



Heather Pierson - New Hampshire based, multi-genre artist at Oct 29 FolkSide Coffeehouse

Interview by Bill Cohen

Heather Pierson is an award-winning singer/songwriter and performer. With eight solo recordings under her belt, Heather's wise-beyond-her-years songwriting, angelic voice, and world-class chops have catapulted her into the spotlight. From New Orleans-style jazz and blues to rousing Americana

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Glorious Food: Offerings at Oct Coffeehouse

Article by D. Boston



If you attend the Heather Pierson Concert on October 29, you'll be in for a double treat. This is also the evening of our Annual Bake Sale, with all proceeds benefiting the 2017 Central Ohio Folk Festival.

If you are familiar with the Columbus Folk Music Society and its "bakers and

food purveyors" you are already aware that we are known for our love of good food in addition, of course, to music! If you are not familiar with our food offerings, then you should definitely come and experience them! There will be many, many scrumptious baked goods available.

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Coming in November: Joe Crookston

From Ithaca, NY...

Songwriter, guitarist, painter, fiddler, eco-village member and believer in all things possible. He's not afraid to walk outside trends and create his own version of magic. Named 2016 Folk Alliance International Artist-in-Residence. His CD, "Able Baker Charlie & Dog" received

Joe's live performances are multi-media celebrations of art and possibility with looped fiddle, video, slide guitar and SONGS. He's a bard in the modern world plumbing for lyrical gold like a social archeologist. His story songs are universal, his slide playing infectious, and on stage he's funny as all get out one moment

**Joe Crookston
in Concert**
Sunday, Nov 13 3-5 pm

Sponsored by Columbus Folk Music Society.

Held at: Maynard Avenue Methodist Church, 2350 Indianola Ave, Cols, 43202. Door donation: \$15

Interview by Bill Cohen



“Woody Guthrie has a quote that says, ‘A song needs to be more than good, it needs to BE GOOD for SOMETHING.’ One of my favorite quotes. . .

“For me the sonic beauty, the story, the emotional impact, and the humanity all combine to make music that is powerful and accessible.”

- Joe Crookston

Bill Cohen: You are one of the most successful singer-songwriters in the country these days, but, for people who've never heard you, how do you describe the type of songs you create and perform?

Joe Crookston: I love art that inspires and surprises people. I love a great show that leaves people with a

the most airplay of any folk acoustic recording and was awarded "Album of the Year" by Folk Alliance International. The newly released volume of *Rise Up Singing* includes three of Joe's songs: *Fall Down as the Rain*, *Good Luck John* and *Bird by Bird*, along with 1200 new songs, will become part of the canon of American Folk Music. His songs are being made into films. He received a year-long songwriting grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to travel throughout New York State, collect stories, and write original songs.

and transcendent the next.

Come to a show. Travel mystical, historical, and humorous roads, and twist through lush sonic landscapes along the way. At the end of the night, you'll leave inspired. **The Long Note in Irish culture is that place of resonance and transcendence where the music, the voices, the instruments, and the community ALL come together and unite. There IS a "Long Note" and Joe is courting it fiercely.**

little more hope! Woody Guthrie has a quote that says, "A song needs to be more than good, it needs to BE GOOD for SOMETHING." One of my favorite quotes. When my songs become part of people's lives, when they sing them at weddings, funerals and around the house...I've made it! For me the sonic beauty, the story, the emotional impact, and the humanity all combine to make music that is powerful and accessible. I love sending people home from concerts with a renewed spirit.

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Joe Crookston - from page 2

Bill: Have you been inspired by traditional folk singers from the last century? Or does your spark come more from fellow singer-songwriters of this century? What musicians have been your heroes or heroines?

Joe: Absolutely. 100% I'm influenced by traditional music. Old-time fiddlers like Tommy Jerrell from North Carolina and Bluegrass players like Jimmy Martin, also songwriters like John McCutcheon, Nanci Griffith and Tom Waits. When I drive for hours I love listening to old-time string band music and bluegrass. There is an immediacy in

traditional music that I love and it pumps me up. I got a speeding ticket once listening to Ralph Stanley.

I'm a person who loves to create. I think my music has become a balance of new innovative and creative sounds combined with traditional music from long ago. I was in Ireland two years ago, and someone played my song "Fall Down as the Rain" in a pub and introduced it as a traditional song. That was an awesome moment where tradition and creativity collide!

Ultimately, the music is a gift. I want it to speak to the heart and soul.

Bill: How do you see your "job" as a singer-songwriter? Are you simply trying to tell stories? Or is your goal to spark emotions in the audience? Or is your song-writing and performing a way to let your own emotions out? Or perhaps there is some other reason you've dedicated your current life to this creativity?

“I feel like a blue collar bard/troubadour, traveling from town to town to enliven, nudge and ultimately help us remember who we are as humans. I'm interested in personal experiences that become universal, creating a 'WE experience.' That's my intention... and having a good time doing it!

