



Fiddlin' Around

Volume 12, Number 2

www.salinefiddlers.com

Winter 2006

Hometown Concert Series

Newgrass artist Sam Bush to highlight February show

Newgrass? Actually an old term, it refers to taking bluegrass and one's musical experiences and making the resulting music one's own. Contemporary bluegrass. So was the name of Sam Bush's band in the 1970's, Newgrass Revival. The term has been largely ignored by bluegrass musicians since and Sam still does his own thing, nowadays freely blending bluegrass, jazz, pop, reggae and more.

The Saline Fiddlers proudly announce their 12th Annual Winter Hometown Concert, featuring guest artist Sam Bush, February 3, 2006, 7:30 p.m. at the Ellen A. Ewing Performing Arts Center at Saline High School.

Headlining the evening's concert is fiddler and mandolinist Sam Bush, one of acoustic music's great innovators and consummate collaborators. Critics across the country describe Bush's work as stunning, flawless, showy perfection, and superb. Having been honored with three Grammy Awards for his role in projects by Emmylou Harris, Bela Fleck, and the soundtrack for "O Brother, Where Art Thou?", Bush has graced the stage with superstars



February guest artist Sam Bush

like Garth Brooks and Alabama. Other greats—Alison Krauss, Vince Gill, and Leo Kottke—refer to him as their hero, one of the gifted ones, and mandolin with an attitude!

The Saline Fiddlers will kick off the concert with old audience favorites and new pieces. The Fiddlers, all Saline High School students, astound audiences with their remarkable stage presence. They present an upbeat, lively show of music, song and dance from the traditions of American folk fiddle,

bluegrass, western swing

and Celtic music. Their growing repertoire includes

many pieces composed or arranged by an exceptionally talented artistic team, headed up by Artistic Director Ben Culver. Listen for "Leaving Liverpool", arranged by senior Fiddler Alex, and the kids' new favorite, "Catharsis," as well as the popular "Blackberry Blossom" and "Orange Blossom Special."

Tickets for the Hometown Concert range from \$10 to \$30. Look to the box at left for how to get your tickets.

The Hometown Concert will be one night only: Friday, February 3 at 7:30 pm. Tickets are going fast. Please call 1-866-257-5333 or visit www.salinefiddlers.com to get your tickets today!

Artistically Speaking

Culver's musical upbringing, Part II

Not many of us have heard the whole story of how Artistic Director Ben Culver got his start in music, so we've asked him to describe his musical beginnings. Ben related his experience through fifth grade in the Fall 2005 issue of Fiddlin' Around. He told how, as the son of two accomplished musicians, he began studying violin when he was three years old and eventually studied with some top-notch instructors and performers. In this issue Ben picks up the story from elementary school and goes on to tell of his start into fiddling.

Ben: Until eighth grade, I enjoyed being successful with playing, but the music wasn't really a part of me. Then around my junior year of high school, after many failed attempts to quit (thanks Dad!), I found an old tape from the Calgary Fiddlers and started to pick up the tunes. I found that my years of Suzuki training had helped hone my skill at playing by ear, and I was energized! I loved playing and could pick things up faster than either of my parents (my mom is an elementary music teacher and my dad played viola in the Detroit Symphony and is a music education professor at the University of Michigan), which of course was a cool feeling for a teenage guy!

It was around that time that I received a call from Bob Phillips, the orchestra director in Saline, who was looking for another violinist for his new fiddling program. He said he had a big gig in Chicago at a music education convention and that I had



Ben Culver plays with the Fiddlers at the Michigan State Fair last summer. Nick is on guitar at right.

a week to learn the music if I wanted to get involved. I gave the music a listen and picked it up right away, and that started my involvement in the Saline Fiddlers Philharmonic.

After graduating from high school, I continued my education by enrolling in the Performance Arts Technology program at U of M (still studying with Prof. Shipps), but after a year I changed trajectories and began working to earn my Music Education degree. By this time I was studying classical violin technique, but working more in folk music and improvisation (a completely new area for Prof. Shipps - he was very kind to allow and facilitate my interests).

Studying in Ann Arbor allowed me to continue my work with the Fiddlers (as Music Ed Intern and then Assistant Director) and connected me with the thriving performance culture in which I worked as a production and sound engineer through college.

I played in every band I could, played with the University Orchestras, played several sessions and on many recordings, worked as a sound engineer at night, played with the Fiddlers, and worked to find time to practice and do homework. By the time I graduated, I was honored to be selected as the featured graduate performer at the U of M School of Music.

