

Vancouver Folk Song Society

May 2025

www.vfss.ca

Friends (Quaker) Hall, 1090 west 70th at Osler St.

Got news? Performing somewhere? Contact us at vanfolksong@gmail.com by **Saturday, May 31** to be included in the next newsletter.

Schedule (1st and 3rd Wednesdays)

VFSS Now with Cookies! Please bring your own mug to reduce the dishwashing task!

- **7:00 pm** Doors open
- **7:20 Harmony Jam** warm up our voices together as we start the evening with well-loved sing-along songs.
- **7:30 - 8:30** open stage. Come early to sign up!
- **8:30 - 8:45** tea break (bring your own mug)
- **8:45 - 9:45** feature performers
- **10:00 pm** Doors close

For events on Zoom, the link is sent to our mailing list the day before the event.

Upcoming VFSS Events

May 7

Features

In person only

No online options

- **Ben Rogalsky** is already known to some in the VFSS as a member of the Amorphous Folk Collective. He is a multi-instrumentalist who has performed and studied music in Canada, the USA, Europe, South-East Asia, Japan, and Central America. Musical projects have included three albums and tours with Vancouver-based roots band the Breakmen and projects with Gamelan Madu Sari and Uzume Taiko.
- [Tim Readman](#) is a musician, singer, songwriter, producer and music journalist, originally from County Durham, England. His musical output is eclectic and embraces a wide range of influences but most frequently he performs folk/Celtic music.
- **Savoir Faire** has been performing an eclectic mix of traditional folk and world music since 2008. Repertoire includes music from all over Europe--including France, UK, the Balkans, and the Baltics--and from Canada, including some originals. **Savoir Faire** is **Oliver Schneider** button accordion, tambura, vocals/ **Kristina Zalite** percussion, lead vocals/ **Naomi Steinberg** flute, lead vocals/ **Gregory Coyes** – guitar, vocals/ **Helen**

Lambourne viola, recorder, vocals/ special guest **Kyle Hagen**
- upright bass.

May 21

First half

Choose Online
song circle OR
Livestream from
Open stage

Second half

Livestream
features

Features

- **Shear Luck** is long-time VFSS members **Leona Axbey, Ian Edwards,** and **John Neilson,** bringing us songs and stories from the Land of the Southern Cross. Expect humour and curious perspectives from these creative collaborators.
- **Isa Hastings** is an emerging young musician from Vancouver, who loves music for the way it brings people together. With a background in acoustic guitar and prayer singing in groups, she is excited to learn more from the folk scene.
- **Barb Shaw a.k.a. Random Old Lady** With over 50 years of musical experience, Random Old Lady's songs are steeped in Americana influences of folk, jazz, blues and rock, played in her own percussive guitar style. She is a prolific songwriter and has a talent for creating songs to help bring communities together around a common cause. **RandomOldLady.bandzoogle.com**
- **Lovejoy Sisters Heidi** and **Tiffany** grew up singing with their sister, mum, and dad (Graham Baldwin -- their lifelong musical "north star"). They have recently discovered the beauty of blending their voices and creating harmonies together. This is their first performance as Lovejoy — a name inspired by a character from an English novel, and reflecting the love they have for each other and the joy they find in making music together. Graham will be joining them on guitar.

June 4

New format!

**1 feature with
longer open
stage options**

Live only.

Features

- **The Retreaters** Join us for the kind of songs you can expect to hear at the 2025 VFSS Retreat, performed by the retreat organizing crew: **Mary Armitage, Steve Deering, Graham Baldwin, Lynn Applegate, Elizabeth Dunn, and Sherry Swann.** What a (re)treat!

June 18

VFSS Anniversary and Potluck dinner

Come early!

VFSS 66th Anniversary and Potluck dinner

No features! Open stage all evening. Information coming soon on how to sign up for your one song each.

Potluck dinner at 6 pm. Please bring (and take away) all your own plates and cutlery, and choice of beverage (alcoholic or non-alcoholic). Special anniversary cake by Linda Chobotuck!

**The next 5th
Wednesday
is July 30!**

Welcome back to in-person 5th Wednesdays!

