

APRIL 29 COFFEEHOUSE TO OFFER A SLICE OF **Sour Cherry Pie** (PHIL HART & STEVE ROLFE)

Interview by Bill Cohen

Phil Hart, singer/songwriter, folk musician, and his bass playing buddy, Steve Rolfe play songs with catchy tunes with thought-provoking lyrics that Phil has been writing since the early 70s.

To listen visit: www.facebook.com/Sour-Cherry-Pie-296604507043057/



Bill Cohen: At our monthly coffeehouses, we define “folk music” very broadly, so each of our featured acts have differed greatly. For folks who’ve never heard you sing, please tell us how you describe your music.

Phil Hart: I have always struggled with the “genre” label. In the 70s I was in a band called “Succotash”, which we understood to be a pot of corn, several kinds of beans, and any other vegetables you happened to have in the fridge. It was a nod to the fact that our

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2 Fun Musical Ways You Can Help This Year’s Folk Festival !

by Bill Cohen

Pay a few bucks to hear some great folk music . . . and help us pay for this year’s Central Ohio Folk Festival. That’s the idea behind two

upcoming musical fundraisers.

April 8 will feature a double shot – two polished bands will take the stage in the party room at

El Vaquero Mexican Restaurant at 3230 Olentangy River Road. Whiskey Maggie calls itself “an

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set list included all kinds of stuff, from Peter, Paul, and Mary to the Beatles to Dolly Parton to the Everly Brothers to some of our originals. The music I am drawn to and try to write should have a melody that can stand on its own and some lyrical poetry to make me want to pay attention.

Bill: Many of your songs are originals. Tell us a little about how you do your writing. Where do your ideas come from? Give us an example of one of your originals and how it came to be.

Phil: Song ideas usually come to me in one of two ways. One is fear of the deadline, like where I promised someone I was going to write a song for their wedding or something. But the most common place for me to encounter my muse is on the interstate. When I am out on the highway my consciousness goes into some kind of musical Zen state, and it is difficult to keep my brain from throwing out little phrases and saying, “Hey, what do you think about this?”

My song, “Visiting Nanna,” showed up on the way to Wisconsin two years ago for the holidays. It’s about my sister-in-law narrated by her young granddaughter. We were crossing northern Illinois when I turned to my wife and said, “Hey, write this down.” I continued to dictate phrase by phrase till, in less than an hour, there it was. That was

unusually fast, but typical of how the core of a song shows up.

Bill: Who are the musician heroes and heroines that have influenced your music?

Phil: Tom Paxton was a huge influence on me when I was young, though I didn’t realize it at the time, because when I was learning his



songs, it was through someone else’s voice. I loved Bob Dylan and Phil Ochs for their social justice voice and James Taylor for his style. I was a huge Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young fan. I was introduced to John Prine late. He’s a hero.

Bill: What’s your history as a performer and song writer? When and how did your musical career begin?

Phil: When I was in junior high an older cousin lent me two Brothers

Four albums and one of Kingston Trio’s. That was a pivotal moment in my life. In 1967 I enrolled as a vocal music major at a big state school where I had to hide my folk tendencies from my professors. Then while working at a summer camp in 1970, another counselor introduced me to the idea that it was okay to write our own songs. I had just started playing the guitar the winter before, encouraged by another friend. Two of those first songs, the “Friend Song” and “Shine,” came directly out of the Camp Akita experience, and I still get requests to perform them. In retrospect it may seem odd to some folks, but I never really saw myself as a songwriter till I turned 50 and my wife insisted that my birthday present was to be a recording session with several old friends from California. That turned into the album *Sing Me Home* and inspired the title track.

Bill: Do any of your past performances come to mind as being particularly great...or awful ?

Phil: I think what sticks out right now is the recent overwhelmingly positive reaction I have been getting from folks to my song “Lady Liberty,” which was written in the fall of 2010. It is surprising and sad that the theme in that song is even more of a crisis today than when I first wrote it.

