

Kentucky Just Us

By Susan Marquez

They're a family band, they work hard, and they have enjoyed success in their field. Kentucky Just Us is a prime example of how life can change when you least expect it. "I went to school to be a biology and chemistry teacher," laughs Terry O'Neal, the patriarch of the family. "I never dreamed of having a family band."

It all started with the family driving and singing. "We realized the kids had the natural ability to harmonize really well," says Terry. Both Terry and his wife, Shelane, play music. "I played keyboard, mostly in churches, and I was in a few Gospel groups when I was young. Shelane sings and plays the upright bass." But music wasn't something Terry and Shelane had much time for once children started coming, other than Terry teaching piano lessons from time to time. That all changed when the kids began singing together.

"They asked me if I'd help them, and I said I would, but they had to agree to sing any time or any place I asked them to. They agreed, and we started practicing. All we had was a guitar and the kids' voices."

On a cool evening in October 2014, on the way to a family outing to a local restaurant, Terry told the kids they'd have to sing for their supper. The kids laughed and went inside. They were just finishing up when Terry got up to go talk to their waitress. He asked if they could stand up and sing. The waitress said it would be fine, so Terry told the kids to get up and sing. "They were shaking like leaves, but they did a

very good job.” The manager heard the kids sing and invited them to come back and perform.

Since that time, the kids have learned to play instruments, including the fiddle, mandolin and banjo. John, the oldest of the group at age 19, plays mandolin and guitar. He also writes songs. Kacey is 18 and is a vocalist in addition to playing fiddle and writing songs. Jesse is 16 years old and plays banjo. Terry laughs as he describes Jesse as being the comedian of the group. “We never know what will come out of his mouth!” Jesse is also an accomplished songwriter. Caleb, the baby, is nine years old and plays mandolin and sings. He can also play the guitar and the mountain dulcimer. “He’s learned about 14 songs now, so he’s on stage a lot now,” Terry says.



In addition to playing with the band, John does the arrangements for each song while Kacey manages merchandise and social media. Shelane plays bass for the group, keeping them “in time and in line.” Terry plays keyboard and occasionally plays rhythm guitar. He also serves as the band’s manager, booking agent, van driver and sound man.

“We’ve been blessed,” says Terry. “When we first started, we

didn't know much about bluegrass or the music business. We played at a competition at a bluegrass festival in Kentucky and came across the Moron Brothers. They told us to talk to Dean Osborne. We went to tour the Hazard Community and Technical College's Kentucky School of Bluegrass and Traditional Music in Hyden, Kentucky." They enrolled and were instructed by Bobby Osborne, Dean Osborne, Virgil Bowlin and Scott Napier. "We were still playing on weekends and going to class during the week. We rented an apartment close by. It was difficult, but we made it work. It was worth it for the fantastic opportunities we had to study with such bluegrass greats." Kacey has also studied with legendary fiddle player Buddy Spicher and Jesse has studied with banjo extraordinaire Gary "Biscuit" Davis.

The band did 101 gigs last year and has played in venues such as the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, Silver Dollar City in Branson, and several bluegrass festivals. They've been on television shows and were selected to be the first artists in residence of the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum.

Their first album, The Land of Bluegrass, was released in 2015 and included a song by Shelane called The One Who Knows All Things. "It's a Gospel tune," says Terry. "We also have a Gospel tune on our second CD. People have been asking if we'll do an all-Gospel CD, so that's our next project.

Throughout it all, the kids have been homeschooled, which works well for their lifestyle. Their success has never gone to their heads. "We call the band Kentucky Just Us because we are from Kentucky, and I tell the kids all the time, we don't need to be like anyone else. We just need to be us."

Visit Kentucky Just Us

Appalachian Road Show

by Susan Marquez

"This band is all about emotional impact," says Jim VanCleve, fiddler for Appalachian Road Show, a young band in terms of when it was formed, but heavy on experience. "There is enough artistry in this camp that things have come together very quickly. As a matter of fact, we are shocked at how fast things have taken off. We had hoped for steady and positive growth. We are thrilled that the band has been received so well. It's both exciting and encouraging."

The band was just an idea, "probably while I was driving," recalls VanCleve. "I put it on a back burner because I was working with Josh Turner's band." Over the years, VanCleve has been in two bands with banjoist Barry Abernathy. "Barry also drives tour buses for artists like Hank Williams, Jr., Dolly Parton, Jason Aldean, Blake Shelton, and others. Wouldn't you know, he was driving the bus for Josh Turner! What are the chances of that?" Abernathy had to have surgery to repair degenerative disks in his neck that would involve moving his voice box, and doctors couldn't promise he'd have the same powerhouse vocals after the surgery. "Before the surgery, Barry recorded songs he loved just so he'd have them," says VanCleve. "He started seeing a theme to the songs. I had thought of doing a variety-type road show, and he wanted to make it Appalachian. That was perfect because it's so personal to both of us."

Abernathy handled the surgery beautifully, and in 2018 Appalachian Road Show hit the road. The group seeks to honor

the music, traditions, and history of the Appalachian region and its people. "It is authentic, in a cultural sense," says VanCleve. "It's the most pure, authentic expression of this music as we can deliver. No bells. No whistles. It's delivered as starkly as possible, via world-class musicians. Each of us is an old soul, and we combine our artistry and talents with a common goal."

VanCleve grew up in the western mountains of Haywood County, North Carolina and began playing the fiddle at the age of eight. He played with bands including Ric-o-Chet, Lou Reid & Carolina, Rambler's Choice, and Doyle Lawson and Quicksilver when he was a teenager. In 1998 he joined Mountain Heart and in time became an A-List Nashville session musician.

Rounding out the group are GRAMMY award-winning Todd Phillips on bass, acoustic guitar phenom Zeb Snyder, and tenor singer and mandolin-player Darrell Webb. "I had produced a record for Darrell Webb," says VanCleve, "and his embodiment of that lonesome tenor sound that is truly Appalachia was something I felt we needed. Plus, Darrell plays lots of instruments, which is great for us."

The band was the first signed by the Nashville's newest bluegrass label, Billy Blue Records. Their self-named debut album along with the vitality of their stage show is designed to both entertain and educate folks on the musical style and culture of the Appalachian Mountains and the people, including providing history about the instruments being played and the background of the songs performed. "We provide a musical experience," says VanCleve. The album was nominated for IBMA Album of the Year.

The guys in Appalachian Road Show aren't resting on the

success of their first record. “There were multiple number ones on the album,” says VanCleve, “and it spent months at the top of the chart.” That just fueled them to get busy on the next project. “We are ridiculously excited about it. We’ve put a solid industry team together. It’s not just a collection of songs, but an immersive cultural experience of where we call home. And of course, we’ll bring all that to the stage for our shows.”

It’s the authenticity that is so important to VanCleve and the others in Appalachian Road Show. VanCleve is remaining true to the sound the band has developed as he produces the new project. “I’ve produced 35 records, including records for just about everyone in the band. They all trust me. It’s a matter of being authentic. As a matter of fact, we’ve coined a phrase that we had printed on t-shirts,” he says. “Authenticity never goes out of style. With this next project, we are going to take a deeper dive with a continued narrative. It’s awesome that this band works as well as it does. Sometimes you try things and it just doesn’t work for whatever reason. But this is working, and we have a goal and we feel it emotionally. It’s working like gangbusters and we’re going to keep riding the wave!”

**See more about The Appalachian Road Show:
<https://www.theappalachianroadshow.com/>**

Six Strings, a Song, and a Soldier

by Richelle Putnam

“Army Bands provide music throughout the spectrum of military operations to instill in our soldiers the will to fight and win, foster the support of our citizens, and promote our national interests at home and abroad.”

The US Army is the oldest and largest employer of musicians in the world, dating back to the Revolutionary War. As ambassadors to the nation, musician soldiers uphold 230 years of tradition, entertaining veterans, soldiers and communities through the Army Music Program that offers musicians opportunities to do what they do best—play music. Sergeant First Class Marc Purinton joined the U.S. Army as a trumpet player in August 2002. Since

then, he served in the Infantry Center Band at Fort Benning, Georgia, the 8th Army Band in Seoul, South Korea, and the 1st Cavalry Division Band at Fort Hood, Texas. He has more than six years overseas experience, including a combat deployment in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Since 2013, Sergeant Purinton has served in the U.S. Army Field Band and is currently a tour coordinator for Six-String Soldiers.

“Six-String Soldiers officially formed in February 2015,” said Purinton. “They had been performing together about two or three years before that and were originally constituted as a rock band.”

Labeled as the Army's premiere rock band of volunteers, the band toured the country for approximately 100 days out of the year, performing at VA hospitals and veteran facilities. However, smaller facilities weren't suitable spaces for the heavy equipment of a rock band.

"We kind of formed as necessity," said Purinton. "We got out our acoustic guitars and a couple of drum sets here and there and started playing in smaller spaces for those who didn't have the opportunity to come out to our larger shows."

All band members are active-duty soldiers with a full-time mission to show appreciation for the support of the American public and their support for the American soldier.

"It's not just us that they are appreciating. It's the people deployed overseas, the men and women of the Armed Forces everywhere around the world that we represent."



"We all auditioned to get into Six-String Soldiers," said Staff Sergeant John Brandon Bolon, who plays guitar with the group. "It's a special assignment." Some band members came straight into the music field, he explained. Others didn't. The sound guy was a diesel mechanic on boats, the banjo player is field artillery and served as a supply sergeant.

“When I joined, I wanted to go to medical school to be a psychological specialist investigator. They found out that I had a musical background and asked me if I wanted to play in the band in Europe, so I tried out and I got into that gig.”

The military is like a microcosm of society, according to Bolon. “You have the infantry and combat arms, but you also have other soldiers that support them, from cooks to doctors to media people.” Most any career in the regular world can be found in the military. “We happened to be fortunate enough to be musicians in the military and it’s a special job. We are called special bandsmen.”

To promote the Six-String Soldiers band, shows, tour dates and video performances are posted on their Facebook page. One of the first videos posted was in February 2015 during a heavy snowstorm in the New England area where the band was touring.



“When one of the performances was cancelled due to weather, the guys went out to the snowbank by the hotel, which was about 10-feet high,” said Purinton. “They played ‘Here Comes the Sun.’ Everybody got a kick out of it and the local news did a story.” The video received around 9,000,000 views. “That was a good way to interact with the American public.”

Six-String Soldiers began as a side project, but took off because it resonated with people. The band has performed on

national TV and opened for John Fogarty, who is a veteran.

“I’ve been fortunate enough to perform for the Prince and Princess of Monaco,” said Bolon. “I’ve played with the Vice President of the United States in the living room of the Ambassador to Iraq in Bagdad. I’ve also played for a handful of soldiers out by the Syrian border.” To play for the soldiers, to eat with them and hang out with them, brings a little feeling of home, he added. “It’s for morale, but also for camaraderie. Being a part of it is amazing.”



Typically, veterans are the older generation, Vietnam and Gulf War Vets, so the band plays music the veterans listened to back in the day, like Creedence Clear Water Revival. Music is therapy to the soldiers, said Purinton. Some VA facilities started programs that tie art and music into rehabilitation. “In this program, you’re teaching someone to play guitar or playing and singing together.” It’s like how the arts help in early childhood development through building, enhancing and improving the brain and motor skills. “It works wonders.”

“We couldn’t do it without the public support and are so grateful and honored to serve you all,” said Bolon. “We are proud of what we do.”

Those interested in catching a performance or concert, check the Six-String Soldiers Facebook page.

Musical Gumbo with a Singular Voice

by Stephen Pitalo

Combining her Haitian heritage, New Orleans living, Cajun dancing, and growing up on the streets in Brooklyn, the bilingual multi-instrumentalist, cellist and singer known as Leyla McCalla is a world-class musician whose unique sound reflects her long road and her singular perspective. Her originals tap the depth of her experience and soul, and her interpretations of traditional songs traverse a river of emotions,

revealing a truly American experience and Leyla's struggles with and acceptance of her own cultural identity. Deeply influenced by traditional Creole, Cajun, and Haitian music, as well as by American jazz and folk, McCalla's earthy, elegant, soulful and witty compositions mine three centuries of history, while still feeling contemporary. McCalla has called the Crescent City her home for nearly ten years, soaking in all its influences and culture daily.

"It has been an extremely fertile and nurturing creative place for my music," McCalla said. "I fell in love with New Orleans culture and made many connections with my ancestral roots. I feel spiritually lifted by this beautiful city and

its amazing people.”



Leyla marinated in a gumbo of cultures from early on, having been born in New York City to Haitian immigrant parents.

“I first started playing the cello when I was eight years old through the public-school system in Maplewood, New Jersey, where I grew up,” McCalla said.

She relocated to Accra, Ghana for two years as a teen. She returned to the United States to study cello performance and chamber music at NYU; soon after, she found herself busking as a cellist on the streets of the French Quarter in New Orleans. Singing in French, Haitian Creole, and English, and playing the cello, tenor banjo and guitar allowed her to connect more to those areas of her heritage. Down the line, as cellist of the Grammy award-winning African American string band, the Carolina Chocolate Drops, she and bandmates Rhiannon Giddens and Dom Flemons found notoriety and followers. McCalla left the group in 2013 to pursue her solo career.

Leyla’s debut album, Vari-Colored Songs: A Tribute to Langston Hughes,

was named 2013’s Album of the Year by the London Sunday Times and Songlines. The next album, A Day for The Hunter, A Day for The Prey, continued to explore themes of social justice and included guests Rhiannon Giddens, Marc Ribot, Louis

Michot of Lost Bayou Ramblers and others.



2019 saw the release of Leyla's third solo album, The Capitalist Blues. With this record, Leyla processed the current political environment in her own way, with New Orleans Cajun, zydeco and Haitian jazz, and lyrics sung in English, French and Haitian Creole. She recruited a tight group of local musicians to tour the album at its best level.

"The current lineup of my band includes Shawn Myers on drums and percussion, Pete Olynciw on upright and electric bass, and Dave Hammer on guitar," McCalla said. "I've known my bandmates for years as gigging jazz musicians in New Orleans. I'd admired their playing from afar and when I decided to expand my sound on stage to match the dynamism of The Capitalist Blues, I invited them to tour with me. I've been able to really expand the dynamic range of my sound with these musicians who handle my songs with sensitivity and mindfulness."

She was also a collaborator on Songs of Our Native Daughters (Rhiannon Giddens, Amythyst Kiah, Leyla McCalla, and Allison Russell), via Smithsonian Folkways, a project that pulled influence from past sources to create a reinvented slave narrative. The project involved confronting safer views about America's history of slavery, racism, and misogyny from a powerful, modern black female perspective.

Breaking the Thermometer to Hide the Fever is McCalla's latest project, which tells the legacy of Radio Haiti, Haiti's first privately-owned Creole-speaking radio station, and the assassination of its owner through Leyla's own Haitian American viewpoint. Her own original compositions and arrangements of traditional Haitian songs combine in this performance, set to premiere next March at Duke University.

Picking her favorite songs in the set is a tough task for McCalla since they change all the time, she said.

"I think that the song 'Heavy as Lead' is one of the most important songs that I've written to date," McCalla said, "because it has affected my life and I see how prevalent and unspoken the problem is. The topic of lead poisoning in our children is something that I have become passionate about and feels most urgent. But when it comes to performing, the song I most enjoy singing is the Neville Marcano calypso song 'Money is King.' It speaks so cleverly to the problems that we face in society today – namely, our obsession with money and the value that we give it."

Watching the Grass Grow

by David Pugh

Brayden Williamson was just 16 years old when he started listening to my online radio show. The show is Mountain Bluegrass with David Pugh, every Sunday night, 9-11 pm est., live on the WWB. Worldwidebluegrass.com/listen.html.

Brayden, a huge fan of Larry Sparks, emailed me to say he had been listening to my show. I had just interviewed Larry Sparks 2 weeks before getting his email. Brayden told me he had just written and released his first single. He wanted me to listen to it.

The song he sent was, "Watching the Grass Grow." I thought it sounded pretty good, so I put it on my playlist. The kid, from Logan, West Virginia, was elated to hear me play it. I do a Top 12 Bluegrass chart, and countdown, every week. The requests started pouring in for Brayden's song. His single has now been on the Top 12 for 11 weeks. Plus, it hit number one two weeks ago, and it's on fire in the Bluegrass world.

I am proud of Brayden Williamson. He's a great young man, who loves God. He is multi-talented, and I think he will go far in his musical career. He has a brand-new gospel single that will debut on my show next Sunday night. I know it's going to do well for him.

Rich on Song

by Susan Marquez

It's hard to believe Dave Adkins grew up in a poor family in Pikeville, Kentucky. Today he's rich with great friends, family, a menagerie of animals, and a successful music

career. Not that Dave ever wanted for much.

"I had a great childhood. My parents did all they could for me, including buying me a \$100 Yamaha guitar when I was eight years old."

Dave says his mama tells the story of Dave singing from the time he could talk. "I wouldn't ask for something like a regular kid, I'd sing for it!" By the time he was in the sixth grade, he joined up with three of his friends to form a band that performed at schools and other venues in the area. "When we were juniors and seniors we were playing a hundred or more gigs a year!" Their big break came when they performed in a talent show at Dollywood when they were juniors in high school. "We won, and a higher-up from Dollywood was at the show and told us we should come audition." They did, and while not immediately picked up, they got a letter a while later that said there was a place for them at the theme park if they wanted to play there. "We spent two years at Dollywood, and during that time we learned a lot about the music business. They polished us up and got us ready to go out into the world."

After leaving Dollywood, Dave did some solo country shows and even performed with a rock band in the Chicago area before leaving music altogether. "I was done at the time, and ready to move on with my life." In September 2008, Dave's life changed when he got married to a woman who supported his dream. She had two daughters, now 21 and 25. "Both are wonderful girls." He now has a three-year-old step-granddaughter whom he loves dearly. In 2010, with the encouragement from his wife, Dave returned to the music world, and to his bluegrass roots. He formed the group Dave Adkins & Republik Steele. In just three years, he won a Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music of America (SPBGMA) nomination as Male Vocalist of the Year in the Contemporary category. Many other nominations and awards have

followed.

“The only one I really see when not on tour is Mitchell. Our wives are really close friends.”

In addition to touring and recording, Dave loves performing on the Ernie Evans bluegrass cruise. We went to the Bahamas last year, and we’re going again in January, but in 2019 we are going to Cozumel, and I’m really looking forward to that!” He also takes part in a big bluegrass weekend each November in Breaks Interstate Park. “We did our first show November 3 and it sold out. We thought if 100 people came, it would be a win, but we sold 300 tickets.” The Dave Adkins Band shares the stage with acts like Ralph Stanley Jr. and Blue Highway. “We’ll be doing it again on November 10, 2018!”



After that show, things start winding down for the year and Dave’s thoughts turn to the holidays at his home on the side of a mountain in Elkhorn City, Kentucky. “The kids come home, and on Christmas Eve we go to my mama’s house, then to my wife’s mama’s house, then we wake up at home, where I love to play Santa Claus. I feel so blessed because when I was growing up, a good meal at Christmas was a big deal. We didn’t have many presents. But that didn’t matter—I felt like the luckiest kid alive.”

Dave Adkins Music

David Church

by Emerald Butler

He's been called the most requested artist on RFD-TV,

and he gained that title with his tribute to classic country music and the legendary Hank Williams. David Church performs a collection of material from Hank songs to his own originals: on TV and in person. He's recorded two albums, and he shares the music from both as he tours and performs across the country with his wife Teri Lisa.

In the '90s he toured with a Bluegrass group called Open Highway.

"Bluegrass is very important in my life," David shared. "I love the music and have the utmost respect for the entertainers and pioneers of the music." However, as time went by, David found that his country roots bled through. "My sound, even in bluegrass, was leaning more into what I call Country Grass sound...as more people heard it they really wanted more of the country thing," David shared.

David grew up on Classic Country and Bluegrass music.

In the '90s he toured with a Bluegrass group called Open Highway. "Bluegrass is very important in my life," David shared. "I love the music and have the utmost respect for the entertainers and pioneers of the music." However, as time went by, David found that his country roots bled through. "My sound, even in bluegrass, was leaning more into what I call Country Grass sound...as more people heard it they really wanted more of the country thing," David shared.





David Church put together his first Hank Williams tribute show in 2002.

“I don’t call it impersonations,” he stated. “I know I’m not Hank and never will be. We just try to recapture his music and his vocal style.”

Though in the beginning, David said that he was hesitant to do so. “I never set out to do that. I knew a lot of other tribute artists that had a hard time getting their own music out there after they started doing it. Every time we would do a show out somewhere people would request one of Hanks songs, and it created a buzz that people really wanted to hear.”

Shortly after his first tribute show, CMT found out about this buzz. In 2003, there was a commemoration for Hank Williams’ passing in Montgomery, Alabama, and David was invited to do a show for the event. David got to meet a lot of Hank’s family and friends that were still living. He also got to meet steel guitar legend and member of Hank’s band The Drifting Cowboys, Don Helms, who became a good friend of David’s. In March of 2003, they went into the studio and recorded the tribute album “A Legend Froze in Time”.

The other boost in David’s career came with the success he had on RFD-TV.

It all began with a show that was recorded in a little

theater called the Midwest Country music theater in Sandstone, Minnesota. The theater was beginning a new relationship with RFD-TV, a station that David says was primarily focusing on farming, cows, and other agricultural content. "When the Midwest Country show got on there it just went wild," David informed. "At one time, just a few years ago, the music was about 57% of RFD's viewership." David Church still records shows for RFD-TV, but he also shares his music around the country with live performances.

"I'm proud of being able to be a little part of keeping the tradition alive."

He still carries on this tradition and has done so lately while on tour. Over the past couple of months, David has been on tour in the south. He also shared that he is considering a new recording project soon that might include some Bluegrass. Hank Williams Jr. sang about family tradition. Though that song may be more about the addictions and struggles of the singer and his father, David Church finds the best in the music and the entertainers, so no matter what exact genre or tribute, you won't go wrong with going to Church.



Rate this feature!

-
-
-
-
-

Boucher Guitars

By Susan Marquez

From the deep woods of the Appalachian Mountains, in the far northern reaches of Quebec, a special red spruce grows. A hybrid blend of black and white spruce, the density-to-lightness ratio of the Picea Rubens is such that it is known worldwide for its harmonic qualities. "Our little village of Berthier-sur-Mer is actually surrounded by red spruce," says Robin Boucher. "Many bluegrass artists now know that it is the best spruce species for making bluegrass guitars."

Boucher comes from a guitar-building family.

"My Uncle Norman was the founder of Norman Guitars, the first acoustic guitar company in Canada." He started the company in 1969, and young Boucher first toured the guitar factory when he was ten years old. "I remember it like it was yesterday. When I was 11 years old, my uncle let me put a top knot on one of his guitars. That's where my passion for making guitars came from."



Boucher Guitars

It was also at age 11 that Boucher learned to play the guitar. He took it very seriously, practicing whenever he could. From 1983 to 1987, he earned his income solely from playing the guitar. "I played a lot of styles of music, including country, folk, rock-n-roll and Top 40." Boucher explains that his father played the banjo and steel guitar. "I grew up listening to country and bluegrass."

In 2005, Boucher followed in his uncle's footsteps and founded Boucher Guitars.

He knew that he would utilize the rare red spruce that grew so abundantly in the area where he lived. "I source the wood from various saw mills and lumber yards. I even have farmers who contact me directly, because they understand that I buy large lots of wood at a time."

The wood grows in Appalachian regions from Virginia to New York, Vermont to Maine and into Canada in New Brunswick and into Nova Scotia. "It grows exclusively in the Appalachian Mountains," says Boucher. "It's sometimes called Adirondack spruce, because it grows in the Adirondacks, which are in the middle of the Appalachians. Boucher sources other woods as well, including exotic rosewood, cocobolo and bubinga in

addition to South American mahogany, koa and western Canadian bigleaf maple.

Boucher developed his goose series that began with the studio goose series. About that time, he got a call from a guy in Ft. Kent, Maine named Toby Saucier. Saucier played with a bluegrass band called Blistered Fingers. "Toby found us in a roundabout way," laughs Boucher. "He received a damage bass amplifier from Chicago Music Exchange. In communicating with them about the amplifier, which was quickly replaced to Toby's satisfaction, Toby noticed on the Chicago Music Exchange website that they sold Boucher guitars. He had never heard of us, but his wife's maiden name was Boucher. I invited him up to tour our factory, along with his band. I asked them to bring their instruments. They played for about an hour, then I had them play a few more songs on our guitars. After two or three chords, they were amazed. We've developed a great relationship over the years, and I consider Toby and his wife, Jennifer, to be good friends. It was after that visit that I created the Bluegrass Goose series. Before meeting Toby, I was not in the bluegrass market. Now 35 to 40 percent of products we sell are for bluegrass."

The Bluegrass Goose series crafted and engineered to meet the high standards of bluegrass guitarists

both on stage and in the studio, according to Boucher. "Our guitars are very 'present' among the other bluegrass instruments. The sound spectrum on the Bluegrass Goose includes rich low ends, driving mids and beefy highs."



Boucher Guitars Studio Escrito Goose www.12fret.com

Boucher says his company makes 400 guitars a year and supplies 20,000 acoustic guitar tops to other guitar manufacturers. "We have 14 employees, with four of them dedicated to making acoustic tops." The word about Boucher guitars spread like wildfire after the company was named the Backer Best of Show in the guitar category at the 2014 National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) show.

"I like the bluegrass music style," says Boucher. "And I like the bluegrass community. They are very respectful. It's the only music that can be played outside and really heard, because the people in the audience respect the musicians and they want to really listen to the music."

BREAKOUT BOX:

<https://boucherguitars.com/>

When Toby Saucier, a bass player in a bluegrass band in northern Maine, stumbled across Boucher Guitars on a musical supply website, he took a second look. His wife's maiden name was Boucher. He made a call to Robin Boucher, the company's owner, and asked if he and his band could come tour the factory. "We were welcomed with open arms, like we had been friends all our lives," says Saucier. "We were all hooked," laughs Saucier. "The playability is butter smooth. A Boucher

can stand up to any guitar. Now we eat, drink and sleep Boucher. Between all of us, we have 11 Bouchers. The quality and sound are second to none. There's no doubt in my mind that the Lord lined it up for Robin and me to meet. We've become great friends, and he has become a life-long bluegrass fan.

Bluegrass Ridge

Back in the day, the place to watch music videos was MTV, a network providing a place for artists to air their concept videos instead of just performance clips. Those videos helped with the band's marketing efforts by giving fans a glimpse into the band's persona. Fans couldn't get enough of Pat Benatar, Rod Stewart, Todd Rundgren, Styx, REO Speedwagon and The Who. People who loved the artists and wanted to listen to them loved watching their videos.



Country music jumped on board with CMT and soon fans were watching their favorite country music artists from the comfort of their living rooms. Videos became a proven value and found a niche for both artists and viewers.

And while MTV, CMT and GAC did well with videos,

today they don't run them much like they did in the past. Now there's Bluegrass Ridge TV, the show that celebrates all things bluegrass. Jeff Mosely, president of CJM Productions out of Nashville, started the show in the early 2000s. "God guided me through the process," says Mosely. "I started with country music, then Gospel, then classic country and bluegrass videos. I realized there weren't many outlets for bluegrass artists to air their videos."

At one time Mosely owned a large production studio in the Nashville area, and the shows he created were taped in there. "It was a big operation, but times have changed," says Mosely, who explains that at one time he spent \$350 a week to ship tapes to overseas markets. "Now they are delivered via the internet! We send five shows a week to New Zealand and Australia for free. Isn't technology great?"

As with most great things, Bluegrass Ridge has evolved since its start.

Once hosted by different artists each week, the weekly half-hour program is now permanently hosted by the dynamic and award-winning bluegrass duo Nu-Blu. The husband-and-wife duo of Daniel and Carolyn Routh, who hail from Silver City, North Carolina, are the heart and soul of Nu-Blu and they are naturals at hosting a television show. The first two episodes they hosted were shot on location at the Station Inn in Nashville. Fans were treated to a glimpse inside the duo's life and music, getting to know them on a more personal level. "We are extremely excited about Daniel and Carolyn as the permanent hosts of Bluegrass Ridge," says Mosely, who serves as the show's executive producer. "They had guest-hosted a few times and our viewers loved them. They are such a down-to-earth couple. It was a no-brainer to hire them as the permanent host."

Mosely feels that Nu-Blu's love and passion for bluegrass

music elevates the show to another level. "Our tradition of bringing great bluegrass music videos and artist interviews to our viewers remains the same," says Mosely. This love and passion, as well as the duo's relationship with fellow bluegrass artists brings an insider-depth to the show." Daniel says he looks forward to making more and stronger friendships with the artists he and Carolyn interview.

The show's home base is Parlor Recording studio on Music Row in Nashville.

"It showcases the studio, explains Mosely, "while giving viewers a glimpse into a real recording studio, a place where most of them would not normally have a chance to see, which brings a higher level of excitement to the show than it would have were it set in a TV studio. We bring artists into the conference room for interviews." Daniel and Carolyn will also interview artists on the road as they travel to festivals and concerts with their own act. "Daniel is so multi-faceted," Mosley says. "He is a great marketing guy, and he's added a strong social media component that has taken Bluegrass Ridge to a higher level."

The weekly half-hour program is jam-packed with music videos by some of today's bluegrass music's biggest acts, including The Grascals, Dailey and Vincent, the Roys, Rhonda Vincent, Ricky Skaggs and more. But what makes the show so special is the behind-the-scenes views of making the music videos and the artist interviews. The show allows viewers to get a rare first-hand look at the bluegrass genre that keeps getting hotter.

"We reach viewers in sixteen million homes in the United States, as well as in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and in the Cayman Islands," explains Mosley. The show can be accessed via Roku on Heartland TV, on The Family Channel, Keep It Country, AMG TV (northeast United

States), and also on Keep It Country in the U.K., Cayman 27 and Country TV in the Cayman Islands.

The recording studio setting means Mosely no longer needs a large television studio, and the show's shooters and editors all work independently, which eliminates the need for a large staff. "The great thing about TV is that it's not going away," says Mosely. "The way we create content is changing, and the way people watch it is changing. We are proud to deliver quality content for viewers to enjoy."

Check out Bluegrass Ridge on Heartland TV

<http://www.watchheartlandtv.com/>

Check out Nu-Blu:

<http://www.nu-blu.com/>