

# **Study Guide**

## **Ken Waldman & The Wild Ones**

*An Interdisciplinary Arts Extravaganza for Middle School and High School*

*with Music, Poetry, Dance, Visual Art, Surprises*

**featuring Ken Waldman from Anchorage, Alaska**

**with Larry & Joe from Durham, North Carolina (via Venezuela & Argentina)**

**Aaron Jonah Lewis from Detroit, Michigan**

**Lindsay McCaw from Detroit, Michigan**

**Hannah Lewis from Detroit, Michigan**

**and guests, Lucy Long and Steve O'Regan from Bowling Green, Ohio**

**Created for the Valentine Theatre, Toledo, Ohio, September 2023**

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## Biographies

**Ken Waldman** combines original poetry, old-time string-band music, and smart storytelling for a performance uniquely his. Since 1995 he's appeared from the Kennedy Center Millennium Stage to the Dodge Poetry Festival to the Woodford Folk Festival (Queensland, Australia). 20 books consist of 16 full-length poetry collections, a memoir, a creative writing manual, a kids' poetry book, and a novel. 12 CDs include two for children, and another that was recorded to accompany the novel. While he sometimes will still appear solo, more often he appears with **The Wild Ones**, an ever-changing troupe of local, regional, and nationally recognized musicians, many of whom are headliners themselves. Also known as Alaska's Fiddling Poet, he's visited over 250 schools in 35 states and especially loves putting together shows like this one at the Valentine Theatre. Says *The Austin Chronicle* about any Ken Waldman appearance: "Feels like a Ken Burns movie . . . Always recommended." Says a Las Vegas, Nevada middle-school student, "You inspired me to do something bigger with my life."



**Larry & Joe** are **Larry Bellorin** and **Joe Troop**.

**Larry Bellorín** grew up in the state of Monagas, Venezuela. His first instrument was the cuatro, a 4-string guitar. Larry quickly excelled and by age 11 was supporting himself through music alone. He soon became proficient on guitar, electric bass, mandolin and maracas as well. By age 13, he was well-versed in the folk music of his region. Before long, Larry met an authentic Llanera harpist, Urbino Ruiz, who immediately took him under his wing as an apprentice. After only a month of tutelage, Larry had a repertoire of 40 songs. Much later, while touring the country as a performer, he and his wife opened Casa Vieja, a school dedicated to teaching Música Llanera. In 2012 Venezuela began to collapse, and it became impossible to maintain a music school. Poverty and violence was extreme, and new political realities threatened Larry and his family's lives. He decided to go to the United States in search of work and asylum for his family. He arrived with only thirty dollars and slept on the floor of an unfurnished room while doing construction day labor. His wife and young daughter eventually joined him. Having faced

political persecution, they were able to open a case for asylum. Larry has endured wage theft and several work site injuries but continues to look to the future with hope.

**Joe Troop** is a multi-instrumentalist, singer, and songwriter hailing originally from Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The founder of GRAMMY-nominated stringband Che Apalache, Joe's music is deeply inspired by his decade living in Buenos Aires and traveling throughout Latin America. When the pandemic unexpectedly landed him back in North Carolina, he spent 2020 learning direct action from stalwart organizers. Joe's music reflects both his time spent living abroad as well as his upbringing in the North Carolina Piedmont. Now based in Durham, he leads various ensembles which play his original music.

Both Larry and Joe are versatile multi-instrumentalists and singer-songwriters on a mission to show that music has no borders. As a duo they perform a fusion of Venezuelan and Appalachian folk music on harp, banjo, cuatro, fiddle, maracas, guitar, upright bass, and whatever else they throw in the van. The program they offer features a distinct blend of their musical inheritances and traditions as well as storytelling about the ways that music and social movements coalesce.



