

## MUSIC

DANCE, STORYTELLING, AND

COMMUNITY



## Jordan Smart to Perform Concert Series Feb 28th

INTERVIEW BY DORI SMITH

*Jordan Smart is a folk singer based in Latonia, KY. Covering a broad range of subjects — from parental epiphanies and questionable lavatory visits, scathing political commentary and hitchhiking cross country, satirical talking blues to love, loss, grief and even pickles — Smart aims to have a song for every occasion. His recent release *Confessions of a CEO* follows several producing projects and EPs. See Jordan Smart at 8 p.m. February 28th at the Columbus Mennonite Church at 35 Oakland Park Avenue as part of the Americana/Folk Concert Series. You can learn more about Jordan Smart at his web site, <https://www.jordansmartmusic.com/>.*

**Dori Smith:** Many of your songs seem part of the folk tradition of protest, where does that impulse originate from in your life?

**Jordan Smart:** While growing up as a teenager in rural Ohio I discovered punk music, and the thing that stood out to me most about it was the artists who said things that felt like we were not supposed to, or allowed to say.

[See Jordan Smart, pg 2](#)

*Oh I've been smiling lately, dreaming about the world as one, and I believe it could be, some day it's going to come.*

*Yusuf Islam, Peace train*

## A Different Strummer Newsletter Highlights

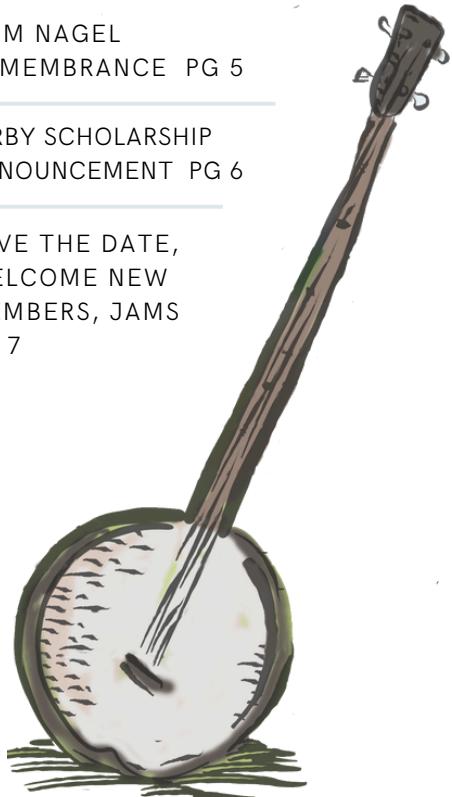
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SAVE THE DATE,  
WELCOME NEW  
MEMBERS, JAMS  
PG 7



Jordan Smart, from pg 1

They didn't just say it, they shouted it. From there I traced the tradition back to folk songs, and that really opened my eyes to what one person can do with their convictions, a couple chords and a tune.

**Smith:** It's been said that your latest album, *Confessions of a CEO*, is reminiscent of the likes of Woody Guthrie and Nina Simone, can you talk about your influences in playing and writing?

**Smart:** As mentioned above my influences are pretty broad but if we're talking folk music I'd say some of my greatest influences are Phil Ochs, Malvina Reynolds, Pete Seeger, Elizabeth Cotton, Mississippi John Hurt, Dave Van Ronk, Woody Guthrie, and John Prine.

**Smith:** Your songs are so content-filled, what is your songwriting process?

**Smart:** Honestly it varies from song to song but mostly when inspiration strikes it feels like what I imagine taming a bucking bronco to feel like. I try my best to see the thing through to the end and not get bucked off in the process.

**Smith:** Your project Songs not Bombs, two full volumes of songs from contributing artists, raises money for the Palestinian Children's Relief Fund. How did that come together and what has that overall experience been like?

**Smart:** I started Songs Not Bombs because for months I was seeing compilations pop up in punk, noise, and indie music circles but in the folk/roots/country or "cameraman" world



*Jordan Smart, by Kyle Wolff*

I saw an almost complete and total void of action, or even acknowledgment of the ongoing genocide of Palestinians. I started out asking local friends who had a heart for the matter, and with a couple enthusiastic, immediate yesses I decided to extend invites to acquaintances I'd met over the years, and folks were eager to help connect me with others. It was a great learning experience, a lot of work, and it really showed me that sometimes people just need to be given direction. I gained a ton of respect for all of the activists and organizers out there who do that kind of work day in and day out.

**Smith:** Where did your musical journey start, and how did that develop into the artist and producer you are today?

**Smart:** As a young child I was always fascinated by the organ in my grandparent's basement and by 10 I received my first guitar as a Christmas gift from my mom. My older brother taught me some riffs and that was that... at 14 years old I performed solo and with friends in my first show at a coffee shop in Ashland, OH. Fast forward several years and I was paying my rent



Jordan Smart, by Kyle Wolff

by busking on the coast of California. It was never about money but once I realized people would literally throw money at me to keep doing this I figured I wasn't too bad and should probably keep at it.

