

The Standard-Bearer of Original Arkansas Bluegrass

RUNAWAY PLANET



www.RunawayPlanet.net * Bookings/Inquiries: booking@runawayplanet.net / 501-960-9609

A traditionally based bluegrass band with modern lyrics? Check.

Tight, three-part vocal harmonies, highly skilled instrumentation with rock, folk and jazz influences? Check.

Songs soaked in longing, loss and heartache, featuring lyrics that tell stories ranging from tales of murderous revenge to humorous, tongue-in-cheek "I told you so's" to fond memories of Grandpa's farm? Check.

Runaway Planet, a four-piece acoustic band based in Little Rock, Arkansas, has a lot to offer, and brings over a decade of experience as a band, having played their first show together in the fall of 2001.

The group has been compared to Old Crow Medicine Show, Trampled By Turtles, The Avett Brothers, Yonder Mountain String Band and others for their modern spin on the traditional bluegrass sound.

Runaway Planet's members say their style and sound have been heavily influenced by the found-



ing fathers of bluegrass as well as the likes of The Seldom Scene, Old and In The Way, New Grass Revival and Old Crow Medicine Show.

With two full-length albums under their belt, many accolades, high-profile appearances at major festivals and events such as South By Southwest and the opening of

the Clinton Presidential Library, as well as internationally broadcast radio and television appearances, Runaway Planet offers a level of professionalism and talent unparalleled among bands in the state of Arkansas.

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RUNAWAY PLANET: THE BASICS

Compared To: Yonder Mountain String Band; Avett Brothers; Keller and the Keels; Del McCoury Band; the Steeldrivers; Trampled By Turtles; Old Crow Medicine Show.

Influences: Bill Monroe; Flatt & Scruggs; The Seldom Scene; New Grass Revival; Old Crow Medicine Show

What's Playing In Their Van: Porcupine Tree; Magma; Django Reinhardt; The Grateful Dead; Brave Combo

What They Perform: Originals and covers including everything from the traditional (Bill Monroe and Flatt & Scruggs classics and Old Crow's "Wagon Wheel") to The Beatles, Pink Floyd and even the Violent Femmes. Originals feature everything from story-songs about revenge for love gone wrong to childhood memories of farming with Grandpa.

What To Expect at Their Shows: A rousing, danceable performance featuring uncompromising musicianship, gripping vocal harmonies and songs that keep toes tapping and hands clapping. While Runaway Planet's members are well-versed in many genres, their love of traditional American string band music is showcased by their depth of talent, producing a hard-driving bluegrass performance that inspires audience members of all ages to get up and move.

Have Played With: The Gourds, Derek Trucks Band, Ricky Skaggs, Del McCoury Band and Sam Bush, among many other regional and national acts.

Accolades: Winner of the Arkansas Times Musicians Showcase (2002); Runner-up in Arkansas Acoustic Festival (2002); Member of Arkansas Arts on Tour (on their "notable artist" roster for the Arkansas Arts Council program).

Major Live Performances: Arkansasongs Music Festival;

Mulberry Mountain Harvest Fest; Riverfest (five times); South by Southwest Music Conference in Austin, Texas (2005); Opening ceremonies for Clinton Presidential Center and Library.

Major Broadcast

Performances: Appeared on and helped produce AETN's documentary of the First Annual Arkansas Acoustic Festival; state-wide televised programs include "Good Morning Arkansas," "On The Front Row" for PBS (2012); performed live on National Public Radio for Michael Feldman's "Whad'Ya Know?" (2008); music featured on NPR's "Car Talk" program with hosts Click and Clack; and performed on NPR's Michael Jonathan's "WoodSong's Old-Time Radio Hour," (2008) broadcast to millions around the world.

What the Media Says:

"Runaway Planet is the virtuoso bluegrass quartet that defies the hillbilly image that the genre all too often begets." — Arkansas Times

MEET RUNAWAY PLANET'S MEMBERS

Runaway Planet is made up of three founding members: Greg Alexander, Steve Brauer and Michael Proveaux. The band also includes a fourth guest member on mandolin, a spot that is now being filled regularly by Matt Stone. Here's an introduction to each member, their musical influences and backgrounds, and how they came to be bluegrass musicians. Enjoy!

GREG ALEXANDER

The lead singer and acoustic guitarist, Greg Alexander also is the primary songwriter for the group. Alexander recalls that The Beatles — and a version of "Octopus's Garden" — started it all for him as a child, and he began acquiring records soon after falling in love with

the Fab Four, as well as with the vocal harmonies of the Beach Boys and Three Dog Night.

Other early influences — besides his parents' country and blues records — included a wide range of artists, from Elvis to Hank Williams Jr., Rick James to Ozzy Osbourne, and in his teen years, even punk rockers like the Sex



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Pistols and The Clash.

It wasn't until his 20s that the talented longtime singer — he NEVER misses a note, whether singing lead or backup vocals, which depends on the song being played — and burgeoning bass and acoustic guitarist would discover a penchant for bluegrass and jambands like the more folksy Grateful Dead, the Allman Brothers, Marshal Tucker Band, and a then-young band called Widespread Panic.

More recently, Alexander says his biggest influences have included Peter Rowan, the Dead, Railroad Earth, Bob Dylan and Old Crow Medicine Show.

All these influences are reflected in his songwriting for Runaway Planet. A major theme of his songs? Loss.

"It's like blues to me, in the sense that it feels good to sing about the thing that makes you feel bad," Alexander explains. "Funny, huh? I love the religious numbers, too. They just seem to make everyone in the audience feel good."

Other favorite songs that Runaway Planet performs include the original tune "Wrong," written about Alexander's last relationship. "It was over and yet she kept popping into my life," he recalls. "And when a song comes together just right, it seems to embody all those real emotions that we all feel at some time, and it takes you back to that moment. That is real."

Yes, that is real, and that's what good music is all about: Human emotion. And as any Runaway Planet fan will tell you, Alexander and his crew are skilled at reflecting the human experience in the most fun way possible, with upbeat rhythms and melodies that make you want to sing and dance along.

STEVE BRAUER

Banjo player and vocalist Steve Brauer grew up to the sounds his father's large music collection that included everything from Cat Stevens, Simon & Garfunkel, Creedence Clearwater Revival, The Beatles, Linda Ronstadt and Flatt & Scruggs to The Stones and The Yardbirds and even Clint Eastwood's "Spaghetti Western"

soundtracks and "the absolute worst of his collection": Slim Whitman's yodeling records, Brauer recalls.

His own musical tastes — and his guitar and singing skills, beginning with his father's instruction around age 10 — developed to the likes of Pink Floyd, Led Zepelin, Emerson Lake & Palmer, Yes, The Doors, U2, The



Violent Femmes, King Crimson, The Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix, Brave Combo and even classical giants like Mozart, Beethoven and Bach.

More recently, Brauer's musical influences have included Django Reinhardt, Samla Mammás Manna, Bill Keith, Premiata Forneria Marconi, Magma, Gong and Porcupine Tree. Brauer's 2011 solo release "Still Life With Guitar And Banjo" showcases arrangements by J.S. Bach, Scott Joplin, Villa-Lobos and more.

This wide variety in musical tastes could help explain why Brauer has been described as a banjo virtuoso and why his banjo handiwork has been featured on two albums by The Salty Dogs, country music veterans also based in Little Rock who have regularly shared the stage with Runaway Planet for the better part of a decade.

Brauer's banjo lines are anything but traditional, often borrowing from jazz melodies and other genres that are not typically heard on his instrument, he says.

"I am attracted to music with intricate melody lines, unconventional harmonies and unusual chord progressions. I want to do things on the banjo that other banjo players haven't done yet," Brauer explains.

