

A long, long time ago
I can still remember how
That music used to make me smile
And I knew if I had my chance
That I could make those people dance
And maybe they'd be happy for a while...

LYRICS FROM DON MCLEAN'S AMERICAN PIE

THE SOUNDTRACK FOR OUR LIVES

AN OVATION FOR OUR LOCAL MUSICIANS

WORDS NICOLETTE TOUSSAINT

Imagine that the inside of my brain looks like an ornate, archaic old library. The floors are beautifully tiled and big Palladian windows let in the light, but the place is disorganized and noisy. Fragments of old songs float like dust motes in the air, and the stacks are stuffed with idiosyncratic collections: The warhorse room contains full classical symphonies, complete with scratches from old vinyl recordings. Next door, there's a vast collection of song lyrics: Need a phonetic rendering of *Never on Sunday*, in Greek? Here you go! Or the full eight minutes of Don McLean's *American Pie*? No problem. I can't remember the number of my bank account, but I can easily retrieve every word of that one!

It seems that my whole life has been cataloged by soundtracks. Some of my happiest childhood memories center on Denver Friends of Folk Music hootenannies. My musical enthusiasm always outpaced my skill, but while there, I knew that all God's creatures were welcome to "clap their hands, or paws, or anything they got."

Here in the Roaring Fork Valley, you can go to a different free summer concert every night, even without driving to Aspen or Snowmass. Venues ranging from the Glenwood Vaudeville to Steve's Guitars in Carbondale and Heather's Pies in Basalt offer great music all year long. Our local music scene ranges from folk, country and bluegrass to blues, world music, classical and original compositions.

Although I'm always up for a "boot-scootin' boogie", my own music-making never progressed much beyond playing spoons. So I asked three local musicians to tell me about *their* favorite local bands. Courtesy of Matt Harrington of *Poser*, Olivia Pevec of *Let Them Roar*, and singer/songwriter Jim Hawkins, here's an admittedly incomplete list of local music-makers who are not to be missed. Check them out and give them your support.

The Leonard-Curry Trio: The eclectic mix offered up by Craig and Lorraine Curry and Elliot Leonard ranges from bluegrass and folk to swing and original ballads. Craig plays guitar, dobro and mandolin, Lorraine is on upright bass and Elliot plays guitar and banjo. They can often be heard at local farmer's markets, Juicy Lucy's Steakhouse and private events.

Aspen 440: Although just three musicians are playing, "David has recorded backtracks that, if you closed your eyes, you would swear there's a five-piece band playing," says Matt. This trio of seasoned musicians includes David Harding, Amy Hawes and Lisa Mae Sarver and offers a great selection of popular music.

Up Town Strutters: Matt says that "David Bluefield, Roberta Lewis, Steve Cole and Billy Harmon offer a fantastic finger-snappin', toe-tappin' selection of music with New Orleans and light jazz energy."

Louis and the Lizards: "Louis Girardot, Mike Luciano, Tom Mercer and Tim Brogdan play a great mix of original music and eclectic covers with a funk that can't be beat," says Matt.

The Habit: This group, with Nikki Miller and her husband Rob up front, is the rebirth of *Trunk*, a group that was "the locals band when I first moved here," says Olivia Pevec. "Nikki Miller has always had an incredible voice but it grew a lot in her time with the *Starlettes*. They are soul, rock, moving and fierce!"

Pam Rosenthal: She gets a nod as both a bass player and a singer. Olivia Pevec rates Rosenthal as "one of the valley's most dedicated musicians" for both her own music and working with at least five bands, including *Poser* and *Tjjar*. Rosenthal has coached youth bands, and "is an awesome radio DJ, always bringing great energy and new influence into our community," says Olivia.

Chris Rose: Olivia is also a fan of this trumpet player, who sits in with *Let Them Roar* on occasion. "Chris always brings taste, style and wild skill," she says. "I try to channel him when I need a little extra cool."

The Caleb Dean Band: Caleb Dean made both Matt Harrington's and Jim Hawkins' lists. Matt calls them "the real deal" and Jim writes, "My buddy Caleb Whittington fronts the best, true country-western band in the area. The *Caleb Dean Band* includes Larry Gottlieb, a phenomenal pedal steel player who has toured nationally and opened for John Denver on many tours."