**Smith:** Your artist bio on ReverbNation mentions all the genres you've played, punk, metal, indie, folk, bluegrass. What has attracted you to such a varied musical career? Is folk/bluegrass your landing zone or do other genres still call to you?

**Smart:** I really just love music in general, and have always been interested in exploring different styles as there are so many different ways to express things that we all think and feel. I moved to California on a whim at 18 and knew going into it I was seeking adventure, and an electric guitar and amplifier is simply impractical, so I opted for an acoustic guitar and naturally what I was doing was deemed Folk by others, so that is what I keep calling it.

**Smith:** Most of us think of hitchhiking across the country as from our parents or grandparents generation, how did you decide that was something you wanted to do and what did you most take away from that experience?

**Smart:** I always dreamed of grand adventure as a bored kid... but a lot of spectacular journeys seemed to require expendable income, which I never had. I watched the movie *Into the Wild* as a teen and realized that adventure is a choice, and the only thing in my way were my concerns for comfort and the life I had always known. Probably my biggest takeaways from the experience are that kindness is reciprocal, there is always someone out there who is willing to lend a hand if you need it, however you often need to let it be known, and lastly that every single person on the street, no matter how much they are struggling is a human being deserving of food, water, warmth, and a safe place to rest. If everyone had all of those things available to them without question, or stipulation I believe we could alleviate so much of the unnecessary suffering of the world.

**Smith:** Videos from GemsonVHS that feature you also include your daughter, how rewarding has it been for her to be present in your musical life?

**Smart:** When my daughter was born I knew I had a choice to make about what kind of life I was going to live, and by default give her. I could go the route of getting a 9-5 and climbing that ladder, but I felt at my core that what my kid deserved was a parent that not only remains dedicated his family, but also refuses to sacrifice his dreams, passion, beliefs, and vision of what his life can be. Despite all challenges, it does feel like I am succeeding in that way which feels extremely rewarding. Hopefully she gets it one day.

# Tray Wellington Band Headlines 2026 Central Ohio Folk Festival

Headlining the June 6 & 7 Central Ohio Folk Festival held at Bank Run Metro Park is the acclaimed Tray Wellington Band, a celebrated and dynamic ensemble with a “genre defying” approach to making music. Bandleader Tray Wellington is recognized for his fearless exploration of the banjo’s possibilities. He is the winner of prestigious awards such as the **Steve Martin Banjo Prize** and **IBMA Momentum Instrumentalist of the Year**.

Tray’s work has earned recognition not only from peers but also from preeminent media outlets, including *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Billboard*, and NPR which have highlighted his innovative contributions to contemporary roots music. He has a reputation as one of the most exciting, forward-thinking, and influential banjo players of his generation.

Tray’s artistry has taken him to stages across the world, from intimate house concerts to landmark performances on Saturday Night Live with Mumford & Sons. He has been featured at premier festivals including the Newport Folk Festival, Telluride Bluegrass Festival, and Bourbon & Beyond, among others.

Originally from Wilkesboro, NC, he remembers starting to consciously listen to music when he was four or five. He started playing guitar in his teens and once he heard the banjo, he was hooked. Described as gregarious and an easy mixer when jamming with older musicians, he was exposed early on to folks in jam camps and festival circuits. He was noticed, won contests at events, and soon after began the launch of his career. He has a passion for the instrument and composition and songwriting.

The band transforms his work into immersive, high-energy performances blending banjo-led virtuosity with intricate rhythms, improvisation, and a modern sonic palette that pushes the boundaries of acoustic music. Their shows move fluidly from hard-driving originals to transcendent covers showcasing both instrumentation and vocals, inviting listeners into a dynamic musical conversation, celebrating curiosity, connection, and the power of music!

## Listen to:

[Moon Motion](#) on **Youtube**, from the EP *Spatial Awareness*, a superb sample of both instrumental creativity and prowess.

The headliner concert begins at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 6. The Kirby Main Stage is a large outdoor stage, however (like previous years), preferred, limited seating is closer and requires advance ticket



Tray Wellington

purchase. The cost is \$10 (festival admission) + \$10 (headliner). Otherwise seating space is further back and attendees must provide their own seating. The ticket link offers two seating options: under a canopy tent or under the open skies. In the event of inclement weather, the evening show will be moved inside a large tent. DIRECT LINK TO PURCHASE TICKETS (link will be LIVE January 28):

<https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/wwwcolumbusfolkmusicocietyorg/central-ohio-folk-festival-2026> OR visit <https://www.columbusfolkmusicociety.org/festival.html> and get the TICKET LINK on our website.

