

Caroline Williamson: Finding Her Voice

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by Shelby C. Berry

From the Cotton Pickin Kids to The Family Sowell, bluegrass and folk music bring a lot of successful family bands to the surface.

Family harmonies and the ability to almost read another's mind on stage allowed for an impeccable amount of bands in all genres of music for generations to connect with their audience in a way that other bands cannot. Recently, another family band is becoming somewhat bluegrass musical royalty – the Williamson family, better known as Williamson Branch.

The Bluegrass Standard featured the Williamson Family's blend of bluegrass, country, gospel, and dance music in 2017 and 2020, as they prepared to release their most recent 2021 studio album, *Heritage & Hope*. Williamson Branch became a household name in 2020 with their daily live stream videos during quarantine, growing their social media pages to over 442,000 likes and getting millions of likes on multiple videos on their channels. They interacted with audiences with old hymn performances and prayer requests.

However, this Bluegrass Standard feature covers Caroline Williamson, the youngest Williamson who has grown into her own as an artist.

"I've grown up in this band. I was always on stage, doing what I love," said Caroline. "Recently, I've been thinking about

each element of the hard work and skill that goes into the showmanship and music, getting better at what I do, and being a good person in the musical business – not just the musical part of being in a band, but the showmanship and the presence on stage that goes with it. I've started thinking more about what it looks like, not just what it sounds like.”

Finding your voice in a band with your siblings can be challenging, but Caroline is rising to the challenge. Celebrating her thirteenth birthday this February, Caroline is a multi-instrumentalist in her own right, starting fiddle playing at four years old. She clogged and sang harmony before picking up her second instrument, the Cajón drum. Since then, she's learned the ukulele, the banjolele (Banjo ukulele), and the mandolin, the primary instrument she plays in the band.



“Through quarantine in 2020, I started learning how to play the mandolin,” said Caroline. “We did a lot of live videos, and we still do. We started every night, and we now do two or three nights a week. My dad would always have me play mandolin, so I learned how to play them for the live videos. Since then, I’ve been taking lessons. I love it and really enjoy it!”

The Williamson girls are homeschooled and alternate their time between their hometown of Nashville and traveling to performances, the only life that Caroline has ever known.

“Getting to travel around the world doing what we love, spreading the word of God and his gospel, and showing people what He can do through you is such an honor,” said Caroline.

Caroline brings interactive energy to the stage, but what stays steady is Caroline’s faith and how she weaves it into her part of the band and their recordings.

The Williamson Branch Christmas album will be released by the end of 2022, with new singles releasing in the spring. Follow Caroline Williamson and her family on all of their upcoming successes at williamsonbranch.com.

“Through quarantine, we had wanted to do a more gospel album. After doing all of our live videos, each night we would do a hymn,” said Caroline. “People were responding to those. As much as our newer songs we were planning were great, we decided to do a 2-disc album instead, one Heritage with hymns we all grew up singing in church and the second Hope with new songs that they will love too. We had two or three number one songs from that album too, which was really awesome!”

<https://youtu.be/EWuHKKmorGU>

Caroline enjoys her family band’s success and being a member of Tomorrow’s Bluegrass Stars, which connected them with their

banjo player Anthony Howell.

The mission of Tomorrow's Bluegrass Stars is to connect young artists, providing connections and growth opportunities for the future.