Virtuoso banjo player and fiddler **Aaron Jonah Lewis** had their first lessons at the age of five with Kentucky native Robert Oppelt. Their concerts take audiences on a journey through the back roads of American old time and folk music, with detours through ragtime and early jazz. Lewis has taken blue ribbons at the oldest and largest fiddlers convention in the country. They spend most of their time teaching, touring both as a solo performer, or with the Corn Potato String Band, the Lovestruck Balladeers, and other projects. Lewis has appeared on dozens of recordings from bluegrass and old time to traditional jazz, contemporary experimental and Turkish classical music projects. They have taught workshops at the the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow and at the English Folk Dance and Song Society in London. They also play and teach banjo, mandolin, and guitar and are currently based in Detroit.

Greg Adams, Archivist at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, says, “Lewis is one of the few performing musicians with the facility to build compelling musical bridges between the printed banjo music and techniques of the 19th century and the instrument’s journey into recorded sound by the turn of the 20th century.”



**Lindsay Mc Caw** lives in Detroit, Michigan, USA and works as a puppeteer and fiddle/guitar player. She has worked with Bread and Puppet Theater for about 18 years and has also worked with In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre in Minnesota. She has her own puppet company called The Dolly Wagglers and she plays in a band called Roochie Tootchie and the Ragtime Shepherd Kings. She's also a two-time winner of the Minneapolis Jug Band Contest and four-time Grand Prize winner of the Sheffield Field Days Fiddle contest. There's more than that, including the company she started 20 years ago, The Dolly Wagglers/Flying Cardboard Theatre, and she also does crankies. What's a crankie? That will be explained later!



**Hannah Lewis** has earned a reputation throughout southern Appalachia for her driving percussive dancing. Often mimicking the fiddle bow stroke for bow stroke, Lewis's feet blur the lines between music and dance. She has received recognition in flatfooting competitions throughout the country, including the Clifftop Appalachian Stringband Festival competition in 2019, and the Great Southern Old Time Fiddler's Convention competitions in 2019, and 2020. She has taught flatfooting workshops at festivals and conventions across the United States and Canada, and as a musician is a compelling multi-instrumentalist. She lives in Detroit.



**Lucy Long** and **Steve O'Regan** both play with the Root Cellar String Band out of Bowling Green. (We absolutely had to include a pair of Ohio musicians as part of this extraordinary troupe!) Lucy is a sometime college professor with Ph.D. in Folklore and Folklife, and is director for the Center for Food and Culture. Her writing and editing about food, and the culture surrounding it, has brought her international recognition. Steve's day job as a plumbing and mechanical inspector for Wood County has not slowed him from playing music all over northwest Ohio, and beyond. This photo of the band has Lucy on fiddle, Steve on banjo.



## **About Poetry**

True story. One of Ken Waldman's friends is David Romtvedt, the former poet laureate of Wyoming. An accordion player, a professor, a husband, and a father, David Romtvedt has also been a carpenter, a rancher, a truck driver, a mailman, a blueberry picker, and an assembly line worker. Once he told Ken Waldman that when he flies on planes and his seatmate asks him what he does, if he wants to be left alone, he answers he's a poet. He finds this not only usually shuts them up, but that his seatmates will inch as far as they can from him, as if he's now carrying a communicable disease. If he answers, instead, that he's a musician, professor, or writer, or if he mentions any of his former jobs, they'll invariably engage him in a conversation.

Why Ken Waldman mentions this story is that even though people might say they like poetry, or appreciate it (and some of those people might even be you), the majority of people don't (or think they don't). In fact, most people not only don't understand poetry, but actively distrust it. If they think about poetry at all, they might think of sing-song rhymes for kids in elementary school, something that has nothing to do with them. Or maybe they think of it as something written long ago in a kind of code that's hard to understand—and again has nothing to do with them. Or maybe it's something they've come across in another way, and it's something they just don't like, so from then on they stay as far away from those awful poems as they can.

