

STREET SCENE

Son Volt on the road, opening for John Mellencamp



CHRISTINA FUOCO

Jay Farrar's sleeping patterns are non-existent these days. Tour buses aren't the most comfortable places to sleep, and at home he doesn't get a lot of rest either. But it's well worth it, he said. Farrar, the singer/songwriter of Son Volt, is the father of a 9-week-old son.

This year is one of adjustment for Son Volt and Farrar, a man of few words. The band is on the

road opening for John Mellencamp, including the Wednesday, June 30, date at Pine Knob. The roots rock/Americana group is used to playing clubs, so standing on stage in front of a 15,000-plus crowd is a bit of a change.

"I'll be different for us. It's something we haven't done much of in the past."

When asked if he's a big Mellencamp fan, Farrar sighed and said, "I've always been aware of what he's done. His longevity and success kind of speak for itself."

Son Volt is touring in support of "Wide Swing Tremolo," its

third album for Warner Bros. It was recorded in the band's rehearsal space, a former lingerie warehouse, which allowed Son Volt to take its time.

"In the past when you're recording due to budgetary restraints, we only had four weeks. We had the freedom and the time to try things the way we wanted. I'm not sure we'd do it again."

"Some of the songs were allowed to just sort of germinate a bit I guess, especially song like 'Driving View.' We tried it with an acoustic approach the first time around, subsequently

we went electric."

To diversify the sound, Son Volt called upon three people to mix the album — Jack Joseph Puig (Verve Pipe), David Barbo and John Agnello.

"He definitely knows what he's doing. He has a very expansive collection of equipment," he said with a laugh about Puig.

"I just wanted to try different songs with different people. Hopefully they all go together."

Son Volt opens for John Mellencamp at 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 30, at Pine Knob Music Theatre, 1-76 and Sashabaw

Road, Independence Township. Tickets are \$39.50 pavilion, \$20 lawn. For more information, call (248) 377-0100 or visit <http://www.palaceticket.com>.

The Ultimate Showcase

Embassy Music in Nashville is holding its annual The Ultimate Showcase, which gives unsigned Christian singers and songwriters the chance to perform on Music Row in Nashville in front of industry professionals. This year's panel includes representatives of Sparrow Records, EMI/CMG Publishing, Muse Management, Gotee Records,

Atlantic Records and Benson. To receive an entry form, call (615) 345-2500 or send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Embassy Music, 1161 Murfreesboro Road, Suite 323, Nashville, Tenn., 37217. The deadline is Monday, July 19.

Christina Fuoco is the post music reporter for The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. If you have a question or comment for her, you can leave her a message at (734) 953-2047, mailbox No. 2130, or write to her at The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, Mich., 48150, or cfuoco@homecomm.net.

Usual Suspects inspired by higher power

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN
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Katie Geddes and Mark Brokaw were fellow parishioners at First United Methodist Church, Ann Arbor when pastor Tom Wachterhauser decided to start a band for a Saturday afternoon worship service at its new location, Green Wood, in 1995. Mike Fedel was "shopping" for a church when he heard about the band and joined.

Not the usual way most bands get together, but for Katie Geddes and The Usual Suspects their liaison promises a long, fruitful future. Geddes credits the seemingly-unbreakable union to the church.

Before long, the group was being asked to play at weddings. By 1997, they were on their way to playing weddings and benefit concerts in and around Ann Arbor, and open stage nights at The Ark in Ann Arbor. On Saturday, June 26, they take to the stage of Trinity House Theatre in Livonia.

"Our close friendship and love of music has held the band together three years," said Geddes. "There's never once been a harsh word or raised voice. We're all really good friends."

Not easy, for a group as large

What? Katie Geddes and The Usual Suspects perform their mix of country, folk and folk-gospel, including tracks from their "Live at Green Wood" CD.

When: 8 p.m. Saturday, June 26.

Where: Trinity House Theatre, 38840 W. Six Mile Road, west of I-75, Livonia.

