



# MOHAWK HUDSON FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL



**2023**



## Director's Welcome

I am excited and pleased to welcome you today to what has become an annual event - Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival! The festival, which presents the diverse cultural traditions of the region, is now in its 3rd year. We are indebted to the outpouring of support that we receive to make the festival possible, including ongoing support from the New York State Council on the Arts. New York Folklore also receives festival-specific support from the Michele L. Vennard Hospitality Grant Program of the Albany County Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the FairGame Arts Grant of the Upstate Theater Coalition for a Fair Game, and sponsorship by the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. This year the festival is also a program of the Hudson River Valley Ramble!

The Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival is the result of community-based research to identify traditional artists, community cultural experts, and community advocates through the Capital Region and Hudson Valley. Through the support of the Folk Arts Program of the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, New York Folklore has pursued cultural documentation and provided the resulting programming in several regions of New York State. Folklorists Anne Rappaport Berliner, Edgar Betelu, and Ladan Nikravan have provided their expertise to curate today's festival. Today's festival is presented in collaboration with the City of Albany and Discover Albany.

The Capital Region enjoys a rich tapestry of diverse communities, with many skilled individuals who are engaged in folk cultural activities. The performances and presentations you see here today may be, for the artists, the first time that they have presented their art form outside of their communities. Come delight in the diversity of artistic and cultural expression that is found in the Capital District of New York. Enjoy the Festival!

Sincerely, Ellen McHale,  
Executive Director

## **About New York Folklore**

New York Folklore is a statewide organization, headquartered in Schenectady. We are a membership organization, open to all, concerned with furthering cultural equity and strengthening the understanding of the role of folk and traditional culture in our lives. New York Folklore supports folk and traditional artists, community cultural experts, community-based cultural organizations, and those who work as public folklorists throughout New York State. More information about New York Folklore can be found at [www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org).

## **What is Folklore?**

Folklore and folk arts are essential ways of communicating heritage. Every group of people that shares a sense of identity shares folklore as part of that identity. Folklore is a way that people comment upon and creatively make sense of their shared experiences. Examples of folklore and folk culture in New York State include geographically localized traditions such as Adirondack fiddling; culturally based expressive art forms such as African-American quilting or Karen weaving; and urban expressions such as hip hop style clothing and performance. Folklore's dynamic is in the way you cook, the way you clothe yourself, and how you celebrate your favorite holiday. Folklore and folk arts expressions are so diverse that they may seem unrelated, but they are connected through being transmitted orally or through example, and the importance that they have for the preservation of culture and heritage within communities.

# Performance Schedule

**11:05 am - 11:25 am**

Karen Dance and Music / Ehsue Klay Aung, Pinya Aung, Karen Community

**12:15 pm - 12:45 pm**

Merengue Tipico (Perico Ripiao) / Louis Remigio

**1:00 pm - 1:20 pm**

Son Jarocho (Mexican Folk Music) / Pulso De Barro

**1:45 pm - 2:30 pm**

Celtic and Irish Folk Music / DRAM

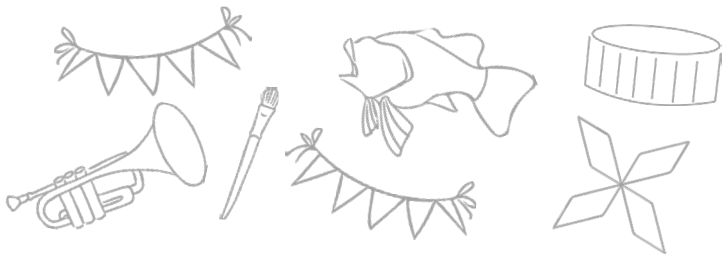
**3:15 pm - 4:00 pm**

Ghanaian Folk Music / Gballoi

**4:45 pm - 5:30 pm**

Afro-Caribbean Music / Bronte

\* Schedule Subject to Change



## Food Demonstration Schedule

**11:30 am -12:15 pm**

Czech Dumplings / Katya and Janek Palat (Sweet Prophecy)