Fair enough. But that's the thing: like everything else, there are good poems and bad poems. And what Ken Waldman has found about good poems is they can be the absolute coolest, smartest, most brilliant things out there. Good poems really can make you think. They're also fun. The trick is finding them. It's like what American poet, Billy Collins, wrote starting this poem here,

### **Introduction to Poetry**

I ask them to take a poem  
and hold it up to the light  
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem  
and watch him probe his way out,

Ken Waldman wrote his first poem when he was thirty years old, living in Fairbanks, Alaska. At the time he was in graduate school, studying how to write stories better. His first year there he was taking a class that combined fiction writers like himself with classmates who wrote poems and classmates who wrote nonfiction essays. Though poems had been all around him before—and, really, there are always poems around you (just go to the library and look!)—he'd never been properly introduced in all his years of schooling or independent reading.

In Fairbanks, Ken Waldman read his classmates' poems and learned what they'd been reading the past weeks, months, and years. There were some wonderful poets out there he'd known nothing

about. Now he knew more. The next years, as he continued to write stories, he began writing more poems. And while he learned that poems could be about anything, he also learned about tastes. While experts could disagree, which was true for any art form, there were ways to improve poems

Here are a few things Ken Waldman learned:

Like with a story, you could always revise. With poems, not only did every word make a difference, but every syllable could too.

When revising, it helped to cut and cut in order to make a single piece as tight as possible.

Poems could be about anything: narrative poems could be like super-short stories; lyric poems depended more on description, but it helped if they described something. A lyric could be a description of a place, or description of a mood, or a description of virtually anything, but since it was a lyric, it was like a song, so it paid attention to sound.

Paying attention to sound doesn't mean rhymes. Most contemporary poetry doesn't rhyme in obvious ways. Contemporary poetry is much more subtle than that.

Something the poet Emily Dickinson said has stuck with Ken Waldman: "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can warm me, I know that is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry."

Another helpful quote is from the poet Robert Frost: "No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader. No surprise in the writer, no surprise in the reader."

Both the Dickinson quote and the Frost quote point to the reader finding something that's extraordinary in a particular poem, something that "takes your head off," or makes you cry, or just plain surprises you—and, to Ken Waldman's way of thinking, the only sure way to get to that point as a writer is to write something you didn't know that you could say. It means going back and instead of reading something absolutely cool, smart, and brilliant, it means writing something like that, which means *not* writing the obvious or predictable, but writing something a little bit deeper, or wilder, something that only you can write.

seven terms (and the name of a favorite poet, who you can look up):

sonnet	acrostic	line	voice
villanelle	stanza	line break	William Stafford

Ken Waldman's best piece of advice: sample lots of poetry collections and anthologies, and when you find a poem you like, read it, reread it, reread it again and again, and then read everything you can by that poet. Chances are you'll find more poems you like. Do you want even better advice? Write lots of poems. Share them. Listen to teachers. Then write more. Have fun with it.



As for online resources, Ken Waldman doesn't have to reinvent the wheel. [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org) has most everything you'd ever want, and so much more. It's so much to go through that you're invited to contact Ken Waldman for suggestions how to narrow the focus or for other sites to visit. Like with most everything else these days, the problem isn't gathering information, it's how to most effectively sift through all the information that's already available. Ultimately, like with so much else, once you have a good overview of the field, it becomes a matter of taste.

Also, everyone attending this Toledo show will receive a poem or two Ken has written for this occasion, and a bookmark with a poem (and Ken Waldman's address in Anchorage), and an invitation to write him. Write Ken a letter, and if there's a return address, he'll get back to you!

## **About Fiddling and String-Band Music**

Sometimes people ask Ken Waldman what's the difference between a fiddle and a violin.

To answer, Ken Waldman will take out his instrument, play a scale, usually with a bit of vibrato (a sound made by maneuvering a finger on the violin string being bowed so there's a throbbing quality) on one or more of the notes. Vibrato is one of the hallmarks of classical music. After finishing playing the scale, Ken will say, "That's a violin." Then he'll start playing a Southern fiddle tune, with double stops (when two strings are bowed at the same time) and slides (moving a finger up, making a slippery and bluesy sound). "That's a fiddle," Ken will say afterward. Fiddle is the term used for a more folksy or bluesy music—Irish music, Cajun music, blues all may have fiddles. While the instrument is the same, some fiddlers prefer slight modifications, like flatter bridges, plus fiddlers will sometimes tune their instrument different from standard G,D,A,E tuning to get a different sound, depending on the particular piece. But, really, the differences are individual. It's the style, and music, that's different.

