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Homegrown Harmony: Celebrating a Decade of Song!
Sunday, November 12, 2023 3 p.m.

Englert Theatre

A fall concert by the **Family Folk Machine** In partnership with




The Family Folk Machine is a non-auditioned, intergenerational, nonprofit choir. We build community through singing songs with our neighbors, explore American history and culture through song, foster individual musical growth, and pursue excellence as an ensemble.



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FAMILY FOLK MACHINE

P.O. Box 1421
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A Hard Rain’s a-Gonna Fall

Bob Dylan, arr. Jean Littlejohn

Morgan Brown, Sebastian Sauder, Michael Crow, Mike Severino-Patterson, Mike Partridge, Ruth Manna,
Craig Kessler, Lynn Partridge, Michael Sauder, Jeffrey Morgan, and Brandy Mitchell, soloists

O, where you have been, my blue-eyed son? O, where have you been, my darling young one? I’ve stumbled on the side of twelve misty mountains. I’ve walked and I’ve crawled on six crooked highways. I’ve stepped in the middle of seven sad forests. I’ve been out in front of a dozen dead oceans. I’ve been ten thousand miles in the mouth of a graveyard. And it’s a hard rain’s a-gonna fall. O, what did you see, my blue-eyed son? O, what did you see, my darling young one? I saw a newborn baby with wild wolves all around it. I saw a highway of diamonds with nobody on it. I saw a black branch with blood that kept dripping. I saw a room full of men with their hammers a-bleeding. I saw a white ladder all covered with water. I saw ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken. I saw guns and sharp swords in the hands of young children. And it’s a hard rain’s a-gonna fall. And what did you hear, my blue-eyed son? And what did you hear, my darling young one? I heard the sound of a thunder, it roared out a warning. Heard the roar of a wave that could drown the whole world. Heard one hundred drummers whose hands were a-blazing. Heard ten thousand whispering and nobody listening. Heard one person starve, I heard many people laughing. Heard the song of a poet who died in the gutter. Heard the sound of a clown who cried in the alley. And it’s a hard rain’s a-gonna fall. O, what’ll you do now, my blue-eyed son? O, what’ll you do now, my darling young one? I’m going back out ‘fore the rain starts a-falling. I’ll walk to the depths of the deepest black forest, where the people are many and their hands are all empty. Where the pellets of poison are flooding their waters. Where the home in the valley meets the damp, dirty prison. Where the executioner’s face is always well-hidden. Where hunger is ugly, where souls are forgotten. Where black is the color, where none is the number. And I’ll tell it and think it and speak it and breathe it, and reflect it from the mountains so all souls can see it. Then I’ll stand on the ocean until I start sinking. But I’ll know my song well before I start singing. And it’s a hard rain’s a-gonna fall.

People Have the Power

Patti Smith and Fred “Sonic” Smith, arr. Jean Littlejohn

Jean Littlejohn, Jeffrey Morgan, Conor Hilton, Louise Olivier, Nora Sobocinski, Callum Crall,
Star Marcelino, Xiomara Ayala, and Beatrice Harper, soloists

I was dreaming in my dreaming of an aspect bright and fair, and my sleeping, it was broken, but my dream it lingered near in the form of shining valleys, where the pure air rarefied. And, my senses newly opened, I awakened unto the cry that the people have the power to redeem the work of fools; on the meek the graces shower, it’s decreed: the people rule! People have the power! Vengeful aspects became suspect, and bending low as if to hear, the armies ceased advancing because the people had their ear. And then the shepherds and the soldiers, well, they lay beneath the stars, exchanging visions and laying arms to waste in the dust, in the form of shining valleys, where the pure air rarefied. And, my senses newly opened, I awakened unto the cry: People have the power! Where there were deserts, I saw fountains, like cream the waters rise. And we strolled there together with none to laugh or criticize. And then the leopard and the lamb they lay together, truly bound. I was hoping in my hoping to recall what I had found, when I was dreaming in my dreaming, God knows a purer view, as I surrender to my sleeping I commit my dream to you. People have the power! The power to dream, to rule, to wrestle the world from fools. It’s been decreed: the people rule. I believe everything we dream can come to pass through our union. We can turn the world around; we can turn the earth’s revolution - we have the power. People have the power!