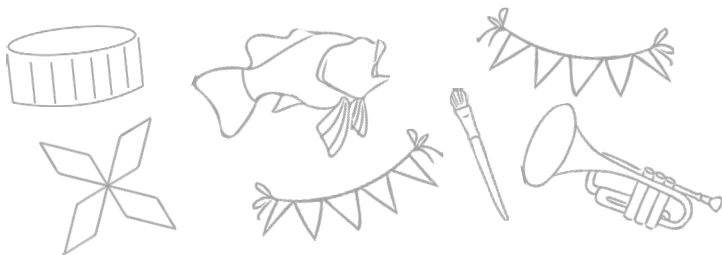
**1:00 pm -1:45 pm**

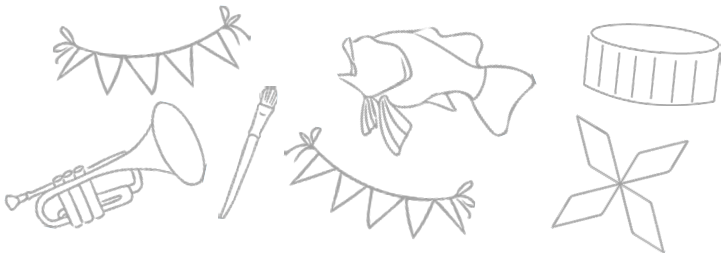
Bangladeshi Daal / Jarin Ahmed

**4:00 pm - 4:45 pm**

Albanian Red Pepper with Ricotta and Butter / Vera Kita

\* Schedule Subject to Change

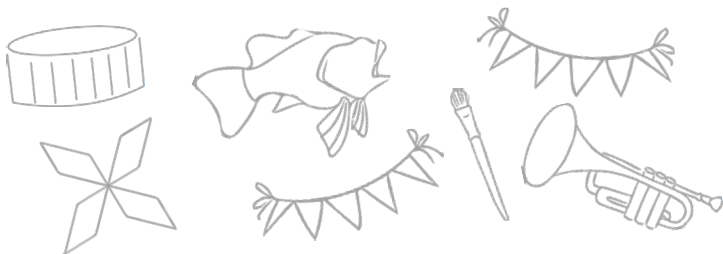




## Participatory Activities Schedule

Please see the activities insert for schedule details!  
Activities include; Chinese Papercutting with Jianling Yue, Afghan Kite Flying with Ahmad Shah Wali, Ojos de Dios (Mexican Yarn Craft) with Pulso De Barro, and Double Dutch with Nanny's.

Schedule Subject to Change



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## Concert Series Live In-Person & Streaming!

at Old Songs – 37 S. Main in Voorheesville, NY

Fri., Oct. 6 at 7:30 pm  
**Niamh Parsons &  
Graham Dunne**

Sat., Oct. 14 at 7:30 pm  
**Jim & Susie Malcolm**

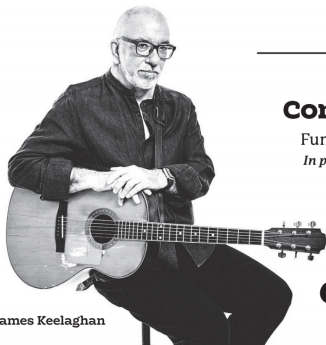
Fri., Oct. 20 at 7:30 pm  
**Sarah McQuaid**

Sat. Nov. 11 at 7:30 pm  
**Scott Ainslie**

Fri. Nov. 17 at 7:30 pm  
**James Keelaghan**

Fri., Dec. 1 at 7:30 pm  
**Kongero**

Fri., Dec. 8 at 7:30 pm  
**Windborne**



James Keelaghan

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## Sat., Nov. 4 at 7 pm Community Barn Dance

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# Demonstrators



## **Fatou Camara**

Fatou is a mother of two from Danané, a city in the far west of Ivory Coast. She came to the U.S. in 2016 and speaks both French and Koyate. She, like many women from Africa, learned how to braid African hair from her mother. Fatou owns and operates her own salon, Fatima African Hair Lounge in Albany, NY.

## **Stephen Iachetta**

Stephen is a performance luthier who began playing the violin in the third grade. A few years later he came under the tutelage of William Cridge, Shaker Middle School Orchestra Director, and cellist in the Albany Symphony Orchestra. Cridge also had a luthier shop, where Stephen worked as his apprentice. Today, Stephen owns and operates Shaker Violin Repair and plays in a number of bands including The Friends Union Band.

