

Charlie Sizemore's Band Bios



Danny Barnes (mandolin, vocals)

Danny has lived his entire life around the world of bluegrass music. Music has always been a big part of his life. He began playing in a family band as a child with his father Earl Barnes and brother, Randall Barnes.

Danny now plays the mandolin, but can showcase himself on several other instruments including the banjo. He helps complete the sound of bands he plays with by singing tenor vocals. Danny is also making a name for himself in the area of songwriting and has had several of his original works recorded by well-known bluegrass bands. He has played live and recorded with several top-billing bands over the years including the Charlie Sizemore Band, Continental Divide, Pine Mountain Railroad, Katie Penn, and Dean Osborne to name just a few.

Danny is sponsored by Gibson Acoustic Instruments and plays the Gibson F-5 Sam Bush Model mandolin on stage and in the studio. He is now also endorses Black Diamond Strings. Danny remains close to his bluegrass roots. He still lives in the town where he was born and raised, Richmond, Kentucky. He makes his home there with his wife Angie and their two children.

Mat Matt DeSpain (Dobro, vocals)

After college, Matt found himself gravitating to the pure acoustic sounds and harmonies of Bluegrass. After learning the guitar and banjo, Matt found a friend in longtime musical master Gene Wooten. Matt says that through his friendship with Gene, he not only learned from the master's musical styling, but also how to remain grounded in the basics of bluegrass Dobro. As Matt's abilities improved, he joined Bluegrass 101 in the fall of 2000. With Bluegrass 101, Matt gleaned his first experiences not only with live stage shows, but also with studio recording. In the spring of 2001, Matt became one of the founding members of Louis Louisville-based "Inquire Within Band." Here Matt found more versatility in his approach to the Dobro, and gained more experience in the recording studio. Matt has since toured with the Dean Osborne Band and Pine Mountain Railroad before working with Bobby Osborne and the Rocky Top Express at the Grand Ole Opry for a couple of years.



Matt lives in Hodgenville, Kentucky. Matt plays Dobro and sings vocals for the band and uses Black Diamond Strings exclusively.

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John Pennell (bass)

John was born and raised in east central Illinois. He has lived in Nashville for the past nine years. As an original member of Union Station with Alison Krauss, John composed several of her earlier songs, such as "Too Late to Cry", "Foolish Heart" and "Every Time You Goodbye." He has also played bass professionally with Harley Allen, Chris Jones, and Vassar Clements.

John has released a CD of original material entitled "All the Lonely" and was co-writer with Harley Allen on the song "Meat & Potato Man" recorded by Alan Jackson on his "When Somebody Loves You" albums. John continues to live and write music in Nashville, TN.

JOSH MCMURRAY (banjo)

From Church Hill, Tennessee, Josh is the newest member of the band, having played his first show in November, 2008. Josh is perhaps best known for his ten years as banjo player for Larry Sparks and the Lonesome Ramblers, where he gained a reputation as a young picker to watch. J.D. Crowe notes his approval in liner notes he wrote for Josh's instrumental CD on Copper Creek Records.

IN MEMORY

Wayne Fields (banjo)

We are sorry to announce the passing of our beloved friend and band member, Wayne Fields.

Charlie Sizemore writes:

I first met Wayne over thirty years ago during his stint with The Boys From Indiana when I was a kid working with the Goins Brothers. I still remember being a bit taken aback by how respectful he was toward me - a skinny kid from Puncheon Creek still trying to learn to pick. He made me feel welcome and comfortable, and I was thrilled just to be able to hang out with him at festivals and shows.

As the years went by we became friends and I continued to be amazed and inspired by his talent, never dreaming that I'd be able to work with him. I can say with complete honesty that working in a band with Wayne is the highlight of my career, and regardless of what happens from here I don't think this will be surpassed.

The term "greatness" is used far too casually these days. But for me Wayne is the embodiment of that idea, both as a musician and as a person. This is a fact: I have never known or been associated with a musician with anything approaching the combination of talent, humility, loyalty, and team spirit, and plain old-fashioned grit that Wayne Fields possessed. One would have had to be in the studio to truly understand how sick he was when

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we made the "Good News" CD, yet he neither complained nor asked for any special consideration.

He was, in the words of John Pennell, "the best kept secret in bluegrass." Beyond this and just as significant, as a band member recently noted, "he made us all better."

I entertain no delusions of being a musician of Wayne's caliber. I can only hope to someday lay claim to being something approaching the kind of person he was. In reality, this may be the larger hurdle.

We love you and miss you, Wayne. You'll never be replaced."

Charlie Sizemore