



Mark the Date:

SOUNDINGS

May 13-14, 2022

We Have Made it to Our 30th Festival

It took longer than 30 years, this journey that began when Dave and Cathy walked into Judy Shields' office in the Old Jail, and said we thought we could do a folk festival in Thespian Hall in May. Judy called Bob Dyer and Ken and Linda Askren, and we started planning. Not a grand vision, just good folk music befitting this beautiful hall, a pleasure to play in and share with our friends old and new. Over the years, we added a day, sometimes two; we added workshops, a dance, a barbecue; the hall got new seats and opened the boxes. And we've lost too many friends over time, devoted patrons, volunteers, and musicians, and two of the three co-founders who helped make the festival a success from the beginning. The echoes of their music and of all who have played can still be heard in the hall, in the bricks and mortar, in the rafters and floor and in the voices and instruments and applause of the friends the who come after them. This is the spiritual connection to Thespian Hall that many people feel, this place of inspiration and joy we can share.

The splendid hall overlooks the river for which the festival is named, America's longest, and she's running very low these days. She's been dammed and channelized and leveed -- work that stands bared in the shallow water. She is, like every river, never the same, and similarly we celebrate folk music for the dynamic change it bears in its concurrent age and newness.

Thanks to the folks who made it to our 29th festival last November who brought their masks and wax cards. Even with the extra year and half it was hard for the first festival without Cathy and at a different time. It was the first step we had to make, like those who first grieve a loss. In spite of himself, Dave's emotions made it more emotional for everyone, but he's grateful for the support extended to him. Old friends paid tribute to Cathy, playing and showing what she loved in her musical life. We look forward to May to let the river run high and more friends returning to light up the hall.

Bringing Their Charm Back to Our City

Just when in 2018 one of our patrons turned to her husband and said, "These guys are sure having a good time," **Alex Lacquement** of **Charm City Junction** told the house, "If you ever wondered what a band looks like when they're having a good time, this is what it looks like." With a classic instrument package of fiddle, clawhammer banjo, button accordion and upright bass, these great young players from Baltimore are unafraid to take roots music to new places and with the energy to take the audience with them. The common threads of Irish, bluegrass and old-time music take flight with this talented ensemble. **Patrick McAvinue** has been awarded bluegrass fiddler of the year by the International Bluegrass Music Association. Button accordion player **Sean McComiskey** brings the tunes and spirit he learned from his legendary father, Bill. Old-time banjo player **Brad Kolodner** grew up with tunes from his fiddling and hammered dulcimer playing



father, Ken. He is recognized widely as a master of the five-string and is a herald for the music by hosting two weekly radio programs on Bluegrass Country Radio (DC) and Radio Bristol (VA/TN). Every band needs a pressure gauge and a fun gauge, and versatile bassist Lacquement fills that roll while tracking the different styles flying by. Their second album, "Duckpin," in 2018 charted high among bluegrass albums for the creative mix of instrumental texture and top-notch playing. They help spread the branches of this musical tradition spread wide.

Chicago Troubadour Authority Returns

When **Mark Dvorak** looks back on more than 30 years of a career woven from the disparate threads of touring musician, educator, and community builder, we're glad it includes some appearances at our festival. He played with his trio in 2011 and again in the tribute band *Weavermania!* in which he took Pete Seeger's part. It was a fitting role for someone first drawn to folk music by a Bob Dylan biography and later went in search of Leadbelly's grave in Louisiana.



Mark took classes at Old Town School of Folk Music, the center of the Chicago folk scene, where you

can learn bass runs on the guitar, frail the five-string banjo and join a hootenanny in the Big Bill Broonzy Hall. In 1986 he joined the faculty and became comrades of Old Town founders Win Stracke, Frank Hamilton, Ed Holstein, and he continues there as artist-in-residence. He also started a folk venue, "The Old Quarter Coffee House," named after the Houston club where Townes Van Zandt recorded a live album in the early seventies. A couple of reorganizations later it became the non-profit Plank Road Folk Music Society, which celebrated its 35th anniversary last year. Mark spent six years on the board, wrote and edited the newsletter and served two terms as president.

Mark's music bears this legacy of the folk revival. In 2012 Rich Warren, host of WFMT's long-running "The Midnight Special," named Dvorak "Chicago's official troubadour," a sobriquet previously given to Old Town School founder Win Stracke, and to Chicago folk fixture Fred Holstein, one of Mark's mentors. The Midwest region of the Folk Alliance gave him the 2013 Lantern Bearer Award, presented to an individual who has contributed to folk performance arts for 25 years or more.