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FolkSide Coffeehouse – Sat, April 29
Open Jam 6-7 pm; Open Mic 7-8 pm
Sour Cherry Pie: 8 pm

Held at: Columbus Mennonite Church,
35 Oakland Park Ave
(Clintonville)

Phil Hart – from page 2

Bill: At your April coffeehouse appearance, you'll have some excellent back-up musicians, and you'll actually be appearing as part of a group called Sour Cherry Pie. Tell us about your fellow music-makers.

Phil: In about 2010, I was invited to sing several songs for a wedding, and I asked the couple if they would mind if I got some guys to help me. Steve Rolfe (bass) and Perry Leatherman (mandolin and vocals) put together a nice little set of songs, and when the wedding was over we had lots of nice feedback including a couple of folks who wanted to know what the name of our band was. Sour Cherry Pie was born out of that gig, and we played around Columbus till the summer of 2013 when the *Rainbow Gardens* album was recorded, Perry moved

to Morgantown, and Steve headed to China to teach English for two

“ . . . the most common place for me to encounter my muse is on the interstate. When I am out on the highway my consciousness goes into some kind of musical Zen state, and it is difficult to keep my brain from throwing out little phrases and saying, “Hey, what do you think about this?”

Phil Hart

years. And I thought I was just getting warmed up! I was relieved

when Steve came home, and we got back to playing and decided to keep the Sour Cherry Pie label as a way to keep folks connected with our performance calendar. I really appreciate the flavors, rhythmic and melodic, that Steve adds to our sets. (You can check our Facebook page for upcoming performances.)

Bill: Is there a particular theme or thrust that seems to run through many of your songs?

Phil: *I don't know that there is a theme, per se. I intentionally try to mix the musical style of my songs, but lyrically I am most attracted to telling stories that come from actual relationship experiences. In the last few years I have joked that I am currently more in my “Phil Ochs” period in trying to use my songs as lenses for looking at religious or political positions in a different light.*

Notes Worth Taking – CENTRAL OHIO FOLK FESTIVAL May 6 & 7, 2017

- **May 6 & 7:** Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park-Indian Ridge area.
- **New this year:** official “festival mascot” (you’ll know him when you see him!); festival coloring book; a parade for the kids (4pm Sat).
- **Numerous** free concerts, dance opportunities, musician workshops for beginners and seasoned artists. Visit: www.ColumbusFolkMusicSociety.org for up-to-date information.
- **Kick-off potluck and jam on Friday** (Cedar Ridge Lodge): 6-9pm. All members invited!



- **Worst Song in the World Contest** (lyrically). 2 separate contests: one 8pm Friday night and the other 4:15pm on Saturday on the main stage. All welcome to participate. Contact Tom Nagel at: tomnagel@wowway.com. You can enter one or both and with the same

song. Please keep lyrics family friendly!

- **John Gorka** featured headliner Saturday evening. **Pre-registration highly recommended.** Tickets \$15 at: centralohiofolkfestival.eventbrite.com.
- **We could use more:** gallon milk jugs (clean and labels removed). We also need ribbons, beads, small artificial flowers, & empty coffee and oatmeal containers. Drop off: Linda McDonald's: 444 Oakland Park Ave.

Central Ohio Folk Festival Benefit
April 8 \$10 Suggested Donation **Concert**
 6:30 - 9:30 pm
EL Vaquero Restaurant
 Food & Bar service 3230 Olentangy River Road

Featuring Irish band **Whiskey Maggie**
 and the great Americana band **Halfway Home**



2 Fun Musical Ways – from page 1

energetic and entertaining pseudo-traditional Irish lineup.” The foursome includes guitar, fiddle, flute, and bodhran/cajon. As the band’s website notes: “These guys are all about drinking, joking, and singing along (often in that order). Whiskey Maggie will pump out some rowdy pub songs paired unceremoniously with foot-stomping traditional tunes.”

