



The Wild Honey Collective

Debut Album: *The Wild Honey Collective, Volume 1* (2021)

Band Members: Tommy McCord, Timmy Rodriguez, , Danielle (Dani) Gyger, and Dan O'Brien

About The Wild Honey Collective

By Laurel Jordan & Sue Clements

Covid-19 didn't stop the music. In fact, for The Wild Honey Collective that's when things were getting started. Band members Tommy McCord and Timmy Rodriguez both play a part in the indie-rock band Drinking Mercury, who were still actively playing until the pandemic put life on hold. Tommy and Timmy still got together, along with Tommy's fiancée, Danielle (Dani) Gyger, and the three musicians sat on a back porch in the spring and summer of 2020, playing music. "We played our own songs, friend's songs, and traditional folks songs and decided to make an album in this vein which turned the whole thing into a proper band," Tommy explained.

Timmy then brought on the fourth member, Dan O'Brien, wanting to add another multi-instrumentalist to round out the band. "Once Dan was in, we started churning out material. There were no shows going on, so we just practiced. Some of us were not working because of the shutdown, so we had time on our hands. We met on a weekly basis, putting together material for when shows returned." The Wild Honey Collective has some great material to share. They released their debut album in 2021 titled *The Wild Honey Collective, Volume 1*, and this album is much like the band members themselves - rooted in what they do best, but also multi-faceted. You can hear all four voices throughout the album as they interchange who takes the lead vocally. A troop of truly versatile performers.

“We intentionally rotate roles as everyone sings, writes, and plays multiple instruments,” Tommy says. “But generally speaking, Tommy is the bandleader and recording arranger, Danielle is the leader in the vocal harmony department and also the one with a legitimate traditional/folk background, Timmy is the deputy vocal harmony arranger and adds the most energy and pop music sensibility, while Dan is the necessary glue with the widest instrumental knowledge and encyclopedic song memory.”

The band has been busy this last year. After releasing their first album, the group took to the east coast for a tour spanning the first two weeks in October. While Timmy and Dan held down the fort in Michigan, Tommy and Danielle traveled with friends **Jeremy Porter** and Nicholas Richard, starting their journey in Albany, New York and ending in Dayton, Ohio before coming home. Tommy shared his experience with us. “This tour was very unique in that every show was completely different - we played a dive bar, a former church, a metropolitan jazz club, an outdoor brewery patio in 40 degree northern Maine, the loft of a record store, a private party in a fancy brewery, and a converted taxi garage.

“I think everyone's favorite show was at the classy jazz club/listening room Blue in Portland, Maine. Our show the night before had been full of an incredible amount of technical issues and had overall been sterile and stressful, and then the locals in Portland and the staff at Blue were incredibly welcoming and supportive, resulting in a well-played and fun show from our band. A great show is a collaboration between the band and the audience.” **Jeremy Porter** also documented each gig and the time the musicians spent on the road in a series of posts he titled as his “Road Blog,” which can be found on The Wild Honey Collective’s Facebook page if you scroll back to October 2021.

Looking to the future, The Wild Honey Collective isn’t done taking to the road to share their music. When asked about their touring plans, Tommy explained, “We're planning a shorter excursion in the midwest for springtime that hopefully can feature the four principles, and nothing is set in stone but the collaboration with **Jeremy Porter** was very successful so we'll definitely do some more road work together in some capacity.” The band is also excited to venture back out east for another tour, expressing that they hope to visit northern Maine when the weather would give them a warmer welcome.

Timmy is especially looking forward to more live opportunities with the band. “We just missed the boat on booking a bunch of shows last summer because we didn't know if live shows would really return in full fashion, so this year we are already booking up the summer. We are totally stoked to just play.” But scheduling tours and live performances isn’t the only project The Wild Honey Collective has in store for the new year. They also plan to release their second album in the spring of 2022.

“The second album will very much follow in the footsteps of the first album: there will be new original songs, songs written by friends of the band, and some band arrangements of folk standards,” Tommy says. “The main difference between this album and the first is that we had never played any proper shows until after the first album was out so we have clearer ideas of our strengths and in general we have just been growing as a band.” Danielle seems to agree with this sentiment. Now with more live performance experience under her belt, she shares, “I'm new to performing, and it's brought me out of my shell and forced creativity upon me in a way that I have never experienced as an adult. I couldn't ask for a better band of constructive, inspiring, and encouraging people to play with.”

Collective is the perfect word for this group. By definition, “a cooperative project or undertaking” is exactly what this band creates for each other and their listeners. Timmy explains this well. “The word ‘collective’ is certainly true here because we are all equally contributing to the songs in ways I have never done before in other bands. Usually in my previous bands, one person

has a song and you just kind of make up stuff based around their structures. That's not exactly how it is here. We rely on each other a lot for the composing.”

There seems to be no better way to describe the band that got together to simply play music while the world was idle and waiting. It's inspiring for all of us to see the good things that came from a time of hardships. This band's story is one that shows us the endurance of art and creativity, even in hard times. And now, because of their love of music and playing together, everyone has much to look forward to from The Wild Honey Collective.