

folksinger
Michael Johnathon
Garden of Silence
20th
album release

It starts with a song about the day Van Gogh passed away and concludes with a tribute to folksingers everywhere.

On the journey between those two musical bookends are songs about Thoreau (*Winter Song*) the spirit of the front porch (*Front Porch Symphony*) Narcissism (*Narcissistic Blues*) dancing with your lover (*September Eve*) a tribute to Pete Seeger (*Seeger Mashup*) and the banjo-driven instrumental about the fragrant scent of earth following a rainfall (*Petrichor*) He composed ten of the eleven songs and produced all, his Martin guitar and long neck banjo are dominant throughout textured with string quartets, Gazebo horn sections, piano and more.

Michael is the host and creator of the nationally syndicated *WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour* and the brand new national TV series *WoodSongs Kids* (think *Mr. Rogers meets the Grand Ole Opry*)

- ❶ **Garden of Silence** 3:06
- ❷ **Hurricane** 3:24
- ❸ **September Eve** 1:50
- ❹ **Prodigal Son** 2:34
- ❺ **Front Porch Symphony** 3:09
- ❻ **Winter Song** 2:48
- ❼ **Petrichor** 2:55
- ❽ **Narcissistic Blues** 2:27
- ❾ **The Farewell** 3:01
- ❿ **Seeger Mashup** 3:23
- ⓫ **FolkSinger** 2:52

All Songs written by Michael Johnathon/©Rachel Aubrey Music Inc/BMI
SEEGER MASHUP by Pete Seeger ©Sango Music/BMI



Folk - Americana - Roots - Songwriter
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Michael Johnathon

and the message of America's Front Porch



He is a banjo playing folksinger. His worldview is shaped from the front porch of his log cabin home near Lexington, Kentucky.

"Never before has the need to revisit the meaning and spirit of the front porch been so needed," he says. Indeed war and economic uncertainty, civil unrest and gun violence, the shattering of accepted norms and the incessant social media noise have caused many to re-examine where we are heading.

"This is not a political idea. It's not left or right, republican or democrat, black or white, liberal or conservative. It is hometowns and neighbors, families and friends. It's America, Canada, Ireland and beyond." says Johnathon. *"It was the poetic calmness of rural communities that built arguably the greatest nation in world history."*

There is merit in that musical message. Generations ago there was a Slavic saying that went, *"if everyone in the whole world simply took care of their own homes you would not have to worry about the world anymore."* In the 1960s that was re-phrased into a bumper sticker, *"Think globally. Act locally."*

To that end, Michael Johnathon is not your average folksinger. A prolific songwriter, now with 20 nationally released albums, 6 published books, he also created and hosts a mammoth all volunteer-run public radio and TV broadcast, the **WoodSongs Old Time Radio Hour** airing on over 500 radio stations, millions of TV homes on PBS stations and the RFD TV Network, and worldwide on the American Forces Radio Network. The broadcast is described on-air as a multi-media front porch. He conceived and created the national community of **SongFarmers**, artists and musicians faced with the post pandemic collapse of the music world and redirecting their efforts into their home towns and communities. Already there are 89 active chapters from Australia, across America and Ireland.

"We are living among the first generation in human history that gets its music and art as a flat screen, cell phone, digital tsunami of ones and zeros," he says. *"The real front porch, organic world of music and art is fading away."*

Johnathon has tapped into a global need for friends, community and the genuine comfort organic art can give in a world of incessant stress. It is an unlikely career trajectory that hasn't been seen since folksinger **Pete Seeger** decided to build the Clearwater sloop to help clean up the Hudson river. While others reach out for a golden ring that no longer exists in a record industry that has essentially collapsed, he reaches instead to a global fan base made up of neighbors, families and fellow musicians.

"I think the truth of music and art is not being told to the world of struggling songwriters," he says. *"There is an illusion that the age of million selling records and world tours are still there, but it is not. The truth is that 99% of musicians will not get a record deal, will not get a booking agent, will not become stars."*

Johnathon believes in the passion and energy of those artists, the greatest stage in the world is literally the emotional and spiritual front porch, the brightest spotlight shines on your living room couch. *"Musicians have a wonderful opportunity to follow the example of artists like Pete Seeger, Harry Chapin and others, doing good work can be the equivalent of having a hit record."*

His recent book **WoodSongs 5** is a tribute to the struggling artists of yesterday and today including Vincent van Gogh. He completed the screenplay for the pending motion picture, **"Caney Creek: the Legend of Alice Lloyd,"** described by industry producers as the *Dances with Wolves of Appalachia*. If all that is not enough, he is launching another volunteer run TV series dedicated to the music of youngsters called **"WoodSongs Kids,"** a *Mr. Rogers meets the Grand Ole Opry* style broadcast.

"I wish musicians understood that free is the new business model," he explains. *"Facebook, Google, YouTube, Twitter allows everybody in the world to use their platforms absolutely free. It is very much an incarnation of the front porch business model. Music can work that way as well and you can accomplish amazing things with it."*

This past spring he reached out to the WoodSongs community and collected over 1000 instruments and delivered them free to the musicians who lost everything in the ravage destruction of tornadoes in western Kentucky. Recently, massive floods devastated the mountain communities of Appalachia and again he is enlisting the passionate front porch spirit to collect another 1000 guitars, banjos, dulcimers, pianos and more and deliver them free of charge to the musicians in the mountains. His belief in the front porch spirit has resulted in powerful partnerships. The Commonwealth of Kentucky gave him the prestigious **MILNER AWARD of the ARTS** reserved for the likes of Wendell Berry, James Still, Jean Ritchie and others.

To find out more or how you can participate in the musical efforts of America's front porch spirit visit:
WoodSongs.com, SongFarmers.org, MichaelJohnathon.com, CaneyCreekMovie.com