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To the Prospective Folk Orchestra Member:

Oct 3, 2017

The South Coast Folk Society is forming a Folk Orchestra; a new contra dance band open to musicians who play at an intermediate to professional level of experience, on any acoustic instrument. Ability levels range widely; all are equally welcome.

The Oregon Cultural Trust awarded SCFS with a Creativity Grant. Additionally we have funding from the Oregon Community Foundation and the Country Dance & Song Society for this project. Our model for this is the Portland Megaband, www.portlandmegaband.com. Sue Songer (along with caller Erik Weberg) organize and direct this band. Betsy Branch is its lead musician. Since 1996, the Portland Country Dance Community has hosted a benefit contra dance with music by the Megaband on the second Saturday of March. The dance has been a smashing success--the dancers have loved it, and the musicians have a blast. The first time they played, there were 25 band members. In March 2016, there were 75 musicians and 450+ dancers!

MUSIC, WORKSHOPS AND REHEARSALS

Sue and Betsy will provide us with a 6 month residency including 3 weekend workshops: **Friday evening and Saturday morning/afternoon January 20-21, March 24-25 and April 28-29, 2017.** South Coast musicians who participate in the project this first time will be paid an honorarium of \$400, for nine rehearsals, three workshop weekends and the performances on June 10 and 11, 2017. Continuing the program in ensuing years will depend on enthusiasm and fundraising from this first project.

The Folk Orchestra will play sets of contra dance music compiled by Sue and Betsy from the three volumes of *The Portland Collection: Contra Dance Music in the Pacific Northwest* as well as from other sources. Participants will receive printed music at the January workshop. To aid in learning the music, recordings of the tunes will be available in late October or early November in the SCFS Dropbox folder in MP3 format. These recordings will be played clearly at a tempo slightly below dance speed. Portland Megaband members have found these types of recordings very useful for learning the tunes. Please plan to spend some time listening to the tunes and getting familiar with them before the January workshop.

In addition to the weekend workshops, there are nine rehearsals for the dance, beginning in February and averaging twice a month. Each of the rehearsals will last 2 1/2 hours and will be held bi-monthly, alternating **Friday nights 6:30-9 pm and Sunday afternoons 3 - 5:30 pm**. The final rehearsal on the Friday before the dance lasts from 3-6 pm. [Calendar attached].

In the rehearsals, we will work mostly on playing as a group and getting the right "feel" for the music. Band members should plan on attending all of these rehearsals and workshops. We intend for them to be fun, and the end product will be very rewarding. Band members are encouraged to host informal rehearsals to work on the tunes, and sectionals will sometimes be offered by various band members or Sue and Betsy.

THE DANCE AND CONCERT:

The Folk Orchestra Contra Dance & Concert weekend will be on **Saturday evening June 10 and Sunday afternoon June 11. [Dress rehearsal Friday evening June 9th]**. We're still working out the logistical details and will let you know as soon as they're firmed up. Thanks for your patience.

Volunteers make this happen. If you would like to be involved in the planning and production, you are most welcome and encouraged. Contact Jennifer Sordyl.

SIGN UP FOR THE FOLK ORCHESTRA:

Name _____ Address _____ City/zip _____

Phone/s _____ Email: _____ SCFS Member? _____

Instrument/s: _____ Advanced ____| Intermediate ____| Years played _____

All members come into the Mentoring South Coast Musicians project through this application. There is a cap of 25 on the sign up slots for the January project start date. SCFS Open Band members will be given first priority, as they have been participating in the Folk Society regularly. Then it will be opened up to those on the waiting list.

If we have more musicians than spaces available, Sue & Betsy will select band members according to length of time on the waiting list with some attention to balance of instruments. Musical ability and/or experience is not a factor in admission to the band.

The above said, there is a cap on certain instruments that are difficult to integrate into the band either due to the nature of the instrument or staging complications. Those instruments are keyboard, bass, hammered dulcimers, percussion, and saxes/horns. If you play one of these instruments, there may not be opportunity for you in this band this year.

