



## The Montvales to Play and Sing January 24th

INTERVIEW BY MICHELLE HUGHES

*The Montvales songwriter duo and native Tennesseans Sally Buice and Molly Rochelson currently hail from Cincinnati, Ohio. Their recent release Born Strangers follows up their debut 2019 album Heartbreak Summer Camp. See The Montvales at 8 p.m. January 24th at the Columbus Mennonite Church at 35 Oakland Park Avenue as part of the Americana/Folk Concert Series. You can learn more about The Montvales at their web site, <https://www.themontvales.com/>.*

**Michelle Hughes:** In the bio on the website for The Montvales, it is mentioned that you both "found community in old-time circles around town". Were you actively searching for community at that time? And what did it mean to you once you found it?

**The Montvales:** I don't think I would have consciously said I was actively searching for community at the time, although I definitely was. There was so much to love about growing up in East Tennessee - a short drive to the Smoky Mountains, seeing live music at the community radio station all the time, learning Appalachian craft traditions right in the place they developed. I picked up the banjo at sixteen, right in the middle of a pretty tough experience at a conservative high school. The community directly around me at school often felt

## A Different Strummer Newsletter Highlights

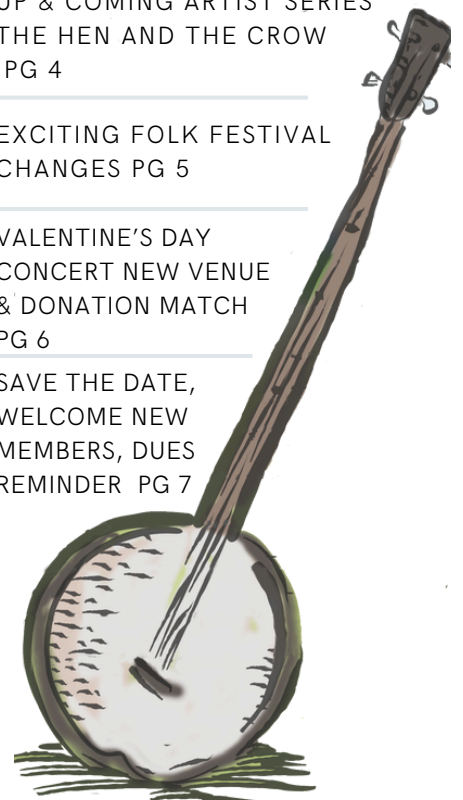
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The Montvales, from pg 1



*Photo Credit Emily Danielle Jones*

at odds with my values. Old-time circles were such a gift to me because I could tap into a long folk tradition and feel a sense of belonging right there at home.

**Michelle:** Alright, and now a hard left into a lighter weight topic - what is the origin of the name "The Montvales"? I see that it is in neither of your names, so I wonder what the significance of it is.

**The Montvales:** We're named after a road that's of significance to us in East TN (there's also a Camp Montvale, but neither of us ever went there). I think loosely it's Tennessee-fake-French for "in the valley of the mountain."

**Michelle:** There was something else I spotted in the bio that absolutely delighted me and I must know - is it true that local dairy cows were the first listeners of your early DIY recordings? Did they give any feedback? Did they have any favorite songs?

**The Montvales:** It is true! A member of local square dance band The Hellgrammites played our songs for his cows and reported to us that they enjoyed them. He has since passed on. I wish I could ask him what their favorite songs were!

**Michelle:** It is my understanding that you both were born and raised in Knoxville, TN, but now reside in Cincinnati. What are some of the similarities and differences between the two music scenes?

**The Montvales:** I would say they are both similarly full of delightful weirdos who feel free to experiment boldly due to the lack of commercial music industry pressure in either city. And Cincinnati actually has more Appalachian music enthusiasts and culture than I think a lot of folks realize—it's Ohio, but we're right across the river from Kentucky. Many folks there have family roots in Eastern Kentucky and West Virginia. A major difference is that Knoxville's cost of living has gone way up in recent years, and Cincinnati (while becoming more expensive too) has remained a bit more affordable. As people trying to eke out a sustainable life in the arts, that matters a whole lot to us. And it feels important to keep talking about, so that cities understand that they're losing out on art and culture by failing to invest in things like affordable housing, etc.

**Michelle:** Is there anything in particular about Cincinnati and the surrounding area that you feel offers particular support or inspiration for your music?