To My Old Brown Earth

Pete Seeger, arr. Paul Halley

To my old brown earth, and to my old blue sky, I now give these last few molecules of “I”. And you who sing, and you who stand nearby, I do charge you not to cry. Guard well our human chain. Watch well you keep it strong as long as sun will shine. And this our home, keep pure and sweet and green, for now I’m yours, and you are also mine.

Precious Friend

Pete Seeger, arr. Jean Littlejohn

Just when I thought all was lost, you changed my mind. You gave me hope (not just the old soft soap): you showed that we could learn to share in time (you and me and Rockefeller). I'll keep plugging on; your face will shine through all our tears. And when we sing another little victory song, precious friend you will be there, singing in harmony. Precious friend, you will be there.

FAMILY FOLK MACHINE SINGERS

Kristi Abuissa
Susan Ahrens
Xiomara Ayala
Glenda Buenger
Laura Christenson
Aprille Clarke and Callum Crall
Libby Conley
Michael Crow
Emily Edrington
Julie Ellen
Sara Feldmann
Lily French, James Smith, and Lila French-Smith
Renee Harper and Beatrice
Susan Henke and Star Marcelino
Linda Johansen
Denise Kanne
Craig Kessler and Janet Lessner
Jocelyn Koolbeck and Corrina
Dave Larew
Perry Lenz
Shawna Levy
Gene Light
Ruth Manna
Marty Miller
Brandy Mitchell
Jane Moeckli
Jeffrey Morgan
Laurie Neuerburg and Micah
Katharine Nicholson
Katherine Olivier and Louise
Lynn and Jerry Partridge
Mike Partridge
Cecelia Proffit and Conor Hilton,
Harper and Emerson Hilton

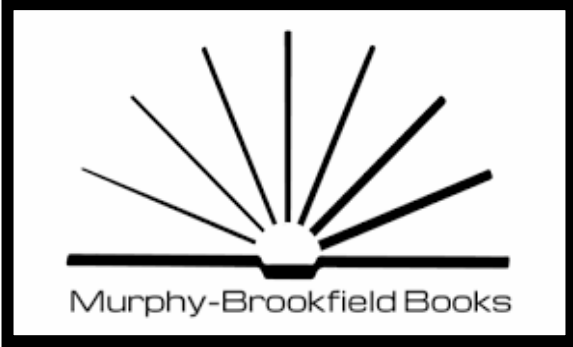
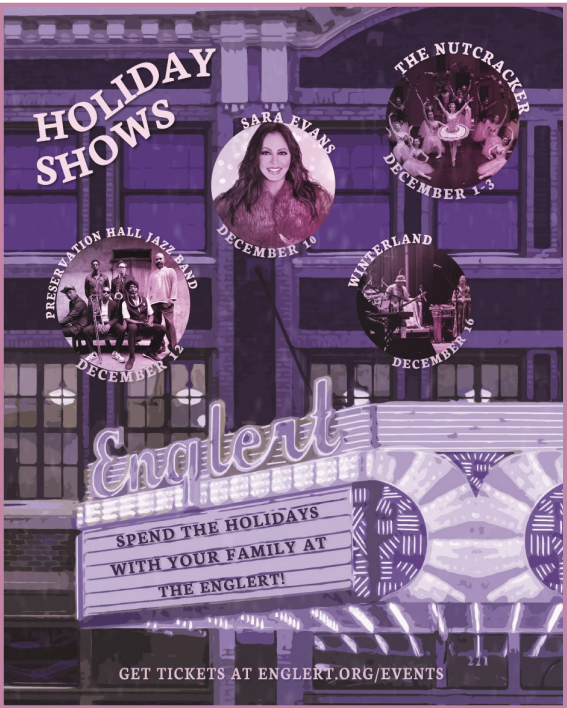
Reed Renneckar
Joanna Sabha and Alia
Michael Sauder
Laura Semprini and Shalai
Mike Severino-Patterson and Lisan
Harper Sherwood-Reid
Christine Sobocinski and Nora
Susan Stamnes
Martha Szyberg and Alina
Elizabeth Willmore, Sam and Morgan Brown

