

together, shared stories and meals, and valued the transmission of a cultural heritage. My band members had similar experiences; all of us in Windborne have been affected by work that CDSS has done at Pinewoods and other dance camps, as well as supporting groups that spread these traditions. CDSS has created a community that has enriched our lives, along with countless others across the country. In a time where many people around the world define Americans by what they see in Hollywood and on YouTube, it was an honor and a pleasure to show another side of American culture during our trip.

My upbringing in the folk world has shaped my academic path as well as my personal life, leading me to study the anthropology of dance as an undergraduate and more recently during a two year M.A. on Dance Knowledge, Practice, and Heritage in Norway, France, Hungary, and England. An important term in dance studies is “Intangible Cultural Heritage,” (ICH) and it is one I think about often in regards to the traditions with which I’ve been raised. While many are familiar with UNESCO World Heritage Sites, such as the Great Wall of China, the Anne Frank House, or Australia’s Great Barrier Reef, far fewer know about Intangible Cultural Heritage. ICH includes practices such as dance, music, storytelling, craft, and ritual, that are important to communities of people, are transmitted from generation to generation, and are alive and pertinent today, not frozen moments of the past reenacted. This is what we do, and what CDSS supports. Our traditions find new relevance with each generation through innovative sword dance, new shape note compositions, or techno-contra. We connect with each other through these traditions, and actively pass them on to new singers, dancers, and musicians. So different than the passive consumption of art and entertainment, this heritage of participatory community art has shaped my ways of understanding and interacting.

While I cannot necessarily point to an object, space, or building and say, “This is my heritage,” Windborne’s trip with American Music Abroad made it clear that I do have an intangible heritage to share, in the form of songs first learned as lullabies, dances from Pinewoods classes, and tunes that lie dormant in my subconscious until the fiddler starts. Yes, this experience highlighted the richness and meaning of intercultural and artistic exchange, but it also rekindled my connection with my own community, helping me dig deeper into these traditions and do my part in passing on the heritage that we so treasure. The music, dance, and song we share are not merely

activities; they are the foundation of a community, the threads that tie us together; a gift from past to future.

You can see videos and photos of Windborne’s AMA experience, listen to the album “Lay Around That Shack” which was inspired by the tour, or find out more about Windborne at WindborneSingers.com or at [FB.me/WindborneSingers](https://www.facebook.com/WindborneSingers). Also see tinyurl.com/WB-AMA for a video of their experience on the tour through music and dance. Their Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/WindborneSingers>.

Windborne Singers are Lauren Breunig, Jeremy Carter-Gordon, Lynn Mahoney Rowan, and Will Thomas Rowan. Photos courtesy Jeremy Carter-Gordon.

The Dance in North Sycamore

by Dudley Laufman

Don’t ask where or when, the place is only there three days a week and it is not always the same three. They only dance twice a year and you might not catch them on that night. For all anyone knows they might dance more often than that but you’d have to be there at the right time.

Starts late, usually around nine thirty. Lights come on in the hall and the band is there like they’ve been there all along in a black and white photo just waiting to come alive. Fiddle, sax, piano and drum.

In comes old Robby from a dinner party dressed in his white suit with black shirt and yellow tie. Dances Petronella with his arms folded across his chest. His wife in long gown, hikes her skirts up so you can see her fancy steps. Their kids troop in, all four dressed the same, dance the same. Elegant.

Then comes Jeff and Tony, Robin and Bailey, straight from the woods, dressed to the tweedy nines, complete with ascots, thumping the floor, flaying their arms, whistling their way through Lady Walpole’s Reel, Morning Star, Hull’s Victory, Money Musk and Petronella, fifteen minute break between each one, time for a drink outside.

Old dancing master used to wander these roads, town to town, fiddle under arm, teach those dances. Now he’s in fiddler’s heaven, pleased as laced punch to see his work flourishing, maybe scratching his head at the manner those loggers carry on.

If you can find this place it might change your life.

© Dudley Laufman