## **Wayne Ford**

Wayne Ford is a master woodworker and shipwright with extensive timber framing experience. His experience includes participating in the restoration of the sloop *Woody Guthrie* and the schooner *Clearwater*. He teaches a wide range of woodworking classes, YouthBoat boatbuilding, timber framing, and special project classes at the Wooden Boat School in Kingston, NY.

## **Jianling Yue**

Jianling Yue is currently a professor of Chinese language and culture at RPI in Troy. She is from Shanxi Province, a region rich in Chinese paper-cutting culture. She learned paper cutting during her childhood. Over the years, she has continued to refine her skills and create her own designs. In addition to teaching the Chinese language and culture, she has hosted workshops on Chinese paper-cutting for various cultural events and festivals.

## **Monica Alicia Sistema Ramos and Lenin Marcelo Pazmino Aroca**

Monica and Lenin are artists and asylees from Ambato and Quito, Ecuador respectively and both are of Quechuan heritage (indigenous community of South America). Lenin is a master craftsman of leather and metals such as silver and copper, and his education began as a teenager. Monica is an artist in her own right, learning metalwork from Lenin. Her work often incorporates natural themes, such as apple trees and duende (an Ecuadorian mythological creature). They used profits from selling their art to finance their journey from Ecuador to the United States. Their recent journey took them almost a full year: they experienced jungle travel, immigration officers, and even jail time before arriving in Albany County. Monica believes life introduced her to the right people who taught her to create art with her hands. She enjoyed being able to get away from her problems by creating beautiful things with her hands.

## **Jabin Ahmed**

Jabin Ahmed is a community organizer, writer, and artist in Columbia County. A Muslim American woman of Bangladeshi descent, she is passionate about creating spaces that support diverse families and youth. She is the co-founder of Hudson Muslim Youth. Jabin's art, Alpona (Bengali: আলপনা) is a folk art style, traditionally practiced by women, consisting of colored motifs, patterns, and symbols that are painted on floors and walls with paints made from rice flour. The motifs and designs in alpanas are usually created without the use of stencils or patterns.

## **Maria Puente Flores and Mateo Cano (Pulso De Barro)**

Mexican American musicians Maria Puente Flores and Mateo Cano explore the tradition of Son Jarocho as the duo Pulso De Barro. The musical tradition brings together the community through the gatherings called Fandangos. Fandangos are a celebratory time where community members make music, dance, and other art. Members play Jarana (a stringed instrument), dance on the Tarima (percussive platform) and sing folk and original compositions called Versadas. Mateo is especially drawn to the Jarana and Maria to the Tarima. Maria is also an artist of material culture, the crafting traditional Mexican papier-mâché masks that are used during carnivals and taught to her by her aunt.

## **Ahmad Shah Wali**

Ahmad grew up in Kabul, Afghanistan, where the weather is like the Capital Region's. During the winter he used to make and fly kites a deeply embedded Afghan tradition. Ahmad believes building a kite helps teach a child patience and diligence to finish a task. For him, flying a kite is one of the most exhilarating experiences a person can have. A sense of pride, joy and accomplishment washes over them as they watch this object, they built fly into the sky.

## **Bibi Asia Zadran**

Bibi Asia is an Albany County based henna artist, originally from Khost, Afghanistan. Bibi learnt henna as a young girl, watching family members and friends. One of her aunts was particularly talented, and her designs caught Bibi's imagination. Before she drew with henna (a temporary plant-based dye) she and her friends used pencil and paper. Bibi designs are spontaneous, from her imagination, and she does not copy set designs. Her designs are inspired by events and circumstances. Henna is commonly created for social events like weddings.

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# Community Cooks

## Vera Kita

Vera makes most of her food from scratch, including butter, yogurt, and bread. In addition to cooking, Vera breaks down animals and fish caught by her husband and maintains a large garden for her cooking. She documents her cooking on her Instagram @tradite\_guzhine\_vera. She learned much of her cooking from her family while living in Albania. Vera moved to Albany County in 2014 with her family, and became a citizen in 2019.

