

Energy Park Sunday Concert Series ready to roll

The Whiskey Treaty Roadshow kicks things off on Sunday

The Greenfield Recreation Department will kick off the 2019 Energy Park Sunday Concert Series by welcoming The Whiskey Treaty Roadshow to the park on Sunday night for a 6 p.m. show.

The group is a collective of western Massachusetts-based singer-songwriters — Greg Smith, David Tanklefsky, Billy Keane, Chris Merenda, and Tory Hanna — who play a high-energy brand of Americana-folk music with rock and roots that celebrates their love of western Mass., music, brotherhood and, of course, whiskey.

The band recently released a new EP, "Live at Mass Moca," and has completed its first full-length studio recording, "Band Together." That album does not have a release date as the band is currently in negotiations with a Los Angeles-based label that has expressed interest in releasing the album under its name.

While the band's five members all have musical lives beyond the band, they're putting their solo careers on hold for now as The Whiskey Treaty Roadshow's tour moves forward. And to think, it all started right here in Greenfield.

According to the Roadshow's Tory Hanna, if you want to give credit to the formation of this group, you have to look to his wife, Susie Hanna.

Back in 2012, when Tory and Susie were living in Brooklyn, she came up with the idea that it would be great to host a show that showcased a group of musicians who came from western Mass. and who wrote songs that were often inspired by the area.

The show was called the Whiskey Treaty Festival and was held at the Arts Block (now Hawks and Reed Performing Arts Center) in Greenfield.

"The festival was a culmination of all these bands," Hanna said. "The whiskey came about because we all had songs about whiskey and treaty was because it was a coming together of individuals."

The show was a huge success and the group of musicians held another Whiskey Treaty Festival in 2013 — inspiring the band.

"I was living in Brooklyn and there was a very supportive venue called Pete's Candy Store, and I had a residency there," recalled Hanna, a native of Buckland who now lives in

Pittsfield. "And I'd bring down David Tanklefsky from Cambridge and Billy Keane from Pittsfield and Greg Smith, who was in Brooklyn, and we'd all share the stage and play on each other's songs. The idea of this super-group was formed."

Since then, the Whiskey Treaty Roadshow has recorded a live album and two EPs and toured throughout the United States. In 2015, Rowe native Chris Bradley directed an award-winning documentary about the band.

"The documentary opened a ton of doors," said Hanna. "It was shown at all these film festivals like the Woods Hole Film Festival and the Tribeca Film festival in New York. We would be asked to come perform before or after the screening, so we got to play before a ton of people and to add to that, the documentary was shown to a ton of people."

Hanna added that beyond the exposure the film provided, it made them realize that the group is kind of cool. He noted that Chris Merenda replaced founding member Abe Loomis soon after the group formed.

"This myriad and collaborative group of songwriters — there is something to this. We kind of have this Eagles vibe; everybody writes songs and everybody sings," he said.

From the tight, robust playing to the seamless backing vocals, this collaborative nature comes through on "Band Together." This is not guys taking turn on center stage while the others serve as the backing band. This is an actual band where the individual styles and personalities are evident while, at the same time, the band remains a cohesive whole.

Hanna is very anxious to get the new album, which has been recorded, out to their fans. The day after the Energy Park show, Hanna says the band will head to the West Coast for an eight-date tour, during which the members will meet with their prospective label.

"We hope that we are able to release this collaboratively with them," said Hanna. "It's an exciting prospect, but our fans want their hands on the album."

As a holdover gesture, the Whiskey Treaty Roadshow recorded six of the album's tunes acoustically and released them on the "Live at



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Whiskey Treaty Roadshow

Mass Moca" EP. They also recorded six videos that can be viewed on their website, thewhiskeytreaty.com. The West Coast tour also features an appearance at the Kate Wolf music festival, and the musicians have been invited to play a Highway Man tribute in honor of Kris Kristofferson's appearance at the festival.

"Band Together" is a 10-song album that includes guest appearances from Steve Gorman of The Black Crowes on drums and Pat Sansone from Wilco on bass. Arlo Guthrie plays harmonica on one of Hanna's tunes, "Don't Cross My Land."

"It's produced by Jonny Iרון. He's got an amazing ear and sonically it's really cool," Hanna said. "It's a little bit of a deviation from our sound and I'm actually playing trumpet on like six of the songs."

"Band Together" finds the band moving its sound forward as the members rock a little harder, leaning a bit heavier on the electric guitars and less on the banjo while the trumpet adds an entirely new dimension to the sound.

"We are describing us more as rock band," Hanna said. "We were

folk-influenced, for sure, and we're definitely an Americana project. But it is more rocking than ever. I can't wait for folks to hear it."

And you will get a chance to hear these new songs as the band plans to play this new material at the Energy Park show. Its members didn't road test the majority of these songs before recording them, so they have only played them live during a handful of shows that were held earlier this month. The Whiskey Treaty Roadshow always puts on a great, rowdy rockin' show and getting to hear these new tunes is an added bonus. Don't miss out.

Energy Park is located at 50 Miles St. in Greenfield. The suggested donation is \$20. In the event of rain the show will be held at The Guiding Star Grange, 401 Chapman St. in Greenfield. The Sunday Concert Series will feature Emma's Revolution on July 21 and John Gorka on Aug. 11. For more information call 413-772-1553.

Dustbowl Revival at Hawks and Reed

The Dustbowl Revival has been a favorite of local audiences since the

band released its title album for Signature Sounds in 2017. The band has been frequent performers here in the Valley, and the band of eight musicians, who are based in Los Angeles, are currently in the middle of an extensive summer tour that will make a stop at Hawks and Reed in Greenfield Friday night at 8 p.m.

The band, which got together via Craigslist, started out playing rootsy, retro music, but on their last album branched out into a more funky, contemporary sound. The band's shows are known for keeping audiences on their feet and dancing the night away. Popular Valley progressive bluegrass band Mamma's Marmalade will open.

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$26 day of show. Tickets are available at www.hawksandreed.com. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Hawks and Reed is located at 289 Main St. For more information: 413-774-0150.

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