

## What is new at the Folk Club

Summer is here, and if you missed DRAMTREEO you missed a lot. New and wonderful people are coming to the "open mike" these days and we look forward to seeing you there. As you can see in the "Coming Attractions", we continue to bring you music of traditional interest, all excellent!

Do you have an event you would like listed? If it is musical and would interest us get the info to Dave Hurd (or any board member) and we'll try to get it in the newsletter. If you have a "Want Ad" of musical interest, (for sale, etc.) get it to us and we will print it free to members (space permitting).

How to become a member? Send or hand \$12.00, checks to **The Reston Folk Club**, to a board member or Dave Hurd at the address below. Membership is for one year and entitles one to a mailed newsletter and discounts to events. Also, to perform in a **Folk Club** sponsored community event, one must be a member (the "open mike" is open to ALL, member or not).

### **The Reston Folk Club**

at The Tortilla Factory  
648 Elden Street  
Herndon, VA 22070  
c/o David Hurd  
1405 Cottage Street SW  
Vienna, Virginia 22180

# The Reston Folk Club

... Preserving Folk Traditions

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## WHAT IS FOLK MUSIC, ANYWAY?

--Dick Moore

That's my question: "What is folk music, anyway?"

Well, I don't have an answer, but I would like to share some thoughts with you.

Finding a definition for "folk music" isn't easy. In my view, those who try often fail. For instance, here's what the Harvard Dictionary of Music says about folk music:

*"A folk song may be defined as a song of some antiquity and of unknown authorship, which has been handed down orally for many generations and has become widely known throughout a nation or a smaller community."*

I think we'll all agree that the above is only part of the story. There are too many good folk songs out there whose authors are, indeed, well known. And there are plenty of folk songs, which are hardly of "antiquity," some written in the past few years by not-so-anonymous colleagues in the Reston Folk Club.

If we can't define folk music, what about music itself? What is it and when did it get started?

Not that I have the answer to that question, either, but I will draw from one of my favorite authors, David Reck, who wrote an absolutely marvelous book, published by Scribner's in 1977:

*Music of the Whole Earth.*

David, along with a number of other musicologists, believe

the whole thing started with birds, which have inspired men and women for countless centuries. But birds could carry the process only so far, and Reck points out it was men and women who listened to the birds, comprehended, imitated, developed melodies, and used them for both spiritual and secular purposes.

A personal note. Twelve years ago, I was in Ghana in West Africa, among other things running the American Cultural Center, where I produced a series of seven-hour programs on the history of jazz, a bonafide American creation growing from the intertwining roots of African and European cultures. During the first workshop of the series, we explored those roots, and I was fortunate to have the participation of Joseph Kobun, a xylophone player who had been the chief musician of a village in northern Ghana. Joseph's instrument had roughly carved sounding boards and--for amplification--gourds with small holes covered by spiderwebs, which helped create resonance. We

often played together...more or less...since the notes of my flute and guitar didn't really match those of Joseph's instrument. Didn't matter. Neither one of us was "right," and it surely was fun.

At that first workshop, when Joseph had finished playing one of his own melodies, I asked him to tell us how it had been composed. He smiled and said, "Well, I was sitting in the trees listening to the birds. With my left hand I copied a bird in the tree to my left, and with my right hand I copied a bird in a tree to my right."

The roots of melody? The roots of jazz? The roots of folk music?

Also performing at the workshop were villagers playing those wonderful talking drums, with some of the most complex rhythms I had ever heard. Through the drumbeats, they told stories and they told the evening news for people in the villages without TV or radio, and this music came from the very souls and psyches of the people. Folk mu-

sic? I should say.

Sometimes I wonder if that chap who wrote the entry to the Harvard Dictionary of Music has ever been to West Africa. Maybe better yet, he should join us at the Reston Folk Club and hear some pretty good folk music of not-such-great antiquity.

## IONA to Perform at The Folk Club

On July 31, The Reston Folk Club will host IONA, a Celtic music group featuring Barbara Ryan, Bernard Argent and Diana McFadden. Known widely in the local area for their renditions of music and traditions of the British Isles and the Celtic heritage, IONA has performed at the Maryland Renaissance Festival, the Birchmere, Marmadukes in Annapolis and at the Barnes at Wolftrap.

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

- Jul 25 - Hickory Grove, Weathervane, Frederick, Md (7PM)
- Jul 29 - Hickory Grove, Nottoway Park, Vienna, Va (6PM)
- Jul 31 - IONA at **The Reston Folk Club** (7:30PM)
- Aug 5 - Hickory Grove, Lake Anne Conc, Reston, Va (7PM)
- Aug 25 - Bill Staines, Club Acoustic, Herndon, Va (8PM)  
with George Turman
- Aug 25-Oct 14 - IONA at The Md. Renaissance Festival
- Sep 8-9 - Chesapeake & Weathervane trip to Norfolk Fest.
- Sep 18 - Joe Hickerson, at **The Reston Folk Club** (7:30PM)
- Sep 22 - Mac Bailey, Club Acoustic, Herndon, Va (8PM)  
with Vicky Pratt Keating