

Out & About: Caravan of Thieves steals into Portland

By [Scott Andrews](#)

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Caravan of Thieves is a gypsy jazz quintet built around a husband-wife team of guitarists. The group plays One Longfellow Square in Portland on Friday.

Caravan of Thieves is motoring toward Portland, but there's no need to call the police or double-latch the doors.

Caravan of Thieves is a musical ensemble that specializes in gypsy jazz and other old-time acoustic genres. The band released a new CD last year and a new one is currently in process. You can hear many of those tunes on Friday when they steal into One Longfellow Square.

If you're in the mood for more conventional jazz, check out the University of Southern Maine School of Music's upcoming events. The school is offering back-to-back jazz events on April 28 and 29. The first will be a small-scale performance in Gorham; the second will be a celebration of big bands in Portland.

Caravan of Thieves

Expect an element of freakishness to the show that's coming to One Longfellow Square on Friday. Start with the name: Caravan of Thieves certainly suggests an ensemble that's utterly out of the conventional box (if not downright illegal).

Specializing in original tunes, with a smattering of covers, Caravan of Thieves is centered around a husband-wife duo of singer/songwriters who love to populate their lyrics with creepy creatures from earth and spooky visitors from beyond the boundaries of the physical universe. Fuzz and Carrie Sangiovanni say they draw inspiration for their songs by walking through a graveyard that's close to their home in Bridgeport, Conn.

And their musical medium certainly harks back to long-dead artists, especially the "gypsy jazz" string stylings made famous by Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli of the Hot Club de France from about 80 years ago.

Caravan of Thieves is normally a quartet: two guitars plus violin and bass. But they're frequently joined by an accordionist. The Sangiovanis share the principal vocal duties. Last year's CD, the group's second, was titled "Mischief Night," and another album is in the works.

It's definitely not overly standardized McMusic, avers Fuzz Sangiovanni, and plenty of others agree with his assessment.

“If you’re weary of the heavily manufactured sounds and slick production values that dominate mainstream music today, then Caravan of Thieves promises to at least provide a satisfying alternative,” wrote Naila Francis of the Philadelphia Intelligencer. “These songs are soaked in a melange of influences, that while obviously steeped in gypsy swing, bear elements of everything from chamber pop and 1920s hot jazz to vaudeville, folk and bluegrass.”

Writing in the Portsmouth Herald, music critic Christopher Hislop said:

“The tunes that Caravan of Thieves write are fun, full of imaginative imagery, and are unlike anything that’s out there in the music world nowadays. Steeped deeply in the traditions of gypsy jazz and call-and-response blues/folk tunes, with a smattering of ‘punk’ edginess thrown in for good measure, this music demands action, and reaction. This isn’t just music that you hear, its music that you feel. Primary songwriters Fuzz and Carrie Sangiovanni are the curators of the stories that bring you to an era when performance art was really the only form of entertainment. The time before television sets and the Internet. A time when being social meant being a part of a thriving, living (in the flesh), and breathing community. This stuff is fun.”

Catch Caravan of Thieves at [One Longfellow Square](#) (corner of State and Congress) in Portland at 8 p.m. Friday, April 22. Call 761-1757.

Link:

<http://www.theforecaster.net/content/pnms-out-and-about-caravan-thieves-042011>