

Press Pass: Caravan of Thieves

By Mike Hume

Thursday, 06 August 2009 10:50

When it comes to descriptions of their sound, Connecticut-based four-piece Caravan of Thieves has heard just about every combination imaginable. Progressive bluegrass? Check. Gypsy punk hardcore? Check, check. Hardcore gypsy folk? Check, check, check.



Caravan of Thieves (Photo: Chad Anderson)

The combination is nothing if not unique, flaunting a Transylvania-at-dusk quality of foreboding and a rustic aspect that feels more likely to crackle out of a phonograph than blast out of Bose speakers. In all, it's the kind of music you'd expect to hear on the soundtrack of an old-time silent film about a train heist or, as Fuzz, who founded the group along with his wife Carrie, says, "Something you'd hear on a Tim Burton soundtrack for Dr. Seuss."

Unconventional music can be strange, but also wildly successful, as The Decemberists have proven at length, so long as it is done well. With the harmonies of Fuzz and Carrie serving as the backbone of the Thieves' sound, you can count this group among that same "oddity-but-goody" company as well.

Fuzz and Carrie evolved their duo dynamic from a more traditional pop/rock outfit to better accommodate those husband-and-wife harmonies that the couple considers their strength. Working with your spouse can have its ups and downs, but the couple says the process has been a good one so far.

"It's been an ongoing process of working together," Carrie says. "It's key to take constructive criticism and separate that and not take it personally. But you have to do that any time you're working with people. It's just a little different when you're working with your partner too."

They eventually added violinist Ben Dean to the mix, before rounding out the quartet with double-bassist Brian Anderson and finally settling on an almost one-of-a-kind sound.

"We've opened for rock, reggae bands and folk artists and it's gone really well," Carrie says.

“When people come in, they don’t know what to expect. They’re like ‘What is this?’ Then we just stick to our guns and do what we do and we just hope they have fun because we’re having fun. And usually by the end they’re all smiles.”

“One of the reasons we got away from the rock band is because it seemed a little too run of the mill and this seemed like a unique way to approach folk and songwriting,” Fuzz says. “We liked that because it could set us apart. We wanted to be more dramatic. We can dress up. We can have a theme and have a whole package that goes along with this Caravan of Thieves persona.”

Part of that persona is the band’s muse, a Phantom-of-the-Opera sort of ghost that brings them its music to play. While the process is laid out in the opening track (the aptly named “Ghostwriter”) of their debut album *Bouquet*, Fuzz explains it more succinctly.

“We’re just kind of blank slates,” Fuzz says. “This ghost is pretty much feeding us all of the material, which is great since they see all this stuff because they’re omniscient across the universe.”

In that case, there should be no shortage of material from Caravan of Thieves. That’s fortunate, considering this collection of quirky talent feels like it has a long road ahead of them.

• *Caravan of Thieves performs Aug. 17 at IOTA Club and Café in Arlington. The show starts at 8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$12. For more on Caravan of Thieves, visit www.caravanofthieves.com.*

Link:

<http://www.fcnp.com/arts/4826-press-pass-caravan-of-thieves-.html>