



November 2020

Minnesota *Bluegrass*

Peter Ostroushko **A Minnesota Treasure**

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To preserve and promote bluegrass and
old-time stringband music
in and around the state of Minnesota.

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Board Meeting Minutes are available - szack01@gmail.com or call: 651-456-8919.

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From the President

An article by Jonathan Zecher, “Acedia: the lost name for the emotion we’re all feeling right now,” in “theconversation.com” introduced me to that very old word. The term acedia emerged from the experience and isolation of monastic monks and referred to a “strange combination of listlessness, undirected anxiety, and inability to concentrate.” If that sounds familiar, I encourage you to read the article. Conversations with friends suggest that many if not most of us are experiencing some degree of acedia brought on by isolation and being flooded with bad news. I know this seems like a rather odd thing to write about in *Minnesota Bluegrass*, but because of the Covid isolation (including the cancellation of MBOTMA events), we don’t realize others are also struggling. Reach out to friends and family for them and for you.

On a positive note... due to the generosity of our members/donors (many of whom upgraded their memberships), the success of the August 2019 festival and the 2020 Winter Bluegrass Weekend, and a grant obtained from the Minnesota State Arts Board, MBOTMA is in a good position to weather the Covid storm. I am grateful and amazed, as I certainly would not have predicted our financial and organizational strength, given how precarious MBOTMA’s situation was the first two-plus years of my time on the board. Kudos to the staff, volunteers, board, members and donors!

MBOTMA recently sponsored a jam in the park (a small scale event) that was well attended. We hope to offer other opportunities for people to play and hear music while adhering to the current Covid guidelines. We welcome your ideas.

MBOTMA’s annual election is upon us. Your ballot and candidate profiles are included in this issue of the magazine. There is also information regarding the election on the website. I am very pleased with the slate of candidates running for the board. Please vote!

Stay safe and healthy.

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Become a Member

The Minnesota Bluegrass & Old-Time Music Association is open to everyone. Our members include people who love to listen to music and people who love to make music. As a member, you’ll be invited to participate in bluegrass and old-time music events and celebrations. You’ll receive discounted prices on admission to events and merchandise, and you’ll receive a subscription to *Minnesota Bluegrass* magazine.

Becoming a member of MBOTMA is easy and affordable. Your membership will not only nurture your own interests, but will help to ensure that the bluegrass and old-time music tradition is sustained and grows in Minnesota.

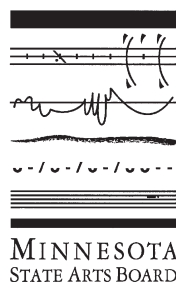
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Minnesota Bluegrass Calendar of Events

Concerts and events presented or supported by
the Minnesota Bluegrass & Old-Time Music Association



The following events are presented or supported in part by the Minnesota Bluegrass & Old-Time Music Association and made possible in part by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Complete Info/Tickets at: www.minnesotabluegrass.org

Your MBOTMA Board of Directors is working hard, constantly monitoring the events around Covid-19. They will make appropriate decisions about canceling events, given the situation at the time, and will notify membership via the website and email, when those decisions are made.

2021 Dates

March 5-7, 2021 - Friday-Sunday

**Minnesota Bluegrass
Winter Weekend**

August 12-15, 2021 - Thursday-Sunday

**Minnesota Bluegrass
August Festival**

Contribute to Minnesota Bluegrass Magazine.

Write a Review of a favorite concert or CD.

Write an article about your favorite jam.

Tell us about how you came to like
Bluegrass and Old-Time String Band Music.

editor@minnesotabluegrass.org

Tom O'Neill Award Nominations are Open

Annual nominations are now open for the Tom O'Neill Award. This award is presented to someone who has made an Enduring Contribution to the Mission of MBOTMA.

Please write two or three paragraphs about why your nominee should be selected as the recipient of the award and email to info@minnesotabluegrass.org no later than March 27th. The Board will review the nominations in a blind review, and the award will be presented at an upcoming festival.

Minnesota Bluegrass Website:

www.minnesotabluegrass.org

Info and news about our events
Buy tickets on line, Donate, History
Complete calendar of Festivals
Magazine: Members can read current
and past issues
Links to Member Bands

Get to Know the MBOTMA Board

Board Member at Large: Shane Zach

How long have you been on the board and what's your position?

I have been on the board since the Fall of 2017.

What is your occupation and what type of work do you do?

Currently I am the director of Enrollment and Tuition Aid for a small, independent school in St. Paul.

What MBOTMA volunteer role(s) have you held in the past?

I have worked the ticket table, information tables, facilitated board retreats and offered mandolin workshops.

How long have you been part of MBOTMA and what brought you to the organization?

I am not sure exactly when I started attending MBOTMA events. It was at some point in high school, either sophomore or junior year. I started playing bluegrass because I had a mandolin and didn't really know what to do with it.

Everything just sort of went downhill from there.

How has being a board member impacted you?

As a board member, you really get to see the amount of work, effort, love and care volunteers and members pour into this organization. You hear more stories, more perspectives, and see so clearly the relationship the community has to the music but also the people who make up MBOTMA. It is harder to see that as the average person going to a few festivals a year.

Do you have a favorite festival or activity at a festival?

Jamming. There is a part of me that thinks I should attend more stage shows or workshops, but in the end, I can't resist a jam.

What are some of your hobbies and interests?

I like playing music, mostly blue-



grass, in my band King Wilkie's Dream. I also like to bake, mostly bread, but cake and cookies too when the mood strikes.

What's a fun fact about you?

I have a two-year-old daughter and a five-year-old daughter who don't seem to be catching on to bluegrass at the pace I would prefer. I am thinking about re-recording the Frozen 2 soundtrack as a bluegrass album to see if that does the trick.

What excites you about MBOTMA right now?

At the moment I am both excited and worried about the pandemic and its impact on the music. I worry about the loss of revenue and playing opportunities for our bands, but at the same time I am pretty excited by the new and creative ways people have leveraged social media and technology to bring bluegrass and old-time music to larger and more diverse audiences. Really, this music was made by and meant for people going through hard times. The music was built for times like this, and I am excited to see what it all looks like on the other side of this pandemic.

What would you tell a new MBOTMA member/volunteer?

Thank you for joining and thank you for your support. This music and organization provides meaning and connection for so many people. It can be life-changing, and I am not sure where I would be without it. Thank you for making this possible.



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Minnesota State Fiddlers Association adjusts to new environment

Like everyone else, the Minnesota State Fiddlers Association (MSFA) had to adjust quickly as the pandemic forced new rules and restrictions. Most MSFA events take place at public libraries; when meeting rooms closed up, the group needed to make some quick changes.

Elmo Wick – Volume 2

A few years back, the MSFA worked on *Fiddle Tunes from Crow River Country: The Music of Elmo Wick*. The Association had a lot more tunes from Elmo, and always knew there would be a Volume 2. Walter Sigtermans and Scott Gamble took this project on, transcribed around 70 tunes into ABC, and have been recruiting volunteers to learn the tunes and record them on YouTube. The MSFA has been releasing them on their YouTube Channel as they come in for people to learn during their time at home. Volunteers are still welcome, as Walter has more tunes to assign.