## Sweet Prophecy

Sweet Prophecy, located in Saratoga County, is a culinary venture led by Janek Palat, the main baker and chef. With assistance from his wife Katya and father-in-law Viktor, they specialize in genuine Eastern European culinary traditions. Janek, who is from Moravian Wallachia - a beautiful mountainous region in the Czech Republic, uses traditional Czech recipes passed down in his family. Sweet Prophecy started in 2022 when the couple pursued their dream of a food business, selling their offerings at various markets. You can find them with a selection of freshly baked confections at the Saratoga's Farmer's Market on Saturdays, and at various Pop-Ups across the Capital Region. Follow them on Instagram: @sweetprophecybakery for updates, events, and menus.

## Jarin Ahmed

Jarin Ahmed grew up in Columbia County. Part of a large family, Jarin's parents migrated from Bangladesh in the 90's and were one of the first Bangladeshi families in the area. Today, the community has grown significantly and is a pillar of the town's identity. Jarin helped her parents cook from a young age, tending the vegetable garden where her parents planted hard to find produce, snake and bitter gourds, hyacinth beans, and potato flowers, and other items. Jarin continued to cook throughout her youth and has become one of the most cherished cooks in the community. Eventually, she opened a catering business and was the head cook for local community organizations. Follow Jarin on Instagram @tanjarinrecipes.

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# Performers



## **Pinya Aung**

Pinya Aung plays the Tenaku Harp and the Kana, instruments in the Karen musical tradition. Pinya was born and raised in the town of Hlaingbwe in Kayin State in southern Myanmar near the border with Thailand. The region has been marked by decades of political violence and persecution of the Karen and other minorities. Pinya and his family were forced to relocate to the Mae La refugee camp in Thailand and later arrived in Albany County. During his years in the Mae Le Refugee Camp he joined a local music and cultural organization and performed in many celebrations and community events.

## **Ehsue Klay Aung and Karen Dance Group**

Ehsue Klay Aung was born and raised in the Mae La Refugee camp in Thailand. She lived in the Mae La camp until she arrived in Albany County as a refugee in 2007 along with her husband and young son. Growing up in the camp, Ehsue began to learn dance from her mother and other elders. In Albany, Ehsue soon began to gather with other Karen refugees and started putting together small dance ensembles. The dancers are a combination of Karen women, some born in refugee camps in Thailand and others born in New York.



## **Gballoi**

Gballoi (The Prophet Band) is a traveling ensemble from Ghana with three decades of experience in the field of West African music and dance. Hailing from Accra, a city on the coast of Ghana known worldwide for its rich, intricate, and notoriously difficult musical traditions, Gballoi's mission is to promote Ghanaian culture in the United States and across the world. "Gballoi" is a Ghanaian word meaning a prince or "prophet" who gives divine insight to members of his community. Gballoi's members perform on bells, hand drums, shakers and flutes. The core members are Zorkie Nelson, Benjamin Apang, David Nunoo, and Robert Nunoo, with dancer Felix Nelson. They are joined by several more musicians and dancers who collectively represent the traditions of the Ga people of Ghana, for the Mohawk Hudson Folklife Festival.

## **Bronte Roman**

Bronte Roman, is a New York based contemporary, jazz and latin-pop vocalist. She surprises and excites her audiences, highlighting her Puerto Rican heritage when performing Latin-infused merengue, salsa and Afro-Caribbean Music. She has studied with jazz legend Sheila Jordan to creatively mark her own jazz style. Her musical feel for a variety of genres is her distinctively unique gift.

## **Luis Remigio and His Conjunto De Merengue Tradicional**

Luis Remigio is an accordion player based in Rockland County, New York who performs Merengue Típico also known as Perico Ripiao. Merengue Típico is the oldest style of merengue still performed today (usually in the Dominican Republic and the United States), with origins dating back to the 1850s. Luis grew up in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. His grandfather was an accordion player and his first teacher. Luis began to play at family and social celebrations at the age of 10. Luis was a teenager when his family moved to the U.S., and soon after he formed his Conjunto with his brothers Esmeldyn and Luis Fernando on Guira (metal scraper) and Tambora (stringed instrument). They regularly perform in social and community events in the Dominican community.