**The Montvales:** It's just really hard to overstate how held we feel by our community in Cincinnati. People really look out for each other here. Friends have found us housing and jobs when we've needed them, and local

institutions like The Southgate House Revival, The Woodward Theater, and Cincinnati folk music legends. The Tillers have given us so many opportunities to expand and develop our project. We also both live really close to a great bookstore (Downbound Books) that functions as a rad community hub and keeps us steeped in inspiring dialogue and new ideas.

**Michelle:** You've mentioned that you "spend your days crafting songs that explore the joys and perils of self-determination" - that's quite the statement! Do you feel that you intentionally choose this to be the overarching theme of your songs, or is it perhaps that you've come to realize this is consistent throughout your works upon looking at them in total?

**The Montvales:** We've always just written about what we feel and see, and we're both such dramatic, existential freaks that this is what tends to come out!

**Michelle:** What wisdom or insights do you feel have you gained from writing on these particular themes?

**The Montvales:** I think we often tend to write from braver parts of ourselves than always lead the way in our day-to-day lives, and this helps keep us accountable to facing scary realities (like fascism, climate change, and various other overlapping forms of societal collapse) with courage and heart. Especially because people are kind enough to share with us the ways in which our songs help them do the same thing.

**Michelle:** One thing that stood out to me as I was listening through your discography - the songs on your newer album Born

Strangers are on average about 1 to 2 minutes longer than those on your first album Heartbreak Summer Camp. Is there any sort of reason for this or is it just how the songs kind of naturally evolved?

**The Montvales:** Heartbreak Summer Camp was recorded in a living room with just one or two takes of each song. We had spent a lot of time busking and learning to fill up space with just the two of us. With Born Strangers, we had a producer and a studio and a whole band of incredible Nashville musicians to help us build a world around the songs. They're all a bit longer to give the band time to shine.

**Michelle:** Finally, can you please recommend a couple of songs for our readers to check out prior to seeing your show?

**The Montvales:** Check out "Loud and Clear", our latest single with Free Dirt Records!



*The Montvales, Photo Credit Suzi Kern*

# Up-and-coming Artist Series: Appalachian Gothic of The Hen and The Crow

BY JIM MCHIE

If you attended the recent Columbus Folk Music Society concert headlined by Moe Reen, you witnessed a powerful moment of musical community. Reen invited their friends—a local duo—The Hen and The Crow, to the stage to perform their powerful new single, "Cardinal Power Plant." But if you missed them then, prepare to be captivated. This is an opportunity to get in on the ground floor of a new phase of music from the Appalachian Gothic and folk-country duo, composed of Caroline and Wesley Crow.

Crafting songs that feel both timeless and urgently modern, rooted in the quilt of Southern Ohio and Appalachia, The Hen and The Crow explore themes of family farms, land preservation, and community deconstruction.

For those curious about the band's evocative name, it's a story born from the local scene. "Yes, we are Caroline and Wesley Crow," Caroline shares, "but my maiden name is Hennebert. We used to run an open mic night for a bit and the owner dubbed us 'The Henn and The Crow'." The name stuck, and the duo soon found their sound evolving. While they had played music together for years—mostly punk and oldies—a return to their roots redirected their artistic path.

"In 2019, we got back into the bluegrass and country music we grew up on, and our writing changed from rock and roll to folk music," Wesley explains. "It really came together because we were asked to play a small bluegrass event and we wrote a few

songs to showcase there and couldn't stop."

## Defining "Appalachian Gothic"

The duo's "Appalachian Gothic" descriptor is no mere marketing tag; it's a deeply considered reflection of their sound and ethos. Their influences range from modern standard-bearers like Willi Carlisle, Sierra Ferrell, and Tyler Childers to the foundational pillars of Willie Nelson, Ralph Stanley, and Johnny Cash. But the label "Appalachian Gothic" goes deeper, capturing the complex cultural tapestry of the region. As Caroline describes it:

"It's hard for us to stick to one genre... It feels more authentic to the picture my dad paints of his hometown. There were rock bands playing in garages and choirs singing at church, and my dad's grandfather strumming a guitar for the family. Appalachian Gothic is all the genres present in the area with a reflection on the struggles our families faced and the hurt we bear today. We talk a lot about religion and community, the loss of third spaces and the impact that capitalism has on all of us."

