

# Central Pennsylvania

# Traditions

the newsletter of the  
Harrisburg, PA USA Since 1985

**Susquehanna Folk  
MUSIC SOCIETY**



## November / December 2020 Events

### Fall Coffeehouse.....Page 2

*Sun, Nov 1* • Join us online for a live-streamed edition of our popular series of performances by regional artists. Enjoy songs and tunes performed by Paul Wegmann and Beth Greenberg, Russ and Paulette Matthews, and Chris Purcell.



### Del Rey.....Page 2

*Sat, Nov 7 and Sun, Nov 15* • An old-time performer of blues, jazz and ragtime with an exquisite fingerpicking style on guitar and ukulele returns to Central Pennsylvania on consecutive weekends for a live-streamed concert and conversation and a ukulele workshop.



### David Jacobs-Strain.....Page 3

*Sat, Nov 21* • A singer-songwriter brings an eclectic mix of blues and indie-folk lyricism, along with a fierce slide-guitar, for a live-streamed concert and conversation.



### Jewish Music Traditions.....Page 4

*Sun, Dec 6* • Five groundbreaking female Klezmer musicians join forces for a unique residency exploring the roots, development and modern expressions of traditional songs and instrumentals. "Artist to Artist: A Residency Exploring Jewish Music Traditions" is a free program of workshops via Zoom.



### John McCutcheon.....Page 5

*Sun, Dec 13* • A true "Renaissance man" of folk music presents a free, live-streamed concert and conversation exclusively for SFMS members, thanks to a generous contribution by long-time members Bruce and Joan Kolka.



### SFMS's Expanded YouTube Channel .....Page 3

Explore SFMS's growing video archive of online performances, in-person concert and festival clips, "Meet the Masters" interviews and much more.

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## Del Rey, Sat., November 7, and Sun., November 15



West Coast singer, guitarist and ukulele player Del Rey brings her extensive repertoire of original and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century blues, jazz and ragtime songs and tunes, together with her distinctive fingerpicking style, to the Susquehanna Folk Music Society for a pair of online events, beginning with a live-streamed concert and conversation on Saturday, November 7, at 7:30 p.m., followed by a ukulele workshop via Zoom on Sunday, November 15, at 4 p.m.

Rey began her musical career at age four, when her parents bought her a guitar, and by age seven she was performing in a talent show. In her early teens, Rey became immersed in folk music by frequenting a local record store whose owner, the artistic director of the San Diego Folk Festival, introduced her to everything from country blues to classic jazz to hillbilly boogie. Rey eventually focused on ragtime from 1900 to the 1920s and blues from 1920 to the 1950s. Over time, she has become an authority on the pioneering women who helped shape American roots music, including Memphis Minnie, Lovie Austin, Rose Maddox, Mary Osborne, Maybelle Carter, Lydia Mendoza and Sister Rosetta Sharpe.

As a performer, Rey is known for her virtuosic playing on the resonator guitar and resonator ukulele; her ability to produce a full, complex sound on her instruments; her fine singing and engaging stage presence; and her fashion sensibility that hints of Minnie Pearl.

Rey has played all over the world, including at such well-known events as MerleFest, Kerrville Folk Festival, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, Vancouver Folk Festival, and San Remo (Italy) Blues Festival. Rey has recorded 17 albums on the Hobemian Records label that she co-founded with bluesman Steve James in 1991, and she has made four instructional DVDs for Homespun. In addition to James, Rey collaborates and frequently tours with fiddler Suzy Thompson and guitarist and ukulele player Adam Franklin. She writes for many publications, including *Acoustic Guitar Magazine*, and is a popular instructor at guitar camps like The Ashokan Center and The Swannanoa Gathering.

Rey's live-streamed concert on November 7 will be accompanied by a chat with blues guitarist and SFMS member Hank Imhof. Participants in Rey's ukulele workshop on November 15 will receive a video lesson to study when they register for the workshop. The earlier participants register, the more time they will have to prepare so that they can get the most out of the workshop, which will focus on questions and practice. Since workshop participants cannot hear each other play, even beginners can attend without feeling self-conscious.

Separate registration is required for the concert and workshop. Voluntary donations are requested for the concert, with the suggested donation for each viewer being \$15 and the supporter-level donation being \$20. Ticket prices for the workshop are \$13 for SFMS members, \$15 for general admission and \$20 for supporter-level participants. The concert and workshop will not be archived for later viewing. To register for the concert, workshop or both, please visit SFMS's webpage for this event at [sfmsfolk.org/concerts/DelRey.html](https://sfmsfolk.org/concerts/DelRey.html).

