



May 2020

Minnesota *Bluegrass*



Twenty Years of Monroe Crossing

Inside:

From the President 3 | MBOTMA Calendar of Events 4

From the Editor 4 | Meet the Board: Laura Cooper 7

Cover Story: Twenty Years of Monroe Crossing 8 | My MBOTMA Story 13

I Wonder Where You Are Tonight 14 | Bluegrass Saturday Morning 19

CD Review: Hand Picked Bluegrass 21 | Token Creek Music 22



May 2020
Vol. 46
No. 4

Newsstand: \$3
Subscription: \$35

Mission Statement:
To preserve and promote bluegrass and
old-time stringband music
in and around the state of Minnesota.

www.minnesotabluegrass.org

MBOTMA Hot Line 651-456-8919

(to subscribe and for other information)

info@minnesotabluegrass.org

P.O. Box 16408, Mpls, MN 55416

Twitter: @mnbluegrass

Facebook: minnesotabluegrass

Thank you, MN Bluegrass members

Membership as of April 2020: 797

Welcome New Members

Minnesota Bluegrass Board of Directors

President: Laura Cooper - president@minnesotabluegrass.org

Vice President: Nic Hentges

Treasurer: Robbi Podrug

Secretary: Shane Zack

Term expires in 2020 - President and Vice President

Term Expires in 2021 Treasurer and Secretary

Board Members at Large:

Term expires 2020: Dale Gruber - dalergruber@me.com

Brett Day, Wayne Hamilton

Term expires 2021: Bill Lindroos - welindroos@gmail.com

Rudy Marti - rudolphmarti63@gmail.com

Mark Anderson, Jason Juran

Board Meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month. Contact info@minnesotabluegrass or call for location

Board Meeting Minutes are available - szack01@gmail.com or call: 651-456-8919.

Grant Bakken
Mark Bridge
John Ely
Carla Fahlin
Adam Grams
David Vincent
Kathleen Wallace
Marvin Cofer
Country Music Foundation
Greg Gardner
John Heine
George Hughes
Claude Kazanski
John Meilner
Rusty and Audrey Nelson
Al O'Byrne
Sandi Pidel
Ann Tessneer
David Tutje
Susan Wichmann

Minnesota Bluegrass Staff

Executive Director: Darcy Schatz

execdir@minnesotabluegrass.org

Events Manager: Dave Norell

eventsmanager@minnesotabluegrass.org

Minnesota Bluegrass Magazine

Editor: Doug Lohman, editor@minnesotabluegrass.org

Contributors: Laura Cooper, Bob Douglas, Wayne Erbsen, Derek Johnson, Tracy Keibler, Phillip Nusbaum,

Coming Up: Loretta Simonet, John Brandberg

Wordmark: Katryn Conlin

Photography:

Cover: Jamey Guy

Back: Tom Schrack

Deadline for submissions:

The 1st of the month preceding publication

Submit content: editor@minnesotabluegrass.org

Advertising rates/sizes available at:

www.minnesotabluegrass.org/Magazine

Minnesota
Bluegrass.org

Minnesota Bluegrass is published 11 times a year by The Minnesota Bluegrass & Old-Time Music Association™, a Minnesota nonprofit corporation, P.O. Box 16408, Mpls, MN 55416. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the publisher. The publisher is not responsible for the loss or return of unsolicited photos, recordings, or manuscripts.

©2019 *Minnesota Bluegrass*. All rights reserved. ISBN 0891-0537.

From the President

Like many others, I'm feeling rather disconnected these days. I missed the Winter Bluegrass Weekend (WBW) as I was on my way to Florida on what was supposed to be a month-long road trip. Speaking of the WBW, I understand it was a great success with much improved attendance and great shows. A big thank you to the WBW committee for their dedication, talent, and hard work. As you know, the concerns about Covid-19 escalated significantly in the week following the WBW. As a result, the executive committee decided that the Flannel Fundraiser was a no-go, and we also cancelled the monthly board meeting.

So far as we know, El Rancho intends to hold the Kick-Off Jam, and it was announced as I write this that the shelter in place order is to be lifted on May 4. Like last year, MBOTMA does not put on the event. Since there isn't a stage show, it seems as though we could continue to practice social distancing if necessary. We have not made a decision yet regarding whether we will put on Ranch House Live. We will be monitoring developments regarding Covid-19 and keep you posted via email and on the website about the Kick-Off Jam and Ranch House Live.

At this juncture we are moving ahead with plans for the August Festival and encourage you to purchase early-bird tickets at a reduced rate. If MBOTMA deems it unsafe to hold the festival, all tickets and camping fees will be refunded. I sincerely hope that is not the case, as I am so ready to listen to fabulous live music and spend time with my MBOTMA tribe.

Please stay safe and healthy.

Inside:
From the President 3
MBOTMA Calendar of Events 4
From the Editor 4
Meet the Board: Laura Cooper 7
Cover Story:
Twenty Years of Monroe Crossing 8
My MBOTMA Story 13
I Wonder Where You Are Tonight 14
Bluegrass Saturday Morning 19
CD Review: Hand Picked Bluegrass 21
Token Creek Music 22

Become a Member

The Minnesota Bluegrass & Old-Time Music Association is open to everyone. Our members include people who love to listen to music and people who love to make music. As a member, you'll be invited to participate in bluegrass and old-time music events and celebrations. You'll receive discounted prices on admission to events and merchandise, and you'll receive a subscription to *Minnesota Bluegrass* magazine.

Becoming a member of MBOTMA is easy and affordable. Your membership will not only nurture your own interests, but will help to ensure that the bluegrass and old-time music tradition is sustained and grows in Minnesota.

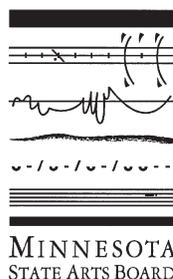
Individual \$35	Includes <i>Minnesota Bluegrass</i> , events discounts for one person, and a free classified ad.
Family \$50	Includes <i>Minnesota Bluegrass</i> , events discounts and a free classified ad.
Band \$75	Includes <i>Minnesota Bluegrass</i> , advance booking information for MBOTMA events, a free classified ad, and listings in the MBOTMA member band directory in print and on our website.
Bronze Level \$100	Includes <i>Minnesota Bluegrass</i> , first-class postage, events discounts, and a free classified ad.
Silver Level \$150	Includes <i>Minnesota Bluegrass</i> , first-class postage, events discounts, and a free classified ad.
Gold Level \$500	Includes <i>Minnesota Bluegrass</i> , first-class postage, events discounts, a free classified ad, and more.
Platinum Level \$1000	Includes <i>Minnesota Bluegrass</i> , first-class postage, events discounts, a free classified ad, and more.

Add \$18 for First Class or foreign postage to individual, family or band membership.

Go to minnesotabluegrass.org

and select the **Membership** tab to join online
or download a membership form

Call 651-456-8919 for details
or if you would like to join by phone.



Funding for Minnesota Bluegrass is provided in part by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and private donors

Minnesota Bluegrass Calendar of Events

Concerts and events presented or supported by
the Minnesota Bluegrass & Old-Time Music Association



The following events are presented or supported in part by the Minnesota Bluegrass & Old-Time Music Association and made possible in part by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Complete Info/Tickets at: www.minnesotabluegrass.org

May 29-31 2020 - Friday-Sunday

Minnesota Bluegrass

Kickoff Jam

El Rancho Mañana

Richmond, MN

Supported by The MN Bluegrass & Old-Time Music Assn

August 6-9, 2020 - Thursday-Sunday

Minnesota Bluegrass

August Festival

El Rancho Mañana

Richmond, MN

Presented by The MN Bluegrass & Old-Time Music Assn

From the Editor

Welcome. We live in an unprecedented and strange time. *Minnesota Bluegrass Magazine* will look a little different for the next couple of months. The biggest change will be no Coming Up, the listing of live music events. The "Stay at Home" directives make this section obsolete as we social distance. We will be reassessing this as we go forward and will be reinstating the music listings when the time is right.