FAMILY FOLK MACHINE BAND

Alma Drake, guitar and percussion
Laurie Haag, cajón, drums, and percussion
Craig Kessler, soprano saxophone
Craig “Pappy” Klocke, all the instruments
Jean Littlejohn, keyboard
Christine Moad, bass
Laurie Neuerburg, flute
Mary Neumann, violin
Katherine Olivier, flute
Jon Ranard, keyboard
Ben Sauder, violin
Sebastian Sauder, cello
Mike Severino-Patterson, trumpet
Nicole Upchurch, ukulele and banjo
Waelyn Upchurch, ukulele

LEADERSHIP

Jean Littlejohn, Director
Alma Drake, Associate Director
Jon Ranard, Associate Director
Sebastian Sauder, Assistant to the Director



*In memory and in honor
of our parents,
Janet and Rex, Richard and Ann.
With all our love,
Jeffrey and Cheli Morgan*

Thank you to **SENIOR CENTER TECHNOLOGY AND VIDEO (SCTV)** for videotaping all of our concerts, including today's performance, and for masterfully editing and producing a meaningful and lasting archive of our music.

The Family Folk Machine presents

HOMEGROWN HARMONY: CELEBRATING A DECADE OF SONG!

That Cause Can Neither Be Lost nor Stayed

original Danish text: Kristian Ostergaard
English: J.C. Aalberg
Danish folk tune, adapted by J. Nellemann, arr. Jean Littlejohn

That cause can neither be lost nor stayed which takes the course of what nature made, and is not trusting in walls and towers but slowly growing from seeds to flowers. Each noble service that we have wrought was first conceived as a fruitful thought; each worthy cause with a future glorious by quietly growing becomes victorious. There by itself like a tree it shows that high it reaches, as deep it grows; and when the storms are its branches shaking, it deeper root in the soil is taking. Be then no more by a storm dismayed, for by its force full-grown seeds are laid; And though the tree by its might it shatters, what then if thousands of seeds it scatters.

I Got a Name

Norman Gimbel and Charles Fox, via Jim Croce
arr. Jean Littlejohn

Like the pine trees lining the winding road, I’ve got a name, I’ve got a name. Like the singing bird and the croaking toad, I’ve got a name. And I carry it with me like my daddy did, but I’m living the dream that he kept hid. Moving me down the highway, rolling me down the highway, moving ahead so life won’t pass me by. Like the north wind whistling down the sky, I’ve got a song. Like the whippoorwill and the baby’s cry, I’ve got a song. And I carry it with me and I sing it loud; if it gets me nowhere, I’ll go there proud. And I’m going to go there free!! Like the fool I am and will always be, I’ve got a dream. They can change their minds, but they can’t change me: I’ve got a dream. Well, I know I can share it if you want me to; if you’re going my way, I’ll go with you.

You’re Not Alone

Allison Russell, with new lyrics by Alma Drake
arr. Jean Littlejohn
Kristi Abuissa and Lynn Partridge, soloists

Hey, my little evening star, how bright you are. Anywhere you go, you’re not alone. Rocks and bugs and angel wings, every little shiny thing, anywhere you go you’re not alone. You’re the North Star and the compass, always finding something wondrous; anywhere you go, you’re not alone. Wish that I could keep you from sorrow and harm. None of us is here for long, but you’re not alone. In the cradle of the circle, all the ones that came before you, their strength is yours now, you’re not alone. Sparrows in the morning, crows at dusk, singing with your mommy, we have love. From everywhere to anywhere, from history to the wild future, music brings us together as one family. Music reunites us with the history of our living breath, and no matter what we dream we become one family.

I Want to Sing

(world premiere) FFM kids with Nicole Upchurch

Loving, growing, buzzing in the springtime sun; raindrops into rainbows. Swimming and exploring, having summer fun. Friendships may erode, others grow. I want to love. I want to sing. I want to bind. I want to weave. Baking, raking, gathering in autumn; spending time with family. Sledding and enjoying winter’s holiday hum, around the fire merrily.