"I try not to think like a **bluegrass** musician when I perform on banjo, but it's difficult because so much of the sound of the instrument is linked to bluegrass. So doing anything different at this point in the history of the banjo is going to be a challenge. But that's one of the things I like most about playing original music: the challenge."

MICHAEL PROVEAUX

Runaway Planet bassist and vocalist Michael Proveaux plays the upright bass with a fiery passion unlike anything you've likely ever seen, bouncing along with every note he picks, as his fans well know.

But when he sings lead on songs such as Johnny Cash's "Delia," Proveaux's voice is smooth as milk, with a broad range and a tonal quality reminiscent of the high lonesome sound common among great bluegrass vocalists.

Like his bandmates, Proveaux grew up on the classic rock greats, and in fifth grade acquired his own cassette recorder, which he recalls using to tape his favorites off the radio: Styx, Fleetwood Mac, J. Geils and others. The hit-makers of the 1980s ruled his musical collection throughout high school, and in college, he says, Pink Floyd was his biggest musical influence.



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The 1990s brought him new alternative and progressive rock tastes and favorites, and it wasn't until around 2000 when he finally got "bit by the bluegrass bug". That same year he began playing songs from Old and In The Way and Nitty Gritty Dirt Band who were responsible for luring him into the bluegrass world. He also began dressing up some of his original songs in bluegrass garb probably, he notes, as they should've been in the first place.

It so happens that this also marked the first year Proveaux ever played bass, though he'd been playing acoustic guitar for about six years. His first bass was a Martin B1 acoustic bass guitar, but he was really after a "truer" bluegrass bass sound, so he found a 1967 Kay upright bass in Mountain View, Arkansas, and bought it. Already playing bass in Runaway Planet, he was forced to learn the basics quickly. With help from bandmate Steve Brauer, who'd played upright bass as a teenager, Proveaux dove right in.

Other big influences on his sound, particularly since forming Runaway Planet, have included the founding fathers of bluegrass, of course, as well as more progressive bluegrass bands like The Seldom Scene, New Grass Revival, The Dillards, Country Gentlemen and John Hartford, Proveaux says.

Proveaux says his favorite Runaway Planet songs to perform are those that move the folks in the audience. "Those are songs that usually have great harmonies and strong drive; songs can mean different things to different people so I'm not particular when it comes to a song's meaning as long as it resonates with the listeners," he explains. "When it is played and sung with passion, the listeners transmit positive energy, and it ignites something in me that I can only describe as a form of unity consciousness." Proveaux adds, flashing a toothy smile with a sparkle in his eye.

MATT STONE

The newest addition to Runaway Planet is mandolinist Matt Stone. Stone, who actually considers himself a guitarist first and foremost since he began playing that instrument in his childhood, is somewhat of a metal-head, he admits.

He learned to play guitar as a pre-teen (after dropping the no-longer-cool clarinet by the wayside) by listening to a lot of Led Zeppelin, Tool, Pantera and similar bands, he says. In fact, his first concert to ever attend was Black Sabbath, on a reunion tour with Pantera and Incubus as openers.

More recently, his musical influences have included Wes Montgomery, Neil Young, Django, David Grisman, Chet Atkins, Antonio Carlos Jobim — and Metallica. Guess some loves never completely desert you!

Stone says his wide variety of influences come through in his playing at different times, depending on the type of composition he's playing — but it all definitely makes a difference. "I can play most of (Guns N' Roses lead guitarist) Slash's guitar licks, but they're really not pertinent to what I'm doing when I'm playing a Celtic tune on the mandolin," Stone acknowledges with a smile.

His favorite covers to perform with Runaway Planet are those with lots of harmony, or those with a driving rhythm.

"But my favorite Runaway Planet songs are the ones that almost want to spin out of control, like 'Salt Creek' or 'Pike County Breakdown'" he says. "Those are a lot of fun."



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