The last couple of months we've been running new articles about your MBOTMA stories and Spotlight on MBOTMA Youth. If you have an idea about a story, let us know. The more we know about the vitality of the music community, the more we will feel connected to that community.

This is your magazine and I invite you to make the most of it. We like to publish stories and articles about what's happening in bluegrass, old-time and string band music in the Upper Midwest. If you are planning a new recording for your band, you can let us know ahead of time and we can run an article about it. As bands learn how to connect to their listeners in new ways via livestream concerts and other technology, make *Minnesota Bluegrass Magazine* part of your marketing plan. We can all learn new ways to connect with each other in these times.

Do you have a favorite jam? Write up a description about what's happening at that jam. You have noticed the joy on others' faces, so why not share that and invite others to join.

Buying music online is a great way to support musicians whose income has disappeared. Many groups are doing livestream music events, online, with a tip jar.

We invite you to write letters to the Editor. If I remember

correctly, we have printed every one, well... the only one we have received in the last four years. The point: this is your magazine, so we invite you to make the most of it. It will help us to stay connected.

Another way you can support the magazine is to let the advertisers know you saw their ad in the magazine. We all need strings, capos, and other accessories, and mail order is a convenient way to get them, but, when the "Stay at Home" orders are lifted, get out and support your local music store.

It has been my pleasure to serve as editor for over four years. I welcome your ideas, critiques, suggestions about how to make this magazine even more relevant to all the members. I want to particularly thank Loretta Simonet and John Brandberg for their work compiling the Coming Up section. I would also like to thank our faithful proofreaders, Loretta Simonet and Mary DuShane. They have sharp eyes and minds. Volunteers make this Association work and they all work hard to keep you informed about upcoming events.

I also want to thank the MBOTMA Board over the last four years for their tireless dedication and work to keep this Association vital and moving forward. Their work is not done and has probably become harder in the last few months, but they are a dedicated bunch of folks who love this music and community.

Stay connected via the Facebook page and the website. Both will have the latest updates about what's happening in our area.

IBCNU, Doug

Minnesota *Bluegrass* Kickoff Jam

MAY 29-31, 2020

El Rancho Mañana Campground, Richmond, MN

A CAMPING AND JAMMING WEEKEND!!



Mark Your Calendars

Tickets and camping will be
handled by El Rancho Mañana



Minnesota
Bluegrass.org

MinnesotaBluegrass.org

Minnesota *Bluegrass* August Festival

Five Time IBMA Event Of The Year Nominee!

August 6-9
2020

El Rancho Mañana
Campground,
Richmond, MN

Sam Bush Band

SideLine

Valerie Smith and Liberty Pike

Special Consensus

Jim & Lynna Wolsey

Caleb Daugherty Band

Bernie King and the Guilty Pleasures

More bands TBA

Beautiful Main Stage
Shaded Seating Area

35 Hours of Concerts

Nightly Dances

Instrument Showcases

Children's Activities

Over 20 Workshops

Plenty of Campground Jam
Sessions

30 Merchant &
Food Booths

Campground with
Showers & Beach

Shuttle Transportation

A Welcome &
Safe Environment

Kids Are Free!



Tickets on Sale NOW!!

1-651-456-8919 - www.MinnesotaBluegrass.org



Get to Know the MBOTMA Board

President: Laura Cooper

How long have you been on the Board and what's your position? Three plus years as President.

What's your occupation or what type of work did you do? I've been fully retired for two and a half years. Prior to that, I worked for Hennepin County, in Family Court Services. The work involved custody and parenting time evaluations, mediation, and alternative dispute resolution.

What are some of your hobbies or interests? When the weather is nice, I'm a gardener. My focus is native plants for pollinators and birds. My city lot has only a small strip of lawn left, and I will eliminate that in the near future. I also grow vegetables. I love digging in the dirt.

When the weather is crappy, I'm a contemporary (as opposed to traditional) quilter.

Tell us about your family. I have two long-since-grown sons who have generously supplied me with seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren. I've taken three of my grandchildren to New York City for their highschool graduations, and I've taken the two oldest grandchildren and their girlfriends to Chicago to see Hamilton. I decided a long time ago to give my grandchildren experiences rather than stuff. I've lived with my partner Jim since 2011. He's a prince--he'll laugh if he reads this.

How long have you been part of MBOTMA, and what brought you into the organization? I attended my first festival at Zimmerman in 1989, and I've not missed an August Festival since then. I had been involved in the dance community starting in 1987, the Monday Night Square Dance, and I was a Bone Tones Cajun band groupie. I was introduced to the bluegrass community by Art Blackburn, and for that I will always be grateful.

Do you have a favorite festival or activity at a festival? I camp out at Old Wash Machine at the August Festival, and it's like a big family reunion. Folks



from Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas and Germany make Old Wash their home. I also love the eclectic stage performances and jams.

Do you play an instrument? If so, what is it and how long have you played? I've toyed with instruments but never stuck with any of them. I strummed chords and sang to my kids when they were little, a million years ago. I played bass for awhile and was in an all women's bluegrass ensemble, The Sod Sisters. I own a lovely LaPlant mandolin that I swear I'm going to play one day. I still play my feet--dance.

Do you have any pets? Jim came with a cat--Niles. He is still with us. We love him, he loves us, and he drives us nuts.

What excites you about MBOTMA right now? Compared to my first two years on the board, we are much more stable organizationally and financially. I love to see younger folks participating--performing, volunteering, and on the board. Grass Seeds and the Family Area in August are wonderful and important for perpetuating the music and MBOTMA.



FEIN STRINGED INSTRUMENTS
DEALERS, REPAIRERS AND MAKERS OF
VIOLINS, VIOLAS, CELLOS, AND BOWS
Andrew Fein



GREAT INSTRUMENTS
Beautiful Wood Music Stands
Quality Cases
Wonderful Values

ON-LINE & ON GRAND AVENUE
www.FineViolins.com

1850 Grand Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55105
651.228.0783 / 800.347.9172

Twenty Years of Monroe Crossing

By Derek Johnson

I am no historian, but I am fascinated by the subject of history, and it makes up the bulk of my reading and watching materials. I even minored in History in college, so I know what kind of painstaking research goes into a topic before it can be entered into the historical record. Thus, let it be known that no such discipline is on display in this essay. This is not so much a history as it is folklore.

The year of 2020 marks Twenty years of Monroe Crossing. In a business where even the most popular bands may last only a few years, it is no small feat that Monroe Crossing has continued to entertain audiences for the past two decades. Many of the bluegrass acts that have endured throughout the years are often headed by a single individual who employs a backing band (i.e. Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys). The backing band is often a rotat-

was a bass player new to bluegrass named Mark Anderson. He had recently made the transition from the Minneapolis punk rock scene and was enjoying the new, and somewhat normal, community he found

better than “pretty good.” They decided a name change was in order. In September of 2000 Matt Thompson came up with the name Monroe Crossing and the band officially came into existence. The final piece came into place when Benji Flaming joined as the banjo player. Benji was quite a bit younger (18 years old) than the rest of the crew, but he and Mark had befriended each other through their mutual interest in computers. So Benji was asked to join and the original lineup of Monroe Crossing was established: Art Blackburn (guitar & vocals), Lisa Fuglie (fiddle & vocals), Matt Thompson (mandolin & vocals), Mark Anderson (bass) and Benji Flaming (banjo).

The first Monroe Crossing CD, *Across the Blue Mountains*, was recorded and released in 2001. At the end of this year, Benji Flaming decided to leave the group and thus began the ever-changing banjo position. Benji was replaced by Graham Sones who performed with the band for over two years and appeared on the next three



Monroe Crossing 2020
Photo by Jamey Guy

“In a business where even the most popular bands may last only a few years, it is no small feat that Monroe Crossing has continued to entertain audiences for the past two decades.”

ing cast of bluegrass characters. Monroe Crossing is different in that it is a collective made up of distinct personalities who all contribute equally.