The MSFA has also released the first Elmo Wick tune book as a free PDF as a service during Covid.

Zoom Jam – The MSFA SloJammers and Johnna Lawrence and the PBNJ held a couple of socially distanced jams, but Rob Ross and the South of the River (SOTR) Jam seems to have come up with a great system for hosting a weekly Zoom Jam. Every Thursday, around a dozen folks gather to play tunes together. Rob and Walter have an ever-growing list of tunes with sheet music and chords to select from. One person leads, and everyone else is muted. It is more of a “play along” than a typical jam, but it does keep people engaged, learning new tunes, and connected with other musicians. It will likely be our jamming solution as the winter sets in.

Mary Pat Kleven and Walter have been hosting monthly SloJammers using a similar format. The MSFA paid for two Zoom licenses to allow more functionality for the hosts and to avoid a time limit, as these jams typically run about 1 – 2 hours.

November 7th Upper Midwest Folk Fiddle Fest

Fiddle Fest

This event, funded by the Southeast Minnesota Regional Arts Council and hosted by the Minnesota State Fiddlers Association, went from a live event in May to a completely online event in November (see article page 17).

MSFA YouTube Channel

Last year at this time, we had around 300 views on YouTube, from April 20-July 18. This year, it is almost 14,000 and counting. The big winner is Carla Manning, whose recording of “Polka from Sartal” has almost 12,000 views, so she’s gone viral!

In addition to *Elmo Wick, Volume 2*, we hired professionals to record a tune lesson for us that we posted in our Online Tune Learning Series. These tunes, along with links for the sheet music and chords, are offered free of charge to the public as a service to the community.

- “Adrain’s (or Adrian’s) Hornpipe” from “Uncle” Bob Walters taught by A.J. Srubas, Minneapolis.
- “Bultedans” taught by Debby Greenblatt from the Avoca Schoolhouse of Music, Avoca, Nebraska.
- “Gâteaux au Bananes (Banana Cake)” taught by Linda Breitag, Minneapolis.
- “Hobb Dye” taught by Pop Wagner, St. Paul
- “Spotted Pony” taught by Cristina Seaborn, St. Cloud
- “Weedwalker” taught by Audrey Knuth, San Diego, CA
- “Tater Vals” (Norwegian Gypsy Waltz) taught by Eric Christopher, St. Paul.

There is also a playlist of thirteen “Play-along” videos. These are videos from the MSFA “vault” that have been edited so that the fiddler can read the sheet music/chords while playing along with audio of the various local musicians performing at past MSFA workshops and concerts.

- “Arlan Erickson’s Schottische in F,” Down Home Band

- “Henschien Lake Schottische,” S. Ann Schluter
- “Herbert Erickson’s Polka,” John Wallace and the Stringbeans
- “Old Benjamin,” Mary Pat Kleven/Gilmore Lee
- “Oles Waltz,” Ann Patten-Larson and Charlie Knuth
- “Patrick Co Blues,” Pamela Longtine, Lynn Dixon and Dick Kimmel
- “Polka from Sartal,” Carla Manning and Rob Ross
- “Starlight Waltz,” Gilmore Lee
- “Stoltmans Dad’s Waltz,” Walter Sigtermans and the SloJammers
- “Snuff Polka,” Don Jacques and Gritpickers
- “Waltz from Fla Hallingdal,” Dempsey Schroeder and Elmo Wick Workshop players
- “Wood Choppers Reel,” Michelle Stettler Stein

Fiddle Contests

Due to the cancellation of live events, the MSFA has been keeping fiddlers posted on online event options and provided contest fiddlers with links and resources to keep them practicing until events can go live again in 2021.

MSFA E-Newsletter

MSFA started by keeping people informed of cancellations – then turned to providing people with information on other virtual and socially distanced options available for workshops, contests and concerts. This monthly newsletter is free to anyone; members are welcome to submit event and activity information.

The MSFA has been able to continue to provide services to the fiddling community due to the support of members and volunteers whose creativity, generosity and hard work have made this all happen. In unprecedented times, fiddlers in Minnesota have truly stepped up to the plate.

More information on these projects is available on the MSFA Website at www.fiddlemn.com or by emailing msfafiddlers@gmail.com.

Volunteer Spotlight: Tony Anthonisen

How long have you been a volunteer with MBOTMA?

20+ years

What current volunteer role(s) do you have with MBOTMA?

Organizer of the Twin Cities Ukulele Club and Great Minnesota Uke Gathering (held at the Minnesota Fall Bluegrass Jam).

What MBOTMA volunteer role(s) have you held in the past?

Chair of the Minnesota Homegrown Kickoff for many years. Volunteer roles at many MBOTMA events. Jam and workshop leader at many MBOTMA festivals and events, including MBOTMA Fundraiser, Winter Bluegrass Weekend, Minnesota Homegrown Kickoff, August Festival and Minnesota Fall Bluegrass Jam. Was awarded the Tom O'Neill "Lifetime of Service" Award in 2014. An award I truly cherish!

How long have you been part of MBOTMA and what brought you into the organization?

First involved in about 1996. I was taking guitar lessons at Homestead Pickin Parlor, and my instructors (Brian Fesler, Bill Cagley and Adam Granger) led me into jamming at Homestead. They also told me about MBOTMA. I love the times I have had with my MBOTMA friends! They have truly become my best friends. The first event for which I volunteered was the the August Festival. I helped Paul Christensen with first aid support at the festival. From then on, I was hooked!

Why are you a MBOTMA volunteer?

Music has brought me a great deal of enjoyment. Volunteering is my way of giving back. I most like teaching workshops and leading jams. Helping and seeing people really get into and enjoy music is the absolute greatest feeling. Watching the "light bulb light up" in their music life makes it all worth while.

Do you have a favorite festival or activity at a festival?

Yes, all of them. I'm serious. I would be hard pressed to name just one. OK,



I'll stick my neck out and say the Winter Weekend. Tons of great jamming. Wonderful concerts. But then, that's really all the festivals.

How has being a volunteer impacted you?

It has brought many good friends and gratifying times. Why not do something that is so easy and fun?

What are some of your hobbies and interests?

When I'm not involved with music - bicycle riding and walking. When I was younger - bicycle riding, skiing and snowboarding. Music - I love playing and singing bluegrass music. I lead about 100 jams and workshops a year for the Twin Cities Ukulele Club and at Steve Kaufman's Acoustic Kamp. Used to live and breathe bluegrass guitar and fiddle tunes on guitar before tearing both rotator cuffs in 2012. Since then, just substitute ukulele for guitar. I often say that if I had taken up ukulele before guitar, I'm not so sure I would have taken up the guitar. Ukulele is that much fun! And, bluegrass and fiddle tunes work out just fine on the ukulele!

Do you have a fun story about being a volunteer or about MBOTMA that you'd like to share?

The mud at El Rancho Manana. Heavy rains brought flooded areas and mud. Lots of mud. I can't tell you how many times we watched cars, trucks and campers slither and slide around on the

roads, particularly on the road up the hill to the performer parking area for the stage. We would try to keep reasonably clean at first, but finally just accepted the fact that mud was fun.

What occupation did you have or do you have now?

Management and training background. Currently a part time hardware and software trainer with Apple Computer.

