



Enjoy The Mighty Troubadours Saturday, July 12 at the Reeb Center

INTERVIEW BY BILL COHEN

The Mighty Troubadours, playfully aka "The Troubz", perform "new grass" with a "whimsical intensity . . . soulful harmonies and foot-tapping instrumentation." See them Saturday, July 12 at The Reeb Center, 280 Reeb Avenue, as part of the Americana/Folk Concert Series. Refreshments will be served at 2 p.m., followed by a community open mic at 2:30. The Mighty Troubadours take the stage at 3 p.m. You can learn more about The Mighty Troubadours at their web site, <https://www.facebook.com/themightytroubadours/>.

Bill Cohen: We know the Mighty Troubadours perform bluegrass music, but how do you define bluegrass?

Joseph Gardina: This is always a fun question to answer because there tends to be an inherent ambiguity about the genre. The explanation can be a little lengthy, but I'll do my best to be concise . . . haha.

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*Warm summer sun, shine kindly here.
Warm southern wind. Blow softly here.*

-Mark Twain

A Different Strummer Newsletter Highlights

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There are definitely different styles of bluegrass music and it's important to point out the distinction between them because there are preservationists of the traditional style that want to keep the integrity of its history and proper form. Traditional bluegrass originated with the godfathers of bluegrass: Bill Monroe and The Bluegrass Boys, the Carter Family, Doc Watson, etc. To play traditional bluegrass you want to emulate the style of these godfathers, such as: playing mandolin using the Bill Monroe technique, playing banjo with the three finger roll pattern style that Earl Scruggs patented, and using the flat/cross-picking method of Doc Watson.

But it's also fun to research the history that led to this style of music coming to fruition. All of these beautiful stringed instruments came together from different parts of the world. The banjo originated in Africa as the sheep skin banjo, the violin and mandolin originated in Italy, and the guitar originated in Spain.

Also, there is the immeasurable melting pot of genres' influence here as well! Such as: Gospel, Celtic, classical, folk, Ol' Timey blues, rock 'n' roll, etc. Throw a bunch of these genre-influenced instruments into the hands of music loving folks from the hills of Appalachia... alas... bluegrass has been born! Phew! Ok – got that out of the way!

Bill: How do you describe the kind of bluegrass music you play?

Joseph: The thing I've always admired about these godfathers of bluegrass is their choice as individuals to create and innovate with their music. Meaning, coming up with



Photo Courtesy of The Mighty Troubadours

their own style of playing and not conforming to what other styles of music may have told them they were supposed to sound like. The Troubadours define our music as being "new grass" or "contemporary" or "progressive." All the terms are interchangeable. A band by the name of New Grass Revival was a pioneer of new grass. The band was founded in 1971 and composed of Sam Bush, Courtney Johnson, Ebo Walker, Curtis Burch, Butch Robbins, John Cowan, Béla Fleck, and Pat Flynn. They broke the rules of traditional bluegrass by using the same instrumentation, but . . . experimenting with different playing styles. Hence, the term "New grass" was formed! In my personal opinion "new grass" is just a fun term to use interchangeably with "progressive". And I would say that it's defined by doing any style of music with bluegrass instruments that is 'outside the box' of the traditional style.

Bill: What is it about bluegrass that makes you so passionate about it?

Joseph: I'm sure this answer has a commonality enjoyed by most that play this type of music. I would say it's the diversity of how many different styles of music you can play, and all the fun of different stringed instruments melded

together in such a really cool way. It's often said how there's a certain purity to a piece of wood and some steel strings. And you don't need much more to make a very down-to-earth music style come together. It's about singing harmonies and picking/bowing your instrument. And you can do that anywhere — from a really big stage to a humble front porch. When a musician who plays bluegrass sits in a circle for the very first time, with the many different instruments and sings harmonies with dear friends, it's a very, very powerful and therapeutic experience.

Bill: What's the history of your band?

Joseph: The Mighty Troubadours started in 2009 as a duo with founding members Joseph Gardina and Christopher Swanson. They joined forces with others after realizing they had a mutual love for harmonious singing and certain musical styles. Heavily influenced by the band New Grass Revival, they selected songs that showcased their unique ability to pull off some of the fun, acrobatic harmonies they loved so much by artists like Sam Bush and John Cowan. Around this time, Dick's Den (a bar in Columbus' Old North neighborhood) began doing a Tuesday night bluegrass jam. The jam was the idea of present-day co-owner, Aaron Snyder, a bartender at the time. This bluegrass jam was not just any ordinary jam. It was something that became an outlet and breathed life into both the city and hearts of musicians and music lovers all over Ohio. Not only was it a rip-roaring, intensely fun night of music from 10pm till 2am every Tuesday, but it allowed a lot of musicians to meet and form bands, a number of whom

are now notable ensembles in Columbus' local music scene. Aaron Snyder had a strong front man presence both vocally and on rhythm guitar: he was the missing link for Chris Swanson and Joseph Gardina's vocal arrangements. Over the many years of playing at this bluegrass jam, The Mighty Troubadours continued to add some of Columbus' most talented string band musicians namely, Andy Kuss (upright bass), Isaiah Sparling (banjo), Mark Gonzalez (dobro and guitar), and Skotty Brown (fiddle).

Bill: What venues have you played in over the years?

Joseph: Dick's Den, Natalie Coal-fired Pizza (Worthington), Natalie's Music Hall (Grandview Heights), Midland Theater (Newark), The Bluestone, The Refectory, Brothers Drake Meadery, Woodlands Tavern, and Nocterra Brewery, amongst numerous other venues, including private events and weddings.

Bill: What do you want your audiences to experience when they see and hear The Mighty Troubadours?

Joseph: Plain and simple, we want the audience to have a joyful experience. The Troubz (band's nickname) have been reviewed as "A whimsical intensity offered by soulful harmonies and foot-tapping instrumentation!" We feel it encompasses a truly authentic Americana style. We're a band of brothers united by a collective passion for making music with one another and believing in the incredible power of healing that music offers us all throughout the fleeting moments of life.

The Central Ohio Folk Festival Feel 2025

Have you been to the Columbus Folk Music Festival in years past? If so, you may remember it most by the pleasant tunes drifting on the breeze as you approach the grounds; the laughter of children as they make instruments, music, or friends; or the myriad choices of what to do at any given hour of the festival thanks to the many tents and zones. None of these things were missing this year, but one thing that came before it even began - and refused to leave for most of it - was the rain. The cool and damp mist would regularly be replaced by steady drizzle, and even slanting rain, making wanderers wet and creating scores of shelter-seekers.



As a volunteer of many years, I was all over the festival helping out with various things, generally helping to keep the vibe “merry and bright”. I say I helped keep it that way because I didn’t see anyone in the doldrums, the weather did not dampen spirits! There weren’t many children at the festival this year, but there were plenty of youthful people, especially those young at heart. The time I spent volunteering in the children’s craft area reinforced my belief that folk music inspires connection, and that includes each person with their inner child. Youths from 1 to 89 enjoyed making

BY EILEEN SMITH, PICTURES BY LINDA MCDONALD



COFF Headliner, Richard Shindell

floral crowns, shakers, drums, zines, and colorful art.

Experienced musicians met those with little experience at the instrument petting zoo and encouraged all to try one they had not tried before, and children were encouraged to try them all! I love this opportunity; where else can you try so many different instruments? Can you answer the question “What happens if you give a child an instrument?” I’ll give you a hint, it can lead to lifelong pursuits.

Elsewhere (in the 4 main tents and 5 jam tents) the music and festivity rarely ended, and a few of my favorite performers not only had great names and vibes, but filled multiple performance and workshop slots on Saturday and Sunday, like Cross-Eyed Possum, Fox & Clover, and the Stillhouse



Junkies (SJs). The SJs were one of my favorite bands, their original music struck a chord in my soul, and their interactions with Darby Duck made me laugh every time! Darby himself was all over the festival too, and his antics from early afternoon Saturday through Sunday encouraged all to weather the weather as he did, with a smile and a spring in his step.

As I walked around, I noticed the festival

had a nice balance of music. Some performers demonstrated classic folk music in jam tents and on a few stages (at times). Others played and sang original music that ranged from high-paced instrumentals on every string instrument in existence, to melancholy melodies that put me in a zen-like state. Every group, song, and smile left their mark on me, and make me want to return year after year. I hope to see you there next year!