Monroe Crossing was born out of a series of band configurations and name changes. As is the norm, bluegrass musicians tend to float between different bands, coming and going as life takes them. In this case it all began when Art Blackburn & Sandi Scott, performing as a duo, were in search of a backing band. They picked up some Minneapolis musicians to complement their act and performed under the name of Art & Sandi’s Pretty Good Band. One of the musicians

among the bluegrass crowd. In contrast, Art Blackburn was a seasoned bluegrass and folk performer already established in the community. As it happened, Sandi left

the group for other musical pursuits. The remaining musicians decided to move forward under the name of The Pretty Good Bluegrass Band. At its peak, The Pretty Good Bluegrass Band consisted of Art Blackburn, Mark Anderson, Barry St. Mane, Ross Vaughn and the late Deb Boeh. As members began to drift away they were replaced by other people on the scene. Mark recruited his wife Lisa Fuglie to play fiddle. Art Blackburn recruited Matt Thompson, who had been playing mandolin in another band with Art, named Big Skyota. The newly assembled musicians soon discovered The Pretty Good Bluegrass Band was

recordings: *Then Sings My Soul*, *Green Mossy Ground & On the Road*.

During this time period, the band’s bookings increased. They began to develop a reputation as not only talented musicians, but a very entertaining musical act. Monroe Crossing has always been very aware of their audience. Early on it was established that the band would honor song requests. To this day there is always a portion of the show where the band performs requests from the audience. “We were performing at a county fair in MN,” remembers Matt Thompson, “and people started yelling out requests. We started playing them on the spot. People loved it!

We've been doing it ever since."

As the performance schedule became more demanding, and thus more profitable, the band reached a point where they needed to make a decision. Should they switch to being a full-time act? "I remember when Art first proposed the idea," says Thompson. "He and I were eating lunch at a McDonald's. I liked the idea because I didn't like my other job at the time, but it was scary. We would be playing without a safety net."

Mark Anderson describes a similar feeling, "It was like letting go of the edge of the pool. You leave behind a lot of security for a small chance of actually making your living as a musician."

It was indeed a very big transition for Mark and Lisa. They had decided to start a family, and Lisa had recently given birth to twin boys. "Frankly it's a little blurry," says Lisa Fuglie. "I remember carrying two portable cribs along with all the baby stuff, as well as traveling with sitters. Sometimes we would have the venues line up sitters for us. I sometimes wonder how we did it, but we were young."

Despite the challenges, in 2004 day-jobs were jettisoned and the members of Monroe Crossing made the leap to supporting themselves as entertainers. It was at this time an Arkansas banjo player named Jeff Whitson was brought into the fold, to lend his talents, and his open schedule. Times were lean but very productive. The band recorded two CDs simultaneously: *Somebody Like You* and their first Christmas CD, *The Happy Holidays*. But, as it happened, Jeff Whitson quickly grew tired of the Minnesota winters and missed family and friends back home. After two years banjo player number three said goodbye and returned home to Arkansas.

Banjo player number four, Jason Ericsson, had a very short tenure with the

band, lasting less than a year but was around long enough to appear on Monroe Crossing's second gospel collection entitled *Into the Fire*, which was released

was Benji Flaming.

"The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass" debuted on Jan. 19, 2007 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Stillwater, MN, and

was a major success. However, the success wasn't achieved without a fair bit of stress. Bluegrass musicians perform by ear and "The Bluegrass Mass" "requires a lot of sight reading and careful attention to the many time signature changes. Also, the band had to learn their parts without the benefit of knowing what the choir would be singing. "There were no recordings or YouTube videos to learn from," states Matt Thompson. "We really had to rely on the

director for cues. I don't know how we made it through those first few performances. I don't remember most of it!"



Monroe Crossing 2005

in December of 2006. The title track was written by Lisa Fuglie and remains one the most fan-requested songs to this day. It was also in 2006 the band said "yes" to a unique opportunity which would open so many doors for this Minnesota bluegrass band for years to come. Monroe Crossing was approached by the Minneapolis choir VocalEssence, under the direction of Philip Brunelle, to collaborate on a newly commissioned choral piece. The project was a fusion of classical choral music and bluegrass instrumentation entitled, "The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass." Two Minnesota artists, Carol Barnett (composer) and Marisha Chamberlain (author/poet) had been commissioned to create this adventurous piece. The final product was complex and stunning, requiring Monroe Crossing to dig deep as musicians to learn the score.

It was during the preparation for this piece that banjo player number four abruptly left the band, as well as the state. With the debut performance of "The Bluegrass Mass" quickly approaching, Monroe Crossing reached out to one of the few banjo players in the area with the skills to learn this complicated piece in a short amount of time. That banjo player

DuShane Deluxe 4-string violins

\$1299 (w/ Gary Bartig's internal pickup, and case)

\$899 (w/ case but no pickup)



For an appointment call
612-781-5799 or 800-741-3045
1620 Central Ave NE, Mpls

AcousticElectricStrings.com

Mark Anderson has a similar memory, “The first performance of “The Bluegrass Mass” was crazy. We were simply trying to keep up and I constantly had to battle the urge to simply listen to the choir instead of play my part.”

Lisa Fuglie also remembers the tension: “It was a sold-out crowd with reviewers attending. We were all a bit nervous and very conscious of counting and staying laser focused on the conductor, Philip Brunelle.”

All the hard work and stress paid off for the band as “The Bluegrass Mass” was coined a “modern day masterpiece” and has taken Monroe Crossing around the country collaborat-

ing with choirs from Washington D.C. to California. In 2013 and 2014 it brought the group to New York City for perfor-

stage and, more precisely, the road. Art was not only the guitar player and a lead vocalist for the band, but was also the booking agent. Considering their busy performance schedule and all the work involved in booking the band, Art was essentially working two full-time jobs. In order to prevent the inevitable burn out, Art decided to retire from the stage and concentrate on booking the group. Although the band had replaced many a banjo player, this was the first time the group was replacing a founding member. It was at this time I received a phone call.



Monroe Crossing 2010
Photo by Rebecca Youngmark, Heirloom Art & Photography

mances at Carnegie Hall, and in 2014 Monroe Crossing toured South Korea performing “The Bluegrass Mass” with the Missoula-based choir Dolce Canto. To date the band has performed “The Bluegrass Mass” over 65 times and continues to collaborate with choirs from across the country. In fact, in 2017 the group teamed up again with VocalEssence, Carol Barnett and Marisha Chamberlin to present and record the companion piece, “Mortals & Angels: A Bluegrass Te Deum.”

With the success of “The Bluegrass Mass,” Benji Flaming decided to return to the band. He now held the distinction of being banjo player number one and number five. At the end of 2007 the band released a recording of a show in Branson, MO, entitled Live From Silver Dollar City. A few years later the band returned to the studio to record a collection which featured largely original material. The title track was a song by Art Blackburn entitled “Heart Ache & Stone.” The CD was released in August 2009 and contains a host of songs which remain very popular for the band today.

As the first decade of Monroe Crossing approached its end, Art Blackburn decided it was time to retire from the

Since 2006 I had been performing traditional and original bluegrass in The High 48s. The group kept a relatively busy schedule performing in Minnesota and adjoining states, occasionally doing some extended road work. In fact, in 2008 the band had gone out to Lyons, CO and took first place in the RockyGrass Festival’s band competition. This afforded some extra road work in 2009, but the band was still a regional act, performing on a part-time basis. A position in Monroe Crossing would allow me to travel far and wide as well as make music a full-time job. I decided I could not pass up the offer. It was not easy leaving a group I had spent so much time helping to develop and whose members I considered close friends. I’m so glad The High 48s are now on their fourteenth year of performing and recording!

My first show with Monroe Crossing was in January 2011 in California, at the Blythe Bluegrass Festival. Art was now at home handling the bookings, and the band was busier than ever. In fact, the new job started with a seven-week tour which began in California, and then off to Alabama, Georgia and Florida. I then embarked on my first bluegrass cruise. Immediately after the cruise we boarded

EXPERT REPAIR SERVICES

(Craftsman Quality for Every Customer)

Vintage or new –
from simple crack repairs
to full-blown restoration.