### Fall Coffeehouse, Nov. 1

The Susquehanna Folk Music Society's ever-popular Coffeehouse series moves online this season, beginning with the live-streamed Fall Coffeehouse on Sunday, November 1, at 4 p.m.

The performers, all from the Central Pennsylvania, include Paul Wegmann and Beth Greenberg, who play informal, rough-hewn classical duets on guitar and bass; Chris Purcell, a singer-songwriter and guitarist with a wide range of delightful covers and great original songs; and Russ and Paulette Matthews, long-time Coffeehouse faves who deliver pure folk in a fun and entertaining style. Each act will perform a set of about 20 minutes. Local musician and SFMS member Joe Cooney will host the event.

Viewers may watch the Fall Coffeehouse on SFMS's website ([sfmsfolk.org/events/coffee\\_fall.html](https://sfmsfolk.org/events/coffee_fall.html)) or catch it on SFMS's YouTube channel or Facebook page. The event is free, but donations to SFMS are welcome.



# David Jacobs-Strain, Saturday, November 21

David Jacobs-Strain, a fierce slide-guitar player and song poet from Oregon, brings his “Left Coast” blues and indie-folk sensibility to the Susquehanna Folk Music Society for a live-streamed concert and conversation on Saturday, November 21, at 7:30 p.m.

Jacobs-Strain is known for his virtuosity and spirit of emotional abandon. His live show moves from humorous, subversive blues, to delicate balladry, and then swings back to swampy rock and roll. It’s a range that ties him to his own generation and to guitar-slinger troubadours like Robert Johnson and Jackson Browne.

Though still in his thirties, Jacobs-Strain has been performing to public acclaim for more than 25 years. At age nine, he began singing while accompanying himself on the guitar. By age 12, he was playing at fairs and festivals. Early on he developed a fascination for the blues, having seen live shows by Taj Mahal and Walker T. Ryan and listening to recordings of acoustic blues masters, such as Johnson, Skip James, Lightnin’ Hopkins and Mississippi Fred McDowell. A concert by Bob Brozman inspired him to learn bottle-neck slide guitar. When he was 15, Jacobs-Strain became the youngest-ever faculty member at the prestigious Port Townsend (Wash.) Country Blues Festival & Workshop, teaching alongside blues greats that he had long idolized.

A highly travelled performer and instructor by the time he graduated from high school in 2001, Jacobs-Strain enrolled in Stanford University but later dropped out to become a full-time musician. He resolved to put his own creative stamp on his work. “I wanted to tell new stories; it just wasn’t enough to relive the feelings in other people’s music,” he says.

Over the years, Jacobs-Strain has appeared at major festivals from British Columbia to Australia, including MerleFest, Telluride Blues Festival, Philadelphia Folk Festival, Montreal International Jazz Fest, Newport Folk Festival, and Blues to Bop in Switzerland. He has shared the stage with the likes of Lucinda Williams, Del McCoury, Etta James, Bob Weir, Janis Ian and The Doobie Brothers; he did more than 60 shows touring with Boz Skaggs. In recent years, Jacobs-Strain has enjoyed performing with harmonica player Bob Beach and with his amplified string band, The Crunk Mountain Boys.

Jacobs-Strain was a teenager when he recorded his first album, “First Friday Live,” in 1998. He has since recorded nine more albums, including 2013’s “Geneseo,” which had its origins in a converted 1820s church in upstate New York, and last spring’s “The Rhududu Sessions Vol. I and II,” a collaboration with fellow singer-guitarist Christopher Worth.



## Check Out SFMS’s YouTube Channel!

Ever since the shutdown of live, in-person performances last spring with the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, SFMS has “kept the music coming” with online concerts, workshops and other performances by local, national and international artists. Excepting those that could not be archived because of contractual stipulation by the artists, videos of these performances have been uploaded to the newly updated Susquehanna Folk Music Society YouTube Channel, which has merged content from the former Susquehanna Folk Festival YouTube Channel. In addition to videos from online performances, the expanding channel will include “Meet the Masters” videos, vintage clips from past concerts, highlights from past folk festivals, and “sneak peeks” at upcoming concert and festival performers.

Viewers are encouraged to check out the Susquehanna Folk Music Society YouTube Channel often to explore SFMS’s growing collection of videos and to consider subscribing. To access the Channel, please visit [www.youtube.com/channel/UC0Jec7v7L-aN42aKhW0Edmg/videos](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0Jec7v7L-aN42aKhW0Edmg/videos).