## **DRAM**

A dram is a small drink of whisky.

Dram is also the ten-year placeholder name that five Greene County musicians go by when they gather to play the music of mountain folk and Celtic folk. They have performed on a regular basis at the East Durham Irish Festival, Irish Arts Week, The Shamrock House in East Durham, Coxsackie Riverside Festival and venues such as the Stewart House Hotel and Tavern in Athens, NY. The band roster includes Shannon and Andy Shober AKA Shandy. They bring to DRAM, Shannon's lead and Andy's harmony vocals, along with guitar, tinwhistle, and bass - both upright and electrified, Chris Fisher on the drums, Chris Kennedy and his guitar and last, Chris Marshall self-proclaimed jack of fiddle, mandolin, banjo and vocals, master of none!

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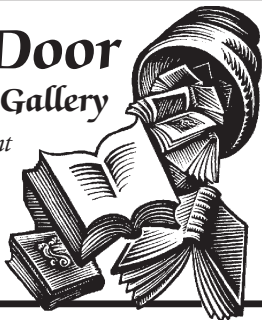
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# **Non-Profit Participants**

**West Hill Refugee Welcome Center**

**Friends of Tivoli Lake Preserve and Farm**

**U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants Albany**

**Schoharie River Center**

**Columbia County Sanctuary Movement**

**Nanny's Double Dutch League**

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## **MEMBERSHIP**

Become a New York Folklore member today! Members receive many benefits and help support folklife in New York State. To join online, visit our website [www.nyfolklore.org](http://www.nyfolklore.org). Or email ([info@nyfolklore.org](mailto:info@nyfolklore.org)) for new or renewal membership information.

# Join or Renew your New York Folklore Membership to Receive *Voices* and other Member Benefits

## For the General Public

*Voices* is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal, published twice annually. Join New York Folklore and become part of a community that will deepen your involvement with folklore, folklife, the traditional arts, and contemporary culture. As a member, you'll have early notice of Gallery special exhibits and NYF-sponsored key events. Members receive a discount on NYF Gallery items.

## For Artists and Professionals

Become a member and learn about technical assistance programs that will get you the help you may need in your work:

Mentoring and Professional Development  
Folk Artists Self-Management Project  
Folk Archives Project  
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Advocacy  
A Public Voice

## Membership Levels

### Individual

\$ 50.00	Basic Membership
\$100.00	Harold W. Thompson Circle
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### Organizations/Institutions

\$ 75.00	Subscriber
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**or mail a check to us at 129 Jay St., Schenectady NY 12305;**

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*Simone's Kitchen*  
*Simply Beautiful Soaps*  
*Smalls on Jay*

## Folk and traditional arts programming in the Capital Region!

<https://nyfolklore.org/events-exhibitions/>

### October 21st: Día de los Muertos

#### Sugar Skull Workshop

1pm at New York Folklore



Registration required

### November 18th:

#### Art Education Showcase

Call for Information



**Current Exhibit:**  
**Hattitude! The Hats of**  
**Louise Hughes Rolling**

Closes October 15th

**Upcoming Exhibit:**  
**Mexican Cartonería**  
**By Aurelia Fernandez**

Opens October 20th

### October 15th: Design Your Own Hat Workshop

12:30 pm at New York Folklore

Participants will create their own unique designs on hats. In this guided workshop participants will learn how to prime and paint on hats for a long lasting design. Lifelong Schenectady Resident and workshop leader, Rae' Frasier is the creator and owner of Art Money (@artmon3y). Rae' is a clothing designer and mural artist. This workshop is presented in partnership with our neighbor Smalls on Jay. This workshop is designed for youth ages 11 – 19. **SPACE IS LIMITED** Please call or email to register. Cost (includes materials): \$10.00



# THANK YOU

Programs of New York Folklore are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

This is a 2023 “Hudson River Valley Ramble” event, in collaboration with the Hudson River Greenway and the Maurice D. Hinchey Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Eric Ayotte, Charlie Jones, Quill Harrison, Schoharie River Center, the West Hill Refugee Welcome Center, Jeff Hunt and the City of Albany Department of General Services.

## SPONSORS:



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