

THE BARN OWL BAND

Traditional Music At Its Best

Hoot it up with barn dance music from the mighty Barn Owl Band! The nationally recognized Owls are powered by fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin, piano, accordion, and upright bass and give new wing to the exciting sound of the traditional American string band. It's good old-fashioned, toe-tapping, foot-stomping entertainment brought up to date with fresh renditions of time-honored tunes and songs, as well as new compositions that add to the tradition.

Since its inception in 1991, the band's mainstay gig has been playing for a monthly barn dance for the Central Iowa Barn Dance Association in Ames, Iowa. The Owls have also been sighted at the Iowa governor's inauguration dinner, coffee houses, concert stages, farmer's markets, weddings, celebrations, Irish ceili dances, TV shows, sound tracks, RAGBRAI (the [Des Moines] Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa), or wherever plenty of fresh mouse is on offer. The barn owl (*Tyto alba*) is known for sticking to its home territory, though, and like its namesake, the Barn Owl Band tends to remain home in central Iowa for the majority of its performances.

In 2000, the Owls released their first CD, "Dance Owl Night." This album captured some of the best medleys that the Owls had arranged for dances, a couple of vocal songs, and included several tunes that were composed by members of the band. Currently, a live concert recording is scheduled for a September 2003 release and a studio CD, "Cloud Forest", is set for a winter 2003 release.

The Owls feature:

- Roger Alexander — piano, accordion, penny whistle
- Michael Bell — mandolin, guitar, 4-string banjo, strumstick, octalute, vocals
- Jon Duvick — guitar, bass, vocals
- Merle Hall — 5-string banjo
- Jason Huntley — fiddle, vocals
- Brad Johnson — mandolin, bouzouki
- Marty Miller — bass, percussion
- Ehler Orngard — fiddle, bodhran

On February 23, 2002, The Barn Owl Band was featured on the National Public Radio program, "A Prairie Home Companion" broadcast live from C.Y. Stephen's Auditorium. The weekly radio program is broadcast on more than 500 stations worldwide and has over 3 million listeners.

"...one of the best..." — The Green Man Review

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UPCOMING PERFORMANCES IN 2003:

The Barn Owls are the house band for the Central Iowa Barn Dance and play for Autumn 2003 dances on September 27th, and October 25th at 8:00 PM. For more information visit:

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~alex/barndance.html> or call (515) 292-5587.

The Owls are taking flight for performances and dances on:

- September 6th — Pufferbilly Days in Boone, Iowa.
- September 13th – Story County Democrats BBQ with 2004 presidential candidates.
- September 19th — Private party at Gateway Center, Ames.
- October 3rd — Concert at the Des Moines Arts Center.
- October 17-18 – Friday night concert and Saturday contradance in Madison, WI.
- November 8th – Barn dance at Raccoon Ridge Music Hall, Stuart, Iowa.
- December 13th – Barn dance at Raccoon Ridge Music Hall, Stuart, Iowa.



THE BARN OWL BAND (from left to right): Roger, Brad, Ehler, Jason, Marty, Mike, Merle, Jon.

INTERNET LINKS:

Information about the Barn Owl Band can be found at our official website:

www.barnowlband.com

Information about our performance on “A Prairie Home Companion” can be found at:

<http://www.prairiehome.org/performances/20020223/guests.shtml>

Listen to our live performance on “A Prairie Home Companion”:

<http://www.prairiehome.org/performances/20020223/index.shtml>

BOOKING:

See our website for detailed information on upcoming performances or contact:

Roger at (515) 292-5587 or Jason at (515) 232-1803. Email: owl@barnowlband.com

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PREVIOUS PERFORMANCES:

Where have the Barn Owls been sighted? In addition to our monthly dances in Ames, the Owls have performed at a wide variety of venues.

August 22, 2003	Iowa Veterinary Medical Association	Living History Farms, Des Moines, IA
August 13, 2003	Two performances at the Iowa State Fair	Des Moines, Iowa
August 9, 2003	Contradance at Tapestry Folkdance Center	Minneapolis, MN
July 19, 2003	Round Barn Restoration Festival	Armstrong, Iowa
July 13, 2003	Outdoor concert	Roosevelt School Ames, IA
July 6, 2003	St. Ann's Church Celebration	Vail, Iowa
July 2 & 4, 2003	Television showing of "Battle Cry of Freedom"	Iowa Public Television
June 27, 2003	Nevada Sesquicentennial Celebration	Nevada, Iowa
May 10, 2003	Battle Cry of Freedom: Iowa in the Civil War	Des Moines Civic Center
April 12, 2003	Barn Owl Band 2 nd Annual Spring Concert	Ames City Auditorium Ames, IA
Mar 29, 2003	Madison Contradance	Madison, Wisconsin
Mar 1, 2003	Benefit Concert	Collegiate Methodist Annex Ames, IA
Feb 28, 2003	Raccoon Ridge Music Hall Dance	Stuart, Iowa
Feb 21, 2003	Hey for 40 Barn Dance	West Branch, IA
Jan 16, 2003	The Governor's Pre-Inaugural Dinner	Walnut Center-Iowa State Fair Grounds
Dec 6, 2002	Iowa by Design Concert	Octagon Center for the Arts Ames, IA
Nov 13, 2002	Ames Music Live Television Show	Ames Public Access Television Ames, IA
Nov 2, 2002	Irish Céilí Mór dance	Thoreau Center Des Moines, IA
Oct 22-25, 2002	Children's Theater in Elementary Schools	Ames Public School System Ames, IA
Oct 19, 2002	Contradance at Tapestry Folkdance Center	Minneapolis, MN
Oct 2, 2002	Des Moines Women's Club	Hoyt Sherman Theater Des Moines, IA
Oct 1, 2002	Midwest Facilities Planners Meeting	Gateway Center Ames, IA
Sept 7, 2002	Methodist Church Fundraiser	Granger, IA
Aug 25, 2002	Community Gospel Service	West Des Moines

Garrison Keillor welcomes the Barn Owl Band to the "Prairie Home Companion" stage.



