheat it first became a food of working people, and now is less used for bread and por-

"We come with the dust and we go with the wind" **Woody Guthrie**



ridge and instead used for brewing beer and for animal feed. It is making a bit of a comeback, though, as people explore a wider range of culinary grains.

Apple harvesting in the late summer and fall was an important addition to winter stores in early America. Green apples were used for cider and were the most abundant. Nurseryman John Chapman (1774-1845) famously spread cider apple trees westward for the pioneers. When he died his apple trees were sold off at low prices, creating the legend that he planted them for settlers for free and giving him the name "Johnny Appleseed." Sweeter apples were made into

pies, apple butter, and apple sauce and even used like vegetables in stews and other savory dishes. They could be kept fresh in cellars and dried for winter use. There are songs about apple trees related to love and other topics, but not much concerning the harvest.

Woody Guthrie wrote a beautiful harvest song, "Pastures of Plenty." He wanted to call attention to the plight of dust bowl migrants who had to leave their towns and farms in the Midwest to work as agriculturalists in California and other states less devastated by drought. It speaks eloquently of the bounty of the American harvest, but of the workers it says "we come with the dust and we go with the wind." It is a reminder to give thanks for all those who bring food to our table. This song sheet for the lyrics is found in the Bess Lomax Hawes Collection.

Whether your feast this year is small or large, and however you are able to celebrate in these extraordinary times, we at the American Folklife Center wish you a Happy Thanksgiving. ◆

*By Stephanie Hall, blogger for Folklife Today,
The Library of Congress*

Dear PFS Members: Thank You!

I don't dare say we are done with the COVID 19 pandemic, but there are a lot of signs that the worst might be behind us. When we look back over nearly two years, we all have a lot of personal memories. But I'd like to share an institutional memory with you: The pandemic months for PFS were so, so much better than they might have been, for one reason: you, the members.

The pandemic was a shock to PFS: we had to shut down our popular concert series, cancel the zany Strawberry Social, suspend the annual members'

But remarkably, in many ways we are crawling out of the pandemic months in good shape

meeting, cancel the beloved 2020 Singtime Frolics, and forgo the enchanting in-person song circles. Those were almost all of our activities – Boom! – wiped out! However, the virus didn't pay any of our on-going expenses (website and membership software, insurance, ASCAP fees, postage, bookkeeping, registration...) The pandemic could have been a financial catastrophe; and, it could have demoralized the organization. Who would have blamed members for leaving an organization that wasn't able to offer most of its regular activities?

But remarkably, in many ways we are crawling out of the pandemic months in good shape. As the PFS Membership Coordinator, I measure the health of PFS first by looking at the membership (of course!) and – well, from April 2020 (when the pandemic really shut us down) to September 2021, our total membership has grown (from 343 to 351 people). So thank you, dear members, for sticking with us!

What's more, you showed us your loyalty with your checkbooks. We had made a large down-payment to rent Menucha for the 2020 Singtime Frolics, and when we had to cancel, many of you donated half or more

of what you had paid in advance, so we didn't have to take a giant loss. Same for many of the folks who had bought season tickets for the concerts, where we had also made financial commitments. In fairness, the folks who run Menucha have been very understanding in allowing us to reschedule until the COVID situation lets up, but we would have had a bad cashflow crisis, were it not for your generosity.

Also, during this time many of you have opted to be particularly generous. The number of sustaining members (who voluntarily pay extra dues) has increased from six to fifteen, and life memberships have risen from 33 to 40. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

I want to single out two groups of PFS members who have made particular contributions to the morale and health of PFS during the pandemic. One is Kim McLaughlin and the Local Lore team, who have kept a wonderful bi-monthly newsletter coming out all through the pandemic. The content has been particularly readable and informative, and the newsletter has never been so appreciated as during this time. The other group is all the volunteers who have swiftly moved many of our events online. We have held 86 weekly Saturday night virtual song circles, and produced two large online musical weekends with hundreds of participants. There are too many volunteers to list here, but – dang! – you have done a consistently excellent job in letting folks share their music through a new medium.

So thank you dear members for keeping the music and the love flowing. Thanks to those who were able to be particularly generous. And special thanks, dear volunteers, for keeping some great activities going despite the worst pandemic in a century. Please know how appreciated you are!◀▶

By Paul Rippey, PFS Membership Coordinator

PFS Membership

It's easy to join PFS: just go to www.PortlandFolkmusic.org.

You can also join by filling out the form below, and sending it, along with your dues, to: Membership, PO Box 1448, Portland, OR 97207-14485



PortlandFolkMusic.org

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Web Address _____

(business members only)

	1 year	2 years	Life-time
Individual	\$25	\$45	\$400
Household	\$35	\$65	
Sustaining	\$50		
Student and/ or Low Income	\$10		
Business	\$50		

May we list you in Members' Directory?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Yes, but don't list my:

☐ Phone ☐ Address ☐ E-mail

This is a:

☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal

☐ Donation ☐ Gift Membership

☐ Contact Information Update

Advertise in Local Lore

PFS accepts ads pertinent to folk music, dance, and the arts. To place an ad, return the following information via e-mail to: secretary@portlandfolkmusic.org

☐ Date

☐ Name

☐ E-mail

☐ Phone

☐ Address

☐ PFS member

☐ Business or personal membership

Specify Size of Ad and Membership expiration date

Please provide ad copy/jpg/pdf if prepared.

Send ad file to minerva@europa.com

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July & August Issue—June 10

September & October Issue—August 10

November & December Issue—October 10

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The minutes of the most recent board meeting are available on our website.

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PFS

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Complete Lineup and
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The Texicana Mamas