Jacobs-Strain’s live-streamed concert for SFMS will be accompanied by a conversation with a member of the SFMS music community. The concert is supported by a grant from the Hall Foundation.

Advance registration is required for the concert. Voluntary donations are requested, with the suggested donation for each viewer being \$15 and the supporter-level donation being \$20. The concert will not be archived for later viewing. To register for the concert, please visit SFMS’s webpage for this event at [sfmsfolk.org/concerts/DavidJacobsStrain.html](https://sfmsfolk.org/concerts/DavidJacobsStrain.html).

# Jewish Music Traditions, Sunday, December 6

Klezmer, the mesmerizing music tradition of the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe, will take center stage on Sunday, December 6, when the Susquehanna Folk Music Society presents “Artist to Artist: A Residency Exploring Jewish Music Traditions,” a free, online event open to the public via Zoom from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The residency comprises four workshops – each with musical and discussion components – and features five groundbreaking female Klezmer musicians: Harrisburg’s Susan Leviton (vocals), Lauren Brody (accordion/vocals), Cookie Segelstein (violin), Ilene Stahl (clarinet), and Susan Watts (trumpet/vocals), who will serve as moderator for part of the day.

## Residency Workshop Schedule

*The Klezmer Awakening* (10 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.): Join SFMS folklorist Amy Skillman for a conversation with Segelstein and Stahl exploring the revival of Klezmer music in the U.S., the aesthetics of the tradition, and the relation of the sound to both secular and spiritual identity.

*Sing Out! Bring Your Voices and Instruments* (11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.): An opportunity to learn by singing, playing along or just listening as Leviton and Brody explore several songs under the umbrella of Jewish music, both traditional and newly composed.

*Klezmer Suffrage: An Interview with Women in Jewish Music* (1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.): The extraordinary and diverse family histories and personal journeys of five women who have crafted lives in Jewish music.

*“Whose Song is This?” – The Wonders of Song Migration* (3 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.): Leviton, Brody, Segelstein and Stahl contribute to a whirlwind exploration of how the tangled roots of songs lead to the widest variety of musical expression over time, geography and even political boundaries. The session will culminate in the finale performances to cap a great day of musical exploration.

## About the Musicians

*Susan Leviton* is an accomplished singer, papercutting artist and calligrapher. In the mid-1980s, she joined the Harrisburg-based Old World Folk Band as lead singer, singing Yiddish theater songs, Klezmer and Eastern European folk songs. She has recorded two CDs and continues to break new ground by uncovering historic and contemporary Yiddish songs and bringing them into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. (Her full profile can be viewed in SFMS’s Folk Artists Gallery: [sfmsfolk.org/folkarts/artist.html?a=susan\\_leviton](http://sfmsfolk.org/folkarts/artist.html?a=susan_leviton).)

*Lauren Brody* is a pioneer of the Klezmer music revival in the U.S. and a founding member of the groundbreaking band Kapelye, with whom she toured, recorded and appeared on TV and film beginning in 1979. She has also performed with the seminal all-female ensemble Mikveh, along with many other Klezmer luminaries. She recently has been composing new music for her own Balkan/Klezmer-inspired project, “Lauren Brody’s Accordion Bytes.”

*Ilene Stahl* has been acclaimed for her passionate performance style and soulful interpretations of traditional Yiddish music. Since 1987, she has been the clarinetist with The Klezmer Conservatory Band, a Boston-based ensemble that tours extensively throughout the U.S. and internationally. (Continued on page 6)



Cookie Segelstein



Susan Leviton



Ilene Stahl



Lauren Brody



## John McCutcheon, Sunday, December 13

John McCutcheon, long revered as one of America's most respected and loved folksingers and a peerless multi-instrumentalist, has performed seven times for the Susquehanna Folk Music Society during its 35-year history. His eighth performance promises to be extra special when he appears for a free, live-streamed concert and conversation exclusively for SFMS members at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 13.

