



Caravan of Thieves Put on Devilishly Delightful Performances

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The **Caravan of Thieves** are **Ashland Coffee & Tea's** latest Artists in Residence.

The quartet, led by husband and wife team Fuzz and Carrie Sangiovanni, will be back in Ashland Wednesday, October 21.

I caught up with them on the phone from their hometown, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Caravan of Thieves, despite being a relatively young band, has gotten off to a very promising start.

"Our very first show with Caravan was the Spring of 2008," says Carrie, who sings and plays guitar. "We've been playing together for about a year and a half."



The Thieves in their favorite cemetery - Photo Caroline Valites

The couple married in 2005.

It was an intimate relationship before it became a musical one," says Fuzz, who also sings and plays guitar.

It's likely you've never experienced a show like theirs. Both Fuzz and Carrie say music has been a part of their lives since childhood.

"As a kid I was doing a lot of theater and Broadway," recalls Carrie. "I was classically trained on piano first and then started playing guitar in high school. My dad taught me."

"I started off as a kid playing guitar, Rock-n-Roll," says Fuzz. "I played my first show when I was 14. I just kind of got hooked on performing and playing in bands."

Fuzz went to school for classical music and arrangement and composition, played everything from Blues to Jazz to R&B to Dance-Pop, toured with **Deep Banana Blackout** and joined up with **Tom Tom Club**, which is the drummer and bass player from **Talking Heads**.

"When Fuzz and I met I was doing a solo singer-songwriter thing up in **Burlington, Vermont**," says Carrie. "I had just gotten out of college about a year before that, so I was just getting my feet wet in the business part of it."

When the two of them first started making music together, they found that they were able to connect most on an acoustic level.

"When I teamed up with Carrie, sitting together singing and playing guitars was kind of our common ground," says Fuzz.

The rest of Caravan consists of **Ben Dean** on a possessed, impassioned violin and **Brian Anderson**, the toe-tapping, swift-fingered double bassist.

Fuzz and Carrie's harmonies are quite beautiful. Not surprisingly, both cite **the Beatles** as highly influential.

"I listened to a lot of Beatles growing up," says Carrie.

"The Beatles are there. Along with any kind of rock music that sort of pushes the envelope of what you could consider Rock-n-Roll or that has a lot of influences outside of Rock-n-Roll," adds Fuzz. "Often, they didn't sound like a rock band at all, they could have sounded middle-eastern or like the circus. **Queen** is another group that goes from Rock to Classical Opera. So we're influenced by any intricately arranged or composed Rock music."

Bouquet, their debut album, is a dark and delicious romp through fields of psychedelically colored pansies ... a story told in three acts.

They describe the album as a collection of colorful characters. These characters have tales to tell, some about love, most are dark and twisted, yet playful and humorous.

Fuzz explains, "We kind of like to think of it as like a carnival show. We've got a rattlesnake, and freaks and pirates, "Billy" is about a guy that's a bug."

"The Butcher's Wife" tells a story all too often played out in movies and the news.

"If you care not to tangle with a knife ... Don't get friendly with the butcher's wife"

What can one expect from a live show?

"When you're at the show we like you to kind of just be 'there' – in our time, wherever that time is – in the moment," says Carrie. "But you feel like it's not this present time."

"We like to think of our show as fun and lively but people do need to sit and watch, like watching any other theatrical performance," Fuzz says. "You'll miss some of the subtleties if you're not paying attention. We have set breaks."

If you're craving a visual, imagine a Tim Burton film or Dr. Seuss story; both are cited as sources of inspiration. They call an opportunity to work with Burton a "dream pairing" – and after hearing the music, it seems the partnership would be quite fitting.

The darkness of their set isn't depressing; it's more of a "dry, satirical and dark sort of humor."

They tell a story that's interwoven with circus and carnival themes. But we've all been warned, never to judge a book by its cover.

"It's entertaining, but there's a sadness to it, another side, it's not all fun and games," says Carrie.

At home in Connecticut, there's a beautiful old cemetery close by. The band takes a lot of their pictures there.

"We go for walks there a lot when it's nice out," says Carrie.

Fuzz chimes in, "It may even have been in some ways a source of inspiration for this whole thing because it's a real combination of all this beauty and death. Maybe that's sort of what we're doing in a nutshell. We always try to walk the line between fun and creepy."

Check them out online if you're still undecided. You can see videos of some of their live performances on their YouTube page and listen to their music here on their official website. You can even follow them on Twitter.

Their next show at Ashland Coffee & Tea is this Wednesday. Click here for details.

Christy Sheppard is an avid music fan, music mag subscriber and live show goer and she tweets for @richmonddotcom and her personal account @cshepscorp. She sometimes often sings loudly in her cubicle.

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