

Nothin' Fancy **SPBGMA's 6 Time "Entertaining Group of the Year"!** **(2014, 2013, 2012, 2010, 2009, and 2008)**

From the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, comes one of the most entertaining bands in the bluegrass genre, Nothin' Fancy. As a matter of fact, they've won SPBGMA's award for Entertaining Group of the Year six times!

Nothin' Fancy was formed as a bluegrass band in 1994 to compete in a bluegrass competition. Ever since then, they have grown in popularity, released 11 full length albums, and continue to perform at festivals all across the United States, Canada and Norway including the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, TN, the Lincoln Center in New York City, and the Birchmere in Alexandria, Virginia. They have successfully hosted their own Nothin' Fancy Bluegrass Festival every year since 2001 in Buena Vista, Virginia.

Their full-time touring schedule has earned them one of the most loyal fan bases in all of bluegrass music. They are loved by festival-goers and bluegrass fans from the East to West Coast and abroad.

Nothin' Fancy recorded four independent albums before signing to a record label. In 2002 they released their debut recording for Pinecastle Records entitled "Once Upon A Road." This album earned them a showcase at the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) Convention and a nomination for the IBMA Emerging Artist of the Year Award. Their second CD, "Reflections," received innumerable accolades and proved that they were one of the new powerhouses in the genre. Their 3rd project with Pinecastle, "Album #7" continues to receive rave reviews from disc jockeys and fans alike. Listening to the request of fans, Nothin' Fancy then released their first gospel CD, "Lord Bless This House." This album captures Nothin' Fancy's distinguished sound, vocal harmony, spirituality, and friendly charisma. In 2011, under their new label, Virginia Dreams Records, they released their latest CD, "Nothin' Fancy." This album holds true to their Nothin' Fancy sound while introducing a few new pieces to the Nothin' Fancy puzzle. Many bluegrass bands never reach the longevity to award itself a greatest hits album, but Nothin' Fancy has met this goal. Crediting the fans, Most Requested, Volume 1 was released in 2013. Also in 2013, Nothin' Fancy was honored to record their first Christmas album. Their love of traditional Christmas music can be heard in each song.

In 2014, 2013, 2012, 2010, 2009, and 2008, the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America (SPBGMA) honored Nothin' Fancy with the prestigious "Entertaining Group of the Year" award. The band has also been nominated for SPBGMA's Vocal Group of the Year and each band member has been nominated for individual awards as well.

Their strong vocals, powerful instrumentation, and energetic stage presence, along with their friendly down-to-earth charm keeps people coming back for more. Nothin' Fancy is not just carrying on the tradition of bluegrass music; they are contributing to the creation of a new tradition within the acoustic music genre.

Mike Andes, born and raised in Timberville, VA, began performing publicly at age 14. Mike will tell you his music ability is God-given. He plays by ear and has never had any lessons or professional training. Several family members, including his brothers and uncles, influenced Mike with their musical abilities. In the early 1980s, Mike formed his first band, The East Coast Bluegrass Band and in 1994, was a founding member of Nothin' Fancy. Mike always wanted a full-time career in music and Nothin' Fancy has given him the opportunity to fulfill this goal. During his time with Nothin' Fancy, Mike has been nominated for Mandolin Player of the Year, Male Vocalist of the Year, Individual Entertainer of the Year and Songwriter of the Year through the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America (SPBGMA). Mike has become well known as an exceptional MC for the band and keeps the show rolling from song to song with his wit and charm. Mike has always considered Charlie Waller to be his bluegrass hero. He learned his trade by Charlie Waller and the Country Gentlemen's example. The Seldom Scene has also been a huge influence on Mike's music. When Mike is not touring with Nothin' Fancy, he enjoys building mandolins, fiddles and woodworking in general. He also enjoys the outdoors and gardening with his wife, Becky, at their home in Pataskala, OH. Together, Mike and Becky have three sons, one daughter, a son-in-law, and three beautiful grandchildren.

Mitchell Davis is Nothin' Fancy's banjo man. He also plays mandolin, guitar, and fiddle. He had learned the guitar and fiddle from his uncle, Joe Connor, and he comes from grandparents who both played mountain music. He fell in love with the banjo after seeing Earl Scruggs and Don Reno on TV shows. Like many aspiring banjo players, he started with an Earl Scruggs Banjo Book. Mitchell is also an alumnus of the East Coast Bluegrass Band, as well as a country band (which incidentally was called Nothin' Fancy and was the inspiration for the bluegrass band's name). Mitchell cites The Country Gentlemen and the Seldom Scene as his influences, especially in their song selection. Mitchell was the primary producer of the band's four self-released albums. Mitchell was born in Lexington, VA and still lives there with his wife, Sandy. In his time off the road, Mitchell can be found playing chess at the local library and takes the time to hunt and work around the house, and is also a good cook.