A true "Renaissance man" of folk music, McCutcheon is blessed with gifts as a songwriter, historian, musician and storyteller that have won him praise around the world. His eclectic catalog of ballads, historical songs, children's songs, love songs,

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***"John McCutcheon is not only one of the best musicians in the USA, but also a great singer, songwriter, and song leader. And not just incidentally, he is committed to helping hard-working people everywhere to organize and push this world in a better direction."***

***~ Pete Seeger***

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Whether it's a musical snapshot of the day in the life of an Alaskan salmon fisherman, a child's pondering the loss of her first tooth, remembering a moment that was omitted from our history books, lampooning the latest foibles on the national political scene, or celebrating the joy of old love, McCutcheon's songs are always about something small and, at the same time, something much bigger. "All big things start with little things," he observes. "The way in which a song is able to open up the universal from the personal is one of the great joys of writing."

McCutcheon's albums have received numerous awards



and accolades, including seven Grammy nominations. His 40th album, "To Everyone in All the World: A Celebration of Pete Seeger," was issued in 2019 to mark the centenary of Seeger's birth. As both a student and friend of Seeger's, McCutcheon was profoundly influenced by the folk legend's music and social activism. McCutcheon's latest album, "Cabin Fever: Songs from the Quarantine," was released earlier this year, the creative output of his being "hermited away" in his north Georgia cabin as part of a self-quarantine beginning in mid-March.

As a young honors student at St. John's University in Minnesota, McCutcheon felt led to seek a broader curriculum beyond the classroom walls. "I had discovered these old Folkways records of people like Roscoe Holcomb and Clarence Ashley," he says. "And when I realized that they were still alive, I decided I wanted to learn all I could about them." So he left school and started hitchhiking across the country, imagining that he was putting himself on a 90-day independent study program to find banjo players. Nearly five decades later, McCutcheon's "independent study" is still continuing and shows no signs of slowing down.

McCutcheon's live-streamed concert will be accompanied by a chat with SFMS Board members Peter Winter and Sara Willard. The concert is being offered free to SFMS members thanks to a generous contribution from Bruce and Joan Kolka. Bruce is an SFMS Board member and membership coordinator, and Joan is a former SFMS Board president and past membership coordinator.

Although the concert is free to SFMS members, tickets are required. Please visit [sfmsfolk.org/concerts/JohnMcCutcheon.html](https://sfmsfolk.org/concerts/JohnMcCutcheon.html) for ticket information. Ticketing for the concert opens in December. Watch for email announcements. Please visit [sfmsfolk.org/info/membership.html](https://sfmsfolk.org/info/membership.html) to join or renew online. Remember, your renewal adds a full year to your current subscription, so you can renew anytime. Please email [membership@sfmsfolk.org](mailto:membership@sfmsfolk.org) for any questions about your membership status.

## Jewish Music Traditions *(Continued from page 4)*

In 1999, she founded Klezperanto to create a new kind of dance music that combines Klezmer with irresistible rhythms from other cultures.

*Cookie Segelstein* has performed with many high-profile Klezmer bands, including Kapelye, The Klezmatics and The Klezmer Conservatory Band. She has toured internationally with her Klezmer trio, Veretski Pass, which specializes in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Jewish instrumental folk music of the Carpathian Mountains. She has presented workshops on Klezmer fiddling all over the world and at many Klezmer camps.

*Susan Watts* represents the youngest generation of an important Klezmer dynasty that reaches back to the Jewish Ukraine of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, beginning with her maternal great-grandfather Joseph Hoffman, a musician, composer, poet and cornet-player. For many years, Watts performed with her mother, the great Klezmer drummer Elaine Hoffman Watts, in their Philadelphia-based group, The Fabulous Shpielkehs. Watts is the sole living purveyor of the family's electrifying, Klezmer-style trumpet sounds.

\* \* \*



Susan Watts

The residency is a program of SFMS's Folk Arts Center. It is being held in partnership with Penn State Harrisburg's Kulkarni Cultural Series, Humanities Department, Pennsylvania Center for Folklore, and Center for Holocaust and Jewish Studies. It is funded by a CARES Act grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and by a generous donation from Lois Lehrman Grass. Persons may register for the workshops by visiting SFMS's webpage for this event at [sfmsfolk.org/events/JewishMusicalTraditions.html](http://sfmsfolk.org/events/JewishMusicalTraditions.html). The workshops are being offered free of charge, but donations to SFMS are welcome.

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## Thanks to These New and Renewing Members

### New Members

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Cathy Lonas - Lititz\*

### Renewing Members

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Jill Smith - Lancaster

Anita Stabile - Harrisburg\*

Bill Stine - Manheim

Brad Weirich - York

(The above listing represents memberships processed from September 22 to October 24.)

### A Special Thanks

\*SFMS wishes to thank these members and others who wish to remain anonymous for donating an additional \$508.

