



Coming Soon

5/8

Little Feat

The Last Farewell Tour

5/10

Jake Shimabukuro

with Andrew Hoyt

5/13

Samantha Fish

5/16

Jackie Venson

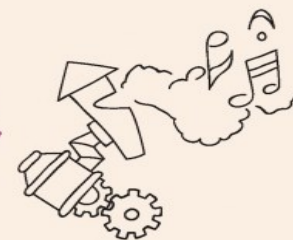
with James Tutson at Wildwood Saloon

6/4

Marty Stuart

and His Fabulous Superlatives

**Family Folk
Machine**



**Spring
Concert**

**Free!
Donations
Accepted**

**Saturday, May 2
Englert Theatre
3pm**



Art by Susanna Rodriguez

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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Kristi Abuissa	Perry Lenz
Amel Ali	Shawna Levy
Laura Bergus	Gene Light
Courtenay Bouvier	Ruth Manna
Kristi Brinck	Elizabeth Marilla-Kapp and Liliana
Glenda Buenger	Joe McGee
Liz Caldwell and Cora	John McKinstry
Jim Calkins	Marty Miller
Cole and Anna Chapman,	Jessica Montgomerie
Jude and Lucy	Marilyn Moore
Aprille Clarke and Callum	Jeffrey Morgan
Libby Conley	Bonnie Murphy
Michael Crow	Bill O'Neill
Amy Dobrian and Mike Partridge	Tony Orrico and Mindy Myers,
Michele England	Orion and Iris
Ned Epps	Lynn and Jerry Partridge
Michal and Riley Eynon-Lynch	Cecelia Proffit and Conor Hilton,
Sara Feldmann	Harper, Emerson, and Zora
Ed Flaherty	Reed Renneckar
Nancy Footner	MaryAnn and Bob Reynolds
Kate Fox	Derek Rodgers and Margot
John and Donita Grebner and Harper	Susanna Rodriguez and Halah
Liz Gaar	David Rust
Francis Gurtz	Michael Sauder
Faye Hadfield	Jeremy Schwenker and Greta
Missy Harrison	Mike Severino-Patterson and Lisan
Brian Hartley	Janet Shepherd and David Kleist
Susan Henke	Harper Sherwood-Reid
Roxanne Hughes	Hannah Shultz
Pensée Ismael	Corinne Stanley
Denise Kanne	Susan Stamnes
Kevin Kaufman	Martha Szyberg
Mary Helen Kennerly,	Alicia and Sam Taylor, Evan and Alma
Aurora and Theia	Peggy Taylor
Craig Kessler and Janet Lessner	Jim Throgmorton
Joe Klingelhutz	Mary Trachsel
Dave Larew	Claire Trettin, Charlotte and Theodore

Annette Vernon
Mykola and Svitlana Volkogon,
Sashko and Oriana
Will Wilkinson, Tavi and Felix
Elizabeth Willmore and
Morgan Brown
Margaret Wilmeth
Caroline Woods
Laura Yoder

FAMILY FOLK MACHINE BAND

Alma Drake, guitar
Ed English, bass guitar
Rowan Eynon-Lynch, percussion
Laurie Haag, percussion
Craig "Pappy" Klocke, everything
Ben Sauder, violin
Pat Smith, guitar
Hemlock Stanier, violin
Adam Zeithamel, cello

LEADERSHIP

Jean Littlejohn, Director
Alma Drake, Associate Director
Jon Ranard, Associate Director
Hemlock Stanier, Assistant to the
Director
Nicole Upchurch, Kids' Program
Director

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Laura Bergus
Emily Edrington
Jeffrey Morgan
Susan Stamnes

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

The Iowa City Senior Center	Sam Knutson, technical support	All FFM members, past and present
The Englert Theatre	The Family Folk Machine Board	Screen printing volunteers
Brad Mowrey, video production	Susanna Rodriguez, original poster art	The PS1 Press Co-op
Hospers and Brother Printers	Susan Stamnes, research, publicity, web	Marty Miller, treasurer
Our advertisers and sponsors	Mike Partridge, jam sessions	Francis Gurtz, Shape Note consultant
Hazel Boerner, childcare	Gene Light, equipment and AV support	Yotopia: Iowa City's Original FroYo
Tobin Crall, childcare	Kevin Kaufman, equipment transport	The Iowa State Historical Society
Waelyn Upchurch, childcare	The Old Capitol Chorus, choral risers	The Iowa City Bike Library
Mabel Wittenkeller, childcare	Glenda Buenger, rehearsal CDs, research	

ABOUT THE SONGS FROM *THE SACRED HARP*

The Sacred Harp is a collection first published in 1844 that presents songs intended for a cappella singing where the noteheads each have one of four shapes: a circle (like our "regular" notes), a rectangle, a triangle, or a diamond. The "shape-note" system was part of a music-education push in the nineteenth-century United States; in the early days of Iowa's statehood, it's likely that the Singing Schools that provided wholesome entertainment for young people used shape-note songs. Each shape is associated with a solfège syllable: Fa is the triangle, Sol is the circle, La is the rectangle, and Mi is the diamond. You'll hear the choir "singing the shapes" before we start the words for each song.

As the New York City brass band The Westerlies reminded us at Hancher's Stop/Time festival this April, the name "sacred harp" refers to the instrument constituted by all our voices singing together. While most traditional *Sacred Harp* songs are religious, we present three songs today on the secular side, with some beautiful additional lyrics by FFMer Francis Gurtz. Here is an example of the notation, from a song we're not singing on today's concert:

A Major Joseph Hart, 1759.

M. A. Hendon, 1859.
D. C.

Come, my soul and let us try For a lit - tle sea - son. What is this that casts thee down? Who are those that grieve thee?

Chorus: Speak - ing may re - lieve thee.

ABOUT OUR COVER ARTWORK

When Jean first put out the call for a design with this year’s project theme, the image came to me almost instantly, like it had been waiting to be revealed. I created this image as a reflection of where I come from and what I carry with me.

A sunflower reaches toward the light, holding a quiet hope that believes in growth even when the sky is uncertain.

Being from Iowa, I have learned how a place can hold both change and memory at once. My relationship with this place hasn’t always been simple; there were times I didn’t feel rooted here. But over time, I’ve come to see that places, like people, ask something of us. And Iowa needs those willing to help it grow, to keep it moving forward.

The Goldfinch rests here as a symbol of home, not just where I am, but how belonging has felt over time. I was born in “old Mercy” and grew up here in the eighties and nineties, one of the few Mexican American kids in town. This city looks different now than it did then. It wasn’t always easy to find myself reflected in the world around me. But even then, something within me kept reaching.

My mother and grandmother taught me to see the Monarch butterfly not just for its beauty, but for its grace and spirit. They taught me that monarchs are more than travelers; they are our ancestors, returning like angels. When they arrive, they bring memory, sacrifice, and love carried across generations. They travel far, guided by something unseen, trusting there will be a place to land.

Because of those who came before me, my path was made possible. In my own way, I try to steady the ground beneath me to make the path a little clearer, a little softer, for those who will come after. I’m reminded of the voices around me in Family Folk Machine: how each generation carries something forward, how no voice stands alone, and how together we create a path that did not exist before.

This image lives in the space between wings and roots held here, in Iowa, where past and future meet, and where we are all still becoming.

Susanna Rodriguez

John R. Strief D.D.S.

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- Food distribution through our community garden
- Basic first aid

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Family Folk Machine: DREAMING IOWA

Complete song lyrics are available at familyfolkmachine.org.

KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

Claire Trettin and Liz Caldwell, soloists

A song about belonging, finding home, and realizing that we already have what we need.