Ken Waldman started playing when he was living in North Carolina, sharing a house with a banjo player and a guitarist. One day a friend of the banjo-playing housemate decided he wasn't going to keep his fiddle, so brought it over to the house to sell it. When Ken Waldman bought it, he'd just turned 25 years old.

Ken Waldman kept practicing, and was fortunate to be living in the community near Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where there was a tradition of this old-time string-band music. Though Ken never learned to read or write music, he learned as others before him learned: by listening and watching local fiddlers, which is the age-old way for learning this kind of music. As he continued, occasionally one of those other local fiddlers showed Ken Waldman a few tricks. For some tunes, it meant specific techniques with the bowing. For others, it meant retuning the fiddle. Always, it meant listening to the music.

As Ken continued listening to this kind of music, he continued to practice. A few years later, he moved to Seattle, Washington, then the following year to Fairbanks, Alaska. After three years in Fairbanks, he moved to Juneau, then Sitka, then Nome, and from 1982-1992, he played at least a little bit everyday. He continued improving.

What Ken Waldman plays is called old-time music, a style that predates bluegrass. The style comes from the Appalachian Mountains and the adjoining regions of the southeastern United States. Though the music has spread all over the country—and all over the world—it's still identified with the South. But while the music may come from there, it's evolved from other music that preceded it. Since the fiddle and banjo are the main instruments, it helps to know that the fiddle style is related to Irish, Scottish, and English fiddle styles from early settlers. The banjo is derived from various African instruments, and came to this country with the slave trade. The clawhammer banjo style used in old-time music, where the right hand is shaped like a claw and then the hand comes down like a hammer, with the thumb following to pick a string (usually the short, high string), takes the instrument back to its roots as a strung drum. While fiddle and

banjo are the classic combination, other instruments found in bands include guitar, bass, and mandolin. Sometimes you might find a dulcimer or a piano in a string band (and some bands will include two or three fiddlers—it can get pretty wild).

In 2000, Ken Waldman made his first CD. And over the next nine years he made eight more CDs, including two double CDs, and two children's CDs. All the CDs include fiddle, banjo, guitar, poetry, and more. After making three more CDs in 2022, he now has twelve.

Like with the poetry, there are near infinite resources for this music on the internet, and going to YouTube you can see and hear enough to keep you busy for weeks (or months, or years).

Here at the Toledo show, you have seven other musicians whose skills surpass Ken Waldman's. Are they geniuses? Maybe. They have their own particular stories. They started younger, maybe. They practiced longer and harder. They met more people that inspired them. Some of their stories you can find more easily online. Some you may have to reach out to after meeting them here. Larry & Joe are combining instruments in new and exciting ways. Aaron Jonah Lewis is going back in time with banjo. Lindsay McCaw combines music with puppets and crankies. Hannah Lewis is not only dancing, but she's making music with her feet. Lucy Long and Steve O' Regan have been playing in a band together for years, and their musical friendship is part of the Bowling Green community.

But you know what? There may be accomplished musicians in your own families, or who live next door, or down the street, or who teach at your school, or who you meet by chance as you go about your own life. So many people play music, whether professionally or for fun. If they can do it, you can too if you want to.

## **About Percussive Dance**

The kind of dancing that Hannah Lewis does is specific to the old-time string-band playing that we all can do. And like that string-band music, it combines the European influence of the fiddle, and the African influence of the banjo, to make movement, and music, that's new, and totally American.