What's a fun fact about you?

At the festivals, I had a goal of getting to bed early first night (1 to 2 a.m. or so) to save up my energy for the next night. There were no time limits for the final night.

What would you tell a new MBOTMA member/volunteer?

Do it! It will be the beginning of a wonderful experience, including making some wonderful friends.

**Ask not what
Minnesota
Bluegrass can
do for you,
but what you
can do for
Minnesota
Bluegrass**

Cover Story

Peter Ostroushko - A Minnesota Treasure

By Dan Hansen

A couple of months ago, I decided I'd like to interview two local musicians who had the biggest musical influence on me when I was right out of high school. I started with Jim Tordoff for the September issue, and this is my follow up interview/article with Peter Ostroushko.

DH: Where did you come up with the idea to do a podcast?

PO: Well, let me tell you what happened. So, two and a half years ago, I had a stroke—which left my left side compromised. My left arm, my left hand does not work. Which means that I can't play string instruments anymore.

DH: Right, I'm so sorry.

PO: And that has been a very hard pill to swallow. Anyway, while I was in rehab, a lot of people visited me. I was thinking earlier, the last time I saw the band, Hot Rize, they came to visit me. So, anyway—two of the visitors I got were Sam Hudson and Garrison's son, Jason. Sam was the main engineer for the Prairie Home Companion Show. Jason handed me a couple of CDs and said, "I hope you enjoy your trip in the way back machine." They were recordings of me on the Prairie Home show. He was working on digitizing the Prairie Home shows from the tapes and every time he ran across something that I was on that he liked, he put it on a CD. He handed me these CDs and I listened to them and two things went through my head: one was, wow! I don't have any memory having done half the stuff. And two, how good it was—it was all so good. Shortly thereafter, Garrison gave me a call. One of the first things he said was, "Well, when can I expect to hear you play again?" And I said, "Garrison, that's never going to happen. That part of my life is over. But, your son provided me with some great entertainment and ideas." I was thinking, I started playing on the radio show in 1974. I had just turned twenty-one years old and I played on it pretty much until Garrison gave it up. That was a lot of shows—that was a



Peter Ostroushko, circa 1980
Photo by Mason Harris

lot of music.

DH: Covering maybe forty years?

PO: Yeah, and I said to him, "You know, this is a great opportunity. There are so few people in this world who have their life basically recorded. This would make such a great recording project—to show one musician's [journey] where he started from and where he ended up at. You've got that totally down in your recordings of the Prairie Home show." And Garrison said, "Yeah, I think that would make a good recording project."

I should point out that at this point, Peter was thinking about putting out recordings in the form of CDs. However, all that changed when Garrison told the Prairie Home production team to make that music available to Peter. Great! Right? Yes, that sounded great until Peter received a hard drive with every show that Peter had ever played on—all 260 shows with the note, "Have fun listening!". Here's where our conversation picks up:

PO: So, that's the way I've spent the last two and a half years. I've been listen-

ing to those shows and making notes. It struck me that it was impossible to think about putting this out as recordings. It would have been a hundred CD set. Also, it would have been totally prohibitive by the fact many of these musicians, I would have to get permission from them to use the material and then probably pay them something for using it—if I put out a recording like that. A friend of mine came over, Marian Moore, who used to produce a TV show on Channel 2 called, "Night-time Variety". It was a weekly show on KTCA, and it featured live music of Minnesotans, for the most part, and occasionally a national name would come on. Anyway, she came over and said, "Well, let me hear some of this stuff."

A Podcast?

Upon listening and discussing the music and memories, Marian persuaded Peter that what he needed to do was to create a podcast. Here's where our conversation picks up:

DH: The podcasts are very well produced. That's why I thought, "Who's do-

ing [producing] these? They're really well done.

PO: Well, I'm using Steve Kaul. He owns Wildsound recording studio over in Northeast Minneapolis. So, he basically just comes over to my house and sets up a microphone and off we go.

DH: Well, they're fascinating. They really are.

PO: Well, thank you.

DH: Peter, I wanted to touch on something you mentioned in the first podcast. You said that most people didn't know you were a "guitar-slinger" at one time, but I did. In fact, that was my first introduction to you back in the early 70s. I remember listening to you and Dakota Dave Hull flat-picking fiddle tunes at the New Riverside Cafe and the Cafe Extempore. In fact, I remember that you competed at the National Flatpicking Championship in Winfield, Kansas, and that you took third place back in 1974. I confirmed my memory by Googling past Winfield competitors.

PO: Well, there are people who will remember me that way. When you think of forty years on the radio show, most of the people that were Prairie Home fans toward the end would have known that. I mean, I still occasionally played guitar—I just used it to back me up singing. I wasn't like a flatpicker anymore.

DH: There's something else you said on the first podcast that I wanted to ask you about: You said back in the early 70s, you were just starting to pursue the fiddle and mandolin. I was surprised at that because, all flattery aside, when I hear someone of your caliber I just assume, "Oh, he's been playing the fiddle and mandolin since he was a child".

PO: Well, the first instrument I ever picked up and tried to play was the mandolin because my father played the mandolin—so there was one in the house.

And I would pick it up and try to figure out how to play Beatles songs on it.

Peter's early years

PO: I was totally self-taught. Being self-taught means a lot of things. It means



**Jim Tordoff, Dakota Dave Hull, Peter Ostroushko
Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN circa 1974**

that you kind of take the onus of putting in the time, figuring out what works and what doesn't work—you know, it doesn't come out of a vacuum. You're listening to a lot of other music. Which is something I did a lot of. I used to go and see people in concerts all the time—and recordings too. My older brother George and I both just got into getting recordings. We stock-piled a pretty big collection of music. Back then, my hero was Eric Clapton—particularly a recording by John Mayall and the Blues Breakers. It was the first time I heard him. And I was just blown away by his playing. And I sat there with my sister's plywood Harmony guitar and tried

to figure out how to play like him. I would sit for hours, picking up the needle off the record and putting it back down every four or five notes—I would learn. You know, I got a long way, but it wasn't until years later when someone put an electric guitar in my hands, then I said, "God, no wonder he can bend notes like that! You know? I had no idea!"

DH: So, as a teenager, you were playing electric guitar?

PO: I played electric guitar, yeah. It was my desire to be a Rock musician. Truly. I mean, you can't make this stuff up.

The Labor Temple and Rock and Roll

In the late 60s, early 70s, a group of hippies were intent on putting on Rock concerts complete with psychedelic light shows. The venue was a place at the corner of 4th St SE and Central Avenue called The Labor Temple. Because Peter lived five or six blocks away in NE Minneapolis, he was there all the time—taking tickets, relaying messages backstage and helping with the light shows. It was there at the Labor Temple he saw concert after concert of such greats as The Grateful Dead, Jethro Tull, Doctor John the Night Tripper, Country Joe and the Fish, Procol Harum, Savoy Brown, Ten Years After, the list went on and on. But it was a concert put on by

the Byrds that really caught Peter's attention. At one point, Jim (Roger) McGuinn wanted to feature their guitar player who McGuinn said was also the best Bluegrass flatpicker in the world. Yes, it was Clarence White. Clarence exited the stage and came back with an acoustic guitar and burned the place down by playing "Black Mountain Rag," or some other such tune. In Peter's words, "That was mind-blowing to hear Clarence White do that."