Also in the musical lineup will be longtime CFMS favorites, Halfway Home. That 5 member band specializes in Americana music, which often tells poignant stories about the gritty lives of prisoners, factory workers, diner waitresses, gamblers, addicts, lovers, and down-and-outers.

For a \$10 per person donation at the door, you’ll be able to

experience both those great bands and help produce the folk festival on May 6 and 7. The evening at the April 8 fundraiser starts at 6:30 p.m. If the music makes you hungry, you can buy delicious Mexican food off the El Vaquero menu. Plus, there’s a bar.

The mood, food, and playlist will be different at an **April 23** musical fundraiser. We’ll take you back to the 1950’s and 60’s folk music revival, as the Folk Ramblers – Carl Yaffey and Bill Cohen – lead us in a sing-along. We’ll do songs made famous by the Weavers, Pete Seeger, the Kingston Trio, Harry Belafonte, Peter Paul and Mary, and others. The only instruments will be Bill’s guitar and Carl’s banjo, but everyone’s singing voice will be welcomed, along with your shoes for tapping.

The April 23 sing-along will take

FOLK MUSIC SING-ALONG



It’ll take you back 50 years !

Together, we’ll sing songs we recall from summer camp, church retreats, protests, & backyard bonfires.

The Folk Ramblers -- Bill Cohen on guitar and Carl Yaffey on banjo -- will lead us in:

- * If I Had a Hammer
- * Puff
- * Kum Ba Ya
- * Where Have all the Flowers Gone?
- * Sixteen Tons
- * Charlie on the MTA
- * This Land is Your Land
- * and many more

Where: Byrnes Pub 1248 W. 3rd Avenue 43212
 (Byrne’s also has great food)

When: Sunday April 23 3-5 p.m.

Free Admission,

but we’ll welcome your donations for the Central Ohio Folk Festival (coming up May 6-7)

for more info, call Bill at (614) 263-3851

place at Byrne’s Pub at 1248 W. Third Avenue near Grandview from 3 to 5 p.m. Donate whatever you want as you sing along, and we’ll use the money for the folk festival. Plus, you can buy a pizza or other scrumptious food off the Byrne’s Pub menu.

Sat, April 8
6:30-9:30 pm (El Vaquero’s)
Whiskey Maggie & Halfway Home

\$10 donation at door

Sun, April 23
3-5 pm (Byrne’s Pub)

Folk Ramblers
we’ll pass the hat

CFMS JAMMERS SPREAD FOLK MUSIC SPIRIT

by Bill Cohen

“A raucous cacophony and lots of fun.” That’s how guitarist and singer Mike Zajano describes the Saturday morning jam he joins that shifts from the Worthington Green farmers’ market in warm weather to the indoor Worthington Mall in the winter months.

Sometimes it’s just a handful of musicians. Other times, the jam grows to a full dozen or more. “Everyone gets into the spirit of the music,” notes jammer Steven Ing. “When we pass the microphone around the circle and everyone gets a chance to present a song, it’s the closest thing -- coming from this inveterate Trekkie fan – to a group ‘Vulcan mind-meld.’”

The jammers bring tambourines, rhythm sticks, and drums. Shoppers are delighted to see their children pick up the instruments and keep the beat. “The kids bang along but we love it because they are participating,” says flutist Linda McDonald. “We have seen the same families visit us for years! We have really seen the children grow up.”

Percussionist Tom Nagel agrees. “One young fellow has been coming regularly for several years, starting when he was 3 or 4 years old; I think he’s in middle school now. He loves the washboard trap set. Dan Clarke has gotten several of the kids interested in cigar box guitars, which he makes for them.”

Guitarist Karen Stephens also notices how the children react to the music. “I love it when one of the kids actually sings or plays with



Ella Tridico contributes her part. Photo by Ben Tridico

us. It’s all about passing on the music to another generation.”