**More festival info:**

[www.columbusfolkmusicociety.org/festival](https://www.columbusfolkmusicociety.org/festival)

## Tom Nagel Remembrance: In Memoriam



Tom Nagel, by Linda McDonald

CFMS lost a beloved, long time member last year. Here's how some friends remember the inimitable Tom Nagel:

"He was a natural storyteller. His dedication to this open-hearted jamming community and his kindness supported and helped everyone feel welcomed." *Mary Finney*

"Tom was one of the emcees at the Cockroach in the basement of the United Christian Center on 15th just off campus, now gone..." *Terry Hartley*

"A gentleman from the word go, Tom was always thoughtful of others and would reach out with ride offers or music advice if he thought it would help..." *Dan Clarke*

"As a friend he was unfailingly generous and more than a little bit funny." *Hugh Farthing*

"He had one song that ended with, "for those of you who believe in telekinesis, please raise my hand." It always cracked me up." *Charlie Flowers*

"Tom helped lead a niche that few others were doing locally: original satirical folk songs. He would take well-known popular folk tunes and write his own original lyrics that would take the songs in a totally different direction. His most famous example?

Tom Nagel Remembrance, from pg 5



*Tom Nagel, by Linda McDonald*

His taking the Kingston Trio hit MTA about a guy who gets lost on the Boston subway because he doesn't have the nickel fare that's needed for him to exit.....and replacing those lyrics so it became a song about a very modern-day topical subject and annoyance: the TSA airport workers who pat down all potential airplane passengers. Tom's version was a perfect copy.... detailing the trials and tribulations of "poor Charlie" who was at the mercy (quite literally) of the hands of the TSA."

*Bill and Randi Cohen*

"Tom was a good friend, a kind lawyer in my time of need, and could really sing the hell out of 'The Egg Plant That Ate Chicago' on his banjo!" *Stephen Ing*

"I really enjoyed playing music with Tom.

His paw-paw passion was admirable. He gave me several paw paw shoots but I was unable to get them to grow..." *Dave Fultz*

"Anyone who knew Tom knows he understood people, and he understood people because he was the best kind of person." *Nick Booker*

We close with one of Tom's favorite quotes: "I tell you, we are here on Earth to fart around, and don't let anybody tell you different." -Kurt Vonnegut, *A Man Without a Country*

## KIRBY MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

The Kirby Music Scholarship committee is now accepting 2026 application forms!

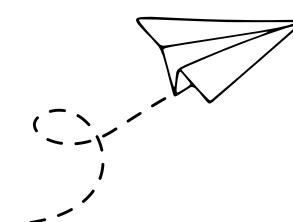
This form with guidelines is located online at:

<https://www.columbusfolkmusicociety.org/>

The Kirby Music Scholarship is open to any central Ohio student in grades 3-12.

The deadline for submission is March 20th.

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## Welcome NEW Members

John Herbert	Sheena Phillips
Jonathan Johns	Rob Potter
Chris Kovell	Cylia Queen
John Pettibone	Steve Wald
Anne Mecum Nelson	

...and Welcome Back RENEWING Members!



## Save the Date!

### Americana/Folk Concert Series

**Jordan Smart**

**Sat, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 8 pm**

6pm open jam / 7pm Open Mic (pre-sign-up) / 8pm Jordan Smart

Refreshments available. \$15 door donation / \$10 CFMS members

Venue: Columbus Mennonite Church, 35 Oakland Park Ave, Columbus

### COFF Fundraiser

**Pre-Valentine's Day Concert with**

**Bill Cohen**

Sat, Feb 7, 7-8:30pm

Venue: Northwest United Methodist Church, 5200 Riverside Drive

\$15 donation suggested

Benefit for Central Ohio Folk Festival

### Zoom Jam Sessions

Mondays and Thursdays

10am - 11:30am. Please contact Jane for information: [vanaukj@gmail.com](mailto:vanaukj@gmail.com)

### In-Person Jams

**Mondays**- 6-8pm - Contact Jane for location: [vanaukj@gmail.com](mailto:vanaukj@gmail.com)

**Wednesdays**- 6:30-8:30pm at Gillie Community Senior Center, 2100 Morse Centre Dr. Register online or in person for free.

## NEWSLETTER TEAM

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## 2026 FESTIVAL ANNOUNCE/SHARE CAMPAIGN

Our new website will go live any day; check it out at the same web address!

IF its not "live" by Feb 1, it should be by not later than Feb 15!

Below is a direct link to the festival page where you can preview some of our 2026 line-up!

[www.columbusfolkmusicociety.org/festival](http://www.columbusfolkmusicociety.org/festival)

**DIRECT LINK TO PURCHASE TICKET** (link will go LIVE 1/28):

<https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/wwwcolumbusfolkfestival2026> OR visit

<https://www.columbusfolkmusicociety.org/festival.html> and get the TICKET LINK on our website.

Share the word!

### In-Person Jams, continued

**Saturday**- 9:30-11:30am at Whetstone Community Center, 3923 N. High Street, 43214. Music Jamming Class, register online or in person for free.

**Saturday**- noon-2pm Carriage Place Community Center, 4900 Sawmill Road. Music Jamming Class, register online or in person for free.



## 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.

**To join/renew by credit card, visit CFMS' website: [columbusfolkmusicsociety.org](http://columbusfolkmusicsociety.org) (About Us/Join)**

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:

