

The Hub City Ramblers

Immersed in the traditional Bluegrass canon, the Hub City Ramblers bring their own thoroughly modern, west coast sound to the table, performing at festivals and venues around the West coast. Their repertoire typically consists of trad., old time songs and instrumentals, as well as their own uniquely crafted originals with hints of jazz and rock n roll influences. Sounds that come to mind include Bill Monroe, Tony Rice, Jerry Douglas, and Alison Krauss. These VIU Music alumni are a truly unique band of individuals of diverse backgrounds coming together for the love of acoustic folk music.

The story of HCR starts with the core "brother duo": Ira Pelletier and Brad Shipley, both first call musicians in mid-Vancouver Island. Initially meeting many years ago in Jazz school, they spent hours discussing their love of mandolins, and sitting in the grass picking when they probably should have been in class. They decided to form the duo when Ira took interest in bluegrass guitar. Now with both guitar and mandolin bases covered, it was a natural resolution.

Ira Pelletier has become a mainstay of the island bluegrass and folk festival scene, known as a mandolin player, and equally adept at the guitar. Previously the founder, mandolinist, and chief songwriter of the bluegrass/newgrass band Skagway, he has played numerous times at the Lighthouse, Coombs, Sooke and Chemainus bluegrass festivals, and Islands Folk Festival.

Brad Shipley is known for his prowess as a jazz guitar player as well as his mandolin skills, touring extensively at music festivals throughout British Columbia, N.W.T., and the Yukon with bands like The Contraband Trio, Fishead Stew and in musical theatre orchestras.

Duncan Symonds' is an in demand sideman, playing alongside some of Canada's finest musicians including Ed Robertson of the Barenaked Ladies, Jim Cuddy of Blue Rodeo, Jimmy Rankin, Sue Medley, Canadian Jazz icon Brad Turner and extensively touring western Canada with David James & Big River.

Though an island girl at heart, Marisha Devoin spent years floating around the world, literally and figuratively, as a bassist and vocalist on cruise ships, in musical theatre orchestras with Arts Club and Chemainus Theatre to name a few, as well as various touring projects. Recently, she has dug in her roots so-to-speak, moving back to South Nanaimo to build a music education and production studio.

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