FULL SERVICE:

Structural, Finish Work and Electronics

GUITARS • BANJOS • MANDO'S • RESO'S

We install Fishman, LR Baggs
and K&K pickups in anything.

FOR 25 YEARS

Willie's
American Guitars

ST. PAUL, MN
(651) 699-1913
williesguitars.com

flights for Monroe Crossing's first tour of Europe. When we returned to the states we flew directly to the Southwest for even more shows. It was quite the introduction to life on the road. In fact, I don't think we have ever been out that long since.

When the band wasn't traveling, we were in the studio recording. In 2011 we recorded a tribute to Bill Monroe as well as the band's third all-gospel CD which we entitled *Joy, Joy, Joy*. The title track was a song I had written a few years earlier and continue to perform regularly. That spring, after going through my own stressful preparation, I participated in my first performance of "The Bluegrass Mass" as part of the Berkshire Choral Festival in Massachusetts. It was a crazy year of travels and hard work but was very thrilling and rewarding.

At the end of 2011, and after an unprecedented five-year banjo player run, Benji announced that it was time for him to take a break from the road. The band began the search for yet another banjo player and found a young, talented picker from right next door in Wisconsin. David Robinson was only 18 years old and had just graduated from high school when he joined Monroe Crossing. He had been home-schooled and had earned his degree just before the Christmas holiday, so as of January 2012 he was ready to go on the road as banjo player number six.

David fit in great with the band on and off the stage, and for the next eight years the band's line up remained the same, consisting of Mark Anderson, Lisa Fuglie, Matt Thompson, Derek Johnson and David Robinson. Or as we sometimes called it, Lisa Fuglie and The Four "Sons" of Bluegrass. It was the longest stretch without any change of personnel, and the band became tighter than ever. During this time the band averaged over 125 shows a year, traveling all about the

country, released five CDs, toured Europe three more times, performed twice at Carnegie Hall, toured South Korea and

retired to Hawaii. Art, giving plenty of notice in the summer of 2017, was ready to enjoy the quiet life, and thus, for the first time in 17 years, the band needed to find a new booking agent. Not being interested in outside representation, I took up the challenge to perform the booking duties. I had some experience in this realm, but must admit there has been a bit of a learning curve. To add to the mix, at the beginning of 2019 David Robinson announced he wanted to leave the band in pursuit of other musical opportunities. With the loss of a booking agent, a great banjo player, and having logged in nearly twenty years of life on the road, Monroe Crossing



Monroe Crossing 2012
Photo by Jamey Guy

in 2017 hit the milestone of performing over 2,000 shows! Of course, what makes all the achievements so amazing is the extremely dedicated fan base the group has garnered over the last twenty years. We are so grateful for the many wonderful people who have taken the time, energy and expense to come watch and listen. We in Monroe Crossing thank you all!

In 2018 the band entered another period of transition when Art Blackburn

had some decisions to make. Should we do a nation-wide search for banjo player number seven? Would our new booking agent (me) be able to maintain a full-time schedule? Or was it time to part ways and say goodbye to the road?

Needless to say, these were not easy decisions and the uncertainty was daunting, but it was decided the band had come too far to call it quits. We still had so many loyal fans and we still had plenty of

ARMADILLO SOUND & DESIGN

MINNEAPOLIS, MN



Serving the acoustic music community for over 35 years.

Complete audio production services:
sound - multi-track recording - live/studio.

*You know Doug's attention to audio detail.
Let him help you craft your next recording project!*

EQUIPMENT: Midas, Behringer, dbx, Shure, AKG, AudioTechnica,
Crown amps, RCF speakers, Countryman, Radial, Protocols

Doug Lohman - 612-306-3490
douglohman@aol.com - armadillosounddesign.com

MinnesotaBluegrass.org

opportunities to perform.

In the end it was decided it was time for a slight pull-back in the schedule. We aren't getting any younger, and perhaps a few less shows and a few less miles would be a good thing. If we, as individuals, had to find a "side hustle" to help bring in a little extra income, it would be worth it to continue. And instead of relying on a single banjo player and full-time member, Monroe Crossing would take a different approach. David Robinson still had room in his schedule to play with us from time to time, so why not draw on the many other talented banjo players here in Minnesota and split up the duties? We call it "banjo by committee" and it's come to work out even better than we thought. The "committee" is made up of past associates including great pickers: David Robinson, Graham Sones, Benji Flaming and (Pretty Good Bluegrass Band member) Barry St. Mane. Monroe Crossing loves working with all of these great musicians and enjoy the variety each one brings to our show.

There is a kind of Catch-22 to performing music as a living. The travel can be very exhilarating and has brought the band to so many places we wouldn't have gone as individuals. At the same time the travel can be exhausting and one of the main challenges. Matt Thompson sums it up nicely when he states why Monroe Crossing has kept it up for so many years, "I enjoy presenting new audiences to bluegrass music, making new fans. I enjoy teaching music to young musicians, bringing in the next generation. And I love the happiness we bring to our fans. That, more than anything, keeps me going."

I was going to wrap up this article by saying, "as Monroe Crossing approaches its 20th anniversary the schedule remains busy," but I'm afraid this is not the case. The measures needed to combat the coronavirus have made for a very challenging time for Monroe Crossing as it has for so many people across this country and ever-shrinking world. Like so many other musicians, we have had to cancel shows and

try to absorb the economic costs. Needless to say, bluegrass bands were part of the "gig economy" well before that phrase came into popular use. We survive on the proceeds from our live performances, and that has come to a screeching halt. We hope our summer schedule remains intact but it is too early to tell. With that being said, I am happy to report we all are in good health, we all have a roof over our heads and our cupboards are stocked with food. We hope to ride this out like the rest of you and emerge on the other side ready to get back to doing what we do best, putting on an entertaining and uplifting bluegrass show.

It's hard to say what the future will bring. After all, the only thing consistent in this life is change. We certainly aren't getting any younger, but why stop doing something you love? Thus, we will do our best to keep the 20-year tradition of Monroe Crossing alive, especially if people keep standing up out of their seats at the end of each performance yelling, "more, more, more!".



GRASS LAND JAM
SATURDAYS AT 7 P.M.

pioneer
public television

LEARN MORE AT PIONEER.ORG/GRASSLANDJAM.

My MBOTMA Story: Mac Mckay

By Tracy Keibler

Q: How did you become a bluegrass musician?

Mac: Nancy and I retired in 2002, bought a motor home, and headed to Voyager RV Park in Tucson, Ariz. Looking in the book of park activities, I found myself sitting next to Bob Nible, a musician who played with Jethro Burns of Homer and Jethro fame. Bob was extremely helpful, leaning over and giving me chords, as I hadn't touched my guitar since 1958.

Q: What do you like about bluegrass music?

Mac: I fell in love with Bluegrass. It's uniquely American. It has an unusual set of instruments that come from Africa, Europe and the U.S., like the dobro. Bluegrass just captured my soul in a way that I can't describe. When you have a strong feeling about something, you've got to be around it and live it.

Q: From a jam circle in Arizona, how did you become involved with MBOTMA?

Mac: I found MBOTMA once we moved to the Twin Cities from Rochester. I just wandered in to a jam, and they needed a bass player. Then it was: "Are you going to the summer festival?" And it went from there. Now my bride of 60 years and I go to bluegrass festivals in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota in our Ford van RV—it's perfect for festivals.

Q: What do you find valuable about MBOTMA?

Mac: For me, MBOTMA is the greatest fraternity of like-minded people around. No state has anything exactly like this. When you have an organization that puts on festivals like El Rancho Mañana, and has a publication that goes out regularly telling you who's where and what's coming up, it's special. I just wanted to come and contribute to this organization.