You'll see it most often in Appalachia, where when a band plays, while there might be a dance caller, and couples pairing up for a square dance, there might be solo dancers, with their boards, clogging and buckdancing. Here's Hannah Lewis, just her feet (with solo fiddle), then another where you see all of Hannah (with fiddle and banjo)

<https://www.instagram.com/p/ByjE-myBHgW/?igshid=MDM4ZDc5MmU%3D>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=879673692375819>

## **About Crankies**

Sue Truman is a long-time fiddler, dancer, guitarist, and crankie artist out of Seattle, and someone who Ken Waldman met years ago when he lived in Seattle. She has a great website about crankies, [www.crankiefactory.com](http://www.crankiefactory.com).

I'll quote her here:

“What's a crankie you ask? They are an old storytelling art form. Start with a long illustrated scroll that is wound onto two spools. The spools are loaded into a box which has a viewing window. The scroll is then hand-cranked while the story is told, a song is sung or a tune is played.”

What will Lindsay McCaw do with her crankie here? We'll see!

## **About Alaska, Venezuela, Argentina, Durham, Detroit, Bowling Green**

Our 49<sup>th</sup> state has had a history as mythic as its size (it's not just the largest state, but if Alaska was divided in half, Texas would become the third largest state—Texans don't much like hearing that). It's truly a land of extremes.

Because it's so far north, summer days are much longer than the 48 contiguous states—and winter days are much shorter. From late May through late July in the Interior Alaska community of Fairbanks it never gets darker than dusk; drivers can get by without headlights. Winter is the opposite with a long slow sunrise to the southeast over mountains, which is followed by a long slow sunset—and only several hours of light during the day. The highest spot on the North American continent is in the Alaska Range, on the summit of Mount McKinley, which is over 20,000 feet. But if you call that mountain Mount McKinley, Alaskans will know you're not from there. Everybody calls it Denali, which is an Athabascan Indian word for “Great One,” and is the name of the spectacular national park. By the way, Alaska comes from the Aleut word, Alyeska, which means “Great Land.”

The Southeast part of the state has a maritime climate, so isn't as cold as the northern latitude suggests. Still, the weather is a challenge, and many of the communities there average 100 inches of rain a year or more, including Juneau, the state capital, where approximately 30,000 people live. The main population center of Anchorage, where nearly half of the almost 700,000 residents live, isn't any colder than many communities in the Upper Midwest or Plains. But the state's second most populated community, Fairbanks, population of approximately 70,000, averages January highs of below zero.

There are a number of Native groups in Alaska. Athabascan Indians are in the Interior the state. Aleuts are in the extreme southwest, including the Aleutian Islands. Three Eskimo groups are Yup'ik, in the western part of the state; Inupiat, in the northwest; and Siberian Yup'ik, only on St. Lawrence Island in northwest Alaska. In Southeast Alaska, two Native tribes are the Tlingit and the Haida.

These Native groups have made Alaska their home for centuries. In the mid eighteenth century, the first European explorers, a crew from Russia, landed in the Aleutians. The next hundred years Russians settled from the Aleutians, to Kodiak Island, all the way to Sitka, on Baranof Island in Southeast Alaska. In 1867, the United States bought the land from the Russians for \$7.2 million dollars, a deal brokered by Secretary of State, William Seward. After many years as an unofficial United States territory, Alaska officially became the 49<sup>th</sup> state in 1959.

As with everything else, there are plenty of resources on the web to learn more about Alaska.

Venezuela and Argentina are both in South American, but are much different. Though they're both predominantly Spanish-speaking countries, they're not contiguous. Venezuela is closer to the equator. Argentina is further south on the continent, and has had a broader European influence, so there are more languages throughout the country.

Larry Bellorin knows first-hand the challenges of the political instability there, and the challenges in seeking asylum. Joe knows first-hand what it's like to have his livelihood, too, stripped because of the pandemic (and having his old band mates in Argentina), and the difficulties of touring internationally.

If you didn't already know it, September 15-October 15 is National Hispanic American Heritage Month. It's a time to not only celebrate the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America, but to learn more about those cultures. The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15. It was enacted into law that same year.

