## Mp3 The Washington Squares - Folk: Modern Folk



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A deliberate throwback to the days of earnest, politically oriented folk groups like Peter, Paul Mary, even though they formed 20 years after the peak of the folk boom. 8 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, POP: New Wave Details: The Washington Squares were a 1980s neo-beatnik folk revival music group. Modeled after early 1960s groups like the Kingston Trio and Peter, Paul and Mary (PP&M), the group was named after New York City's Washington Square Park, emblematic of Greenwich Village. The group, consisting of Bruce Jay Paskow, Tom Goodkind, and Lauren Agnelli, came up with their name over free drinks provided by Agnelli, who was a waitress at a Village club where Goodkind and Paskow were regulars. They began with the suggestion of "The Charlie Weavers to Block," then "The Hollywood Squares," and finally "The Washington Squares". Paskow, Goodkind, and Agnelli dressed, played, and sang in a style evocative of the idealistic, left-leaning folk revival groups of the Kennedy era, but added a layer of post-punk Reagan-era irony. Paskow had previously played in the punk band The Invaders; Agnelli had been in the Nervus Rex; Goodkind, the band's leader, had knocked around in U.S. Ape, and had been the founder of two NYC new music venues: Irving Plaza and the Peppermint Lounge. The revivalist concept preceded any real familiarity with this genre of music: to put together their repertoire, the band bought a bunch of records, picked the brains of veteran folksingers, and pooled their money to send Goodkind to Washington, DC to do research on folk songs at the Library of Congress. They followed the Kingston Trio in covering Hoyt Axton's "Greenback Dollar" and PP&M in covering the traditional folk song that PP&M credit to Reverend Gary Davis about Samson, "If I Had My Way", and also performed a bittersweet Polish song associated with the union Solidarity; many of their own originals were powerfully political, but somewhat indirect; for example, "You Can't Kill Me" alludes to the assassination of gay San Francisco politician Harvey Milk without mentioning him by name. The group broke up after Paskow's

death in 1994. Agnelli has continued to perform on and off (she sings on some of Brave Combo's albums). Goodkind left the music business for some years, re-emerging as the conductor and arranger for the TriBattery Pops, an orchestra of volunteers who live near the former site of New York's World Trade Center.

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