Tickets: \$10, \$8 members, and available by calling (734) 464-6302.

as Katie Geddes and The Usual Suspects. When Rev. Wachterhauser, also the group's drummer, harmonica and piano player, was assigned to a new church in Davison, Andy Callia, a parishioner there, came on board the group on mandolin/piano. Occasionally, Davison parishioners Jim Callia, harmonica and Mo Jones, bass also join in. Fedel plays lead guitar, and Brokaw guitar/bass/harmony/vocals for every engagement.

"We play everything from Woody Guthrie to Buffy St. Marie, Aretha Franklin, Emmy Lou Harris, Willie Nelson, Eric Clapton and Bare Naked Ladies," said Geddes. "We're pretty versatile. Our first set is



Country folk: Katie Geddes joins The Usual Suspects for a concert at the Trinity House Theatre in Livonia.

traditional old folk and country songs. The second set we get out the electric guitars and get a little bit rowdier, we also try to fill requests."

Geddes and The Usual Suspects will also be playing songs from their new CD, "Live at Green Wood" at Trinity House Theatre. Green Wood is the coffee house founded by Rev. Wachterhauser in 1996. While the opening of a coffee house is certainly not an earth-shaking

revelation because many churches initiate settings to bring people together while hosting fledgling entertainers, the problem was no one wanted to volunteer to perform until Geddes came forward. She'd been singing in the church choir, but lacked confidence to be out there fronting a group. Then a twist of fate gave her the boost she needed. Geddes was waiting in line outside The Ark to hear Livingston Taylor perform when who should she meet but the singer himself. Livingston usually asks a volunteer to sing "City Lights," a song originally recorded with brother James, with him. Geddes boldly asks him if she could sing "Loving Arms" with him. She does, and her confidence level soars.

"People have been passing our CD along and playing them," said Geddes, who sells life insurance and investments for a Northville company. "We've been so fortunate. I don't think we've done a gig we asked for. It's all been word of mouth."

The group still plays the 6 p.m. Saturday service at First United Methodist, Green Wood, not the rock Rev. Wachterhauser originally envisioned but their own brand of music, a combination folk and country inspired by a higher power.

Just because something is old doesn't mean it isn't valuable.



I can relate to that, maybe that's why I'm never in a rush with these guys. Standing out a dent here and there, restoring the gears... soon I'll have all the time in the world for them, just like they have for me. That's the beauty of retirement. And now that it's almost here, I'm grateful that I started planning early — with U.S. Savings Bonds. I started buying Savings Bonds when I got my first real job, through a Payroll Savings plan. I put aside something every payday. And little by little, it really added up. Bonds are guaranteed safe, too, and earn interest up to 30 years. In a few more years, you'll find me out here in the workshop more and more, fixing a hinge or polishing a case. I know that there's a lot of life left in these old guys. I can relate to that.

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GALLERY EXHIBIT OPENINGS

ANN ARBOR ART CENTER
Opens June 25 — "Content Contained," through July 25. Lecture on "Little Boxes," 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, July 7 at the Ann Arbor Art Center, 117 West Liberty, Ann Arbor, (734) 994-8004.

JANICE CHARACH EPESTEIN MUSEUM/GALLERY
Opens June 24 — Exhibition and sale of works by Jay Lefkowitz through August 12. Opening reception 6-8 p.m., Thursday, June 24 at the Jewish Community Center, 6600 West Maple Road, Bloomfield, (248) 661-7641.

GIRLEE
Opens June 26 — A collection of women artists and performers present an art exhibit and performances through July 31. Opening reception, 11 p.m., Saturday, June 26. Gallery hours noon to 4 p.m., 1145 Griswold (above the Colonial Toy Store), Detroit. For information call (313) 921-9891.

WENTWORTH GALLERY
Opens June 26 — Diane Anderson exhibition and meet the artist 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. at Laurel Park Place, 37648 West Six Mile Road, Livonia, (734) 462-5840. Opens June 27, 3-5 p.m. at the Somerset Collection, 2801 West Big Beaver Road, Troy, (248) 816-8372.

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