### Are You Due to Renew?

Please note: If the expiration date on your mailing label has passed, or you haven't received any correspondence from us in a while, your membership has probably expired. To continue your membership, please renew now.

If you have any membership questions, please call me at (717) 763-5598, or email me at [membership@sfmsfolk.org](mailto:membership@sfmsfolk.org). Thanks for supporting SFMS.

~ Bruce Kolka, Membership Coordinator

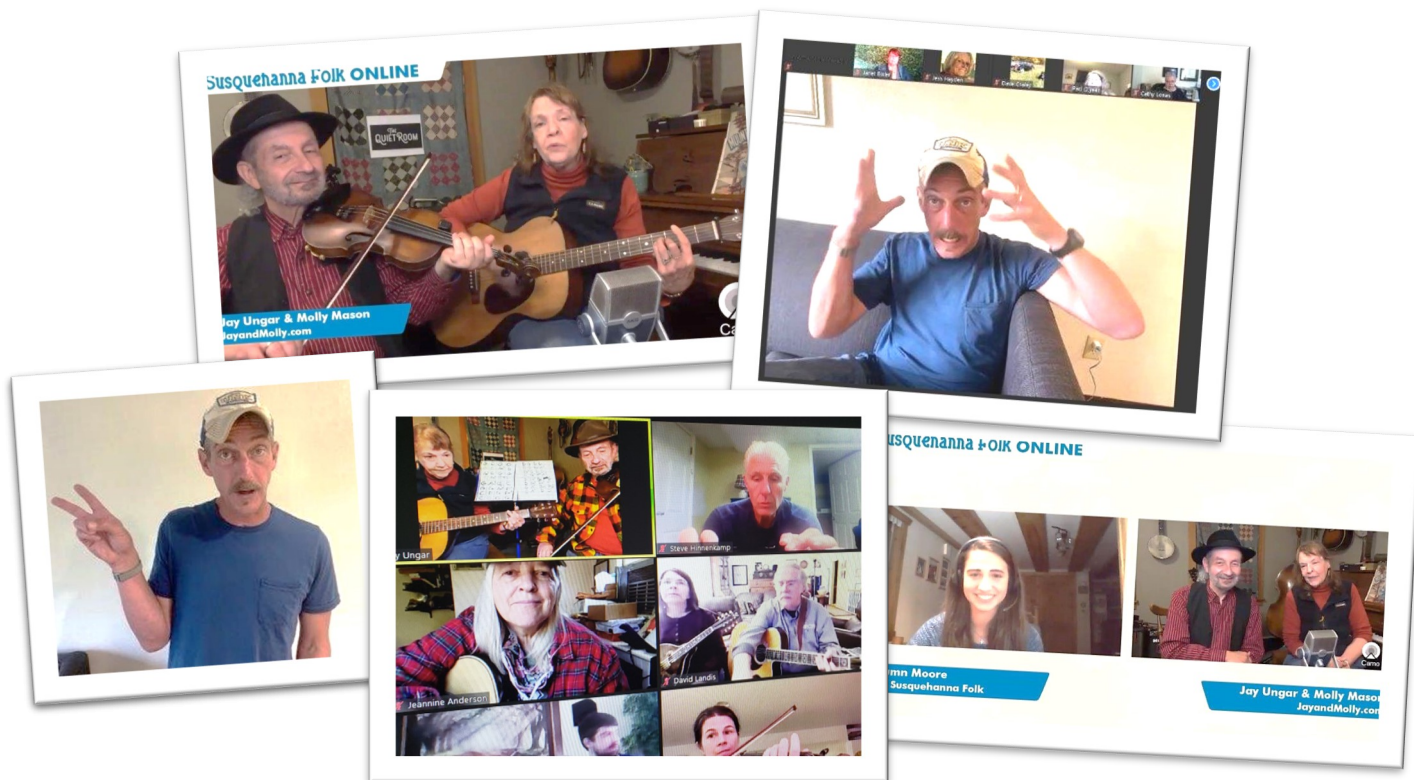


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## Susquehanna Folk Music Society Memories



Scenes from recent online events. Clockwise, from top left: Jay Ungar and Molly Mason during their Oct. 17 concert; Bill Lepp during his Oct. 4 storytelling workshop; SFMS Board member Autumn Moore chats with Jay Ungar and Molly Mason after their concert; some of the participants in Jay Ungar and Molly Mason's Oct. 17 fiddle-and-guitar workshop; and Bill Lepp during his Oct. 4 storytelling performance.