Adult spectators often find themselves drawn into the familiar folk tunes the jammers do. Karen relates this story from just a few weeks ago:

“We were doing ‘Will the Circle Be Unbroken,’ and I noticed a woman wiping her eyes. The verse was the one about the ‘hearse come rolling for to carry my mother away,’ so I went over during the song, thinking she had just lost her mother. Turns out it was her grandmother who had recently passed, and they had sung this song at her funeral. I gave her a hug.”

The camaraderie among the musicians is another highlight of the Saturday Worthington jams. “I enjoy that with the arrival of a new combination of musicians, there is an ever-changing meld of

songs, instruments, styles, and personalities each week,” says guitarist and singer Charlie Flowers. “And yet, over time, there is a

comfortable repetition that each member comes to appreciate in the collective effort to accompany them.”

Improvising songs with that ever-changing group also hones the musicians’ skills, according to guitarist and singer Hugh Farthing. “To see someone you play with become a very good musician through their

own efforts improving every week is a great thing.”

“Non-judgmental” is how singer and guitarist Dan Clarke describes the attitude among the musicians. He says it’s silly that “TV has made us think that we all must sound like Johnny Cash and play like Eric Clapton.” Instead, Dan says, the jammers simply accept everyone’s musical abilities and styles, using the diversity to learn from each other.

Another great thing is the feeling of community the jammers help to spark. “I get an ego boost – and boy, with my low self-esteem, I need it!” says singer and guitarist Terry Keller. “I also love the laughter and general pandemonium.”

Laughter, sometimes sparked by jokes and puns, are indeed another highlight. Washtub bass player

See CFMS Jammers – page 6

ANNOUNCING 2017 CENTRAL OHIO FOLK FESTIVAL HEADLINER

Advance purchase of tickets recommended: centralohiofolkfestival.eventbrite.com

John Gorka

“the leading singer/songwriter of the New Folk movement”

– *Rolling Stone*

“widely heralded for the sophisticated intelligence and provocative originality of his songs.”

– *Boston Globe*

John got his start in the 1970s in a coffeehouse in eastern PA. By 1984 he won the prestigious New Folk Award at Texas' *Kerrville Folk Festival*. In 1987 he released his first album, *I Know*, to popular acclaim. Over the years, he has released a dozen critically acclaimed CDs.

In 2010, an album with friends Lucy Kaplansky and Eliza Gilkyson landed on Billboard Folk Charts and was one of the most played albums on folk radio. Many well known artists have also recorded and/or performed John Gorka songs. He regularly tours across the U.S. and throughout Europe.

“With a tangle of songs that emotionally connect us all and leave a tender trace, John Gorka stimulates the cerebrum, keeps our smiles agile and fit and reconnects us with what really matters most in music: honesty.”

– Brian D'Ambrosio, *Huffington Post* (1/04/2014)



JohnGorka.com

CFMS Jammers – from page 5

Charlie Hummel was one of the humorists until he recently retired from the group, citing the fact he's nearing 90 years old. Talk about commitment to a group. From his home in the small town of Orient in Southwest Franklin County, “it was a 55 mile round trip every Saturday morning for 12 years through downtown Columbus. (Ugh)”

Charlie's “interaction with the ladies,” has provided a lot of laughs for the jammers, according to fellow jammer Larry Staats. Larry recalls that Charlie often urged young female bystanders to come up and play his washtub bass, just so he

could be close enough to playfully hug them.

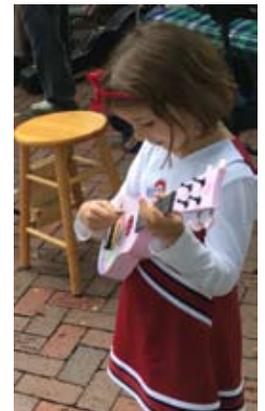
Actually, it was Larry's wife, Jan, who brought the jammers to the Worthington Green nearly a decade ago before she died in 2011. Jan was in charge of the Worthington Farmers' Market and wanted lively music to spice things up, so Larry put out a call for jammers via the Columbus Folk Music Society.

