

Caravan of Thieves will weave stories that'll twist and turn

John W. Barry • Poughkeepsie Journal • March 25, 2010



They wear period clothes, although the period to which they belong is not quite clear.

The violin conjures images of Django Reinhardt, Paris in the 1930s and gypsy jazz.

The lead singer's names are Fuzz and Carrie. Guitar chord progressions take sharp left turns. Harmonies are layered like a cake. Atmosphere is evoked. And rhythm rules.

Caravan of Thieves plays acoustic, organic, original roots music thick on substance and peppered with stories that twist and turn.

These musicians rock hard and have a lot of soul. They will be at the Towne Crier Cafe in Pawling Saturday.

"This is a young, lively, eclectic band," said Towne Crier Cafe owner Phil Ciganer, "whose music is original, with its roots in gypsy jazz."

The Towne Crier figures heavily in the early evolution of the Caravan of Thieves.

James "Fuzz" Sangiovanni and his wife, Carrie, performed there years ago as an acoustic duo.

The couple met after Fuzz, well known throughout the jamband circuit from his band Deep Banana Blackout, played a show at Nectar's in Burlington, VT, where the band Phish launched its career. His future wife had attended the performance.

They dated, then began performing together, and five months after meeting the couple got engaged.

Several years ago, Fuzz and Carrie played as an acoustic duo at a benefit concert for autism services and programs in the Hudson Valley, staged in Putnam County by Putnam ARC. The following year, they were asked to perform again when the show was staged at the Towne Crier.

But instead of performing as a duo, the Caravan of Thieves played. At this point, violinist Ben Dean and bass player Brian Anderson had joined up.

"European jazz, there is a certain sort of elegance to it," Fuzz said. "But at the same time, it's really wild and really fun and upbeat."

Ciganer liked what he saw and gave Fuzz, Carrie and the gang their own night.

"It was one of the first places to really give us a shot," Fuzz said.

Pay a visit to www.caravanofthieves.com to get a sense of what Ciganer might have liked about this band.

For starters, you can't really call what they wear costumes, because each of the thieves looks quite natural in his or her get-up.

"We didn't want to do the whole hair in the face or the tight jeans," Fuzz said. "It felt overplayed and we felt this could be very different and interesting. There is a certain sort of elegance and classiness. We feel like we're getting dressed up for the show."

Caravan of Thieves shares with its audience the energy of a rock band on the opening night of a tour, the intimacy of a late-night, after-hours jam session and the recklessness of a garage band.

"It's really fun," Carrie Sangiovanni said. "We have a really good time with it. ... We had this idea in the beginning and we started coming up with all these songs and stories and things. We thought it was important for the audience to get the full picture, to have the images to go along with the music, so we didn't just offer this off-the-wall kind of music, it was like inviting them into our world. You don't know what time period you're in. You know you're here with Caravan of Thieves and you're in the moment and you're part of it."

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