Attending MBOTMA festivals, I can quickly connect with dozens of people I know and have jammed with. From my first jam in Arizona, where I sweated



through my shirt when it was my time to pick a song, to discovering MBOTMA — Bluegrass has changed my life — and every jam is better than the last.

I consider myself to be the worst musician in MBOTMA, but I know of no one who has more fun playing than me. To all the very gifted MBOTMA players, remember someone has to be on the bottom of the bell curve to make all of you look and sound so good.

Willie's
American Guitars

New and used **C.F. Martin** guitars (Huge Selection!)
Also: **Deering Banjos** and **Larrivee** Guitars
Largest vintage acoustic selection in the 5 state area!
We love trades — We buy old guitars!

World class repairs.
See why the biggest names in music trust this little shop in St Paul.
We fix: Archtops, Flat-tops, Banjos, Mandolin and Ukulele.

williesguitars.com • 651 699-1913
254 Cleveland Avenue South, St. Paul, MN 55105

Willie's American Guitars does not repair or do commerce in Chinese made instruments.

I Wonder Where You Are Tonight

by Wayne Erbsen

One of the joys of my life has been sharing my love of bluegrass music with my students. For the past fifteen years, I've been coaching a group of intermediate level players on all the bluegrass instruments. Like clockwork, we meet on Thursday nights in a rustic log cabin for two hours. Of course, we call it the "Log Cabin Band." For me, part of the fun of coaching this group is learning each member's strengths and weaknesses so I can select songs they can feel good about performing.

For the past year or so, a guitar player by the name of Jon has been a regular member of our group. Initially, he mainly played rhythm guitar with a thumb pick and was very modest about his singing. Gradually, I've been feeding him songs to learn that would suit his style and yet challenge him to find his own voice. Well, brother, let me tell you, he found it! Not only does he have good tone, but he also has a huge range. Recently, I came up with the idea of teaching him "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight."

I went on YouTube to find a version to send him and was shocked to find page after page of bluegrass versions people have put up of "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight." I know it's considered a bluegrass standard or an evergreen, but I had no idea it was that popular. After listening to several different artists sing it, I finally settled on sending him a link to a live recording by Flatt and Scruggs. Lester had the feel of the song that I like best. That's probably because the Flatt and Scruggs version was the first one I heard back in the early 1960s.

Since I'm an historian by trade, I took this opportunity to look into the history of "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight." Here's what I found. The song was written in the early 1940s by Johnny Bond. Growing up on the family farm near Marietta, in rural Oklahoma, his first instrument was the trumpet. When his family purchased a Victrola in the early 1920s, Johnny became hooked on the records of Vernon Dalhart and espe-

cially Jimmie Rodgers. His older sister, Mary, managed to save up enough to buy a radio, where Johnny was exposed to the Western Swing music of Milton



Brown, W. Lee O'Daniels, and Carson Robinson. In high school Johnny was asked to join the school's brass band, so he borrowed an E flat alto brass horn and figured out how to play it. Before long,



Johnny had amassed the sum of 98 cents, and ordered a ukulele from Montgomery Ward. He then borrowed a guitar and a banjo and became proficient on them. Before long, he was playing for dances in rural Oklahoma.

In 1937, Johnny graduated from high school and went to live with his brother, Howard, in Oklahoma City. Wanting to make a career with his music, Johnny approached all the local radio stations and was finally given a radio slot on KFXR. The main drawback of this "job" was that there was no pay. For Johnny, he was just happy to get his foot in the door on his way to becoming a professional musician. At first, Johnny broadcasted under the name Cyrus Whitfield and then Johnny Whitfield. Eventually he settled on Johnny Bond.

Before long, Johnny was recruited to play with Billy McGinty's Oklahoma Cowboys, which later became Pop Moore and His Oklahomans. Johnny then teamed up with Jimmy Wakely and Scotty Harrel. They called themselves the Singing Cowboy Trio but changed their name to "The Bell Boys" when they were sponsored by the Bell Clothing Company on KVOO radio, in Tulsa. Dressed head to toe in cowboy outfits, their repertoire leaned heavily on the Western music of Gene Autry and the Sons of the Pioneers. Johnny's gamble to play on the radio for no wages paid off in spades when Gene Autry heard one of their radio broadcasts when he was on tour in rural Oklahoma. Johnny later recalled that Gene invited them to appear on his Melody Ranch CBS network radio show. Gene's exact words were, "If you boys ever get to California, look me up."

By May of 1940, Johnny was part of the Jimmy Wakely Trio that consisted of Wakely, Johnny, and Dick Reinhard, who had replaced Scotty Harrel. Deciding to take Gene Autry up on his offer, the band loaded up Wakely's Dodge with instruments, kids, and wives, and headed to California. When they arrived in the Golden State, the band had some time

to kill while waiting word on joining Autry's radio show. It was then that Johnny composed "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight." Here is how Johnny explained it. "Before that, all my songs had been cowboy, But I was convinced we'd have quicker success with a hillbilly love song. In the verse of a song we had sung on the radio in Oklahoma, I found the line, "I wonder where you are tonight," and the idea was born. Over the years, many people have come to the conclusion that it is an old Pubic Domain song, and several newer songs have come to life using the identical melody."

Not only did Johnny make guest appearances on Autry's popular radio show, but he was a mainstay of that show from 1940 until the show's cancellation in 1956. During these early years, Johnny's band recorded first for Decca as the Jimmy Wakely Trio and also for Columbia as Johnny Bond & the Cimarron Boys. In 1953, Johnny joined the Los Angeles TV show, "Town Hall Party," as a regular performer, lead, and rhythm, guitarist and writer. He stayed with the show until

its demise in early 1961.

By the end of his career, Johnny had written and published hundreds of songs, many of which were major hits for a



Jimmy Wakely Trio

number of recording artists. These songs included "Cimarron," "I'll Step Aside," "Tomorrow Never Comes," and "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight." The latter song has been very heavily covered by numerous other artists, including Johnny Rodriguez, Bobby Bare, Roy Clark, Flatt & Scruggs, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bill Monroe, the Louvin Brothers, Hank Snow, Red Allen & the Kentuckians, and even Jerry Lee Lewis, Porter Wagoner, and Hank Williams Jr.

For bluegrass fans, several of Johnny's compositions have been favorites for years. These include "Your Old Love Letters," and "Love Grown Cold."

Below are the complete lyrics of "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight." Most bluegrass singers only sing two or three of these verses, but here are the complete lyrics of the song, just the way Johnny Bond wrote them in 1940.

Check out Wayne Erbsen instruction and songbooks for bluegrass and clawhammer banjo, mandolin, guitar, fiddle, dulcimer and ukulele at www.nativeground.com



NATIVE GROUND

Books & Music

Your source for old-time & bluegrass music instruction books, songbooks & cookbooks