## An "Autumnal" Album on the Horizon

This powerful perspective is the guiding force behind their forthcoming 13-track, full-length album. While a title and specific release date are still being finalized, the album, recorded live in Columbus, promises to be a landmark debut.





*The Hen and the Crow,  
Michael Fuhrman Photography*

"The album to us feels very autumnal," says Caroline. "It's kind of got some dark and heavy themes of loneliness, questioning faith, overconsumption and overdevelopment, and the loss of community. The music itself is a blend of weepy country tunes with haunting murder ballads and upbeat resistance songs."

The album is also a testament to the collaborative spirit of the Columbus music scene. "We've got the lovely Moe Reen on a few tracks, friends from Gilded Sun and Space Canoe Records, and we even got to put together a little string band with fiddle and mandolin," she notes, also shouting out the contributions of West Taylor and Alex Estrada in bringing the album to fruition.

### Where to Listen

The Hen and The Crow are currently focused on putting the finishing touches on the album, so while they have no shows scheduled for December or January, they hope to be ready to tour in the new year. Until then, the best way to support this up-and-coming duo and follow updates on the album and release show is to connect with them online. You can hear their single "Cardinal Power Plant" on **Spotify** and follow their journey on **Instagram** at

@thehenandthecrow and @spacecanoe\_rec. Their music, along with that of collaborators like Moe Reen, is also featured on the **Space Canoe Records** website [www.spacecanoerecords.com/](http://www.spacecanoerecords.com/) and **YouTube** channel [www.youtube.com/@spacecanoerecords](http://www.youtube.com/@spacecanoerecords).

## EXCITING CENTRAL OHIO FOLK FESTIVAL CHANGES COMING . . .

**New location** — Bank Run Metro Park in Lockbourne, Ohio. If you live on the north side of town, it's ONLY an additional ten minute drive. A beautiful, outdoor green space dedicated uniquely to large events such as ours!

**New dates** — June 6 & 7, 2026 — first full weekend in June.

### Other changes —

- Easy, more ample parking;
- Large outdoor Kirby Main Stage;
- Larger Showcase and Bailey Acoustic Stage tents;
- More food trucks;
- You can enjoy a beer throughout the festival grounds. As in the past, no alcohol is permitted coming into or leaving the grounds. We remain committed to being a safe family-friendly event;
- To accommodate increased costs, a modest admission fee covers both days: \$10 pre-event and \$15 onsite. Under 18 free! Other opportunities for access available if needed.

See more information in the months ahead!



## NEW VENUE for Our Annual Valentine Concert



Do not...we repeat....do NOT go to the Columbus Mennonite Church Saturday February 7<sup>th</sup> for CFMS's annual Valentine concert. Why not? Because the show won't be there!

The concert, featuring Bill Cohen and friends with serious and comical love songs about the "ups and downs of love," has been so successful in recent years that it's attracted overflow crowds. That's why CFMS is moving the concert, now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, to a bigger venue:

Northwest United Methodist Church, 5200 Riverside Drive, 43220, just south of West Henderson Road. There's plenty of free nearby parking.

The concert will start at 7 pm, Saturday February 7<sup>th</sup> and end around 8:30. Then, delicious home-baked sweets will be served with the usual beautiful Valentine-themed decorations.

With guitar and piano, Bill will sing pop and folk favorites from the 1940's through the 1990's, made famous by John Denver, the Everly Brothers, Sam Cooke, James

Taylor, Sting, Patti Page, Johnny Mathis, and even "Weird Al" Yankovic. Fisher will be on hand to add some romantic flute accompaniment on several songs. David Maywhoor will keep the beat on percussion, and Brian Szuch will add extra sparkle on lead guitar. Plus, the all-girl trio, The Harmonettes, will sing smooth backup vocals.

While the songs will reflect the ecstasy, warmth, heartache, and pain that love can bring, there will be a lighter side too, as Bill poses trivia questions about famous and infamous couples and love songs throughout the decades. Plus, as usual, expect a couple of fun surprises.

\$15 per person donations are suggested at the door, with proceeds helping put on June's Central Ohio Folk Festival, which, coincidentally, will also be moving to a new venue.

Come alone or bring your sweetheart!

For more information, call Bill at (614) 263-3851.

## 2025 Year End Match Challenge: Your Donation Doubled!

For the past nine years, we've had an anonymous donor come forward towards the end of the year with an offer to match all donations to our organization beyond those of regular membership dues, received before December 31, up to a total of \$1,000. That means if we are able to raise \$1,000, it will be matched by our generous donor to a grand total of \$2,000!



