

HOME GROWN CHORDOPHONES by Paul Clipper for May and June at Main Street Gallery

This Spring, Main Street Gallery in Cambridge will be showing the joyful, playful and uniquely beautiful hand made chordophones of guest artist, Paul Clipper, alongside the work of its 13 member artists. If you're wondering what a chordophone is, the Merriam-Webster dictionary tells us it is: "any of a class of musical instruments whose sound is generated by plucking, bowing or striking stretched strings." These include instruments such as cigar box guitars, violins, ukuleles and anything else that will make a joyful noise!

Paul, who lives in Cambridge and works in a 13" x 24" workshop in his backyard, makes what he calls home grown chordophones from all types of found objects and materials such as scrap hardware, cigar boxes, washtubs, oil cans, bed pans, wine boxes and even wheelbarrows! One might wonder if these imaginative creations can actually play music. "The oddest are visual curiosities", says the artist, "but with careful design and construction they are also fun, functional, melodious musical instruments".

Paul began creating his chordophones in 2019 after working for over 30 years, first in the motorcycle industry and most recently for the Dorchester Banner where he worked for 5 years and served as Editor for 3.

Paul, who is also the host of the popular "Bay Blues" radio program on WHCP (101.5FM), explains that he always had a craving to build musical instruments, but couldn't figure out how to do it until he heard about "Cigar Box Guitars". "It is said that the first rule of Cigar Box Guitar (CBG) building is, there are no rules, says the artist. CGB's can be three-string, four-string, even one-string—-whatever fits the mood or the object getting strung". With that encouragement Paul put his creativity and musical knowledge in full gear and started building. He has made 18 instruments to date, some for clients but most for himself "and all for my own entertainment and enjoyment" he states.

A guitar player in his youth, Paul explains that age, arthritis and lack of practice have made him hardly able to play a D-Major chord these days, but he's found his musical outlet by building his unique cigar box instruments and a few full-sized electric guitars too.

“HOME GROWN CHORDOPHONES opens on Thursday, APRIL 29 and runs through Sunday, JUNE 27. There will be two artists receptions on Second Saturdays, MAY 8 and JUNE 12 from 5-8 pm. Paul has invited all musicians, professional or amateur to the gallery on those evenings to pick up the instruments off the wall and enjoy playing them in what he hopes will be a fun, spontaneous jam session. The receptions are free and open to the public. The gallery is located at 518 Poplar St. in Cambridge’s lively Arts and Entertainment District and directly across the street from Jimmie and Sooks Restaurant.

Open hours for the exhibit are Thursday through Sunday from 11-5. Patrons may also schedule a private visit by calling 410-330-4659 or they may shop online at the gallery’s new website: www.mainstgallery.net, The gallery provides curbside pickup and free local delivery.

Main Street Gallery is taking all sanitary precautions to ensure the safety of its visitors and is complying with the governor’s order to wear masks and require all visitors to do the same. Main Street Gallery is Cambridge’s only artist-owned and run cooperative and is currently reviewing work from prospective members and guest artists. Please contact the Gallery if you are interested in being a part of this vibrant artist community.