Do you feel inspired to “*spread the joy*”? A tax deductible donation to the Mentoring Musicians Project would enable us to add more musicians to the Folk Orchestra. See Jennifer to contribute. While you are waiting, we encourage you in the strongest of terms to go to the local contra dances, if you are not already doing so, and to participate in the SCFS Outstanding Open Band. (Rehearsals happen the third Thursday of every month, alternating between Bandon and Coos Bay. Email leader Sharon Rogers at singingsharon@gmail.com. Get acquainted with contra dance music and gain some experience playing it.

All musicians committing to the Orchestra project are requested to be SCFS Members. Use the link at southcoastfolksociety.com to sign up.

The weekend workshops will be open to musicians who are not participating in the Folk Orchestra (but want to learn about it) for a fee of \$45 per person, per weekend. Therefore, if you are interested, but unable to participate in the whole 6 month residency you can still receive instruction from Betsy & Sue during any or all of the workshop weekends.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY:

- There are contra dance and other music sessions every month in the South Coast area.
- Sue Songer has an email list that is of interest to musicians. This list announces workshops, house concerts, and also sends out the set list for the 5th Saturday open mike contra dances in Portland. Send her your info (songer@portcoll.com) to be included.
- The SCFS Outstanding Open Band has an annual campout scheduled the first weekend in August 2017. It's a long weekend on the Sixes River near Port Orford to play, perform, jam and socialize. See the listing for “Contra at the Coast” on the SCFS Facebook page.

Jennifer is the coordinator for this project. Direct logistical questions to her. Her contact info is at the top of the invitation.

Sue will be happy to answer any artistic questions not covered here--either by email or by phone.

SIGN UP FOR THE FOLK ORCHESTRA:

Sue Songer songer@portcoll.com 503-293-1446 www.theportlandcollection.com

Listen to sound clips of the Portland Megaband on youtube.com or Facebook by searching under Portland Megaband. Favorite clips (from 2013 and 2010):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=prKBufX4mjo&feature=youtu.be> (by Doug Plummer)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXoBCxE3tjA&feature=related>. (by Kim Appleberry)

And here is a time lapse (by Doug Plummer) of the setup and much of the evening:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fARKzM8hmw8&feature=youtu.be>

Hope to see you when we begin our project January 20, 2017. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Sordyl

MENTORING SOUTH COAST MUSICIANS PROJECT CALENDAR

Fri Jan 20, 2017 6:30pm - 9:30pm WORKSHOP

Sat Jan 21, 2017 10:30am - 3:30pm WORKSHOP

Sun Jan 29, 2017 - 3pm - 5:30pm REHEARSAL

Fri Feb 10, 2017 - 6:30pm - 9pm REHEARSAL

Sun Feb 26, 2017 - 3pm - 5:30pm REHEARSAL

Fri Mar 10, 2017 - 6:30pm - 9pm REHEARSAL

Fri Mar 24, 2017 - 6:30pm - 9:30pm WORKSHOP

Sat Mar 25, 2017 10:30am - 3:30pm WORKSHOP

Fri Apr 14, 2017 - 6:30pm - 9pm REHEARSAL

Fri Apr 28, 2017 - 6:30pm - 9:30pm WORKSHOP

Sat Apr 29, 2017 - 10:30am - 3:30pm WORKSHOP

Sun Apr 30, 2017 - 3pm - 5:30pm REHEARSAL

Fri May 12, 2017 - 6:30pm - 9pm REHEARSAL

Sun May 21, 2017 - 3pm - 5:30pm REHEARSAL

Dance Weekend Locations & Times TBA

Fri Jun 9, 2017 Mentoring South Coast Musicians Dress Rehearsal 6pm-9pm

Sat Jun 10, 2017 Mentoring South Coast Musicians Dance 7-10pm

Sun June 11, 2017 Mentoring South Coast Musicians Concert 2pm-4pm

*If the project is a success and there is interest in having an annual Folk Orchestra dance event, sign-ups for the 2018 band will take place next November 2017.