Just Like You

(world premiere) FFM Songwriting Group
arr. Michael Crow, Alma Drake, and Jean Littlejohn
Gene Light, Mike Severino-Patterson, and Dave Larew, soloists

Mama’s voice would wrap me up like liquid gold. I would sing along about four years old. She lost her pick inside the guitar, now it’s rattling, and the cat purring in the sun carries me away. What did I do to deserve all this? But don’t you think that everybody does? I’m walking through the hilltop woods today. Trying to find the way back to where I’ve been. The branches rattling sound like Mama’s pick a-clattering and a child’s laughter suddenly carries me away. I’ve paid my dues so take me back now, I’ve paid my dues so give me simple pleasures. Let me lie in the sun when my school/work day is done. Let me lie in the sun just like you. I had ambition way back in the day; wanted the job and wanted the pay. Then things got rougher and the world got tougher, and now my cat and I are gonna run, run, run away.

Goddess

(world premiere) FFM Songwriting Group
arr. Jon Ranard
Ruth Manna, soloist

Flew too high. Fell crashing down. But whispers in the shadows called me to the shore. The Goddess beckoned, “Come where the pebbles are smooth, when the day is a purple blue wound.” Her head held high, crown of jagged gems; sharp black lines upon her painted palm. See the colors of my pain. Weathered and worn, painted hands chipped, as light through broken glass. The splendor of the Goddess shone. Followed, tattered, and torn, but gold in my soul bathed in her deep blue Psalm.

Rabbit Hole

(world premiere) FFM Songwriting Group
arr. Alma Drake and Jean Littlejohn
Susan Stamnes and Liz Willmore, soloists

I came up from the rabbit hole, careened across the floor; thumbscrews, these pointy shoes, left the pom pons by the door. I came up from the rabbit hole, sidled to the mirror me. Shiny wrappers, scraps and scatter, cleared in time for tea. I smile at the real me, beneath the paint I recognize. I don’t mourn my uniform; I’m starting to get wise. We spend all day plotting our escape from the claustrophobic world the hunger culture creates. My bare feet hit the floor, I loosen up my spine. I don’t mourn my uniform, the real me suits me fine. I came up from the rabbit hole, perfect skin, sparkling eyes. I reject the obligation to build this sweet disguise. I came up from the rabbit hole, swept into the holding bin. Every mask an artifice; I shed the photo grin.

Joyous Heart

(world premiere) Lyrics by FFM Songwriting Group
Music composed and arr. Jon Ranard
Harper Sherwood-Reid, soloist

Delight is a moment that lives in a heart. Quickened by a lifting grin, and eyes that dance and spark. Sadness is a moment that lives in a heart. Thirsty cries and stinging eyes. Soon the tears will start. Tossed around here and there, a place to land and harbor care. It’s fine to stay and it’s safe to go. Joyous hearts will find their way home. Some hearts sing for one thing, others sing for more. All our songs can harmonize, though they have clashed before. Shattered hopes and might have beens, sometimes take a toll. Folded hearts, though cracked within, are still completely whole. There is no lie without the truth, no ocean without waves. No fire without a spark. Time may not heal, but joy can reveal a way to rearrange a heart.

Do More Good

Joe Firstman and Brian Wright, arr. Jon Ranard

Well, the young and the old, the sick and the cold, the ones who just long to get out of control; The ones that'll call, and the ones that'll fold, and everyone standing 'round the table. The meek and the mild, the weak and the wild, the ones who won't speak this mean to a child; Those who have lived with their feet to the fire and forgave every miserable jailer. Hey, I love 'em all, can't turn my back, and that goes double for you. Gonna do more good, gonna talk less trash; that's about all I can do. Now the free and the chained, the simple and plain, the ones who just can't seem to hit where they aim. The ones that get by on their family name, those who have no one to call on. The freaks and the prideful, the peaks and the eyefuls, the ones who just wait 'til their dreams are all stifled; Those too afraid to admit they've been lied to, martyrs with no sword to fall on.

This Machine (written for the FFM's 5th anniversary, in 2018)

Jeffrey C. Capps

arr. Jeff Capps, Jean Littlejohn, and Nicole Upchurch

Jeff Capps and Aprille Clarke, soloists

Woody, you were always on the move, the way that it's been told. Woody, you just sang the truth. What are you gonna do with your precious, precious time? What are you gonna choose? Traveler, you are coming home. This machine wages peace, and this machine runs on belief. There ain't nothing they can do to shut it down, and ain't nobody ever gonna turn this thing around, 'cause this machine makes the sound of love. Fight the fight with a lyric and a light, 'til you find the harmony. Fight the fight 'til the darkness dies. All in all, just takes something pretty small to rock this big old world. All in all, we're stronger from the fall. Traveler, you are coming home; soldier, you are coming home; singer, you are coming home. This machine wages peace.