In April, the VFSS picked up on its long-standing tradition of offering special, in-person, thematic programs on the 5th Wednesday! (Of months that have five Wednesdays.)

More details in the next newsletter and on our [website](#).

How to be a Feature: Chat with the features coordinator at the Welcome desk and check out the available dates in our calendar in the red binder. Then choose a date to be our next feature.

VFSS format changing in June-now serving doubles

No, not tennis. Open stage format! We're changing the format slightly to offer more Open Stage time. What will this look like?

- Most performers will be invited to perform a two-song set (10 min).
- There will be 3 slots for single-song sets (5 min).
- One pre-booked feature.

To continue working to give everyone who wants the chance to perform, there will be an A-List (not performed last time) and a B-List (if there's time). We hope this makes the open more interesting by encouraging you to use the room to showcase a theme or have a "song-versation." And as always, we encourage collaboration!

VFSS Benefit Concert Friday, May 9

Special Fund-raising Concert with the VFSS

Notional Space – 1523 E Pender St. Doors at 7:30 for 8 pm concert

The Vancouver Folk Song Society (VFSS) is getting a new website. It will be an interactive home for previously unavailable archival material, VFSS-related recordings, and updates on all things VFSS! To help fund this immense undertaking, we are hosting a benefit concert, featuring a genre- and generation-spanning lineup of performers and a surprise Juno Award-winning guest.

- **The Amorphous Folk Collective** bring a vast breadth of experience — from pub singing and old-time, to jazz and theatre to traditional singing — and their performances reflect this. Expect diverse arrangements of voices and harmonies, and thematic explorations of love, loss, and resistance.
- **Blackthorn Blossoms** features Michael Viens on guitar and vocals and Rosie Carver on fiddle. You may recognize them as half of Blackthorn, Vancouver's longest running Celtic band. These two accomplished players have been making musical magic together for over 25 years and are regular fixtures on the local Celtic music scene.
- **Steel Cut Notes** is a new folk group carving out their sound through heartfelt harmonies, timeless tunes, and drunken ballads. Drawn to the raw storytelling of folk

music and the rousing spirit of sea shanties, they're finding their voice one song at a time.

- **Lucien & Isa** mix sweet and soulful melodies with folk classics. The youthful duo with the rock n' roll hair features Isa Hastings on guitar and Lucien Lawley on the guitar and harmonica.

Come support the continuation of Canada's longest running folk club! Refreshments, raffle basket, and a silent auction! Donations at the door. Limited seating, come early!

If you can't make the concert, consider donating a special service! Perhaps you could teach a newbie how to play the uke, guitar or banjo? Please contact Barb Coward at cowardbarb@hotmail.com.

Zoom option for the concert! *Can't make it in person? The Zoom link will be sent out the day before, May 8th, to our regular Zoom Info email list. If you're interested but don't normally receive our Zoom Info emails, please send a request to VFSS@shaw.ca.*

VFSS Song Circle Sunday May 18

Time for another chance to share songs in an afternoon song circle. 2-5 pm, bring snacks (optional) to share. Location is in Dunbar, conveniently located next to a couple of different bus routes. Email Barb cowardbarb@hotmail.com for address and to reserve a place.

VFSS Volunteer opportunity Media Assistant

We are looking for an assistant to help with the once-a-month set-up, operation, and pack-up of the audio/video/computer equipment used for live-streaming performances from the Quaker Meeting House to our members and friends watching over the Internet via Zoom. To learn more, contact **Steve Deering** at vfss@shaw.ca.

VFSS members out and about

Sun., May 25 Fraser Union and Mohamed Assani present a Benefit Concert for Sahar Ahmadi.

Sahar is a young Afghan "unaccompanied minor" refugee. She is currently a high school student in Vancouver, far from home and family. All proceeds will go into a trust fund in Sahar's name, managed by the Vancouver Unitarian Refugee Committee.

Fraser Union is a mainstay of the west coast folk music scene, currently made up of **Barry Truter, Kathy Griffin, and Roger Holdstock**. [Mohamed Assani](#) is a sitarist and composer trained in Indian/Pakistani classical music, and western classical music and jazz. He draws on different cultures and genres to expand the boundaries of the sitar and create innovative collaborations.