Contact us for **FREE Catalog:**
(800) 752-2656

www.nativeground.com

NOW AVAILABLE:
eBooks &
online audio

MINNESOTA BLUEGRASS MEMBER BANDS

Bluegrass Bands

Alternate Route

Jerome Knopik - 651-208-5565
jerryknopicks01@gmail.com

Back Up & Push

David Robinson - 612-385-2937
backupandpushbluegrass@gmail.com

Biscuit Boys

Daniel Fish - 763-434-2734
nowandthencountry@gmail.com

Blue Drifters Bluegrass band

Stev Howard - 952-595-9819
bluedrifters@aol.com

Blue Groove

David Smith - 952-974-5121
bluegroovebluegrass@gmail.com

Blue Hazard

Hannah Johnson - 651-500-0747
info@bluehazardband.com

Buffalo Galaxy

Zach Tauer, - 763-226-6056
buffalagalaxybluegrass@gmail.com

Buffalo River Ramblers

Marty Solon - 218-850-8715
mmsolmon@arvig.net

Carver Creek

Bluegrass

Julie Monsen - 952-466-2089
carvercreekbluegrass@gmail.com

Def Lester

Lincoln Potter - 651-303-0728
lincoln.potter@gmail.com

Double Down Daredevels

Tom Peschges - 612-232-5292
doubledownbluegrass@gmail.com

Fine Line Bluegrass

Darin Manson - 641-895-4522 darinman-
son@finelinebluegrass.com

Flattgrass Revival

Tom Furrer - 320-766-7007
oldmannoah@outlook.com

Gentleman Dreadnought

Derek Johnson - 612-720-3746
derekdavidjohnson@gmail.com

The Good Intentions

Chris Silver - chrissilverband@gmail.com

Hand Picked Bluegrass

Joe Cronick - 715-966-6463
handpickedbluegrass@charter.net

Kim Harrington & Helen Miltich

Kim Harrington - 218-244-9892
kimharrington1952@gmail.com

Hell Burnin' Sinners

Shirley Mier - 612-720-0820
hellburninsinners@gmail.com

The High 48s

Anthony Ihrig - 612-889-5878
web@thehigh48s.com

The Hummin' Birds

Mike Silbernagel - 303-501-2703
mike@thehumminbirds.com

King Wilke's Dream

Robbi Podrug - 612-562-8402
robertapodrug@comcast.net

Laura and the Lagerheads

Matt Johnson - 612-462-3546
johnsonbluegrass@gmail.com

Long Time Gone

Ben Manning - 651-448-8216
mndawg@gmail.com

Mark Kreitzer Band

Mark Kreitzer - 612-724-7334
mark@markkreitzer.com

Mash Tun

Jamey Guy - jamey@jameyguypoto.com

Middle Spunk Creek Boys

Alan Jesperson 612-751-1733
alanjesp@gmail.com

Midwest Cowboys Ministries

Karen Hahn-Brown - 641-832-7963
karen@midwestgospelministries.org

Monroe Crossing

Lisa Fuglie - lisa@monroecrossing.com

No Man's String Band

Nic Hentges - 612-387-0196
nihentges@gmail.com

Noah John & Ringing Iron

Noah John Klingeisen - 920-229-5283
noahjohnklingeisen@gmail.com

Pale Ales Bluegrass Band

Marty Marrone - 651-295-1376
marty.marrone@gmail.com

Pickin' Up Steam

Dale Martell - info@dalemartell.com

Prairiegrass

Bonnie Hallett 701-429-1666
bkhallett@yahoo.com

Sarah Mae

& the Birkeland Boys

Sarah Birkeland - smb.band@gmail.com

The Silver River Band

Ari Silver 651-491-4013
arisilverguitar@gmail.com

Tim and Cindy

Tim Roggenkamp - 218-821-0342
roggecpa@gmail.com

Timbre Junction

Karen Radford 612-623-0261
KarenJRadford@eaton.com

Tom & Jed

Jed Malischke 715-635-2479
jmalisch@centurytel.net

Tony Rook Band

Tony Rook, 612-669-3511
tonyrook57@gmail.com

Trackside

David Anderson 763-263-3985
renee_ballroom2@yahoo.com

The Woodpicks

Joel Kezar 218-681-2148
kezarmusic@mncable.net

Related Bands

Bad Posture Club

Morgan Kavanagh - 360-510-4116
badpostureclub@gmail.com

The Barley Jacks with

Brian Wicklund

Brian Wicklund 651-433-4564
Brian@fiddlepal.com

Bernie King &

the Guilty Pleasures

Bernie King 763-242-6943
bkandthegps@gmail.com

Bill & Kate Isles Band

bill@billandkateisles.com

Boston Imposters

David Harrison - 262-490-8952
daveyharrisonmusic@gmail.com

The Broadfork

String Band

Anne Sawyer 507-491-8393
anne.e.sawyer@gmail.com

Broken Heartland String Band

Wilson Goss - 310-310-4198
brokenheartlandstringband@gmail.com

Joe Carson

Laura Moe - 952-843-3457
9528433457

Cousin Dad

John Soderberg 612-441-7382
john.soderberg@gmail.com

Curtis & Loretta

Loretta Simonet 612-781-9537
loretta@curtisandloretta.com

Due North

Louise Wiermaa 218-721-5250
lew3355@hotmail.com

Eli Quist

Julia De Georgeo - 6126554728
julia.degeorgeo@gmail.com

Fellow Pynins

Dani Aubert - 541-727-8334

The Fish Heads

Kim Curtis-Monson - 218-831-5181
KMonson802@aol.com

Gated Community

Sumanth Gopinath 612-332-2006
sumanth_gopinath@hotmail.com

Georgia Rae Family Band

Ronilyn Mussared 815-675-2554
mussared@mchsi.com

Ginstrings

Jon Miller - 763-213-3735
ginstrings@gmail.com

Gloryland Gospel Band

Vicki Andersen, 952-457-7672
glorylandgb@gmail.com

Good Morning Bedlam

Tyler Rehm

tyler@thetragedy.com

The Hacklewrappers

Mark Rubbert, 612-387-8189
mjrubbert@gmail.com

The Halvorson Family Band

Loren Halvorson, 507-345-7431
loren_halvorson@hotmail.com

Harper's Chord

Roger Fink
Harperschordmusic@gmail.com

The Haws

Jason Leonard - 612-499-1242
612-499-1242

Homesteaders

Terry Schwartz 701-659-3154
pollantra@gmail.com

The Houdeks

Hollie Brian 651-240-0125
hollebrian17@gmail.com

The Midwesternaires

Clive North - midwesternaires@gmail.com

Lady Spruce

Aubrey Weger - 612-384-9391
aubrey.weger@gmail.com

Mary DuShane &

Nicholas Jordan

Nick Jordan - 651-895-3770
jorda020@umn.edu

Mike Gunther and

the Total Crapshoot

Mike Gunther - 612-710-6343
mpgunther99@gmail.com

Missy Haack

Brenton Haack - 763-360-2142
brentonhaack@gmail.com

Mother Banjo

Ellen Stanley 612-281-1364
motherbanjo@gmail.com

New Riverside Ramblers

Karen Kleinspehn 612-724-4687
info@newriversideramblers.com

Now and Then

Daniel Fish 763-786-2524
nowandthencountry@gmail.com

Oh Sister

Maura Dunst - 715-9282601
mauradunst@gmail.com

Oluwatoyin Alowonle

Brady Perl - 612-720-7420
booking@bradyperl.com

One Ukulele

Aaron Lockridge 612-670-3941
alockridge@gmail.com

Pert Near Sandstone

Nathan Sipe 612-245-0159
nate@pertenearsandstone.com

Prairie Anthem

Brad Borg - 651-4334746
rdbor@gmail.com

Rosby Corner

Jeanne Marti, 763-559-7552
romarti3@aol.com

The Seldom Herd

Gary Cobus, 612-859-9013
garycobi@charter.net

Sherry Minnick

Sherry Minnick 651-644-8682
minnicksherry@gmail.com

Singleton Street

Sherri Leyda, 763-225-7857
singletonstreet@gmail.com

Sloughgrass

Soren Olesen 218-634-2800
sorenjudith@centurytel.net

Sprig of That

Krissy Bergmark - 7084664424
sprigofthat@gmail.com

Terrace Smith

218-728-1438

String Beans, Chick Pea &

Garbonzo

Roger Cuthbertson - 952-737-3281
rogercuthbertson1014@gmail.com

Switched at Birth

Rick Anderson 651-230-2431
ricktune56@gmail.com

Tie Dye Chick

Julie Kaiser 218-308-3131
tiedyechick40@yahoo.com

Troy Flemming

Sandra Flemming - 952-758-7522
contact@troymflemming.com

The UkuLadies

Gig Amal - 612-267-4603
theukuladiesband@gmail.com

Wild Goose Chase Cloggers

John Njoes 612-419-4576
johnnjoes@yahoo.com

Wink the Other Eye

David Gourhan 651-674-8668
dgourh@aol.com

York & Robinson

David Robinson - 612-385-2937
davidrobinsonmusician@gmail.com

MINNESOTA BLUEGRASS MEMBER BANDS

Old-Time Bands

Bob Bovee & Pop Wagner

Bob Bovee 507-498-5452
bobbovee46@gmail.com

Bob & Lynn Dixon

Bob Dixon 612-377-6819
bobandlynnndixon@gmail.com

Corpse Reviver

Mikkel Mikkel - 612-710-2176
mikkelbeckmen@gmail.com

Dick Kimmel & Pam Longtine

Dick Kimmel - kimmel@newulmtel.net

Gritpickers

Old Time String band

Rob Daves 612-822-0085
gritpickers@gmail.com

Hole in the Bucket

John Wenstrom, 651-500-0671
wenstrom11@yahoo.com