After student teaching in Saline, I took a position in 2000 with the schools as an orchestra teacher and have continued my work with students and fiddling since.

Fiddlin' Around is the official newsletter of the
Saline Fiddlers.

We publish four times yearly, or as needed.

Jen Lahnala, Editor.

Photos courtesy of loving Fiddler families.

Will Warner, Executive Director

www.salinefiddlers.com

Meet the new Fiddlers

We are proud to present the 2005-2006 addition of new Fiddlers. This is a talented group! Meet five of our new Fiddlers here. See how to meet the other four below.

By Kristen, senior violist

Evi

Evi started high school this year, and joins the Fiddlers on violin. Evi was inspired by an amazing violin concert she saw in the fall



of third grade. After trying out the piano and the flute, she decided to stick with violin.

Evi says she wanted to join Fiddlers because, "I saw how much fun it would be to become friends with a bunch of great musicians and travel around the country performing." Evi's favorite song is Catharsis, and favorite part of Fiddlers is touring. Evi recognizes that Fiddlers is hard work as

(Please see Evi, page 4)

Ian

Ian joined the ranks of student technician Pat and Technical Director Dan Klos as a member of the Saline Fiddler Tech Crew, where his prime instrument is the Midas Venice 320 sound-board. After successfully passing the first



ever student tech audition, Ian has spent his many hours in Fiddlers not learning notes, but instead laboring over broken cords and tuning "the system". Ian has learned much about the workings of the Fiddlers' huge, complicated sound system. While Ian takes his responsibilities of a technical member of the group seriously, he has, on occasion, been known to send goofy messages through the clear com to the front of house technicians during gigs.

Alex

Alex, entering high school as part of the freshman class this past fall, plays paintball in his free time, and, as a career choice, wishes to



become part of the marines. In keeping with the trend of "hard core," he joined the Saline Fiddlers on violin after auditioning last February. After seeing a Hometown Show in the fifth

(Please see Alex, page 4)

You can read about four more new Fiddlers at our website, www.salinefiddlers.com. Click on **News** on the menu bar, then on **Newsletter** on the left side of the page. They are featured in the Fall 2005 issue of *Fiddlin' Around*.

Hannah

Hannah began playing the violin at the ripe old age of five, after she saw the violin on Sesame Street. Near that time, Hannah also saw a Fiddlers concert, when her current teacher, Sarah Phillips, was in the group.



Hannah enjoys visiting new places with Fiddlers and meeting new people. She likes "Mason's Ape Ron" and "Hungry Man #1," and is surprised at how easy it was to make friends in the group.

Hannah also loves soccer, shopping, listening to music, and hanging out with friends. Perhaps influenced by her love of shopping and art, Hannah hopes to become a fashion designer or an architect, studying at UCLA or U of M.

Andrew

Originally, Andrew wanted to join "Creative Arts" (the fifth grade version of choir) when he was asked to choose an instru-



(Please see Andrew, page 4)



Untangling

During the Pontiac Arts, Beats and Eats Festival in September, the Fiddlers had only minutes to get everything off the stage and so had to carry everything without even unplugging the cords! The tangle was "impressive," according to Gig Manager Doug Rhine. Pictured are Kelsey, Nick and Andrew.

Meet the new Fiddlers

Evi

(Continued from page 3)

well. She was surprised at how much work it takes to memorize music and to perform it in front of an audience, and states that the group is very hardworking.

In addition to Fiddlers, Evi is a member of the cross country team, rides horses, and is receiving Confirmation at her church this year. She enjoys shopping, writing, and hanging out with friends.

Alex

(Continued from page 3)

grade, Alex knew this was what he wanted to do. He started taking lessons with Cori Smith in sixth grade and now takes lessons from Fiddler Artistic Director himself, Ben Culver.

While admitting that Fiddlers is more work than he'd previously thought, Alex has enjoyed meeting the people involved in the Saline Fiddlers and playing his favorite tune "Mason's Ape Ron." Alex used to play the drums, but then decided to stop to pursue violin. We're glad he did!