Peter's life takes a new musical direction

DH: Was that your first exposure to flatpicking guitar?

PO: Yeah, it was.

DH: Is that what drew you in?

PO: No, I'll tell you what drew me in. It was meeting Norman Blake back in late '73 or early '74.

DH: Well, I remember he played at the Whole Coffeehouse in the Kaufman Union at the U of M.

PO: Yeah, it was the first time that he played at the Whole. He played there many times. The first time he played there, he was on the road with a guy named Grant Boatwright who was in a Bluegrass band called, "Red, White, and Bluegrass." Norman was actually in that band. And that was amazing to hear two guys just go at it. But there was something about Norman's guitar playing that just—it grabbed me and I said, "I have to do that!"

Peter went on to describe himself as a flatpicking neophyte who so emulated Norman Blake that he was trying to become Norman Blake.

DH: From the initial time that you met him, did you ever dream that you would not only become good friends, but recording music with him someday?

PO: Back then, no. I didn't think I could possibly be in that league. But that was true of so many of the people.

Vassar Clements was another musician in a different league. But before Peter met Vassar, he met the Texas fiddler, Benny Thomasson at the National Fiddler Championship in Weiser, Idaho—1975.

PO: I went there just because I wanted to get immersed into a world of fiddle music—and that's what Weiser is. The campground is just full of fiddlers. The parking lot—fiddlers, everywhere you go it's fiddlers. And it just so happened that my girlfriend and I set up our little tent right next to Benny Thomasson's campsite, which was always going with

music. Anyway, on one of the last days of the festival, I was walking through the campground and saw Benny Thomasson sitting in a truck, in the passenger seat and he was playing fiddle. I walked up to the truck and I had my tape recorder with me and I said, "Benny will you play some tunes for me?" And he said, "Sure, what do you want to hear?"

By the time Peter walked away, Benny had sat and played for at least an hour



Garison Keiller, Greg Brown, Jean Redpath, Peter Ostroushko
A Prairie Home Companion, circa 1980
Photo by Mason Harris

or two—playing every tune Peter requested. When Peter got home from Weiser, he listened to that cassette to the point of almost wearing it out—trying to learn everything he could. So, Benny Thomasson was a big influence before Peter met Vassar.

PO: Once I met Vassar, that was like a whole other world. That was a whole other world of technical ability and ideas. Vassar's fiddle playing—he had a whole different concept of harmony. His sensibilities were more oriented toward blues and jazz. So, that was a big wake up call.

For Peter's recounting of perusing the fiddle and playing with Vassar Clements, check out his podcast, episode #3, part 1 www.peterostroushko.com

Peter would do the same thing with Vassar as he did with Benny. With his tape recorder in hand, in the green room

at the Whole Coffeehouse, Peter asked Vassar if he would play and demonstrate his fiddling—real slow. He showed Peter a lot of things, like how he used his double-stops in particular. What resulted was a treasure trove of material for Peter to study and learn from. As Peter said, "I learned so much from those guys." What Peter shared next, really surprised me.

PO: I was very shy about playing the fiddle. I didn't think I was any good at it—for years. I mean, when I started playing it on stage—I knew what I wanted to be, but I wasn't there yet and so, I just chose not to play the fiddle very often. But once I got to a place where it was good—yeah. Now, I would credit Mr. Garrison Keillor for helping make me a fiddler, because he loved fiddle music. It was the excitement that fiddle music caused. It was exciting to the audience to listen to people playing fiddle music, whether it was on the fiddle or guitar—or, whatever.

That's why we were on the Prairie Home show so much because we [Peter and Dakota Dave Hull] could provide that with our flatpicking duets. And then eventually, he would say, "I want you to play a fiddle tune—every time you come on the show." And so, that made me work at it.

Peter went on to tell me that the only reason he started playing the mandolin in earnest was because of joining the Middle Spunk Creek Boys. Rudy Darling was the fiddle player and Peter had high hopes of playing some twin fiddle tunes with Rudy, but they needed a mandolin player.

Al Jespersen, the leader of the band, had an old Gibson F-4 mandolin. He loaned it to Peter and told him "You play the mandolin in this group." In Peter's words, "So, I became a mandolin play-

Continued on page 15

Fold #1

Fold #2

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Official Board of Directors Election Ballot 2020

Nominee Bios can be found in this month's magazine and online at

www.minnesotabluegrass.org

To vote by mail:

Step 1: Remove the ballot from the center of the magazine.

Step 2: Mark the ballot and PRINT your name in the space provided.

Step 3: Fold the ballot in thirds, with vote inside and the address on the outside.

Step 4: Seal the ballot closed, apply a first-class stamp, and mail. **Mailed ballots must be postmarked by November 30th, 2020.**

To vote online:

Step 1: Go to www.minnesotabluegrass.org and click the **Board of Directors Election 2020** link.

Step 2: View the nominee bios and then click the **VOTE** link.

Step 3: Mark the ballot.

Step 4: Submit the vote. Online ballots must be completed by midnight **November 30th, 2020.**

Print name: _____ City: _____

If band membership, band name: _____

BOARD MEMBERS: (Vote for 5)

- Brett Day
- Dale Gruber
- Jamey Guy
- Nic Hentges
- Penny Hillemann
- Mabel Houle

Other (Write-in):

PLEASE NOTE

1. Only current members who have ACTIVE paid memberships are able to vote and names on the ballot will be used to verify eligibility. Ballots cast with illegible names or by lapsed or payment pending members will be discarded.
2. Ballots must be completed online or postmarked by 12 midnight November 30th, 2020 to be counted.
3. Additional nominee info can be found on the website



Brett Day

Please describe your volunteer experience

I have been a proud MBOTMA volunteer for 35+ years. I have served on several of our event committees over the years including the August Festival, Winter Weekend, State Fair and fund raisers. My first volunteer experience with MBOTMA was at Wildwood Campground and I, along with many others, helped build our stages at Camp-in-the-Woods and El Rancho Manana.

Over the years I have volunteered for other music events, charitable and health organizations, and arts programs.

Thank you members and thank you volunteers for being the heart of our Association.

Why are you interested in serving on the board?

I am asking for your vote as an At-Large Board member for our Association. We continue to take positive steps to strengthen our Association's policies, processes, and leadership so that members can participate in and enjoy and benefit from opportunities to be a part of our Old-Time and Bluegrass music community. Our selection of a new Executive Director has seen our organization become increasingly efficient, timely, and financially stable. As a Board Member I will work with others to continue to focus efforts for the benefit our members.

Please describe any Board experience, especially with nonprofits

I served on the MBOTMA Board in the late 1980s and participated on our first

strategic planning committee. Currently, I am serving my second term as a MBOTMA Board Member and serve on the Policy and by-laws committees. I have served on other non-profits Boards and have been on a board of incorporation. In addition, I have participated on funding and awards panels for the city of Saint Paul and for the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council. Served on Public Information committees of the Minnesota chapter of the American Cancer Society. Served on the Ethics Committee of the Health Sciences Communications Association. During my career I was a Contracting Officer's Technical Representative and participated on inter-agency committees.



Jamey Guy

Please describe your volunteer experience

Volunteering for most of my life has taught me to work with people, to accomplishing goals for bettering something I care deeply for. I began at 19 years of age volunteering for the United States Forest Service, and the Washington State DNR. That's when I truly felt the impact of giving back. Since that time I've volunteered with several organizations from photographing homeless individuals to send photos back home during the holidays, Habitat for Humanity, and Atlanta Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to name a few.

Why are you interested in serving on the board?

MBOTMA is a key factor in my discovery of Bluegrass and Old-time Music. I was introduced to the organization in 1999, and It's been a keystone in my life ever since. As a Minnesota acoustic musician, MBOTMA has been the source of most of my friendships, late night laughter, and family here in The Cities. I want to help preserve our wonderful organization, and give back to the community that has given me and my family so much.

Please describe any Board experience, especially with nonprofits

No experience in working with nonprofits other than in a vendor or volunteer capacity.



Dale Gruber

Please describe your volunteer experience

I have been on the June festival staff and August festival staff for 15 years. I have been on the board directors for four years. I have been a sponsor for many years.

Why are you interested in serving on the board?

I love the organization and want to help bring it in to the future.

Please describe any Board experience, especially with nonprofits

I have been on the MBOTMA board for four years and enjoy it very much. I want to help make it the best it can be.



Penny Hillemann

Please describe your volunteer experience

Much of my volunteer experience has been serving on boards (see below). I've also done some conservation volunteer work with River Bend Nature Center and the Carleton College Arboretum -- buckthorn removal, seed collecting, etc., in recent years. I have done a few volunteer shifts at MBOTMA festivals: checking wristbands, front gate at last year's August festival, and loading in. I understand the importance of volunteering and enjoy working as part of a team.

Why are you interested in serving on the board?

MBOTMA is essential! As someone who is learning to play bluegrass banjo I've just discovered this community in the past couple of years, but it has already brought me a lot of joy and I want it to thrive. I like to give back to organizations whose missions are important to me. I have a background in strategic communications, nonprofit leadership, and fundraising (plus, way back in time, a law degree and a few years of legal practice), as well as a lot of board experience that may be helpful.

Please describe any Board experience, especially with nonprofits

Just Food Co-op (Northfield) board, 2012-2019 (served as vice president and president, served on Outreach Committee and General Manager Search Committee).

Just Food is a cooperative, not a nonprofit, but it's a mission-driven organization responsible to its member-owners.

River Bend Nature Center (Faribault) board, 2013-2018

Northfield Healthy Community Initiative board, 2008-2015 (served as co-chair)

Also, in my current position as Executive Director for Rice County Area United Way I report to a board, so I have seen both sides of that dynamic.



Nic Hentges

Please describe your volunteer experience

I have volunteered at MBOTMA festivals teaching mandolin workshops, working the merch table, and serve on our nominations, policy, and executive committees. I also volunteer at my church coordinating the Audiovisual technology required for hosting virtual worship services.

Why are you interested in serving on the board?

I take pride in serving our mission and membership. My focus has been on policies and succession planning to help us build a stronger future and I hope to continue that work.

Please describe any Board experience, especially with nonprofits

I have served on the MBOTMA Board of Directors for the last five years and been Vice President since 2017.



Mable Houle

Please describe your volunteer experience

My volunteer experience began at a young age, as our family vocal group visited the local nursing home each week to sing for the residents. That tradition has continued as I join bluegrass musical friends to play at the Minnesota Veterans Home on a regular basis. I have volunteered at every Minnesota Bluegrass Festival that I've attended, and more recently serve as a key volunteer as the Vendor Coordinator.

Why are you interested in serving on the board?

The MBOTMA organization has been a valued part of my life for decades. Along with my kids and grandkids, we have benefited from the musical inspiration and lifelong friendships that have been forged through our shared love of bluegrass, American roots and old-time music. I want to contribute to the future of the organization.

Please describe any Board experience, especially with nonprofits

Served on the board of a security industry local chapter nonprofit of MNASIS for many years during my career.



er and spent the next four or five years playing at Dulono's on my birthday." So, that's when he really launched into playing the mandolin—in Peter's words, "just because I had to, there was no other mandolin player and I just told them, 'I'll do it' and I did it." So, at this point in our conversation, I came back to my question about when Peter learned how to read music.

DH: So, how did you learn how to read music, or when did you learn?

PO: Well, eventually I realized that I needed to learn how to read music if I wanted to go further in music.

The \$64,000 question

At this point, Peter explained that he would answer my question (about learning how to read music) by telling me a long, convoluted story about his new fiddling hero, Johnny Gimble. While teaching mandolin at a music camp in West Virginia, alongside Johnny Gimble (who was teaching fiddle), one of the students asked Johnny the proverbial \$64,000 question: in essence, "how do I become a professional like you?" Peter cringed as he knew it was an impossible question to answer—or so he thought. Fortunately, Johnny had an answer. After chuckling to himself, he responded, "You know, I've thought a lot about that and I've got it down to two things and I'll tell

you what they are: number one, You are in total control of your learning process.

You decide when you pick up your instrument to play and to learn and that covers a lot of ground including playing in front of people. You control your destiny in that [your musical development]. Number two, You gotta be really lucky—



The Middle Spunk Creek Boys: Alan Jespersion, Rudy Darling, Alan Struthers, Peter Ostroushko circa 1974

but number two won't happen without number one." As Johnny went on to describe his lucky breaks, Peter was thinking.

PO: As he was telling the story, I was thinking to myself, "Yes, in 1974 I met Garrison Keillor and he brought me with him on his radio show."

DH: It's obvious that being invited by Garrison onto his show was a huge break for you—musically. Being on that show, as a regular member, gave you tremendous exposure to many, many musicians over the years—right?

PO: Yes, absolutely.

DH: And you as a musician were being heard across the country.

PO: Well, at that time it was a local

show. It wasn't until May of 1980—when the show went National. And the other thing that happened in 1974—and I'm leading back to your question about reading music...

Peter went on to describe something that occurred in the last week of 1974. By "a total fluke" he ended up at the Sound 80 recording studio recording with Bob Dylan to play on his, *Blood on the Tracks* album. In retrospect, Peter found himself thinking, "Those two things happened for me." It was the first recording session Peter ever did, but not his last—to say the least. Out of this experience, Peter received more and more requests to record on other people's projects and he became a session player. This also included commercial work in which oftentimes, a writer was hired to compose music that he, as a musician, had to be able to read and play. One time, Peter was doing a session when they put a piece of music in front of him to which he replied, "I can't play that—I can try playing some other stuff," which he did, but he lost the gig to another violinist who could read. That taught Peter a lesson: "Maybe you should put in some time to learn how to read," he told himself.

DH: Peter, when did you start composing music? You've composed a ton of music.

PO: Again, I credit Garrison for that too. He always wanted us to play anything original and he really kind of pushed us to do that—even though I wasn't sure I could, but I did, over the years.

DH: I'm particularly drawn to your waltzes. Where did all those beautiful melodies come from?

PO: I have no idea. The waltzes basically came from a piece that I heard Norman Blake play on the mandolin, the first time I saw him, called, "The Nine Years Waltz." It was the most beautiful thing I had ever heard and I wanted to be able to do that. So, later on I kind of focused on waltzes.

We then started talking about some

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of the tunes Peter had written. I asked Peter to name some of his personal favorites, but he said he liked everything he's ever done. He's able to listen to old recordings he's made with no regrets of how it went down. But after pausing a bit, Peter said he's probably played "Heart of the Heartland" more than anything he's ever done. Here's what he had to say about that tune:

PO: Often, while I was playing it I would start crying because it was so beautiful. It's like I would become overcome by the melody of it. Now, where does that come from? Where does that music come from? Well, to be honest with you, here's what I believe: I believe it comes from the Holy Ghost—I do.

DH: I agree.

PO: I believe it's God talking to us. I think God talks to us through music—through instrumental music. If you go hear the Minnesota Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra or anyone who is playing instrumental music—what goes through your mind is totally different for every person who is sitting there listening. And to me, that is the voice of the Holy Spirit talking to everybody.

I did ask Peter about a few other tunes, but I did want to touch on one aspect of his technique: his unmistakable tremolo. I thought maybe he practiced it against a metronome, but he said no, it was always something that he was just able to do—naturally. He never really thought about it—it just came. Maybe it was a result of years, as a young person, listening to the older people playing the mandolin. They all did tremolo. When he started teaching, that was a big question from his students: "How do you do it?" That forced Peter to really sit down and analyze how it was that he came to a point in his ability to produce a good tremolo. Peter told me that he thinks he finally came up with the solution. He believes he's helped a lot of students in developing their tremolo.

DH: And...?

PO: It's too hard for me to describe—it's something that I'd have to show.

My last question

DH: What is "Sluz Duz music"?



Becky Reimer, Peter Ostroushko, Powderhorn Park, Minneapolis circa 1975

PO: [laughter] Well, at the time, "Dawg music" was king. Everyone was talking about David Grisman and his

"Dawg music." So, after a show, people would come up and say to me: "Gosh, that piece you played sure sounds like Dawg music. And I'd say, "What's that?" And I just came up with "Sluz Duz" music. Sluz Duz comes from a saying that my mother used to say in Ukrainian. It basically means one French fry short of a picnic basket [or Happy Meal]—describing someone who has flipped their mind.

DH: Thanks so much Peter.

PO: You are welcome. Thank you.

DH: My wife and I are praying for you. You've been a big inspiration in my life.

PO: Thank you for saying so.

DH: Thanks again, Peter.

Thus ended our conversation. While I was hoping for thirty minutes, Peter graciously gave me an hour and twenty minutes. Here, all these years, I thought he just was naturally gifted and didn't have to work very hard at producing music. Truth be told, he's worked very hard at honing the skill and ability he's been gifted with and as a result, his many years of producing wonderful music have been a great gift to us all. Peter truly is a Minnesota treasure.

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Upper Midwest Folk Fiddle Fest Saturday, November 7

Last fall, the Minnesota State Fiddlers Association received their first Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council (SEMACE) grant to put on the first Upper Midwest Folk Fiddle Fest in spring, 2020, in Cannon Falls, Minnesota. The idea was to have a day of workshops, jams and a concert focused on the fiddling traditional from the region, with a long-range goal of making this an annual event.

Then came Covid; and the event was rescheduled for November 7, 2020.

Now, it's going to go completely virtual.

The event, featuring The Lakeside Ramblers (Milwaukee), Upper Midwest Folk Fiddlers (St. Paul) and Hoof on the Roof (Cannon Falls) will be on Saturday, November 7, 2020, with programs beginning at 1 pm.

Workshops on YouTube and Zoom will cover a wide variety of Upper Midwest fiddling.

- “Clawhammer” Michael Sawyer recently published “The Stoltman Tune Book – Fiddle Tunes Played in Northwest Minnesota.” The Upper Midwest Folk Fiddlers have been studying these tunes and will tell stories and play the tunes from this rich tradition.

- Hoof on the Roof has been diving into the real background of one of the best-known Upper Midwest fiddlers, Charles “Pa” Ingalls from the “Little House in the Prairie” series. Using current research, Mary Pat Kleven will talk about the musical life of “Pa” and share her insights as to the dance tunes he likely played, and the band will teach and play a few of them.

- The Lakeside Ramblers will play and teach tunes collected from the iconic band “Goose Island Ramblers” from Madison, Wisconsin, featured in the book *Polkabilly* published by the University of Wisconsin. This band has a fascinating

history, and many of their tunes were published by Mel Bay in the book *Uff Da! Let's Dance – Scandinavian Tunes and House Party Music* by Bruce Bollerud.

At 5:30 p.m., the bands will perform a free virtual concert, and at 7 p.m. there will be an Upper Midwest Folk Fiddle Jam on Zoom.

If people want to attend, but cannot make these times, they may register to receive the links that will be accessible after November 7th.

MSFA Members can register for free; as well as any interested musician age 21 or younger. The fee is \$15 for all others. To register, send your name and email to: msfafiddlers@gmail.com for links and (if necessary) payment information.

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts & cultural heritage fund, and is sponsored by the Minnesota State Fiddlers Association – “Keeping the Heritage of Fiddling Alive.”



Upper Midwest Folk Fiddle Fest Saturday, November 7, 2020

1:00 p.m. YouTube and Zoom Workshops
5:30 PM FREE YouTube Concert
7:00 PM - Upper Midwest Folk Fiddle Jam on Zoom!

***FREE for all MSFA Members - FREE for musicians
ages 21 and younger - \$15 for all others***

To register:

**Send your name and email to: msfafiddlers@gmail.com
for links and payment information. Links will also be
accessible after November 7th. More info on
www.fiddlemn.com.**



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Southeastern Minnesota Arts Council thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts & cultural heritage fund.

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I'll Fly Away

by Wayne Erbsen

There are many ways to close out a bluegrass show, but I always favor ending an evening's entertainment with a rousing version of "I'll Fly Away." This song is the perfect choice because everybody knows it and they love to sing along. Recently, I started digging into the origins of "I'll Fly Away," and here's what I found.

"I'll Fly Away" was among the earliest compositions of Albert Edward Brumley, who was born in Indian Territory near Spiro, Oklahoma, on October 29, 1905. Growing up in a family of sharecroppers, Albert knew from an early age that he had bigger plans than chopping and picking cotton. With a natural bent toward music, in 1922 Albert attended his first singing school when he was just a teenager. As it turned out, these classes were a watershed moment in young Albert's life. As he later wrote, "in one lesson the teacher wrote out a scale on the blackboard and explained that all the songs that have been written and all the songs that will ever be written could be found on that little scale. That set me on fire! That's when I decided that if other people could do it [compose music], I could do it too."

Early on, Albert realized that writing a good song was more than just having a catchy melody. He instinctively knew that the words and the music were a team that must work together. Even though cash was scarce in Albert's family, he spent what little money he had saved and bought a number of paper backed gospel songbooks. By comparing the words and melodies of the songs that people "sung the tar out of" with those songs that were rarely sung, Albert was gradually figuring out what made a great song different from a poorly written one. Determined to be a gospel song writer, at the age of sixteen he penned his first complete song, "I Can Hear Them Singing Over There."

One of Albert's favorite gospel songwriters was E.M. Bartlett, who owned the Hartford Music Company and was director of the Hartford Musical Institute

in nearby Hartford, Arkansas. Bartlett was already gaining fame for writing such songs as "Everybody Will Be Happy Over There," "I Heard My Mother Call My Name" as well as "Take an Old Cold Tater and Wait," which was later made famous by Little Jimmy Dickens. With the burning desire to learn to compose gospel music, in 1926 Albert walked the thirty miles from Spiro, Oklahoma to Hartford, Arkansas. There he met E.M. Bartlett, who soon asked Albert if he had the \$5 to enroll in the singing school. When Albert told him he only had \$2.50 in his pocket, Bartlett accepted him into the Institute and even invited Albert to live with him and his wife at no cost. For Albert, this was a dream come true. Before long, Albert was not only studying music but was also working for Hartford Music, making songbooks and eventually teaching in their traveling singing school. At one singing school Bartlett introduced Albert by saying that "Albert was so skinny that he wore a double barrel shotgun for a pair of britches."

Brumley returned to school with Bartlett in 1929, and at the end of the term Bartlett put Albert and three other students on the road as the Hartford Quartet. They covered the country singing gospel music on behalf of the Hartford Music Co. The salary for quartet members was \$50/mo. They traveled in a T-Model Ford touring car. The old car didn't have side curtains, so the quartet often arrived at their destination wet and muddy from their journey over dirt roads in an open car. Albert said they spent as much time cleaning themselves up before a performance as they did performing.

They usually performed at rural churches and country school houses. Roads were bad, especially after rains, and it seemed that every destination was far out in the country on the worst road in the country. Albert later remembered that "we were lucky to make 50 miles without having a flat. A lot of time we

would do our own repair work to get a little further down the road to a real mechanic.

Albert sang low bass and take turns at the piano with fellow singer Burgess Bell. Albert never considered himself much of a singer. In later years, after he became famous he was constantly asked to sing, but he always refused, saying "I can carry a tune all right, I just can't unload it."

In their performance they mixed gospel songs with comedy. One of their favorite comedy songs was "Take an Old Cold Tater and Wait" written by their mentor Eugene Bartlett. It was later made famous by Little Jimmy Dickens.

On one of his trips home, Albert started to compose the song that he would eventually call "I'll Fly Away." Here's how he explained it: "I thought of the theme and started working on it while I was picking cotton in 1928. I was out in the field by myself-or at least there wasn't anyone close to me- and I got to humming this old song, 'The Prisoner's Song.' Where it says 'If I had the wings of an angel over these prison bars I would fly,' it suddenly dawned on me that I could use the world for a prison and heaven for freedom when we pass on. And I started working on that theory. You'll notice in one stanza of 'I'll Fly Away' it says 'when the shadows of this life have grown, I'll Fly Away, like a bird from prison bars has flown.' I paraphrased that from the 'Prisoner's Song.' Actually, I was dreaming of flying away from that cotton field when I wrote 'I'll Fly Away.'" Even though Albert started writing the words to "I'll Fly Away" in 1928, he worked on it off and on for the next three or four years, searching for the right phrasing and the right melody. Eventually, Hartford Music Company published it in 1932. The song has been recorded by thousands of artists and has sold millions of copies. Today there exist over 5,000 licensed recordings of the song.

Unlike Hank Williams, who felt that if a song couldn't be written in a half-hour, it wouldn't make it, Brumley would often spend years tinkering with a song, looking for just the right combination of words and music that would reach out and touch his audience.

"I'll Fly Away" not only became Brumley's most popular song, but it remains the most popular song in all of Southern gospel music. It was first recorded in 1940 by the Selah Jubilee Singers. In 1949 The Chuck Wagon Gang released "I'll Fly Away" on their Fort Worth, Texas radio program. That recording went on to sell over one million copies.

The awards that "I'll Fly Away" had garnered are impressive indeed. In 1976 it was named "Most Recorded Gospel Song in History" by SESAC. In 1986 Brumley was inducted into the SESAC Hall of Fame. The International Bluegrass Music Association honored Brumley with their Distinguished Achievement Award, and

he was inducted into the Ozark Hall of Fame. Albert E. Brumley was also honored by the International Bluegrass Music Association with their Distinguished Achievement Award (Charter Member).

In addition to "I'll Fly Away," Brumley wrote scores of songs that have become standards in bluegrass gospel music. Some of these include "Jesus, Hold My Hand" (1933), "I'd Rather Be An Old Time Christian" (1934), "I'll Meet You in the Morning" (1936), "There's a Little Pine Log Cabin" (1937), "Did You Ever Go Sailin'?" (1938), "Turn Your Radio On" (1938), "I Found a Hiding Place," (1939), "He Set Me Free" (1939), "Rank Strangers to Me" (1942), "If We Ever Meet Again" (1945), "I Just Steal Away and Pray" (1946), "I'm Bound For that City" (1954) and "Dreaming of a Little Cabin" (1952)

If heaven has a gospel choir, surely Albert E. Brumley will be there singing bass.

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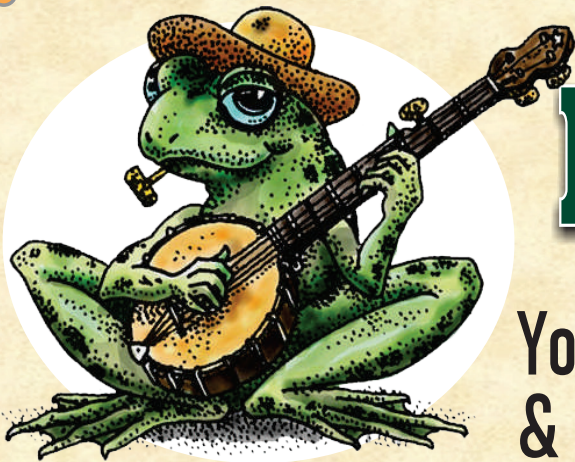
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Bluegrass Saturday Morning

By Phil Nusbaum

The Homely Virtues

When you think of the homely virtues, bluegrass / old-time fans might think of the Carter Family. Part of the appeal of the group, which started performing in public in the 1920s, was its God-and-Family repertoire.

Of course, bluegrass and old-time music has embodied the other end of the spectrum, too. Back in the 1920s, Jimmie Rodgers put forth a rough-and-rowdy approach that was very popular with audiences, with songs like “In the Jailhouse Now.” But Rodgers also sang sentimental songs with titles such as “Mother Queen of My Heart.” Songs reflecting homely virtues have had great staying power in bluegrass / old-time styles.

But the existence of the homely virtues extends a lot further in bluegrass music than song lyrics. You can see it plainly in the perseverance of family groups in old-time and bluegrass music. You can see it, too in the way musicians and fans relate to each other at bluegrass festivals or shows. It’s very matter-of-fact and based on the model of friendship.

The bluegrass and old-time music communities shun glitz and embrace do-it-yourself (DIY). As far as DIY, from its early days, stages have been improvised in locations such as schoolhouses and fairgrounds. Today, old-time and bluegrass continue the DIY connection as the enterprise is supported to a great extent by volunteers and nonprofit organizations.

