

Deep Banana Blackout, Caravan of Thieves unite for New Year's Eve show at FTC

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Musically speaking, there isn't much resemblance between Deep Banana Blackout and Caravan of Thieves: the former plays New Orleans-style jazz/funk; the latter acoustic gypsy folk.

But they do take after each other in one respect, said James "Fuzz" Sangiovanni: "Their live shows are both really fun, energetic and interactive."

And that, he said, is what will make the upcoming DBB/COT New Year's Eve concert at [Fairfield Theatre Company's StageOne](#) "so harmonious."

Incidentally, it also is what will give Sangiovanni the boost he needs to make it through back-to-back sets.

"Music, especially from these two bands, has always been a real energizer," said the guitarist, who plays in both DBB and COT. "I like listening to mellow music, but from a performance standpoint, I enjoy music with a lot of kick to it."

DBB will be kicking it on Friday, Dec. 30, and Saturday, Dec. 31, as the Connecticut jam band unleashes a set of funk classics by the likes of [James Brown](#) and Parliament Funkadelic, along with original material from its studio albums ("Live In the Thousand Islands" and "Rowdy Duty").

It will be a rare performance from the ensemble, which, Sangiovanni said, plays just a few shows a year (including a regular stint at the Gathering of the Vibes in Bridgeport). The band's sparse touring schedule notwithstanding, Sangiovanni expects the "mechanisms to switch into gear as soon as we get on stage."

"DBB has been together for 16 years," he said. "There's a lot of history there."

COT will join DBB on Saturday, opening the concert with a rollicking, "Stomp"-inspired set of gypsy jazz tunes, complete with guitar, violin, upright bass and a bevy of found percussive instruments (buckets, cans, hubcaps).

The Bridgeport band will dish out a wildly eclectic set, including its "Survival Dance Medley"; covers of Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" and [Talking Heads'](#) "Psycho Killer"; and original material from its studio LPs, including "Funhouse," which is scheduled for a 2012 release.

Though Sangiovanni has been a member of DBB for almost two decades, he plays a far more active role in COT.

"In Caravan of Thieves, I'm doing a lot of singing; in DBB, I'm just up there with a guitar," he said. "For this show, I'll get the hard stuff out of the way in the beginning and then I'll get up there with DBB and groove out."

The concert will cap off with a combined DBB/COT jam, along with appearances from surprise guests, Sangiovanni said.

Since forming COT with his wife, singer-guitarist [Carrie Sangiovanni](#), and his friends, violinist [Ben Dean](#) and double bassist [Brian Anderson](#), in 2008, Sangiovanni has expanded his musical horizons beyond DBB and the jam band scene.

Up until now, he's kept his lives in DBB and COT separate.

"The idea of playing together never really came up," Sangiovanni said. "I never saw them as entirely compatible."

But after performing with COT at numerous bluegrass festivals, "where all the music starts to sound the same," Sangiovanni realized that musical diversity is actually "more exciting."

And, having both of his musical families up on stage, together, on New Year's Eve, will only add to the excitement.

"They are musically different, but the fact that it's all in the family feels good to me," he said. "It'll be like getting back with old high school buddies, having some drinks, reconnecting. We'll hit that magical stride."

Fairfield Theatre Company's StageOne, 70 Sanford St., Fairfield. Friday, Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m. \$55; Saturday, Dec. 31, 9 p.m. \$75. 203-259-1036, www.fairfieldtheatre.org.

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