Shine On (world premiere)

Janet Lessner, arr. Alma Drake and Jean Littlejohn

Janet Lessner, Susan Henke, Christine Sobocinski, and Craig Kessler, soloists

From high above the earth, the rainbow is a circle. May the circle be unbroken 'round your heart from when you're young. May you change the gales to breezes as you go out in the world. And every day may we meet you in the sun. May you turn black and white into shades of subtlety. May you change the rocks to pebbles where you run. May you look into the mirror and love the one you see, and every day may we meet you in the sun. Shine, children, shine; Shine, sweet children, shine. If we have to, we will fight, 'cause everybody has the right to shine. As the years go by, here's what helps to keep us whole when we meet closed hearts and need to rise above: a few good friends to lean on, and work that feeds our soul, and the grace to find comfort in our love. Play your music loud, wave your arms and dance, sing your song full voice and beat your drum. And when the moment comes when you're asked to take a chance, remember: you shine like the sun. Shine, children, shine. From high above the earth, the rainbow is a circle. May the circle be unbroken 'round your heart. Shine on.

Free to Be...You and Me

Stephen Lawrence and Bruce Hart, arr. Jean Littlejohn

Lila French-Smith and Micah Neuerburg, soloists

There's a land that I see, where the children are free; and I say, it ain't far to this land from where we are; Take my hand, come with me where the children are free; Come with me, take my hand, and we'll live in a land where the river runs free, in a land through the green country, in a land to a shining sea, and you and me are free to be you and me. I see a land, bright and clear, and the time's coming near when we'll live in this land, you and me, hand in hand. Take my hand, come along, lend your voice to my song. Come along, take my hand, sing a song for a land where the river runs free, for a land through the green country, for a land to a shining sea, for a land where the horses run free, and you and me are free to be you and me. You can find your own sound in this land where we're bound; In this land, there's no fear, everyone is welcome here. Take my hand, come with me, where the children are free; Come with me, take my hand, and we'll run to a land where the river runs free, to a land through the green country, to a land to a shining sea, to a land where the horses run free, to a land where the children are free. And you and me are free to be you and me.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Eleven years ago, the Family Folk Machine (more accurately, the to-be-named family folk choir) was just a twinkle in the eye of a few Iowa Citians. My family had just returned from a two-year stay in the Boston area, where my small children and I had a great time singing with an intergenerational choir. I thought we were probably not the only people in the Iowa City area who would value being part of a musical experience where children and adults of all ages and backgrounds could participate and contribute equally.

When we held the first FFM rehearsal in January 2013, I was amazed by the people who showed up. The Machine has grown from that point, adding singers, instrumentalists, and leaders who brought new ideas that have taken the group in directions I never could have dreamed up on my own. The FFM has become, in the words of one participant, “a non-auditioned, intergenerational community choir that supports its members and the wider community through music, working to promote understanding, acceptance, equality, and social justice through song.”

Thank you for coming to our concert today and for celebrating with us the end of this tenth-anniversary year! We hope you will sing along with us today. We are excited and proud to present several brand-new original songs in today's program. As part of our anniversary celebration, the choir worked on songwriting last spring: the kids with Nicole Upchurch, and the adults with Christine Moad. The short-term results are the original songs you'll hear today, but we know that the lessons of these workshops will stay with participants and continue bearing fruit.

Thanks to the community for all your support through the last 10+ years!

Jean

The Family Folk Machine extends our sincere appreciation to the following:

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Emily Edrington, audio/visual support

A special note of gratitude to the Paula O. and Lowell Brandt Fund of the **Community Foundation of Johnson County** for awarding a grant to the **Family Folk Machine** in support of this concert!



To the Kids of the
Family Folk Machine:

You ROCK!!!!

Craig and Janet

Love and heartfelt thanks to
everyone who has been part
of the FFM, 2013–2023!

Jean