Hoof on the Roof

Mary Pat Kleven
marypatkleven@gmail.com

Poor Benny

David Furniss 651-699-0557
dfurniss50@gmail.com

Roe Family Singers

Quillan Roe 612-599-0266
pappyroe@yahoo.com

Tickwood String Band

Doug Wells 218-736-4469
betsyanddougwells@gmail.com

Upper Midwest Folk Fiddlers

Michael Sawyer - 469-877-8859
Minnesotafiddle@yahoo.com

Whinnie-Muir

John Wenstrom, 651-500-0671
wenstrom11@yahoo.com



Classified Ads

For sale: Deering Calico 5-string banjo, in excellent condition, \$2,499. Comes with strap, capos and original hardshell case. Email: john@jscarch-tops.com.

Looking for a string player (any instrument except guitar and bass) who sings harmonies. Band does 2/3 original vocal based stringband music. Contact: Lance Wendlandt, 651-338-6534, Wendlandtlance@gmail.com

Blue Drifters need players who sing. Need bassist or other picker that sings and then another picker who sings. I can show you how to sing trio harmonies. But, you're going to need a day job. Steven Earl Howard, Blue Drifters, 952-595-9819

MONROE CROSSING - COMING UP

Friday, May 1, 2020	CANCELED Boxcar Pinion Memorial Bluegrass Festival	Chickamauga, GA	423-605-7975
Saturday, May 2, 2020	CANCELED Little Roy & Lizzy Music Festival	Lincolnton, GA	423-605-7975
Sunday, May 3, 2020	CANCELED Thomas Persons Hall	Monticello, GA	706-468-2659
Sunday, May 10, 2020* 11 am	The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass Plymouth Congregational Church, 1900 Nicollet Ave.	Minneapolis, MN	612-871-7400
Sunday, May 17, 2020* 9 am, 10, 11 & 12:00	Mount Olivet Lutheran Church 5025 Knox Avenue South	Minneapolis, MN	612-767-2263
Friday, May 29, 2020* 7 pm	Prairie Days, Memorial Park	Long Prairie, MN	320-266-5640
Saturday, May 30, 2020* 7:30 pm	Westminster Performing Arts Series, Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1200 S. Marquette Ave.	Minneapolis, MN	612-332-3421

**Check online or call to verify before attending*

www.MonroeCrossing.com | Booking: Derek Johnson, 612-720-3746 derek@monroecrossing.com

PHOTO: MIKE CHONACKI

MinnesotaBluegrass.org

★ ★ ★ 15TH ANNUAL ★ ★ ★



FEATURING
THE BEST IN
NATIONAL AND
REGIONAL
BLUEGRASS
BANDS!

PLUS...
CAMPING, WORKSHOPS
JAMMING, FOOD
AND MORE!



Bluegrass
FESTIVAL
Pine River, Minnesota



NEW
FESTIVAL
SITE!

LAKES MUSIC
AND EVENTS PARK
(1 mile north of Pine River)

AUGUST 26-30, 2020

Beautiful Camping Under the Pines! Larger Campsites. Electrical and Primitive Sites Available

Festival Schedule

Main Stage: Thursday - 5-11PM • Friday/Saturday - 11AM-11PM • Sunday - 10AM-4PM

Workshops: Friday/Saturday 10AM-5PM | **Old Time Dance:** Wednesday - 6PM-9PM



KENNY AND AMANDA SMITH
TN - Fri & Sat



ALAN BIBEY AND GRASSTOWNE
SC - Fri



HIGH FIDELITY
TN - Fri & Sat



THE FARM HANDS
TN - Sat



BULL HARMAN AND BULLS EYE
MO - Sat & Sun



THE FIREBOX BLUEGRASS BAND
IL - Thu & Fri



PILLIP STEINMETZ AND HIS SUNNY TENNESSEANS
TN - Fri



THE PUNCHES
MO - Sat & Sun



THAT DALTON GANG
MO - Sat & Sun



HONKY TONK JUMP
MN - Sat

TIM AND CINDY & FRIENDS, MN - THU & SUN

SHAFFERS LOST 40, MN - THU & FRI

BLUE GROOVE BLUEGRASS, MN - THU & FRI

ERICS DANCE BAND, MN - WED

Purchase Tickets in Advance or at the Gate

800.728.6926 • info@LakesBluegrassFestival.com
www.LakesBluegrassFestival.com

Presented by the Pine River Area Foundation - a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization

Bluegrass Saturday Morning

By Phil Nusbaum

Now There is No Normal

It would be normal to begin a May column with hopes that Minnesotans are done with snow, or that we're getting ready for the good times of summer, under shade trees where we are playing and listening to bluegrass. But as this is written, right before the April 6 deadline for this publication, past notions of what is normal are not in play. We are not hearing about festival lineups, or camping at festival grounds, but about hoarding toilet paper, about obtaining face masks and the number of ventilators needed to fight an epidemic.

In the last issue of this magazine, I was announcing the coming of KBEM's on-air fund-raising. In terms of normal expectations, those fund drives rate with death and taxes as far as probability.

But there is no normal in the first half of 2020. The fund drive was supposed to take place the first two weeks of April. But the KBEM-FM studios are located at Minneapolis North High School, and Minneapolis schools are closed until further notice. Also, KBEM-FM and the Hook and Ladder Club was expecting to present Corpse Reviver at the Hook and Ladder on April 12. But under the current government guidelines, there simply are no shows!

I can tell you that the fund drive will take place, but who knows when? And, you can add "who knows where?" Perhaps all of us KBEM-FM radio announcers will be able to go to the studio to conduct the fund drive. Then again, we might be improvising on-air work from our living rooms or kitchens.

Anticipating the Next Normal

The official numbers that are used as gauges of the economy make things seem like everything is at a standstill. These numbers are of course important to musicians, because if everything is down, it means their businesses are suffering, too. However it is wrong to assume that there is no musical activity going on. Musicians are using the enforced period of isolation without work by attending to various aspects of their crafts. They are writing new pieces, learning songs and tunes they'd always wanted to learn, rehearsing and becoming more adept at public relations and technology.

Once COVID-19 is contained, we'll find out about all the improvements the players are working on. It's probably true, too, that people in all walks of life are using the time to refine whatever they do. You often cannot work on refinements when you are up to here with the stuff that you have to get done in the next ten minutes, by noon, or by the end of the day at the latest. But having time on one's hands causes reflection. This does not mean that everything is being reinvented. However, many are seizing opportunities to re-think things. In the case of Bluegrass

Saturday Morning, there are two special pieces offered by the show from time to time. One is called Gems of Bluegrass and the other is a series of conversations with Bluegrass artists reflecting on the connections between their lives and songs. Until recently we ran one or the other during the show segment beginning at 11:30AM. But how to accommodate both on a 5-hour radio show? Well, separating them by a couple of hours seems like a good idea. "Gems" is running in the 9:30 segment, and the interviews run in the 11:30 segment.

When we fade into the next normal phase, expect surprising new music from musicians nationally and locally.

Thank You Andrew Tuchowski

When I needed a break recently, Andy Tuchowski, formerly of KSVC-FM in Saint Cloud was available. Good that he was, and my spies in radio-land affirm that he did a fine job. "Let's have more" is all I can say.

Music Listings

To access the Acoustic Music Listings, at www.jazz88.fm, click on schedule. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Bluegrass Saturday Morning. Then scroll down to Blog Posts and click on Bluegrass Saturday Acoustic Music Calendar.