A FEW QUOTES FROM THIS YEAR'S FESTIVAL GUESTS:

"Beautiful festival despite the rain" - Lesli H

"Happy, happy, happy, good, good good, perfect, perfect, yay, super, super" - youth attendee

"I LOVE this festival weather and all! - E Philippidis

Walhalla Ramblers coming to The Reeb



Photo
Courtesy of
Walhalla
Ramblers

Walhalla Ramblers, f/k/a Clintonville Grass, perform "new grass" arrangements of Bluegrass and Americana songs featuring three-part vocal harmony. The band features Mike Barrie (mandolin, vocals), Wilson Burrows (guitar, vocals), Lea Anne Kangas (bass, vocals), Andy Verhoff (guitar, vocals), and Carl Yaffey (banjo). See them Saturday, August 2 at The Reeb Center, 280 Reeb Avenue, as part of the Americana/Folk Concert Series. Refreshments will be served at 2 p.m., followed by a community open mic at 2:30. Walhalla Ramblers will take the stage at 3 p.m. You can learn more about Walhalla Ramblers at their web site, <http://clintonvillegrass.com>.

A Musical Tribute to Peter, Paul and Mary

From the 1960's into this New Millennium, Peter, Paul and Mary used music to entertain, educate, inspire, and energize Americans to work for a better world. Sunday June 29, 4 Columbus musicians will pay tribute to PP & M's legacy with songs, memories, and quips.

Bill Cohen, Joanne Blum, and Joe Lambert will sing and strum the most beloved songs that PP & M seared into the hearts and minds of so many people for decades. Among them: If I Had a Hammer, Blowin' in the Wind, Where Have All the Flowers Gone, Jet Plane, and Day is Done. Plus, the audience will be invited to sing along on tunes like Puff the Magic Dragon and the Times They Are a Changin'. Some lesser-known PP & M songs will also be in the spotlight because of their powerful meaning: Music Speaks Louder than Words, The Wedding Song, and When the Ship Comes In.

Heidi White will enhance the music with her stand-up bass, the kind that PP & M often used in the background of their songs in concerts and on albums.

The tribute concert will take place Sunday June 29 at 4 p.m. at the Columbus Mennonite Church, 35 Oakland Park Avenue 43214. Free parking will be available on nearby streets and in lots owned by the North Broadway Methodist Church. \$15 donations per person are suggested at the door, but all donations will be welcome.

The musicians and sound crew will split the donations with a worthy cause. Half of the proceeds will go to the Clintonville Community Resource Center, which helps low-income, homeless, and older residents of the area.



Welcome NEW Members

Landon Argabrite Judith Allee &
Robert Erikson Denny Frush
Trent Hall

...and Welcome Back RENEWING Members!



Save the Date!

Americana/Folk Concert Series

The Mighty Troubadours, Sat, July 12, 2pm

Food 2pm; Local Open Mic 2:30pm;
The Mighty Troubadours 3pm
A free-will donation event
Venue: Reeb Center, 280 Reeb Ave.

Walhalla Ramblers

Sat, August 2, 2pm

Food 2pm; Local Open Mic 2:30pm;
Walhalla Ramblers 3pm
A free-will donation event
Venue: Reeb Center, 280 Reeb Ave.

Zoom Jam Sessions

Mondays and Thursdays

10am -12 noon. Please contact Jane for information: vanaukj@gmail.com

In-Person Jams

Mondays Contact Jane for current schedules: vanaukj@gmail.com

Wednesdays 6:30-8:30pm at Gillie Center, 4625 Morse Centre Drive

Saturdays 9:30-11:30am behind Whetstone Community Center at playground off the parking lot.
9-noon at Worthington Southeast Green during the Worthington farmers market.

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CBUS Jammers Outreach

Throughout the year, the Cbus Jammers enjoy playing and singing at community events as well as retirement villages. Audiences are encouraged to sing along and often may join in with instruments shared by jammers.

To learn more about upcoming events, to schedule a session, or to join in one of these informal outreach jams, contact Jane VanAuken at: vanaukj@gmail.com.

Annual CFMS Picnic / Jam

The annual CFMS summer potluck picnic / jam is planned for Sunday, July 27, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

This summer's host will be Cee Cee Bergen. The location will be 9261 Winchester Rd, Canal Winchester.

Picnic information will be sent to the CFMS membership list and be included on CFMS website calendars. Picnic/jams are open to members & non members. View here (along with the current jam calendar):

<https://www.columbusfolkmusicsociety.org/jam-sessions.html>



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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"/> General Help | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CFMS concert events | <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Musician | <input type="checkbox"/> Web Design |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking / Baking | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Instructor | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing / Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Data Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal | Instruments: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Musician | <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 (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: ☐