“I've learned that song ideas are everywhere. If I'm not particularly inspired to write a song, I'll work on my acrylic paintings. “If I'm not inspired to paint, I'll practice my slide guitar. I try to just be present with what feels true and alive and work at it and enjoy the process.”

- Joe Crookston

Joe: All of the above. Wow what a great question! The truth is my art is the Venn Diagram combination of all three of these. I believe that each element that you mention is very important to a complete experience. I feel like a blue collar bard/troubadour, traveling from town to town to enliven, nudge and ultimately help us remember who we are as humans. I'm interested in personal experiences that become universal, creating a "WE experience." That's my intention... and having a good time doing it!

Bill: Tell us a little about your creative process. How do you get ideas for your songs? Do you

have a writing schedule where you force yourself to sit down and try to write stuff? Do singer-songwriters have "writers' block" just like poets and novel writers?

Joe: I'm definitely not an artist who sits and waits for inspiration. I genuinely enjoy the process of scratching and digging and



unearthing stories. I recently finished a collaboration with the National WWI Museum in Kansas City where I read hundreds of archived letters written by Florence Hemphill, a nurse who was based in France during World War I. This kind of discovery and song-writing process is awesome to me. Another song of mine, "Brooklyn in July" tells the story of Frank Walker and the racial injustice that he experienced. This song is very cinematic lyrically and is currently being made into a film called "Brooklyn in July," It'll be released in the mid- 2017. I've learned that song ideas are everywhere. If I'm not particularly inspired to write a

Joe Crookston - page 4

ON YOUR FRIG!

SAVE THE DATE. . .

 **The Saturday Music Jam at Worthington Farmers' Market**
9:30-11:30 am – S.E. quad of Worthington Square until the end of October. All are welcome to play. Consider bringing a chair.

 **Sunday, October 2: 1-4 pm Darby Creek Day Musicians invited to jam** 
 under a tent at *Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park (Indian Ridge area)* for the annual Darby Creek Day filled with nature fun and adventure. 2705 Darby Creek Drive, Galloway. E-mail Tom: tomnagel@wowway.com if you are interested in joining the fun; please bring a chair.

 **Wednesdays, Oct 5 & Oct 19: 2-3pm. Jam at Laurels of Worthington (for Memory Care Unit)** – 1030 N. High St., Worthington. Contact Dan Clarke at dan41n@att.net for more info or to be put on mailing list.

 **Saturday, October 15: 2-3 pm. CFMS musicians 'jam with the kids' at Run the Race** at the farm location: 2500 Gardner Rd, Galloway. E-mail Diane at: dboston2@columbus.rr.com for info.

 **Sunday, October 16: CFMS Musicians play at** 

Columbus Marathon – 9-Noon.
 We are amongst the 100 musical acts performing along the 26.2 mile course. With a CFMS House Band as back up; consider volunteering your musical talents somewhere between 9am - Noon on Oct. 16. Contact for more info: Mike Hale at mike@oldshoemusic.com.

 **Saturday, October 29: FolkSide Coffeehouse**
6 pm Open Jam; 7 pm Open Mic 8-10 pm Heather Pierson
 Held at *The Columbus Mennonite Church*, 35 Oakland Park Avenue, Columbus. Suggested donation at the door: \$7; students \$5; CFMS members \$5; under 12 free. Handicap accessible. Sign up for open mic as soon as you arrive (limited number of spots).

Want to find out more about the Columbus Folk Music Society and it's events?

Visit: www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org

OR you can join as a member. Benefits include: camaraderie with fellow folk music lovers in town, discounts on certain admissions, this monthly newsletter and the comfort of knowing that all events are family friendly! A membership form is provided on the last page of this newsletter.



Welcome to Our New and Returning Members:

- Kathryn Allan (NEW)
- Linda Blaine
- Dr. Lee & Tinya Cherney
- Chuck Dailey (NEW)
- David Frenz
- Wayne Jones (NEW)
- Tom and Patti Liszkay
- Elaine Raynak

FOLLOWING OUR OWN. . .

Saturday, October 15: Grassahol – 7 - 10 P.M. Java Central Coffee House, 20 S. State St, Westerville, OH.

Saturday, Oct 22, Joanie Calem – 1 PM; Homestead Metro Park, Hilliard, OH

Friday, October 28, The Folk Ramblers – Senior day at the Hollywood Casino. Contact Carl: cyaffey@gmail.com or Bill: billcohen@columbus.rr.com for time and location.

Friday, October 28: Grassahol – 8-Midnight. Rambling House, 310 E. Hudson, Cols, OH. \$5 Cover.

Sunday, Oct 30, Joanie Calem Program for kids 3:30pm; Pj Library @ Dublin Library

Heather Pierson - from page 1

and poignant folk narratives, Heather's live performances move seamlessly and effortlessly from one style to the next. She has a growing catalog of wildly divergent CD releases reflecting her boundless creativity.

She released her first EP, "Still She Will Fly", in 2015 and its title track was the #2 single on the Folk radio charts for the year 2015.

We're absolutely positive you'll enjoy her show on Oct. 29 at the FolkSide Coffeehouse. Show starts at 8pm; further details on pg. 7.

