



The SANDCARVERS

Band Member Biographies

A.J. LAIRD, lead singer and percussionist, was born and raised in Harrisburg, PA. He started studying and performing music at a very young age, mostly due to hanging out with his father, a great vocalist in his own right. A.J. studied music and theatre all through high school and college. In 1992, he received a B.A. in Theatre Arts from Penn State University, where he was also very active in the local music scene.

After moving to Wisconsin in 1994 he wasted no time getting engrained in the midwest music scene, playing in several bands, including the long-running Strawberry Square. He got the call to join the Sandcarvers in 2004 and never looked back. This has been the greatest musical experience he has ever had and looks forward to taking it as far as humanly possible.

A.J. uses Shure microphones, Rhythm Tech percussion instruments and is always on the lookout for the perfect bodhran.

BRYCE LEHMAN, lead guitarist, was born in Iron Mountain, MI, spent the first several years of his life in Denver, CO and moved to SE Wisconsin with his family in the late 1980s. After years of piano lessons, he picked up the guitar as a pre-teen to pursue his dreams of grunge rock stardom. By age 14 he was studying classical guitar, and at 15 joined his high school's jazz ensemble as well as the Youth Jazz Ensemble at The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Lehman earned his Bachelor of Music Performance degree in classical guitar from The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, where he played with many of the world's top jazz musicians as a member of the University's esteemed Jazz Symposium. Most recently, Bryce was the lead guitarist for Milwaukee country/rock band "Marshal Law."

Bryce plays whatever combination of wood, strings and wires he's most recently managed to slap together on his coffee table, and the smallest, lightest, loudest amplifiers he can get his hands on.

CHRISTOPHER J. TROTIER, bass playin' guy and world-renowned singing shark, was born on his birthday. He began studying piano when he was four in utero. He spent 13 years bouncing around among piano, trombone, washboard, kazoo, 'shine jug and mandolin before finally settling on comb & wax paper. After a debilitating papercut, he moved to bass, honing his skills with such local bands as Meddling Kids, Cleveland Steamers, Hot Sauce, The Nobody's and The Rabid Aardvarks. Always looking for new challenges, Chris came to The Sandcarvers in an effort to improve his free-style mike skillz and lyrical flow.

Chris plays a bunch of stuff, including Warwick, Spector & MusicMan fretted & fretless basses, and Aguilar amps (or a beer-soaked Ampeg Tube DI). He rides Harley-Davidson motorcycles just like Jeffrey, with whom he will be attending the 17th annual David Hasselhoff Charity Bike Rally and Souffle Cook-Off.

JEFFREY MILLER, acoustic guitarist and vocalist, was born and raised in Burt, Michigan. He moved to Milwaukee in 2001, and joined the 'Carvers in early 2004. Previously, he played out with Foggy Dew while attending Michigan State University, and until his career in the Sandcarvers, could be heard soloing on the Celtic coffeehouse/Irish pub circuit in and around Milwaukee, where you still might catch him when not on tour.

Jeffrey plays a Taylor T5, Washburn 12-string, and an Alvarez AD60. He also plays Hohner harmonicas when no one's around to stop him, and of late has been threatening to add his Rogue mandolin into the mix. He uses Shure microphones, A LOT of D'Addario strings, and rides Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

RAVEN hails from Chicago and began studying piano at the age of six. In grade school she began studying clarinet, but later switched to bassoon because it was so much cooler. Along the way, she taught herself recorder, saxophone and flute, majored in bassoon and orchestral conducting at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and spent many seasons as a symphony musician. Since joining The Sandcarvers in 2003, her mission has been to widen the scope of both the Celtic and rock genres by way of not-so-traditional instruments and arrangements. No one has yet figured out how to put a halt to the madness.

Raven plays Moek and Yamaha recorders, Yamaha Motif keyboard, Puchner bassoon with "BasSonic" custom reeds, Roundstone bodhran, and garage sale accordion. She uses Finale on a Mac for music transcription unless it's a day when she's in touch with her inner Luddite, in which case she uses staff paper and a Black Warrior #1 lead pencil.

TONY KELLER, drummer extraordinaire, came out sticks first. Ouch! As influences, Tony cites early '60s' R&B/Rock & Sesame Street's letter "E." In 2nd grade, his parents bribed him into taking piano lessons in exchange for also getting him his first drum set, and it only took him six years to convince his parents that drums-only was the way to go. (To this day he thinks a clef is part of the mouth.) Tony went on to play in typical high school bands. He even got to play at CBGB's during one particularly memorable summer in NYC, an experience which left a lasting impression. He would like to name the recent bands he's been in, but decided to defer when he realized none of them would back him on any of his claims.

Tony currently uses Yamaha drums, but he is willing to switch for any endorsements!!!