Chris Sexton, multi-instrumentalist, is usually seen with a fiddle, and sometimes contributes to the vocals. He debuted with the band in 1998 at the Maury River Fiddler's Convention, where the band won first prize in the bluegrass band competition – he still has the ribbon. He appeared as a guest on the band's second and third self-released albums and joined the band in the summer of 2000. His dad, "Buster" Sexton who played banjo in several bands in the 70's and early 80's, introduced Chris to bluegrass. Although his first instrument was a mandolin, Chris soon focused his energies on the violin. Throughout middle and high school, he grew as a violinist in symphony orchestras, the All-Virginia Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra Youth Apprenticeship Program, while keeping his bluegrass roots. Chris attended Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA, graduating with a Bachelor of Music in Music

Performance. Soon after, he found himself fiddling with the East Coast Bluegrass Band with his father, and Nothin' Fancy shortly thereafter. He also has appeared in the Maryland Symphony Orchestra, the Roanoke Symphony, and served as the assistant principal violist with the Loudoun Symphony, and also served for five years as a co-director of the American Children of SCORE based in Warrenton, VA. His violin work could also be heard on several TV specials in the early 2000s that were featured on the Discovery Channel, the Learning Channel, PBS, and the National Geographic Channel. In 2008, Chris returned to Shenandoah University for a master's degree in violin pedagogy (the methods of teaching violin in private lesson settings) and graduated with the MM in 2010 – all while maintaining a busy touring and teaching schedule. When Chris isn't playing bluegrass, he's teaching violin, viola, cello, piano, and bluegrass fiddle in his own studio in old-town Manassas, VA. He also routinely does work for DC-area recording studios as a session musician, and he is also an adjunct professor of violin, viola, and cello at the Woodbridge Campus of the Northern Virginia Community College. In the fall of 2005, Chris released his first solo disc on Pinecastle Records, *Coffee at Midnight* and he released a second, all-classical solo album entitled *Proof* in 2013. His hobbies include cooking, composing music, and traveling.

Tony Shorter (actually the tallest member of the band), plays upright bass and sings baritone for the band. He was born and raised in Lexington, VA where he still makes his home. Tony grew up listening to his dad and uncle's bluegrass band. Some of his fondest memories was sitting on the front porch of his grandfather's house on Sunday afternoons and jamming with family. A Gibson mandolin (a high school graduation present from his parents) accompanied him to Va. Tech, where Tony admits, "I may have spent more time pickin' than studying". He was a charter member of the Va. Tech Bluegrass Association and the Blacksburg area was rich in good pickers with lots of jamming. Tony started playing bass in college when he wasn't switching off on guitar. For a few years after college, music took a back seat to his career with Farm Credit. He joined a local jazz group, and ended up playing electric bass in various groups as he puts it, "from reggae to rock". At one point he was playing bass with 5 different bands, which was fun learning to play different styles as he loves most all forms of music and just couldn't say no. In '94 he returned to his roots when he helped form Nothin' Fancy. Tony has a son, Colby, and has 2 daughters, Natasha and Gemma.

Caleb Cox plays guitar, resophonic guitar, and sings tenor for the group. Caleb grew up in Madison Heights, VA and began playing the guitar at the age of 8. Over the course of his youth, he learned to play mandolin, banjo, bass, and even the harmonica. When Caleb saw Jerry Douglas at the age of 10, he gained an interest in the resophonic guitar and added it to his instrumental arsenal. He won the reso-guitar contest only two years later and the guitar contest in 2013 at the Maury River Fiddler's Convention, and was voted Male Vocalist of the Year by the Virginia Folk Music Association in 2014. Caleb has been a mainstay for his family's band, Clearwater Branch, for seven years. He moved on to appear with the Deer Creek Boys on reso-guitar and baritone vocals before his successful audition with Nothin' Fancy. In his time off, he likes to hunt, fish, kayak, and write songs.

**Nothin'
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Quotes

“...Nothin’ Fancy maintains a high level of proficiency and professionalism that unquestionably establishes them as a force to be reckoned with in the world of bluegrass music. Indeed the future for Nothin’ Fancy is boundless and filled with enormous expectations.”

-Bluegrass Unlimited

“...A Unique sound that vacillates between smooth, progressive bluegrass and country-tinged Americana.”

-Cary Virgin, Bluegrass Now

“Impressive is one of the many synonyms for the word fancy. Despite their name, ‘impressive’ describes Virginia based Nothin’ Fancy to a ‘T’...

-Sing Out!

“Group members have developed a strong blend that features tight harmonies and evocative solo performances. The band’s chemistry with each other is superb. Of course it doesn’t hurt that they have a great deal of musical talent and vocals thrown in there, too.”

-Maverick

“This bluegrass band personifies the definition of "antithesis" with its name Nothin’ Fancy. It is the opposite, very fancy. Stellar vocals along with impeccable bluegrass harmonies are just the starting point. The instrumental prowess of the group members also likens itself to some of the old pros that have traveled this road before them.

When these guys play, it is everything but nothing fancy. Their name may not be indicative of their music, but I would rather a group use their vocals, instrumental skill, and songwriting abilities speak for them in lieu of their name doing all of the talking.”

-Bluegrass Works

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Booking Information

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Information

Nothin' Fancy

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Fact Sheet

Nothin' Fancy

www.nothinfancybluegrass.com

Hometown: Shenandoah Valley, VA

Musical Genre: Bluegrass

Latest CD: The Test of Time

Members/Instruments:
Mike Andes, Mandolin/vocals
Caleb Cox, Guitar/vocals
Mitchell Davis, Banjo/vocals
Chris Sexton, Fiddle/vocals
Tony Shorter, Bass/vocals

Points of Note: Awarded SPBGMA's Entertaining Group of the Year three consecutive years (2008, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013 and 2014). All band members have been nominated for individual awards for their respective instruments, vocals and songwriting talents and the band has also been nominated for Vocal Group of the Year.

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