Bill Cohen: *Many of our members are not acquainted with you and your music, so please describe the style of music you do.*

Heather: The short, vague answer is: 'a little bit of everything', which for me is folk, blues, and jazz, particularly New Orleans traditional jazz.

What I have said sometimes from

stage is, 'The reason I play so many different kinds of music is because I could never decide what I wanted to be when I grew up!' Piano is where I started musically, and I also play acoustic guitar, tenor banjo, and ukulele.

Bill: *What are your earliest memories of music, and how did you wind up becoming a performer and song writer?*

Heather: My earliest musical memory is of running around the living room listening to a song called 'The Spider' by the band Kansas. It's a very intense,

keyboard-heavy instrumental, and I used to go absolutely crazy whenever my parents put that record on. As it happens, we were living in Kansas at the time, so I must have been three or four years old. My fondest memory though is of the many times I would listen to my dad as he sat in his chair, playing his clarinet along with his Pete Fountain records. I started playing piano when I was five, took years of classical lessons, sang in the church choir from a young age, and I always knew that playing piano and singing was what I wanted to do, even though it took me many years to overcome my shyness about singing – and now no one can shut me up!



“I don't have a regular songwriting routine. I find that the bug will just bite me out of nowhere, and I am always jotting down lyric ideas or singing melodic ideas into my iPhone.

“I try not to push the creative process too much. I try to relax and let things be, which is how to live in general. It's a one way ticket, and I'm enjoying the ride as much as I can.”

- Heather Pierson

When I was growing up, I thought I wanted to be a classical pianist, until I discovered improvisation and composition as a young teenager, and then at some point I realized that all that poetry I loved writing could also be set to music! These days I still keep a stack of classical pieces around to keep my chops up, but the pull towards creating new songs and new music has always been stronger. I quit my last 'real' job six years ago, and it's been nothing but music since then.

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

Heather: In no particular order, and this only is scratching the surface: Joni Mitchell, Ray Charles, Oscar Peterson, Vladimir Horowitz, Ani DiFranco, Mike Patton, Ella Fitzgerald. Joni's songwriting abilities, in my mind, cannot be matched. Ray Charles was a master of performance, and of blurring the edges of genres. Oscar is my all time favorite jazz pianist, and Horowitz my favorite classical one. Ani's music has actually had less influence on me than her example has – doing everything on her own terms, on her own record label, since she

was a teenager. And Mike and Ella are my all-time favorite vocalists.

Bill: *Tell us about your touring around the country. How*

many performances do you do every year and what's the variety of venues you've played at?

Heather: Most of the touring I've been doing in the last couple of years has been with my acoustic trio, with Shawn Nadeau on bass and Davy Sturtevant on everything but the kitchen sink. But sometimes, yes, I get to venture off on my own. I'm on the road one or two weekends a month, and so when you factor in all the touring, and all the gigs I have close to home, I'm giving over 200

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performances a year. On the road, we're playing mostly house concerts, coffeehouses, and other listening room environments, which is all great. When I'm back home, I have a few steady gigs, including playing solo piano at a couple of resort hotels up in the White Mountains – lots of jazz, some originals, but mostly American songbook stuff.

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

Heather: This may sound like a cop-out answer, but I really think any opportunity to work on one's craft is a good one. Naturally, I prefer the times when everyone is engaged and listening closely – and yes, I've played my fair share of bar gigs where people are looking past me to the TV above my head to see what the score is . . . but those nights are the ones that I can either treat like a 'paid rehearsal' or as an opportunity to try and figure out a way to capture just one person's attention. And I've found that even in those 'nobody is listening' situations, there is always at least

one person who really IS listening, so I find that person and then focus on that person. From there, the joy can spread.

Bill: *Tell us about your song writing. What sparks you to write a song? Is there a particular theme or thrust that seems to run through many of your songs?*

Heather: I never really thought about it until now, but it seems that the ideas of hard work and perseverance seem to thread their way through a lot of my writing – dealing with things as they are, standing in awe of them, too, and overcoming hardship and adversity. And as disciplined as I am in so many other ways, I don't have a regular songwriting routine. I find that the bug will just bite me out of nowhere, and I am always jotting down lyric ideas or singing melodic ideas into my iPhone. This happens most days, throughout the day. I journal regularly, and sometimes song ideas will come from that. I try not to push the creative process too much. I used to worry that I had used up all my ideas and I'd never write another song again – and then another idea

would be right around the corner. I try to relax and let things be, which is how to live in general. It's a one way ticket, and I'm enjoying the ride as much as I can.

Get a preview here:

www.heatherpierson.com/listen/



Saturday, Oct 29: FolkSide Coffeehouse

6pm Open Jam

7pm Open Mic

8-10pm Heather Pierson

Held at: *The Columbus Mennonite Church, 35 Oakland Park Avenue, Col.*

Suggested door donation: \$7; students \$5; CFMS members \$5; under 12 free. Handicap accessible.

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Next Issue in November

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

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