

The Circus is Coming

Growing more theatrical by the day, the Thieves debut

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By Sean Corbett



Sean Corbett photo

Caravan of Thieves: They practice in cemeteries

Caravan of Thieves

With Ash Creek String Band. Fairfield Theatre Company Stage One, 70 Sanford St., Fairfield.
Sat., Feb. 21 at 7:30 p.m. \$12-17. (203) 259-1036, www.fairfieldtheatre.org

On the Caravan of Thieves' debut album, *Bouquet*, they creep around like vagabonds in the night fog at a carnival. Somehow the album simultaneously fits the moods of the smiling little children at the clown show, the men on dates with their mistresses, the gang of kids spooking the horses and also the Ferris wheel full of people that just came unhinged.

Fuzz and Carrie San Giovanni, the band's main singers and songwriters, are two life-long performers who can't stop writing tricky little masterpieces for their band of traveling circus rascals.

With the wailing violin ticklings of Ben Dean and the wiggly but sturdy backbone of Brian Anderson's double bass, the guitar-wielding duo can finally stretch out their personalities and breathe. "With this band, songwriting is never a daunting task," Fuzz says. Carrie agrees. "Things just flow out now," she says, "because we can really open our imaginations."

Don't be confused by their instrumentation. They're not bluegrass. They're not alt-country. They're not just gypsy jazz. They're all of that — with some John, Paul, George and Freddie Mercury thrown in.

"On stage we capture a very specific vibe," Fuzz says. "It's not just us playing our songs; it's a whole visual thing too. We can be very colorful, very wild, very free and that's our vision for the band."

The twelve songs on *Bouquet* help paint the picture. On "Angels in Cages," the Thieves sing about demons that keep angels locked up and a world that sits and waits for someone to do something. "Don't be mad," the song says, "you know they won it fair and square." With "Bar Isole," a slow gypsy jazz–esque song, a woman longs for attention from a handsome bartender who's actually sneaking around with her husband at night. It's all dark and dreary if you're just reading the lyrics, but through the speakers it's like a celebration.

"Billy" is the most playful song on the album; elaborate rhymes, a ridiculously fun rhythm and a bridge that'll surely send Beatles shivers down your spine. The album's title track, with its wistful harmonies and slow bouncing melodies will do the same. And all along there are implications that the whole album was written by a spirit, or "Ghostwriter," from "way back when."

Perhaps you know Fuzz and Carrie from their prior pop/rock band Rolla, or maybe you know Fuzz as the lead funk guitarist in Deep Banana Blackout. "We're not cool enough to be in a rock band," Carrie says, "With Caravan, we get to be our goofy selves, and be as outlandish as we want with the show." They consider all past rock experiences as steps in the process of getting to the creative landscape they're living in now.

"Our musical lives before Caravan almost feels like a lifetime ago," says Fuzz. "It feels like we're not even doing the same type of thing. It's like we became doctors and lawyers!"

"Yeah," Carrie says "There are endless possibilities creatively." Down the road they're thinking concept albums that'll build into concept shows with multiple days of theater performances, eventually with Cirque Du Soleil dancers and a full traveling circus. "You never know how this thing will grow," Fuzz says. "We're still figuring it out."

Saturday night will mark the fullest introduction of the band's vision to date. "We want people to feel like they're in our world," says Carrie. And so, leading up to this weekend's performance they're having dress rehearsals to help arrange the props, screens and secret aspects of the show.

"This'll be a full theater experience," Fuzz says, "If you've seen us before, this is going to be very different and much bigger than you've ever seen."

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