Three Voices Present A World of Music

We welcome the return of Chicago-based vocal trio **Artemisia** who brought their great take on folk music as inspiration to classical music. They disappointed us all at the time by not having a CD recorded so we could take their sound home, but they since have rectified that situation with the CD "Sounds Like Us," and the power of the unaccompanied voice is undeniable. With a trio praised for "sincerity, wit, and mind-blowing technique" by Vocal Arts Chicago this pure-form music seems to bring the voices of the world closer together in one story. Blurring the lines between classical and folk can be an illuminating and open-minded experience when hard-earned, trained technique is held in respect for the traditional material. A cappella voice accomplishes this well, especially with a globe-trotting repertoire that includes Appalachian songs, Tushetian highlander cries, Cuban dance, and Norwegian war songs. **Diana Lawrence, Alexandra Olsavsky, and Kaitlin Foley** actively commission and perform newly composed works by living female composers, including one from our own

Leela Grace two years ago. All three members regularly compose for the

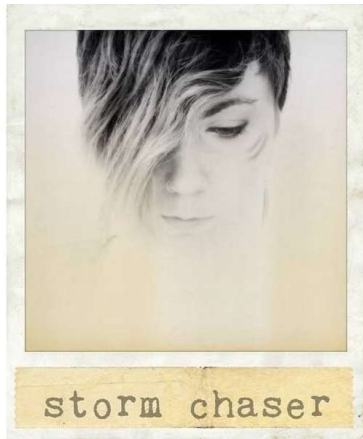


group, frequently adding new arrangements and their own original compositions to their programs. In addition to performing Artemisia does educational outreach for community and youth ensembles on subjects such as cultural literacy through song, improvisational songwriting, and female empowerment.

Songwriting Fool Navigates Familiar Currents

Music caught **Violet Vonder Haar** early in life. As a toddler Violet carried around songbooks pretending the songs she was making up were in them. In fourth grade, cast as Loretta Poinsettia, she sang "Blue Christmas" in the school Christmas musical, but singing "This Land is Your Land," with Lee Ruth on one Earth Day she considers her first "gig." Years of guitar lessons

with Lee gave her an instrument to play and write with, and she “became a songwriting fool,” sprouting in the fertile musical ground of players and songwriters in the Central Missouri tribe like Bob Dyer and Cathy Barton. We remember her guest spot at the Big Muddy, before she recorded her first album, “Shades of Violet,” at 16. After studying music education at Central Methodist University, Violet looked to record a second album and asked the help of jazz drummer Phylshawn Johnson, who had been earning high praise from jazz musicians in the community for her technical and sensitive musicality. Their relationship grew musically and personally. They formed the bands the Undercurrents and Zorya to



give different platforms for Violet’s songs. Exploiting the pandemic’s lean times, they are working to open the Compass Music Center in Columbia, in connection with the Compass non-profit

music education group to nurture aspiring musicians. They’re both piloting a more folkie stream these days; we look forward to listening.

The Friends of Historic Boonville receive funding from the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency

Snorty Horse: Back from the Glue Factory

Snorty Horse is a collection of friends of more 30 years, as the late Cathy Barton, **Mike Fraser**, **Dave Para**, and **Tenley Hansen** found each other at Missouri fiddle contests and jam sessions, played contra dances, festivals and school assemblies. Mike apprenticed with master Ozark fiddler Bob Holt and worked in the Department of Conservation. Cathy and Dave recorded two albums with him there. Mike also has led the band Shortleaf for years, and Tenley joined that band in Kansas City, adding keyboard, guitar, lead singing

and composing. The four met **Erika Gerety** and her late husband, Gary Libman camping together at Picko de Gallo at the Walnut Valley Festival, in



Winfield, Kan. Since Cathy’s passing in 2019 Dave and Erika have found a loving life

together, and music remains a major source of fun. Last year, the four put together some concert material, with Dave playing a lot more banjo than he used to, and Erika adding the solid bass playing and expressive singing voice she is known for. While they still chomp at the bit to drive a tune medley, they found fun in singing and arranging songs together. Their musical friendship and repertoire of traditional and contemporary music honor Cathy’s memory, especially in the fun they have playing it. The band name came during a late-night drive after a dance and has managed to stick, facilitating several bad jokes, puns, and strange graphics. Friends first, band members second, they can make an evening fun.

A Fiddler for the Books

Howard Marshall has graced the Big Muddy stage several times to open the weekend festivities with tunes he has learned from old time Missouri fiddlers and paying heartfelt tribute to those sources. His bearing of the traditional style and active preservation efforts are at the heart of the spirit of our festival, and he has often advised us



with his academic viewpoint in our booking efforts.

