

Brattleboro Reformer



Collective forms as a result of pandemic, musicians call Brattleboro 'honorary hometown'

By Dave Madeloni, Correspondent | Oct 4, 2021

BRATTLEBORO — The pandemic has been tough on everyone, and it's been particularly cruel for musical performers, who rely so much on gigs to sustain their creative work. For the past 18 months or so, many were relegated to performing virtually from their living rooms instead of live with people at concert venues. Luckily, that is beginning to change.

When it comes to crises, we know that opportunities can arise as well. In the case of The Wild Honey Collective (TWHC) — who will be performing at The Stone Church this evening, the ensemble formed because of the pandemic. In a recent email exchange, founding member guitarist Tommy McCord explained how TWHC came together.

“Danielle (Gyger) and I formed this project in the summer of 2020, essentially because all of the shows were canceled and none of our regular bands were practicing or recording”

And what did this brand new collective cook up musically?

“As cliché as it may sound, the whole concept was one of “getting back to the roots” of music as we were basically doing acoustic, outdoor practice sessions, so everyone that we play with is someone that

we know we can connect with on a stripped-down level. We put “collective” in the band name for a reason — folks come in and out of the lineup depending on the show.”

The other two leaders of the collective (Timmy Rodriguez and Dan O’Brien) are not currently able to tour. So that mini-crisis became an opportunity to do a long-discussed collaboration with old friend Jeremy Porter, and also get out on the road with Nich Richard, a longtime bandmate of McCord’s from the rock band The Plurals.

Porter fronts his own rock band Jeremy Porter and the Tucos. He is clearly pumped to take a new direction with some old friends.

“This is the first time in forever that I’ve played or toured with other musicians outside of The Tucos” Porter added. “So it’s pretty exciting for me to get some fresh blood in the mix, get pushed and pulled in a couple different directions. ... We’ve known each other for years, but playing music together adds a deeper element to the relationships and touring together takes it even one step further. Friendships aside, Tommy, Dani and Nich are all people I respected as musicians, and this whole experience has just cemented that, and my hope is that it comes off that way on stage.”

I asked McCord what concertgoers might expect from The Collective at The Stone Church show.

“My number-one goal is to always just give the audience a great night out. Particularly in the era of COVID, any chance to get lost in the passion of live music is worth appreciating. We’ve got a set planned that works as a revue of sorts — Jeremy will play some songs from his projects, then Dani, Nich, and I will back him up on songs before taking over the rest of the set with a selection of Wild Honey Collective originals, traditional songs, and a variety of country-flavored cover songs from artists ranging from Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, Gram Parsons, Husker Du, Rolling Stones and beyond. Danielle used to live in Brattleboro so we’re also looking forward to staking this out as an honorary hometown for us.”

Porter also is excited to share the bill with Moon Hollow, a high-energy acoustic trio from these parts, and have a better time than the last time he played in The Green Mountain State. “I’ve played Vermont once before, in Burlington, and we were on a stage the size of a postage stamp playing to 4 people with their backs to us the entire time on a Sunday night after a nine-hour drive, so I am really looking forward to checking out Brattleboro and playing at The Stone Church — it can only get better, right?”

If You Go

Who: Wild Honey Collective/Moon Hollow/Jeremy Porter

When: Thursday, Oct. 7, 8 p.m.

Where: The Stone Church, 210 Main St., Brattleboro

Tickets: \$10

More information: stonechurchvt.com