## Welcome NEW Members

O'Neill & Martin (band)

...and Welcome Back RENEWING Members!



## Save the Date!

### Americana/Folk Concert Series

#### The Montvales

**Sat, Jan 24, 8 pm**

6pm open jam / 7pm Open Mic (pre-sign-up) / 8pm The Montvales  
Refreshments available. \$15 door donation / \$10 CFMS members  
Venue: Columbus Mennonite Church, 35 Oakland Park Ave, Columbus

### COFF Fundraiser

#### Bill Cohen Valentine's Day Concert

**Sat, Feb 7, 7-8:30pm**

Venue: Northwest United Methodist Church, 5200 Riverside Drive  
\$15 donation suggested

### Zoom Jam Sessions

**Mondays and Thursdays, 10-**

11:30am. Contact Jane for Zoom logon info: [vanaukj@gmail.com](mailto:vanaukj@gmail.com)

### In-Person Jams

**Mondays**-Contact Jane for December-January Schedule  
[vanaukj@gmail.com](mailto:vanaukj@gmail.com)

**Wednesdays**- 6:30-8:30 pm; Gillie Senior Center, 2100 Morse Road.  
Final Fall session date is December 17. Winter session starts January 14

**Saturdays**- 9:30-11:30 am. For locations, contact Jane at [vanaukj@gmail.com](mailto:vanaukj@gmail.com)

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## CFMS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES DUE BY DECEMBER 31! CONSIDER JOINING OR RENEWING NOW?

It's simple, inexpensive, and you're supporting the CFMS! You can fill out the form on the back of this newsletter OR you can join/renew online at: <https://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/member-application.html>. There you can pay with a credit card or via PayPal. You may also pay with a check. All the info is there.

Questions about membership? Reach out to [membership@columbusfolkmusicsociety.org](mailto:membership@columbusfolkmusicsociety.org).

NOTE: To receive a monthly hard copy newsletter (vs. digital), please provide an additional \$15 contribution above dues for postage & handling.

Year End Match Challenge, from pg 6

Whether a CFMS member or not, a monthly concert goer, or one of the thousands attending our May festival, your donation to the Columbus Folk Music Society yet this year may be doubled!

Donations may be made via the website:

<https://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/contact-donate.html>

via the Columbus Foundation's Giving Store:

<https://columbusfoundation.org/the-giving-store/nonprofit-directory-listing/ColumbusFolkMusicSocietyInc/6505>

or by check payable to Columbus Folk Music Society and mailed to: CFMS, PO Box 20735, Columbus, OH 43220. Please write "matching challenge" on your check or online donation note.



## The Columbus Folk Music Society

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### BECOME A MEMBER OF THE COLUMBUS FOLK MUSIC SOCIETY

Date \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ New ☐ Renew Preferred Newsletter Format: ☐ Digital ☐ Hard Copy **[NOTE: if you choose hard copy, we request an additional \$15 contribution over & above dues to cover postage & handling]**

Name(s) / Band Name (if applic) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

General Age Range – Born: ☐ 1930s-40s ☐ 1950s-60s ☐ 1970s-80s ☐ 1990s-2010s

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_ If Band, website \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Additional e-mail (if a household or band) \_\_\_\_\_

We are also a growing, vibrant community of volunteers; the awesome force behind our work! Please ✓ at least 1 box.

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> May folk festival    | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising       | <input type="checkbox"/> Musician                | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CFMS concert events  | <input type="checkbox"/> General Help      | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Skills   | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Design           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking / Baking     | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design    | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Musician   | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing / Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cbus Jammer Musician | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Instructor | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data Management      | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal             | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity               | <input type="checkbox"/> None                 |

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE DUE ANNUALLY ON DECEMBER 31.** ✓ one of the membership levels listed below.

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Band \$25        | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver \$250      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Household \$25  | <input type="checkbox"/> Good Friend \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$200  | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$500 |

☐ I have included an additional \$15 (postage & handling) to have a printed version of newsletter mailed to me.

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OR click here: <https://tinyurl.com/CFMS-Join>

**To join/renew by cash or check**, please mail completed membership form with payment to: *Columbus Folk Music Society, PO Box 20735, Columbus, OH 43220*. Membership amounts may be tax-deductible.

My place of work matches donations: ☐