Durham, North Carolina? Not only do Larry and Joe both live there now, but Ken Waldman went to college there, and started playing fiddle fifteen miles away outside of Chapel Hill. If Ken hadn't once lived in Durham, he certainly wouldn't be playing fiddle, or be at the Valentine Theatre. And if Larry and Joe hadn't both been there, they wouldn't be at the Valentine either.

What do we know about Detroit, where Aaron, Lindsay, and Hannah all live? (And what do we know about Bowling Green, where Lucy and Steve both live.) Neither are far from Toledo. Both have long histories separate from the long history of Toledo. Detroit is a major American city which has long been both a significant industrial center and a significant cultural center. Aaron, Lindsay, and Hannah are all part of a major arts renaissance there. Bowling Green is a much smaller place, but with a big public college. To live in Bowling Green, as Lucy and Steve both do, is to be part of the arts community.

While Ken Waldman can say personally that living in Alaska was the perfect place to make dreams of writing and music happen—he says that with so few people in so big a place, anybody can do anything—the real truth is there's no one single place to write, play music, dance, create visual art, or to dream big dreams. You can become anything living in Toledo. There are plenty of resources here. You can go anywhere (and you can start by going to nearby Detroit, or Ann Arbor, or Bowling Green, or Dayton, Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati). Maybe you'll make it Durham, or Washington DC, or New York City, or Miami, or to some West Coast places like Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland, Seattle. Hawaii is out there. And so is Alaska of course. And so are National Parks. And then there's Argentina, Venezuela, other Latin America places, and Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia. Traveling is a way of learning. So is poetry, music, dance, visual art. So is any kind of writing and reading.

## **What You Can Expect from Ken Waldman & The Wild Ones**

Ken Waldman will begin with an original poem for the occasion, then another poem with one of the musicians joining him, then another musician, and another, and the rest. That will lead to an introduction of all the artists.

From there, Larry & Joe will do a short showcase-length set. Then Aaron and Lindsay, who have been in a band together, will share a set, with Hannah almost certainly joining them. Ken Waldman has his set, in which he promises a surprise or two (students will receive Ken's take-home poems so they'll have paper; they'll also be given small pencils, so one of the surprises will include some writing). Lucy and Steve are there to play when called.

At some point, the artists will be explaining in their own words how they've gotten to where they are. Instead of offering a performance that could be repeated anywhere, Ken Waldman & The Wild Ones share a dynamic and educational entertainment. There are always endless possibilities of the exact content, since it can't be scripted—and if the circumstances allow, we'll invite a handful of students to come on stage to ask questions.

The aim is to provide a show full of fun, inspiration, and surprises. It's interdisciplinary and interactive. It's fast-moving. There's critical thinking,

### ***Six responses to Ken's visits (where he came solo, or with accompanists):***

“The experience was electrifying and inspirational to our students, who continue to talk about the “fiddling poet of Alaska” and his music, his stories, and his poems. Among other remarkable talents, Waldman is uncanny in his ability to capture his audience, regardless of size, age, or backgrounds. He can lead an advanced creative writing workshop with budding poets during the morning, and then, in the afternoon, turn on an auditorium filled with hundreds of middle school students. . . . When Waldman left us, I knew that he was the type of writer I would be calling upon again to visit us. He is a unique, authentic, American voice.

*--Robert Boerth, Chair of English, Trinity Preparatory School, Winter Park, FL*

“What a wonderful day it was at our school when you visited our English and Creative Writing classes! Our students were delighted by the interaction you offered in your presentations. Many have asked if you will be returning during the year for an encore.

*--Jan Neighbor, Chair of English, Rosa L. Parks School of Fine and Performing Arts, Paterson, NJ*

“Thank you for opening doors to writing, music, and Alaska in a manner that was easy for students to enter. Sometimes I worry that kids have given up on wonder. You proved me wrong.”

