

Caravan of Thieves Expand Their Vaudevillian Empire



Caravan of Thieves (Promotional Photo / November 19, 2012)
By Mike Sembos

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Caravan of Thieves

Fri., Nov. 23, 7:45 p.m. Fairfield Theatre Company's StageOne, 70 Sanford St., Fairfield. (203) 259-1036, fairfieldtheatre.org. Tall Heights opens. \$25-\$29.

Mates of State isn't the only local married couple that makes a living touring the United States while playing music together. Fuzz and Carrie Sangiovanni formed Caravan of Thieves in 2008, and their acoustic-based sound, which blends gypsy swing with Beatle-esque pop (with no shortage of vaudevillian theatrics), resonated with fans and critics instantly. Since then, they've been refining their craft, releasing albums and reaching out to broader audiences on a national scale. Fuzz had already found some success with his previous band Deep Banana Blackout, so the new group started with a wealth of knowledge about the music business not available to most newcomers. (Bassist Brian Anderson also made an impact on the festival/jam scene with his locally-based band Raisin Hill.) These guys (and gal) are pros, and though the band is only four years old, their collective experience points are numerous.

They've been on the road since early October, and covering lots of new ground along the way. Until this year, tours had focused on the Midwest and the South, but the current run brought them out to the Southwest for the first time, and the West Coast for just the second time. Strongholds have been developed in scattered locales like Tampa, Virginia, Phoenix, San Diego and Brookings, Oregon.

"We're still really just getting the band out there," says Fuzz, on the phone from Seattle, in a bed at a friend's house, under the covers beside Carrie who is also on the line. "In a lot of ways we're doing better outside the Northeast than inside, except for Connecticut since that's where we're from."

By the time you read this the Caravan will almost be back to Fairfield for a homecoming show at Fairfield Theatre Company's StageOne Friday night that will showcase the tightness a band can only develop by playing every night for extended periods of time. Special treats and new songs have been promised for the event, including the official debut of an original Christmas song.

Building a band in the modern era requires a multifaceted mind set.

"We kind of approach it from all angles," says Carrie. "We try to get the radio stations, triple A, college and local radio stations to play the records, we get tour press to work every show we're doing. We get on the road, but we don't want to overdo any place. You go someplace and plant some seeds, you go back six or eight months later to reiterate and remind people who you are. Then you give it time to breathe and simmer a little bit and give it a chance to build."

"Another part of the approach is coming back with something new to offer each time," adds Fuzz. "Whether it's an album or a single, or this time we're going to play a different type of show, like we're going to partner up with another band or a festival or a different type of venue, indoor versus outdoor, club versus theater... We try to change up the show, and we'll think about what we played the last time through and make sure there's some variety."

And it doesn't hurt that they bang on pots and pans for percussion during their shows, crack jokes and dress up in cool vaudevillian-era clothing: It's a fine-tuned, well-oiled theatrical machine. But they're also musically adept enough to reinterpret old songs and, generally speaking, to explore their instruments with fearlessness.

Touring life isn't always easy, but being out with one's significant other can make a huge difference when it comes to comfort.

"You always have a little piece of home with you," says Carrie. "Also, one of the nice things about being on the road is that I've been having these realizations that there's still a lot of good in humanity. There's some really amazing people out there that open their homes and take us in. Even people that we meet that night will be like, 'Do you guys have a place to stay? Oh, that's not going to work come to my place. I'm going to feed you and I'm going to take care of you.' And it's all over the country we've found this. We've met so many wonderful people."

Link:

<http://www.ct.com/entertainment/music/shows/nm-ff48-caravan-of-thieves-20121122,0,2116652.story>