THE BARN OWLS ARE:

Roger

Roger Alexander

Born in Wichita, Kansas, Roger arrived in Iowa in 1982. In the 1980s he performed with a succession of clogging teams. He has been calling dances since 1985. In 1991 he helped start the Central Iowa Barn Dance Association and recruited the musicians who in 1994 named themselves The Barn Owl Band. Roger and his wife, Marcia Minear, call dances together around Iowa and the upper Midwest. His ambition is to be able to play a tune on the accordion accompanied by his own feet.

Roger is Associate Professor of Mathematics at ISU, where he does research on Runge-Kutta methods and teaches students that mathematics is not a branch of dogmatic theology.

Mike

Michael Bell

Born in Providence, Rhode Island, Mike cut his musical teeth playing the mysterious octalute in the Outhouse Shouters, a family string band with his two brothers, his father, and an older cousin, featuring his dad's virtuoso wash-tub bass playing. He later graduated to playing tenor banjo in a jug band whose most notable claim to fame was getting gonged on the Gong Show. For many years, he played New England barn dance music with the Connecticut bands The Fiddleheads and Froggie on the Carport. Mike also composes music and his tunes have been recorded by Wild Asparagus, Swallowtail, Skip Healy, Fool's Gold, and, of course, the Barn Owl Band. His first opus is to be performed this spring by the Providence Mandolin Orchestra.

For his day job, Mike is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin, and the author of four books, two of which won national awards. His main research specialty is environmental sociology.

Jon

Jonathan Duvick

Jon was born in Des Moines, Iowa and started playing guitar and standup bass in college, where he was part of a short-lived band called the Hoosier Capsnafflers. Jon's contributions to the Barn Owls include serving as recording and production engineer for the Barn Owl Band CD, Dance Owl Night, as well as on an upcoming, as-yet untitled CD, both of which were recorded in his living room. Jon and his wife Carol enjoy singing together, and have written and recorded several children's songs.

Jon is a Research Fellow at Pioneer Hi-Bred International, in Johnston, Iowa, where he is involved in research on disease resistance in crops.

Merle

Merle Hall

Merle was born in Des Moines and is undoubtedly Iowa's leading exponent of the claw-hammer style of 5-string banjo, with a laid-back, tall grass prairie style. In fact, he won his current instrument in a national banjo contest. In a former life, Merle performed with the Central Iowa bluegrass group Hybrid Grass. Merle is an old friend of Jon's, as well as an original member of the Barn Owls.

Merle is a facilities information manager at Pioneer Hi-Bred International.

Jason

Jason Huntley

Jason grew up in Westside, Iowa and started playing piano at age 5 and violin at age 9. He was first taught Irish fiddle tunes by his grandfather, and began classical violin training soon after. Among Jason's musical accomplishments: three-time Mid-American Irish Fiddle Champion, two-time Mid-American Old-Time Fiddle Champion, and most recently his selection as the Grand Champion Fiddler at the 2001 Iowa State Fair.

He is currently pursuing his PhD in Veterinary Pathology at Iowa State University. His research interests are vaccine development and genomic research. Jason also enjoys running marathons and has run four, including the famous Boston Marathon.

Brad

Brad Johnson

Born and raised on the West Coast, Brad has played various instruments since age six, and settled on the mandolin as his life instrument as a teenager. Brad has performed semi-professionally for most of his life in bands and ensembles that have played bluegrass, old time, country, jazz, classical, folk, rock, Celtic and fusions of the aforementioned. For his day job, Brad works for a software developer in Ames.

Marty

Martin Miller

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Marty started piano lessons at the age of 11. He played percussion instruments in high school and took percussion instruction (drums and marimba) at the Chicago School of Music during that time. Growing up in Chicago in the 1950's he was exposed to some of the finest jazz in the world. His desire and ambition was to be a jazz musician. All during high school and college he was a jazz drummer in many jazz combos and bands. When he moved to Iowa he experienced his first bluegrass music festival and fell in love with the music. Marty decided to learn how to play the upright bass (doghouse bass) since the bass is the percussion instrument in a bluegrass band. He bought a bass, learned how to play it, and in 1975 was one of the founders of the Skunk River Bluegrass Band. He has been in several bluegrass bands in the 35 years he's been a bass player.

Marty is a Professor emeritus of Sociology at Iowa State University. His teaching, research and consulting specialties are: criminal justice, juvenile delinquency, prevention, youth development, and youth sports.

Ehler

Ehler Orngard

Ehler is the newest member of the Barn Owl Band. He is a high school student at Pilot Mound, Iowa and plays many instruments including fiddle and bodhran. More information coming soon.