The shoppers and kids who gather around the jammers often show their appreciation with a couple quarters or a dollar bill thrown into a collection jar. The small donations really add up to big bucks. In 2015, the jammers raised a total of about

\$700, donating it to the Columbus Folk Music Society. In 2016, the bonanza doubled to about \$1400!

It's just another example of a win-win project. The jammers in Worthington spread the joy of folk music.

They love what they're doing. Their audiences leave with a smile. The CFMS is richer literally. And all of us are richer figuratively.



Seriously folks, post this on your frig!

SAVE THE DATE . . .

The Saturday Music Jam at Worthington Farmer's Market 9:30-11:30am – each Saturday at The Shops at Worthington Mall thru April. All are welcome to play. Consider bringing a chair.

Wednesday, April 5 & 19: 2-3pm – Jam at Laurels of Worthington (for Memory Care Unit) – 1030 N. High St., Worthington. Contact Dan Clarke at dan41n@att.net to be put on an e-mail list.

Saturday, April 8 – COFF Benefit 6:30-9:30pm – featuring Whiskey Maggie & Halfway Home. Held at: *El Vaquero's*, 3230 Olentangy River Rd, Columbus

(Clintonville). \$10 donation at door. Full food service & bar.

Sunday, April 23 – Folk Sing-Along featuring the Folk Ramblers. Held at: *Byrne's Pub*, 1248 W. 3rd Ave (Grandview Hts). No cover, but we'll pass the hat. Food & drink available.

Saturday, April 29 – FolkSide Coffeehouse: 6pm Open Jam; 7pm Open Mic; 8pm Sour Cherry Pie. Held at: *Columbus Mennonite Church*, 35 Oakland Park Ave, Cols. Suggested donation: \$7; students \$5; CFMS members \$5; under 12 free. Handicap accessible.



Welcome to Our New and Returning Members:

Linda Blaine
David Clutter (new)
Mark Henry (new)

LISTINGS:

Instruments:

Martin Mandolin (1968 or '69) for sale. \$650. Contact Jane VanAuken at: jvanauken@columbus.rr.com.

Lessons:

Old-time banjo lessons (clawhammer, frailing, drop-thumb, etc.). Contact Carl Yaffey at: cyaffey@gmail.com.

If you can donate empty gallon milk jugs for our festival, [click here: on How to Remove Labels!](#)

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY AND IT'S EVENTS?

Visit: www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org

FOLLOWING OUR OWN . . .

Thursday, April 13: 7-8pm – Grassahol at *Upper Arlington Library*, 2800 Tremont Rd, Upper Arlington, OH.

Friday, May 5: 8-11pm – Whinestopper at *Tara Hall*, 274 E Innis Ave, Columbus, OH 43207. No cover.



The Columbus Folk Music Society

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Next Issue in May

We're on the web!

www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY

Date: _____ I'm new to this I'm back for more

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Membership renewals are due annually on September 30th. For new members, please check one of the membership levels listed below & pro-rate the amount of your check as indicated. If joining during the month of:

Feb-April: Your membership level amount x .5

May-July: Your membership level amount x .25

Aug-Oct: Your membership level amount as listed

Nov-Jan: Your membership level amount x .75

Individual \$20

Sponsor \$100

Gold (Life Member) \$500

Household \$25

Patron \$200

Yes! Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities within the organization.

Good Friend \$50

Silver \$250

For credit card transactions: contact treasurer@columbusfolkmusicsociety.org. Membership amounts are tax-deductible.

Please send completed form and payment to:
The Columbus Folk Music Society
P.O. Box 20735, Columbus, OH 43220

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 prefer a hard copy via regular U.S. mail

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