Weekly Playlists, Listen Online - www.jazz88.fm

To stream KBEM programming, at www.jazz88.fm, click on "listen live." Bluegrass Saturday Morning playlists are located at www.jazz88.fm. At the top of the home page on the right-hand side, select "playlists." Then click on the desired date. To listen to archived shows, at www.jazz88.fm, click on "on-demand." Then click on the date and show.

Contribute to Minnesota

Bluegrass Magazine

Write a Review of a favorite concert or CD.

Write an article about your favorite jam.

Tell us about how you came to like Bluegrass and Old-Time String Band Music.

editor@minnesotabluegrass.org

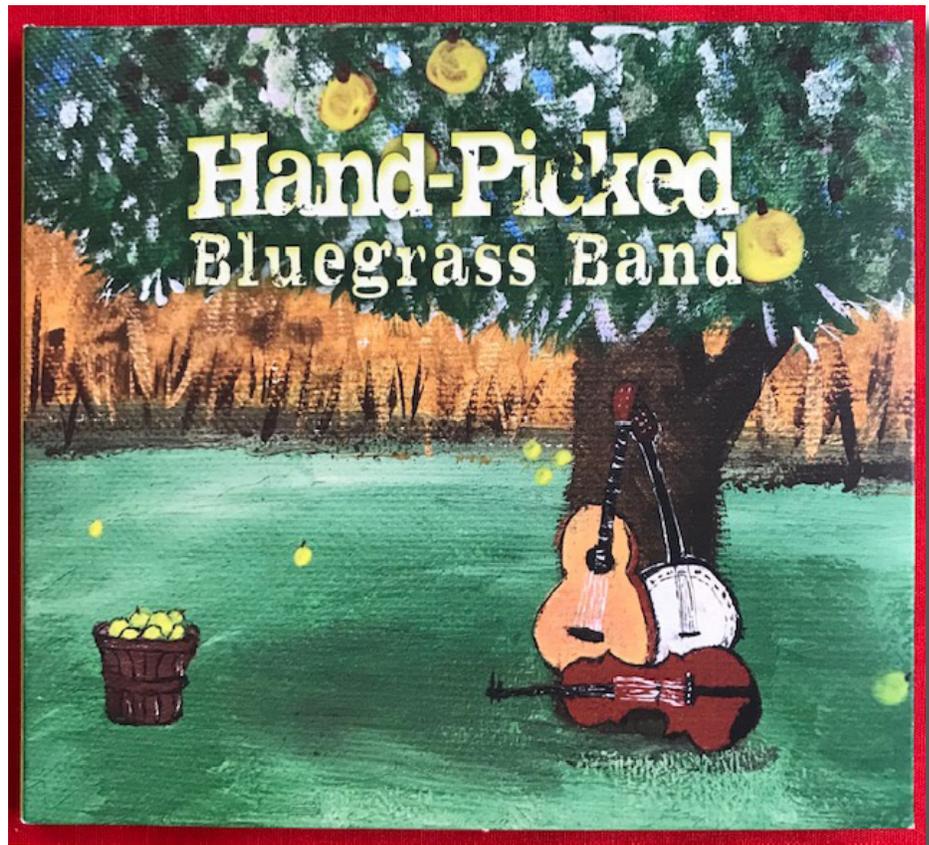
CD Review: Hand Picked Bluegrass V

By Chris Silver

As someone who had the honor of recording one of the group's first projects, I thoroughly enjoyed listening to Hand-Picked Bluegrass' most recent project, V (five). The band is comprised of four individuals who have a long and rich history in performing bluegrass throughout the Upper-Midwest. Their playing and singing reflect this. A band that is willing to play from the heart without posturing or copying styles seems like a rarity, which makes Hand-Picked Bluegrass such a pleasure to listen to. Mandolinist Joe Cronick has written and arranged most of the songs on this album, and the delivery is reminiscent of some of the best bluegrass created a few decades ago. This is the perfect road trip soundtrack that will make you hit repeat more than once.

The instrumental elements encompass what you might expect from seasoned pickers. It's clear that the band members have built a musical vocabulary that goes deep, and their solos reflect a wide range of genres. Joe's wife and musical partner, Sue, has a rich fiddle tone and solid style that supports the diverse set of material. Holding down the bass is Bruce Royal, a second generation picker whose father, Bruce King (Art Stevenson and High Water) is a regional all-star. Bruce's bass playing is spot on and provides the perfect texture and drive, especially on the non-traditional tracks. His runs and fills provide more than a hint of jazz styling. A number of banjo players were used on the project, including Gabe Dettinger, an amazing talent who rounds out the group's fourth.

As a fan of good songwriting, listeners will appreciate Joe's lyric sensibility. In the spirit of Jimmie Rogers, his songs carry messages that we can all relate to. Take "Beyond Lonesome" for instance. This tune in ¾ time starts off with beautiful twin fiddles from the legendary Michael Cleveland and is followed by a really sweet three-part chorus reminiscent of the Osborne Brothers. "The Bar Has



Reached A New Low" will delight any honky tonk fan. This tune sounds like a classic from the 1950s telling the bar room story of someone heading down the wrong path.

In addition to the nine original tunes penned by Joe, the group has carefully selected some great covers. A youth of the 1960s, I was especially intrigued with the Boxcar classic "The Letter." The tune works perfectly with bluegrass instrumentation, and Sue's vocal is as smooth as silk. Other outstanding covers include tunes by regional legend Tuck Pence and Grass Cats frontman, Russell Johnson.

Fans of solid traditional bluegrass, instrumental polish, and great three-part harmonies will not be disappointed. For me personally, the album brought me back to a time when bluegrass was about soul and not playing songs as fast as they

can be played. The arrangements are thoughtful and will leave fans of Hand-Picked Bluegrass wanting more. Highly recommended!

LaPlant Instruments

maker of fine
mandolins & guitars

Buy - Trade
Sell - Repair
(stringed instruments)

31751 LaPlant Road
Grand Rapids, MN 55744
218-326-4456

Token Creek

By Joe Cronick

The tune appears on Hand Picked Bluegrass V album.

“Token Creek” is a tune I worked on in 2017 while visiting my daughter in Florida. Back in Wisconsin, Gabe Dettinger collaborated with me on the chords. It has that “Monroe feel” with major/minor contrast. Token Creek is an actual place near Gabe’s family home in Sun Prairie, WI. It seemed to be the ideal title for this tune. It is recorded on Hand-picked Bluegrass V (five) CD and can be found on Spotify and on HPBB’s website - handpickedbluegrass.net. Michael Cleveland plays a fantastic 3-part fiddle break, transcribed by Shaunce Ali. Here are all three parts. Enjoy, play and share with friends.

Token Creek

Lead Fiddle

Joe Cronick

arr. Michael Cleveland

The musical score for "Token Creek" Lead Fiddle is written in 4/4 time. It consists of seven staves of music. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major). The score includes various chords and a key signature change to D major at measure 21. A box labeled 'A' is placed above the first measure. The score ends with a double bar line at measure 36.

Chords: Am, G, E, D

Measure numbers: 1, 6, 11, 16, 21, 27, 32

Token Creek

Tenor Fiddle

Joe Cronick
arr. Michael Cleveland

A

Am G Am E Am

6

G Am E Am

11

G Am E Am

16

G E Am

B

21

Am D Am D

27

Am E Am D

32

Am D E Am

Token Creek

Baritone Fiddle

Joe Cronick

arr. Michael Cleveland

A

Am G Am E Am

6 G Am E Am

11 G Am E Am

16 G E Am

B

21 Am D Am D

27 Am E Am D

32 Am D E Am



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit 343

MINNESOTA BLUEGRASS & OLD-TIME MUSIC ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 16408
Mpls, MN 55416

TIME VALUE DATA



Grass Seeds - Minnesota Bluegrass Winter Weekend - 2020
Photo by Tom Schrack