Upcoming Public Events

- ♫ December 31: **First Night[®] Cadillac 2006**
Performances at 7:00 and 10:00 pm, Cadillac High School, 400 Linden Street, Cadillac, Michigan. More info at:
www.cadillacmichigan.com/firstnight
- ♫ January 7: **A Benefit for The Ark with the RDF Boys**, 8:00 pm, 316 S. Main, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$13.50. More info at:
www.theark.org
- ♫ February 3: **12th Annual Winter Home-town Concert with Sam Bush**, 7:30 pm, Saline High School's Ellen Ewing Performing Arts Center.
- ♫ July 21: **Mayville Sunflower Festival**, Mayville, MI
- ♫ August 12: **Milford Memories Summer Festival**, Milford, MI

For bookings call: 1-866-257-5333

**Check our website for updates:
www.salinefiddlers.com**

Andrew

(Continued from page 3)

ment in fifth grade. In the end, he decided to join orchestra and this past year has joined the Fiddlers on what he dubs "the coolest instrument" (which is, of course, the viola). Andrew has enjoyed Fiddlers because it lets him "be part of the action" and play fun and challenging music, as well as meeting people in different grades.

Outside of Fiddlers, Andrew participates in a few clubs, including (but not limited to, there wasn't enough room) Destination Imagination, tennis, Future Leaders, coaching and refereeing soccer, tutoring younger students in math and reading, being a member of the Saline Youth Council, and Model UN. In his spare time, Andrew can be found biking, cooking, sleeping, or going on the computer.

Andrew has many career ideas in mind, such as becoming an entrepreneur (hopefully to pursue something with food), and architect, or biochemist/pharmacologist. Look for his senior profile in 2009 for an update.

Tidbits on Tibbets

By Brian, senior Dobro guitarist

How many times do The Saline Fiddlers get a chance to perform at an old, rickety, and probably haunted, opera house? A lot actually, but none as fun and beautiful as the Tibbets Opera House.

The theatre was built in 1882 in Coldwater, Michigan. It comfortably seats about 500 people with an almost perfect acoustic experience. The Tibbets Opera Foundation is currently undertaking many restoration projects. They announced on the day of our performance that they had just completed a "phase 5" of the restoration project and are almost ready to continue onto "phase 6". Pretty "phasy".

Tibbets has put on thousands and thousands of performances throughout its existence. It has hosted many great musical and comical artists, local and school events, and also many famous professional musicals.

But the big question is, is it haunted? Having music as our profession, we are not experienced in the field of the "paranormal". However, when I was backstage and going up the staircase to the second level changing rooms, I couldn't help but get a creepy feeling that something was there. "I'm not scared or any-

thing, I just feel...I just have a strange feeling as I'm going up those stairs," claimed a volunteer parent who was with us.

Nonetheless, despite the general population's premature sixth sense, there is no reason you shouldn't visit Tibbets Opera House. The stage is spacious, the seating is comfortable, and our hosts were very kind. We had a really great show and a wonderful audience. I hope to play there again soon before I graduate.



Playing in the front row at the Tibbets Opera House are Casey, David, Andrew, Alex, Aubrey, Marie, and Brian on dobro. In the background is Jacob.

CD in the Making

By Brian

It's about that time again. The trend is for the Fiddlers to record our music about every two years. Well, "The Sky's the Limit"* was made almost exactly two years ago. And that's not the only reason we're making a new CD. We've learned many new songs since then, like "Hungry Man #1", "Hoe-down From 'Rodeo'", and many, many others. We have also added a drummer to the ensemble to get a fuller sound. There will most likely be some older songs rerecorded with the drums.

We can't tell you much about the new CD right now. As students, all we know is we will be recording a lot of new songs. We're all looking forward to this upcoming event in January because we all leave a little behind in Fiddlers when we graduate. We'll always be remembered...in the form of a CD.

*If you didn't get your copy of "The Sky's the Limit", go to the website right now, www.salinefiddlers.com, and get one!

You can view past issues of *Fiddlin' Around* or sign up to receive your issue by email at our website!

Sam Bush

In concert with the

Saline Fiddlers

Friday, February 3, 7:30 pm

Saline High School.

Get tickets from the website,
salinefiddlers.com,

Or by calling
1-866-257-5333



SALINE
Fiddlers

Will Warner, Executive Director
Ben Culver, Artistic Director
Doug Rhine, Event Manager
Lynda Shea, Administrative Manager
Dan Klos, Technical Director

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Once again, Fiddler dads going beyond the call of duty, this time pushing a stuck tour bus out of a snowy divot on the way to Cadillac, Michigan for the First Night celebration on New Year's Eve. Once they got all the Fiddlers off the bus, they managed to get the bus back on the road. Yay, dads!



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The Saline Fiddlers

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To:

