

# Classically Trained, Bluegrass Bred

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by Shelby C. Berry

Since 1891, Carnegie Hall has opened its doors and hosted some of the most extraordinary legends, including one nine-year-old bluegrass musician, Maxwell Brown.

*“I don’t think anything really made me pursue music,” said Maxwell. “I was always stuck on music, and my parents knew that I needed to get an instrument. I started with the classical violin and later began playing the fiddle.” The performing part of bluegrass and old-time music is his favorite,” explained Maxwell. “It is much freer than classical. That’s not a bad thing for classical, but I love having the freedom to improvise.”*



First picking up an instrument at three years old, Maxwell tapped his toys like instruments and was mesmerized by music which he feels has become a second language for him. In fiddle class at the Suzuki Academy of Music School of Delaware, Maxwell learned to play Irish style music on the fiddle. But his first morsel of bluegrass was in a kid's academy at the Delaware Valley Bluegrass Festival. There, he met Andrew Vogts, his fiddle teacher, who introduced Maxwell to some influential people—like the manager of The Beach Boys.

*“Opening up for The Beach Boys has probably been my favorite people to open for!” said Maxwell. “My fiddle teacher got me a gig at The Beach Boys’ manager’s house, and that led to me getting to open up for them. I didn’t know who they were then, but I definitely do now!”*

In addition to opening for The Beach Boys at Wilmington

Delaware's Grand Opera House, Maxwell opened for Trout Fishing in America at Reading PA's Miller Center for the Arts, bluegrass legends Del McCoury and David Grisman, and other notable performances.

"The Beach Boys were so memorable, but I loved opening up for Trout Fishing in America. I even got to sing a song on-stage with them at their show!" said Maxwell.





Maxwell has won countless awards and competitions. His Carnegie Hall performance happened after he won a contest. "When I heard that I was going to play there, it was just... wow. It motivated me. It was a great experience. I've since performed classical music there a few times, and I've performed fiddle music once. The crowd was kind of blown away! They had never heard fiddle music in there!"

Maxwell is also the recent Grand Champion at Pennsylvania's Lyons Fiddle Festival, becoming the youngest to ever win that title. "This meant so much to me!" said Maxwell. "It was a very big honor. I was blown away by it! It sounded like other

people were too.”

As a prominent member of Tomorrow’s Bluegrass Stars, Maxwell has been involved in multiple concerts with the group, including the spring online bluegrass festival hosted by TBS.



*“TBS has been a great motivator. Being a part of TBS has been a great experience so far, and I’ve excelled a lot with them.”*

Sparks will continue to fly from this little ball of fire’s fiddle, igniting the way for his blazing future in bluegrass.