



Old Songs Festival Great Groove Band

Groovemama

Coaching participatory youth performances each year at Old Songs, Champlain Valley & Philadelphia Folk Festivals

Festivals, community concerts, school & college Fiddling Demystified workshops, master-classes, residencies & camps



Clockwise from top left: Jane Rothfield, Max Cohen, George Wilson, Stuart Kenney. Donna Hébert, center.

"Donna and her Groovemama colleagues changed the way my students and I think about fiddling. They actually helped us to feel confident enough to turn our music over, close our eyes and play independently. The techniques can be a real help to your ears for harmony and melody, your sense of rhythm and your bowing technique. There is nothing in classical music that approaches these skills in this way. I even started playing Mozart the following day in a different style - much lighter and more at ease!"

Jane Ezbicki
ASTA chapter past president
Fine Arts Director (ret.), Wayland MA Schools

"A wild storm of music!"
caller Ron Buchanan,
2007 Philadelphia Folk Festival

"Electrifying and powerfully spontaneous!"

Carole Woodbury, Dennis/Yarmouth MA
Superintendent of Schools

"Donna gets it all right! I suspect that the general level of fiddle knowledge and playing will take a major uptick soon after this book is published, just as other great music books such as Earl Scruggs' original banjo book, O'Neill's great Irish fiddling reference, and the infamous jazz Real Book influenced the course of musicians' lives and work!"

String pioneer Darol Anger
in his foreword to Volume 1 of Fiddling Demystified for Strings

"The Great Groove Band is the heart of the festival, where the traditions get handed down to the next generation."

Andy Spence, Old Songs Festival director

Groovemama

blends serious performance talent and a fluid groove with deep fiddling knowledge. This hot band of master fiddlers, teachers, multi-instrumentalists, singers and songwriters coaches **The Great Groove Band** each summer at Old Songs, Philadelphia Folk and Champlain Valley Folk Festivals. Festival-goers register their 6-18 year old musicians for the Great Groove Band. This program also continues in July as Fiddle & Strings Day Camp at Old Songs Center in Voorheesville, NY.

Groovemama was organized in 1999 by Donna Hébert and Jane Rothfield to coordinate, coach and inspire **The Great Groove Band**, now in its 12th year at Old Songs Festival. Groovemama combines teaching, playing and performing skills with a well-honed curriculum and method that brings surprisingly focused and polished performances out of a new group of young players every year - in only a few hours time and with repertoire taught entirely by ear! All instruments are welcome, along with singers and dancers. In 2006, Groovemama expanded the Great Groove Band to the Philadelphia Folk Festival, giving young festival-goers there a chance to work together and perform on the main stage. In 2009, the program expanded again to include the Champlain Valley Folk Festival in Vermont. As Old Songs Festival director Andy Spence says, *"This is where the traditions get handed down to the next generation."* A June 2009 Albany Times-Union article quoted a young participant, who compared the The Great Groove Band to American Idol. *"Here, everyone is voted IN!"* said 11-year old Darius Irani, in his second year with the group.

WORKSHOPS & RESIDENCIES

Creating curriculum for varied skill levels within any group, from new musicians to advanced music students or music teachers, Groovemama designs new arrangements with each group. Schools usually order curriculum packets several months in advance of residencies with a lesson CD and detailed sheet music lessons. Students each get a copy of the CD first and learn the tunes by listening and singing along while reading the lesson. This happens at home and in class for at least a month in advance. We review the tunes when we arrive, arranging them on the spot and rehearsing the group for the evening performance. In addition to learning melodies, students learn to read and follow chord charts and learn to recognize and find common harmony patterns for major, minor and modal tunes. **We don't conduct. Our goal is to have orchestra members turn over their music and just jam with us!** A recent strings residency in Dennis/Yarmouth MA school district saw the entire audience on their feet as the combined orchestras from three schools shifted individually from harmony to melody to rhythm parts - without a conductor! *"Electrifying and powerfully spontaneous! I've never attended any concert like it!"* applauded the district's school superintendent, Carole Woodbury.

CONCERTS

Melding minds and rhythms, Groovemama performances blend Celtic, French Canadian and Appalachian songs and fiddle music with new compositions of their own. Old-Time fiddler Jane Rothfield, Franco-American fiddler Donna Hébert and Cape-Breton fiddler George Wilson have played together and with bassist Stuart Kenney for decades. Their style is one of musical exploration as they morph into new rhythms and harmonies. Max Cohen's great groove guitar is the perfect rhythm instrument; his original songs are well-crafted stories with a twist. Caller Ron Buchanan called the band *"A wild storm of music!"* at the 2007 Philadelphia Folk Festival.

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fiddlingdemystified.com/bands/groovemama/ - band website with credits, program descriptions

fiddlingdemystified.com/learn/greatgrooveband/ - coaching youth jam performances at Old Songs, Philadelphia & Champlain Valley Folk festivals

www.oldsongs.org/camps.html - Fiddle & Strings Summer Day Camps