The Nields
arr. Chris Eastburn

HOME IN IOWA CITY: OUT OF MANY, ONE

Morgan Brown, soloist

Alma Drake and Morgan Brown
arr. Alma Drake and Jean Littlejohn

A brand-new song written for this session by Alma Drake and Morgan Brown about diversity and belonging right here in our town. We'd love to have you join us on the choruses:

**This is my home; there is no fear
Everyone is welcome here
And if we work together, everyone can belong
Home in Iowa City: out of many, one**

WILDCAT DEN

Amel Ali and Liliana Marilla-Kapp, soloists

Words: Susan Stamnes
Music: Alma Drake
arr. Alma Drake and Jean Littlejohn

Perhaps you have visited Wildcat Den state park? In this song we create sounds to represent wind, insects buzzing, and birds calling to evoke a day well-spent with the natural world.

THREE SONGS FROM *THE SACRED HARP*

Within thy circling power I stand

Tune: P. Dan Brittain (1971)
Words: Isaac Watts (v. 1) (1719)
Francis Gurtz (v. 2) (ca. 1993)

Lord, what a thoughtless wretch was I

Tune: Daniel Read (1785)
Words: Isaac Watts (1719)

Now shall my inward joys arise

Tune: William Billings (1770)
Words: Isaac Watts (v. 1) (1709)
Francis Gurtz (v. 2) (1992)

TEND TO OUR GARDEN

Nicole Upchurch and FFM Kids

The FFM kids wrote and arranged this song with Nicole Upchurch, inspired by an activity led by Miriam Alarcón Avila.

HEARTLAND

Nicole Upchurch, soloist

Nicole Upchurch
arr. Alma Drake and Jean Littlejohn

Nicole Upchurch wrote this song based on a poem by Miriam Alarcón Avila about the experience of belonging to two places at once.

I AIN'T GOT NO HOME IN THIS WORLD ANYMORE

Woody Guthrie
arr. Jean Littlejohn and Alma Drake

A song about displacement and migration and economic injustice. Woody was writing with Dust Bowl migrants in mind, but so many of his words still resonate today.

IOWA

Donovan Woods and Aoife Maria O'Donovan
arr. Jean Littlejohn

Donovan Woods wrote, about this song, "I feel like I fit in everywhere. In America, I'm often reminded that I don't."

ELIZA JANE

Words: Winthrop Packard, 1895
Music: Rick Spencer and Dawn Indermuehle
arr. Jean Littlejohn

Eliza Jane is mocked by those who are threatened by her wearing pants, riding a bicycle, and wanting the vote. In our arrangement, you can hear the joy and freedom of Eliza riding her bicycle in the traditional fiddle tune that breaks out of the texture.

HARDLY BREAKING

Jeffrey C. Capps
arr. Jean Littlejohn and Alma Drake

Jeffrey C. Capps, Mike Severino-Patterson, Brian Hartley, and Kristi Brinck, soloists

This song, written by Jeff Capps for the Dreaming Iowa project, asks "Is this still a place for me?"

THE RIPPEY DUMPS

Words: Susan Stamnes, Alma Drake, and Janet Lessner
Music: Alma Drake
arr. Alma Drake and Jean Littlejohn

Orion Orrico, Courtenay Bouvier, and Jeffrey Morgan, soloists

An FFM original that looks at the proud history of Iowa and reflects on areas in which we've been sliding downhill lately.



Photo of the actual Rippey Dumps Road, in Winterset, IA

THE WHOLE TIME

Sam Knutson
arr. Sam Knutson, Alma Drake, and Jean Littlejohn

Sam Knutson, soloist

An Iowa song that rolls and flows like the landscape. Sam Knutson wrote this song after a conversation with a great Iowa character.