*--Candace Tippet, Community in Schools Program, Granite Falls Middle School, Granite Falls NC (in response to Ken Waldman's outreach show at the Broyhill Center)*



“Ken Waldman is truly an original. . . . It is always very exciting to incorporate traditional music performance in a class like American music, world music, or on an eclectic concert series. Ken's authentic playing and easy manner, accompanied by his unique insight and humor, make for an enjoyable performance. I recommend him most highly.”

*--William Bradbury, Professor of Music and Music Technology, Coordinator Arts and Lectures Series, California State University San Marcos, San Marcos, CA*

“I can't thank you enough for your excellent performances in Sidney. Your shows for our middle school students, both in the poetry workshop and in the school-wide assembly were excellent. It can't be easy to keep 900 rowdy middle-schoolers attentive and engaged, but you managed to do it, and make it look easy. Kids evidently relate to your laid back style and funny anecdotes, as well as your powerful poetry and fiddle.”

*--Susan Fox, Director, Gateway Arts Council, Sidney, OH (2005)*

“As a retired teacher, I sat in awe through (Ken Waldman's) four assembly programs and four small group workshops. Having taught for 34 years, I know how tough a middle school audience can be, but to see how he captured their attention and even more so how he drew out their delight in creativity was inspiring . . . P.S. He also incorporated mini-lessons in spelling, math, history, culture, and geography, but the students probably weren't even aware of that.”

*--Harriet Carlson, for the Portage Center of the Arts, Portage, WI*

## **Post-Show Questions**

Ken Waldman shared a few short poems to open and close the show, one or two of which he passed on to students. What did you think? Can you try writing one, or more, of your own?

Why do you think Ken Waldman does what he does (even though he never started playing music until he was 25 years old, and didn't write a poem until he was 30 years old--and didn't start making his own books until he was 40 years old, and didn't have his first book from a commercial small press publisher until he was 45 years old, which was the same year he released his first CD)?

Larry & Joe say they are on a mission to show that music has no borders. Do you agree with that claim? Why or why not? Is that the same thing as working for social justice?

Do you feel like you want to know more about Larry's background? Joe's background? How they met? Why they chose to make music together? What do you predict they'll do in the future?

Aaron Jonah Lewis sometimes travels solo, and sometimes plays in various music groups. What would you do if you were him? Concentrate on one project or keep doing so many different things? What did you think of his banjo playing? (Maybe he'll have time to show the different styles he plays.) What did you think of his fiddle playing?

Lindsay McCaw also does lots of different things. She plays in bands, does crankies, and can call dances. She also has her own puppet company. Do you think they all relate to one another? What did you think of the crankie? Lindsay wasn't born in Michigan, but she's lived in Detroit for ten years now and calls it "beautiful." Why do you think she's chosen to live there? Would everybody call Detroit beautiful?

Hannah Lewis also lives in Detroit. What did you think of her dancing? If you could dance or play music, which would you choose? Do you think she does other kinds of dancing? Hannah is Aaron's sister. How has that made a difference for her? (And for Aaron, how has that made a difference, being Hannah's brother?)

Lucy Long and Steve O' Regan both have day jobs, so mostly play music on nights and weekends. Are they satisfied with the choices they made? Do they wish they could be playing more often? How do you think they like living in Bowling Green?

After hearing and seeing everybody, are you ready to take quick trips to Detroit and Bowling Green? How about a longer trip to North Carolina? How about Alaska? And how about South America?

Do you think differently now about playing music, about writing poems, about dancing, about making art that you never before imagined? And what about combining art forms to make something new, maybe something nobody has ever made before?

Want to know more about the participants?

Below are six websites to learn more about this **Ken Waldman & The Wild Ones** group:

[www.kenwaldman.com](http://www.kenwaldman.com)

[www.larryandjoe.com](http://www.larryandjoe.com)

[www.aaronjonahlewis.com](http://www.aaronjonahlewis.com)

<https://thedollywagglers.blogspot.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Root-Cellar-String-Band/100063535719666/>

<https://foodandculture.org/>