Howard was part of the local bluegrass scene in the 1960s. He worked in Washington at the Smithsonian and American Folklife Center

and returned in the 1980s to direct the Missouri Cultural Heritage Center at the University of Missouri. Here he produced the compilation album of Missouri fiddlers, “Now That’s a Good

Tune,” and he maintains a prolific interest in the subject, publishing numerous articles in folklore and fiddling magazines as well as a three-volume history of Missouri fiddling.

A dedicated contest player at contests large and small, Howard last year won the senior division at Weiser, Idaho, the long-established premier fiddle contest in the country; and he won it on Zoom, right there in his Callaway County home. Longtime friends **Heinrich Leonhard** and **Kathy Gordon** will accompany him.

Serving of Gumbo Is Back on the Menu

Back before she became Tilly Tyrell, **Meredith Ludwig** did an oral history project through the Missouri River Communities Network and collected stories from people who long had lived and worked along the Missouri River. She decided that, in addition to archiving these stories, she would incorporate them into a play for public performance. She decided on a musical after seeing the local Discovery String Band premier their Lewis and Clark album in 2004 and hearing Cathy Barton’s overture. One afternoon she showed up at her door and began a fruitful and creative collaboration, with many visits to our house with Cathy at the piano. Cathy took on the challenge to write with playwright Meredith songs for people to sing who weren’t her or Dave. She was proud of the project, honored that people would work on the music, and happy to make a great new friend.

The show workshopped in 2006, premiered at



Thespian Hall in 2008 and was performed in Central Missouri in following years, including an incredibly blocked

version in the lounge aboard the *Queen of the Mississippi* for Phyllis Dale’s birthday charter. Various cast members and musicians produced a recording of the songs in 2014. We’re hoping to have **Lesley Oswald, Deb Jewett, Steve Jones,** and **Willie Cogshell** join Dave and other former band members for a short revue of the music.

A Dance Band of Folkies From Downstream

The **River Ridge String Band**, from Jefferson City, is a favorite at local dances and events in Missouri with a mix of traditional, old-time, Celtic, folk and bluegrass, a variety that can drive a dance. **Cliff White** plays hammered dulcimer; his wife, **Molly**, plays cello, **John Cunning** on percussion, and **Ted Koenig** on guitar. These fine folks have been good friends of Dave and Cathy



and the

festival. The dulcimer can lend a bounce to a dance and can define the sound of an ensemble, and we wouldn’t have a Big Muddy without one.

Skeletal Festival Schedule

Friday evening’s concert will feature Howard Marshall and friends, Snorty Horse, Artemisia, and Mark Dvorak. We hope to have a dance following the evening show.

Saturday sessions at First Presbyterian and Christ Episcopal churches and Thespian Hall in the morning and afternoon with fun sessions in song writing, group singing and a variety of instruments from great players of banjo, fiddle, guitar, and dulcimer. The evening concert will feature the River Ridge String Band, Gumbo Bottoms Revue, Violet and Philshawn, and Charm City Junction.

‘Que Up for chef Terry Smith

We’re happy to be back in the spring when **Terry Smith and the Barbecue Crew** can fire up the smokers for the Friends of Historic Boonville main fundraiser and spread smoky good cheer. The favorite fare will return with pulled pork, country ribs, brats and the classic sides in meals and a la carte. Rib packs can be taken home or eaten right there. It will run 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday at the Mercantile, across Main Street from the old bakery, and lucky locals will be able to get deliveries Friday at noon.

Welcome Kari Evans

Kari Evans began work in mid-February as executive director of the Friends of Historic Boonville, just in time for some busy days helping to mail out this newsletter and prepare for festival ticket sales. This is in the context of getting used to a new office and the information that goes with it. With help from Friends members, we hope the time is enjoyable. We're glad to have her with us.



Festival Tickets go on sale March 15, 2022.
and are **\$30** per night or **\$50** for both nights

To purchase online, visit

www.friendsofhistoricboonvillemo.org

Or call our friendly office at 888-588-1477 or
660-882-7977

KOPN: A Sponsor, An Inspiration

This is a big year for KOPN Community radio. It celebrates its 50th year and is relocating to a building of its own. We're grateful for their sponsorship this year and their support in programming over our 30 years.

The station has been the prime source for folk music programming in mid-Missouri since it's beginning. As a new student at MU in 1973, Dave Para remembers hearing recordings of Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston. Six years later he hosted the Sunday afternoon show, "Across the Wide Missouri." It was also one Saturday morning on the "Cedar Creek Pickaway," when Cathy Barton first heard a hammered dulcimer, played by the late Bill Spence, called the station, bought the album and asked her father to get her one. We have done every Big Muddy with KOPN in mind.