WOULDN'T THAT BE NICE

Words: Michael Sauder
Music: Michael Sauder and Alma Drake
arr. Michael Sauder, Alma Drake, and Jean Littlejohn

Greta Schwenker and Jeremy Schwenker, soloists

Wouldn't it be nice to recognize all the colors that make the light
All the wings that help us fly when we feel the weight of life
Wouldn't that be right, wouldn't that be nice?
Wouldn't it be nice to empathize with those who might be left behind
With those who have fallen down and could use a hand to rise
Wouldn't that be right, wouldn't that be nice?
Wouldn't it be nice to harmonize all our voices, low and high
To harmonize what we do with what we pray, to make a kinder place where everyone is safe
Where fires are for keeping warm and pitchforks are for hay
Where stern looks are made with love and truth is on display
Where fields are full, where water's clean, and people have a say
Where every kid can be their self in the light of day
To make a place where we give more than we take away
Wouldn't that be right, wouldn't that be nice?

HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING?

My life flows on in endless song, above earth’s lamentations.
I hear the real though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing.
It sounds an echo in my soul, how can I keep from singing?

What though the tempest loudly roars, I hear the truth, it liveth.
What though the darkness ’round me close, songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that rock I’m clinging.
Since love shall reign o’er all the earth, how can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble, sick with fear, and hear their death knells ringing,
When friends rejoice, both far and near, how can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile, our thoughts to them are winging.
When friends by shame are undefiled, how can I keep from singing?

So life flows on in endless song, outlasting kings and tyrants.
We raise our voices from our hearts; how could we dare be silent?
No shouts of rage or chilling fear shall stop our freedom ringing.
Since music breathes love to the world, how can we keep from singing?

Music: R. Lowry
Words: Anne Warner, 1864
New Verse 4 lyrics: Alma Drake
arr. Jean Littlejohn, via Chris Vinsonhaler

ABOUT OUR GUEST MUSICIANS

Jeffrey C. Capps

Born in the Rust Belt, raised in the Bible Belt and now settled in the Corn Belt, Jeffrey C. Capps is a product of his many hometowns. He is a husband, father and non-profit professional. Capps currently (happily!) resides in Iowa City and serves as executive director of The Iowa Children’s Museum, spending much of his spare time writing songs and dreaming up his next musical endeavor. Capps released his debut solo album The Muddy and the Blue in 2009, following three full-length releases with Memphis-based band The Central Standards — winners of radio station Rock 103’s inaugural “Great Unsigned” contest, which earned them the opportunity to open the 2006 Beale Street Music Festival. These days, Capps stays busy with a range of projects, including performing with his Iowa-based bands The Soft and Low and Blast Choir, as well as collaborating with the intergenerational folk choir Family Folk Machine. Capps’ most beloved/mystifying musical practice involves writing/recording a song for each of his two daughters’ birthdays every year.

Sam Knutson

Sam Knutson is one of Iowa City’s most enigmatic songwriters. His music flows from rebellious to reverent, from deep honesty to the tallest tales; it includes songs about both internal and external weather, and songs about mistakes and youthful foolishness with dry, self-deprecating humor. His songs are wildly unique and yet comfortingly familiar. What they are is authentically Sam Knutson songs. He fronted a really good band that did four CDs and got considerable critical acclaim, but the touring wore him down, as it does. He toured smaller folkie venues as a solo artist for a decade or so, and brought the Iowa Opera House concert series to life. Sam started out as many indie singer/songwriters did in the 80s, with records on cassette, switching to CDs in the 90s. There are still CDs, but nowadays much of his music is offered digitally from his Bandcamp page. His catalog is rich and deep, and well worth exploring.

Nicole Upchurch

Nicole Upchurch is a singer/songwriter, banjo player and educator currently residing in Iowa City. She performs regularly with Awful Purdies, a women-powered folk quintet, and The Feralings, a folk americana quartet. In addition, Nicole is a nature-based preschool teacher at Creekside Forest School at Indian Creek Nature Center where her love of music, language and nature intersects daily. Her song “Something in the Water” - recorded by Awful Purdies - brings awareness about water quality and climate issues in Iowa and was awarded “Best Song By a Local Artist” in 2021 by Little Village’s Best of the CRANDIC. Nicole’s involvement in these projects present meaningful ties to her community through activism, educational outreach and live performance.



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