Notional Space, 1523 East Pender St. Doors 2 pm, concert at 2:30 pm. By donation in advance or at the door. Reserve by email to holdstockroger@gmail.com

VFSS Resources

The following books and CDs are available at our in-person events or from our [website](#).

- ***Songs of the Pacific Northwest***, by Philip Thomas, edited by Jon Bartlett. 208 pp., 62 songs with lyrics, notes for melody, and chords, historical background to the people and events in the song, b&w photos, and index.
- ***Phil Thomas & The Songs of British Columbia***, by Jon Bartlett, 35 pp. This is a brief biography of Phil Thomas and a description of how he travelled throughout BC meeting singers and collecting their songs and history.
- **"Blow the Man Down: Tall Ships on the Fraser."** This CD is a collection of some of our favorite shanties, performed by a collection of singers no longer performing together – so this is your only chance to hear them! It's a gift to new members upon joining, but maybe you need more than one copy. It includes a small booklet of historical information about shipping on the Fraser River and the songs.

To read more or order copies, go to <https://vfss.ca/order-form/>

Goings-on Beyond Here

Robert Kotta Memorial Songwriting Contest

This competition is sponsored by the Maritime Folknet, seeking songs about maritime life in the Northwest, past and present. Free to enter, with cash prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. Open to BC residents, as well as those in Alaska, Washington, or Oregon. **Deadline June 2.** Full details are found on the Port Gamble Maritime Festival [website](#).

Every Thursday - Music & More OFF Main

Music and More Off Main happens live on the second and fourth Thursdays at City Heights Housing Society, 155 E. 37th Avenue - all other Thursdays are on Zoom. Contact Stoo at fsharp5@gmail.com for more info or to get on the mailing list for live and/or Zoom meetings.

Second and Final Friday each month - 411 Coffeehouse

Coffeehouse hosted by Earle Peach, with Open stage and features. Doors at 7 pm, music at 7:30 pm. 3502 Fraser St. Call 604-874-1256 for information.

Second Fridays – Northwest Seaport Sea Chanty sessions

Northwest Seaport Sea chanty sessions, presented with the NWSeaport Maritime Heritage Center, are live **and on Zoom**. Find more details (location changes monthly) and sign up for the mailing list <http://www.nwseaport.org/chantey-sings.html> **Upcoming sessions are Friday, May 9, June 13, July 11, Aug 8.**

Every Sunday – Over the Water to Vancouver Island

Check out the [Victoria Folk Music Society](#) to see a schedule of their events, as well as other music (and dance!!) events around the Island, from Cumberland to Sooke, and of course, Victoria. VFMS meets every Sunday at 1110 Hillside Ave., 6:30 pm jam; 7:30 pm open stage, 9 pm feature. \$8 at the door.

Support Live Music! Rogue Folk Club live and streaming

The [Rogue Folk Club](#) offers live concerts from well-established performers to up-and-coming artists in a range of folk and blues, with hints of jazz and world music to flavour the event calendar. Check out their offerings!

How to stay in touch

- With [Facebook](#) and [Youtube](#), you can view the news and photos we share there.
- Our [website](#) has details and reminders of upcoming VFSS events, as well as news, photos, and technical tips for Zoom events.
- Contact us with news of an upcoming performance for the next newsletter at vanfolksong@gmail.com. **Next deadline is Saturday, May 31.**

Accessible Folk! The Friends Hall now offers elevator access for those using wheelchairs or other mobility aids. The entrance is from Osler St.

Our COVID precautions

- **Self-monitoring** If you are experiencing *any* [Covid symptoms](#), or signs of other illnesses, please stay home and get well soon!
- **Ventilation** Doors and windows open as weather permits. HEPA air purifiers and a CO₂ monitor to check ventilation.
- **Masks.** We *welcome* you wearing a mask when you're not performing and respect each other's choice.

Share songs, not bugs.

If you have [symptoms](#) — coughs, sniffles, fever, "just a cold," please join us safely over Zoom. We care about your good health and ours, too.

This email newsletter is sent to VFSS members and to subscribers by request. **To unsubscribe**, go to vfss.ca/email-lists.