Sometime in the last 20 years or so, the Nashville Bluegrass band performed at the MBOTMA August Festival hosted by MBOTMA. In other areas of show business, you might expect some kind of special costuming for the biggest event of a weekend festival. But when members of the Nashville Bluegrass Band took the stage, each band member was dressed in an individualistic fashion. If there was any unity in dress, each member represented “upscale casual.” Each member fit in, in his own way. The absence of glitz threw the spotlight on the activity that brought everybody together in the first place: musical performance.

The ability to adapt to circumstances is a strength of the bluegrass / old-time communities. This is plain to see at this year’s World of Bluegrass, sponsored by the International Bluegrass Music Association (www.ibma.org). It is a weeklong event held each September into October. At every WOB, there are band showcases, which take place on stages that are run by stage managers and audio engineers. They are generally not fancy, but they are consistent. However, because of Covid-19, the 2020 event is a virtual one. As a result, this year’s World of Bluegrass showcase concerts lean on DIY. Despite Covid, bands carry on using whatever is handy to stage performances.

But when you are doing it yourself, where do you stage a concert? School auditoriums are not possible because many schools are closed. In 2020, bands chosen to showcase at World of Bluegrass had to find locations in which to record performances to be presented at stated times. As a result, if you viewed some of

the showcase performances, you saw some big living rooms. You saw some seeming backyards. You saw one performance at what seemed like a campsite with the sun going down and cicadas chirping. In every one of these cases, bands turned unfavorable circumstance into virtue. They all made the surroundings look nice, even if there were occasional unwanted glimpses behind the curtain. It was all very roll-up-your-sleeves to get the job done, DIY, in many cases cute, and full of native resourcefulness.

I would bet that World of Bluegrass showcase bands would much rather perform in a venue that is provided. When you perform, you want to be focused on your performance, and not whether a deer will prance through your outdoor “performance space” and knock down your cell phone camera that had been placed on a stand. But all the bands figuring out ways to rehearse and perform through the pandemic are displaying an evolved homely virtue of DIY native resourcefulness. Each individual effort promotes a performer or band, and together, they keep the old time / bluegrass enterprise going during some rough times.

Hats off to the bands!

Music Listings

To access the Acoustic Music Listings, at www.jazz88.fm, click on schedule. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Bluegrass Saturday Morning. Then scroll down to Blog Posts and click on Bluegrass Saturday Acoustic Music Calendar.

Weekly Playlists, Listen Online - www.jazz88.fm

To stream KBEM programming, at www.jazz88.fm, click on “listen live.” Bluegrass Saturday Morning playlists are located at www.jazz88.fm. At the top of the home page on the right-hand side, select “playlists.” Then click on the desired date. To listen to archived shows, at www.jazz88.fm, click on “on-demand.” Then click on the date and show.

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To post live streams, gigs and events to this calendar, [Go to this link: https://forms.gle/HPEXGchHuEPChi1s6](https://forms.gle/HPEXGchHuEPChi1s6)

GKb: Grand Kabaret, 210 N Minnesota St, New Ulm, 507-359-9222, www.thegrandnewulm.com

10/25 - Sunday

- Bill & Kate Isles, Ursa Minor Brewing, Duluth

10/31 - Saturday

- Nici Peper with Kit Klidahl, GKb, 7pm

11/2 - Monday

- Bill & Kate Isles, Livestream, www.facebook.com/billandkateisles, 7pm

11/5 - Thursday

- Laura MacKenzie, Kasson Public Library (may change to virtual), Kasson, 6:30pm

11/7 - Saturday

- Hoof on the Roof, Upper Midwest Folk Fiddle Fest ONLINE, www.fiddlemn.com, 1pm

- Traveled Ground, GKb, 7pm

11/9 - Monday

- Bill & Kate Isles, Livestream, www.facebook.com/billandkateisles, 7pm

11/10 - Tuesday

- Laura MacKenzie, Dodge Center Public Library (may change to virtual), Dodge Center, 6:30pm

11/16 - Monday

- Bill & Kate Isles, Livestream, www.facebook.com/billandkateisles, 7pm

11/18 - Wednesday

- Danny and Jimmy, Dubliner Pub, 2162 University Ave W, St.Paul, 8pm

11/23 - Monday

- Bill & Kate Isles, Livestream, www.facebook.com/billandkateisles, 7pm

11/27 - Friday

- Dave Simonett, FITZ, 8pm
- Celtic Thunder, State Theatre, 805 Hennepin Ave, Mpls, 800-982-2787, 7:30pm

11/30 - Monday

- Bill & Kate Isles, Livestream, www.facebook.com/billandkateisles, 7pm



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Tab: Fiddler's Dream

By Bob Douglas

This tune has been played by more old-time, Missouri, bluegrass, and contemporary players than most any tune I know. It is attributed to and was first recorded by Fiddlin' Arthur Smith (1898-1971). He recorded it in 1935 on a 10 inch Victor 78, BVE-87677. Smith was backed up by the Delmore Brothers, Alton and Rabon, stars of the Grand Ole Opry in the 1930s.

"Fiddler's Dream" is included on Charlie Walden's *100 Essential Missouri Fiddle Tunes*, which was a slam-dunk decision, since it's been recorded by great Missouri fiddlers such as Cyril Stinnett, Bob Walters, Lyman Enloe, Pete McMahan, and Vesta Johnson (not to mention Charlie Walden himself). In 1953, legendary Opry and Nashville fiddler, Tommy

Jackson (1926 -1979), recorded Fiddler's Dream on one of the first "long-playing" LPs on Dot Records, *Popular Square Dance Music—Without Calls*. The tune was also recorded by Grand Old Opry and Flatt and Scruggs fiddler, Benny Martin (1928-2001) on his 1974 Marathon LP, *Southern Bluegrass Fiddle*. And one of MBOTMA's own luminary bands, Cagley, Black, Schaefer & Njoes included the tune in their 2001 Copper Creek recording, *Friends in Music*.

I first heard and made my attempt to learn the tune from the 1969 American Heritage LP, *Poor Richard's Almanac*, featuring some of the youngest and hottest bluegrass players then playing, Alan Munde, Sam Bush, and Wayne Stewart, I had to purchase my own copy and al-

most wore out the album trying to learn the tunes at a slowed 16 2/3 RPM rotation. That was before the advent of You-tube slow-downs, don't you know. But now you can utilize that handy tool online to hear more recent recordings of "Fiddler's Dream" from the likes of John Reischman & the Jaybirds, Bruce Molsky's Mountain Drifters, Michael Cleveland, and Butch Baldassari.

The notation given here is close to what I arrived at in both the playing and hearing of the tune by so many great musicians. The A part is in the key of G; the B part is in D, then return to the A part to end the tune. Fit it on for size and learn why so many good folk like and play "Fiddler's Dream."

Bob Douglas
dougfuls@usgo.net

Fiddler's Dream

The musical notation for "Fiddler's Dream" is presented in four staves. The first two staves are in the key of G major (one sharp, F#) and 2/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The second staff continues the melody. The third and fourth staves are in the key of D major (two sharps, F# and C#) and 2/4 time. The third staff starts with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth staff includes first and second endings, marked with '1' and '2' above the notes. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat sign.



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Jamming at the Crowne! Winter Weekend 2020
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