



## PERFORMING AT

You want to be a star? Or do you just want to share your music? Whatever your goal, East River Folk Society will be glad to help. We'll give you a chance to hone your stage skills, try out your material and meet fellow performers who share your dreams — all in front of an audience that appreciates the efforts of performers at all skill levels.

We do, however, ask our performers to follow a few guidelines, which we think will help make each gathering fun for those both on-stage and off.

### **SIGNING UP**

The acts for each ERFS performance are selected on a first-come, first-signup basis, by at least fifteen minutes prior (6:45 p.m.) to showtime (7:00 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month, September through June). We limit each show to twelve acts, not counting that night's special host. If you are a first-time performer at ERFS, please provide us with a brief description of your act (i.e.: "I'm a poet" or "I play banjo and lap dulcimer" or "I play guitar and sing original songs"), so that it will help that night's host introduce you.

### **PERFORMANCE NIGHT**

Select your songs and practice them ahead of time — complete with the intros. Keep your banter short and interesting. Generally, the audience doesn't care *when* you wrote the song or what was happening in your life at the time — *especially if it was the death of a loved one or the breakup of a relationship*. And you don't need to paraphrase the whole song before you start — just let it speak for itself.

Once signed in, on the night of the performance, please arrive at ERFS no later than 6:45 p.m. and check immediately with that night's host to determine your place in the evening's lineup.

Each performer/act is allowed three songs, poems or whatever — lasting no more than ten minutes onstage. Time your performance and if it runs longer, please consider different material or shorten your songs (i.e.: do you really need to sing all 17 verses of that second song?). Disclaimer: If there are twelve acts scheduled, each act could possibly be limited to two songs by the host, to prevent that night's show from running too-lengthy. Our best suggestion is to have three ready to play, but have a backup plan, in case there is time for only two.

ERFS attracts a lot of good talent and the more we can display, the better it is for both the performers and audiences. To do that, you can help us make the most of the time by following some simple steps:

**1. CHECK YOUR GEAR** — Before you leave home, check any cords, batteries or other gear you're going to need. A dead tuner or pickup preamp can bring everything to a screaming halt onstage.

**2. BE IN TUNE** — Tune ahead of time. Occasionally something happens during the setup that makes it necessary to retune after you get onstage. It should be just a tweaking, not a tuning from scratch. *The most important thing, however, is to be in tune.*

**3. USE MINIMAL GEAR** — This is an Open Mic, not a recording session. Usually your instrument, a tuner if you use one, and whatever capos or picks you need is enough. Since ERFS players use mostly acoustic instruments, it is perfectly acceptable (or even preferable) to use microphones rather than pickups. If you do plan to plug in using your own cord, having it ready will probably save time and hassle. Please check with our sound tech ahead of showtime if you have any special needs or questions.

**4. BE READY** — Know your place in the lineup and prepare to go on while the act ahead of you is onstage. Check all cords, straps, capos, tuners, etc. and head right to the stage when you're introduced.

**5. SET UP QUICKLY** — Rehearse this at home, using whatever you can to approximate microphones on stands and boxes you need to plug into — both of which can prove challenging if you have an instrument slung around your neck.

**6. LEARN TO USE VOCAL MICS** — You can practice this at home, too. The main rules are "stay close" and "don't move around." There is usually someone to help you position the mics for your vocals and instruments. While singers' styles differ on vocal mic placement (usually by only minor height requirements), the sound techs know the best places to put mics for instruments. **TRUST THEM** — *they're trying to make you sound good.* Once an instrument mic is placed, neither it nor the instrument should be moved unless there is an overriding consideration such as an equipment malfunction.

**7. TRUST THE PEOPLE RUNNING THE SOUND SYSTEM** — If you are plugged in and have an instrument with onboard controls, set them to a low-end volume and flat (i.e., middle) tones, then let the person running the sound board make you sound good in the room. Remember, what you hear onstage is not what the audience is hearing. If you need more volume in the monitor speakers, say so. But whatever you do, please don't adjust your instrument.

**8. BE CONSIDERATE** — Always the basis for good manners, there are a few things specific to ERFS that bear repeating.

(a) Stay around to support others on the bill. Too often ERFS performers play their two or three songs and leave. Sometimes that's unavoidable, but often it's just bad manners — like saying "I've shown you my stuff, but you have nothing to offer me."

(b) Don't be repetitive. Even cake and ice cream get old if they're served too often. If you have a limited repertoire and you've done all your songs, please wait till you've learned some new ones before you sign up again.

(c) Leave your soap-box at home. There's nothing wrong with addressing social, environmental or religious issues within songs and poetry, but please respect the fact that ERFS has a very diverse membership and each member has his/her own beliefs and causes to support. Most people come to ERFS just to be entertained, not preached to or solicited.