

# *Charleston Folk*

*Music. Dance. Life.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Charleston Folk Hosts Reunion Dance**

**Charleston, SC (April 1, 2011)** – Charleston Folk will be hosting a reunion dance on May 20<sup>th</sup> at 8pm in Lance Hall at the Circular Congregational Church, 150 Meeting Street featuring live music by Anna’s Bananas and contra calls by Maggie Jo Saylor. This dance, open to all members of the public, celebrates the 20+ year history of Charleston Folk contra dances hosted in Charleston. Admission to the event is \$8, cash only, and is taken at the door. For more information about Charleston Folk, visit their website <http://charlestonfolk.weebly.com> and their Facebook group <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=21389979194>.

The dance caller for the evening, Maggie Jo Saylor, is a sought-after dance caller around the United States. Maggie Jo, a Charleston local, is returning to the states for this dance after spending time in Italy. She will also be calling at Youth Dance Weekend in Vermont and Summer Soiree in Asheville this year. Maggie Jo’s calling is notable for a unique, youthful energy and enthusiasm. She incorporates her theatre performance training into her evenings, which makes for clear, concise instruction and creative programming. Maggie Jo firmly believes that if you’re not having fun, then you’re not contra dancing.

Anna's Bananas, also local to Charleston, is sure to have the crowd moving and grooving, shrieking and stomping. The group started when "old codger" Bart Saylor corrupted a few young classical violinists into fiddle players and has erupted into one of the most energetic and eclectic contra bands in the region. With Bart on acoustic guitar, Sytske and Michelle Hillenius on twin fiddles, Taylor and Andrae Raffield on electric bass, fiddles, mandolin, concertina, and viola, Joey Dorwart on drums, saxophone, and various percussion, and Ian Kelmartin on electric guitar, harmonica, and didgeridoo they will make sure you enjoy every minute of the evening.

### **About Charleston Folk**

Charleston Folk is a non-profit organization with a mission to promote, sponsor, and encourage participation in American folk dancing and music traditions among people of all ages in the South Carolina Lowcountry. They host regular dances on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays at the Felix Davis Community Center at Park Circle in North Charleston.

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## Fact Sheet:

- Charleston Folk was formed in 1978 out of the Chanticleer coffeehouse running out of Gage Hall at the Unitarian Church as a concert producing organization.
- Edmund Robinson was the first president of Charleston Folk and stayed with the organization until he moved in 1995 to attend Harvard Divinity School.
- For the first Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston (1978), they collaborated with the Office of Cultural Affairs to produce 5 concerts in the food court near Tommy Condon's.
- They became a non-profit in 1982 and produced the first concert outside of Spoleto that year using the Footlight Players workshop as their principle venue.
- Laura Katz was the artistic director (from the Cultural Affairs Office) with a modest compensation throughout the '80s.
- Throughout the '80s, they produced between 5 and 9 concerts per academic year, no more than one per month bringing in big name folk groups such as The Chieftains.
- Around 1987 they outgrew the Footlight Players workshop and moved into the Garden Theater (now Urban Outfitters).
- Hurricane Hugo struck in September of '89 and damaged the Garden Theater so Charleston Folk concerts were in many different venues, leading to an attendance drop off.
- Contra Dances started to take off after Hugo and by the time Robinson left the organization, this was their sole mission.
- These dances were hosted primarily in Gage Hall throughout the '90s.
- Palmetto Bug Stomp, their mostly annual dance weekend was originally hosted at The Citadel.
- They moved to the Old Ballroom Dance Club until 2008 when they moved the Felix Davis Community Center in North Charleston.
- Charleston Folk became a non-profit in the spring of 2011.