

# Grand Folk Railroad to perform free concert at Freeport Memorial Library

Posted August 2, 2024



The band Grand Folk Railroad performing for a crowd outdoors.

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by Avita John

Grand Folk Railroad, a band that formed 2009 and has been performing for the past 15 years brings together a group of seasoned musicians who blend various musical styles, creating a unique sound that spans from folk to hard rock. They will be performing a free concert at the Freeport Memorial Library on August 2 at 7 p.m.

Their music, rich with electric guitar work and singer-songwriter flair, captures the essence of Americana and indie music. The band's journey began 15 years ago in 2009 and has led to the creation of their own CD.

Mike Christian, 67, is a true multi-instrumentalist, seamlessly switching between guitar, bass, and drums. He also serves as the band's arranger, producer, and engineer. Mike's deep love for 60s and 70s

pop music influences the band's repertoire, filled with forgotten favorites and hidden gems from that era.

Susan Schwartz-Christian, 72, is the lead singer-songwriter of the band. A multi-instrumentalist, she switches between guitar, banjo, and flute. Her powerful voice, rooted in old-school country, combines with sophisticated storytelling to create compelling songs that transcend traditional singer-songwriter expectations.

Schwartz-Christian explained that "The type of music that we produce is a mix of singer songwriter on the folky all the way up to hard rock and our CD that we made reflects all the styles"

Christian added, "It's like a mixture of songs, but some songs are more folk, rather than like hard Rock or Pop or Early Folk is a category, Americana singer songwriter, but there's a fair amount of electric guitar work in it."

"...A pretty good portion of it is what I would call contemporary folk...It's the type of folk music that's written,...it's not the things that you remember from the 1960s like Pete Seeger...It's more contemporary singer songwriters." Christian explained.

"I would call it an eclectic mix of forgotten favorites from the 60s and 70s... eclectic/eccentric mix of forgotten favorites from the 60s and 70s." Christian continued.

Gary Schoenberger, 75, the newest member, who plays the keyboard, guitar and does some of the vocals for the band, has been a close friend and musical comrade of the band for decades.

His expertise on keyboards, guitar, and vocals adds new sounds and rich textures to the band's music. Schoenberger's repertoire includes roots music, contemporary folk, and bluegrass, further defining the "Folk" aspect of the band.

Frank Doris, 69, adds beautifully melodic touches to the band's music, elevating their songs with his versatile guitar skills with bass and uke guitars. Since picking up the guitar after the Summer of Love, Frank has played in various bands and even opened for Duran Duran on their first U.S. tour. His influences range from Roy Orbison to Kraftwerk, contributing to the band's rich and diverse sound.

Bill Resvanis, 75, who plays the drums, is a founding member of the band and is currently no longer a full-time member. However, he still shares the stage during special gigs. Known for his groove and instinctive playing, Resvanis's contributions have been a cornerstone of the band's sound.

The story of Grand Folk Railroad started at an event called "The Song Swap", where musicians gather to share and play songs in a circle. Christian, one of the band's founding members, had left his previous band to care for his daughter.

He was introduced to Schwartz-Christian, who was initially considered as a replacement for the band he left. Despite never having met Susan, Mike was intrigued when a mutual friend, Schoenberger, suggested she join the song swap.

Christian recalled Schoenberger telling Schwartz-Christian, "Susan, why don't you come to the song swap?" reasoning that she would enjoy it more by virtue of her background.

Schwartz-Christian played a song that caught Christian's ear, leading them to become a couple, write music together, and eventually form Grand Folk Railroad. Schoenberger, who introduced Christian to Schwartz-Christian, now plays keyboard in the band.

Schwartz-Christian gave a brief description of what to look forward to for the concert on Friday at the Freeport Memorial Library. "It's an outdoor concert, in the outdoor space that they have, and we're going to be playing a lot of 60s and 70s pop music, but in our own kind of style."

"Some of the 60s and 70s songs that people might recognize as good examples would be a song called "Hooked on a feeling" ...there's one called "98.6", it was a one hit wonder by an artist named Keith... that was his name, one name Keith.... "Midnight confessions"...and "Daydream believer" by the Monkeys is always a big favorite" Christian added.

Join Grand Folk Railroad on Friday, August 2, at 7 p.m. at the Freeport Memorial Library for an evening of nostalgia and forgotten favorites of the 60s and 70s. The band will perform hidden pop gems, one-hit wonders, and feel-good favorites that shaped popular music forever. In case of bad weather, the concert will be held indoors.

The Grand Folk Railroad's journey is a testament to the power of music to bring people together. From a simple song swap to producing their own CD and performing live, the band continues to captivate audiences with their diverse sound and heartfelt performances.