

Caravan of Thieves to celebrate freak power: East Coast gypsy jazz/swing group encourages period costumes, alter-egos

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[Jeremy Martin | Special to the Kalamazoo Gazette](#)



Let the flag fly: Bridgeport, Conn., gypsy jazz/swing band Caravan of Thieves likes to have their fans dress up in period costumes and participate in their shows.

KALAMAZOO — By all accounts Bridgeport, Conn., is a rather normal New England city.

A former manufacturing town, Bridgeport's ubiquitous city parks and sleepy college campus could be uprooted to any town USA and no one would be the wiser.

However, just below the surface of this seaside town lays a force both dark and creative.

P.T. Barnum felt something mysterious in Bridgeport and was compelled to assemble a troupe of oddities, the likes the world had never seen. Now, just down the street from where Barnum's bones lie in eternal rest, four musicians conspire to create something equally stirring and unique.

Formed when the husband and wife duo of Carrie Sangiovanni and Fuzz decided they wanted to work together on both a romantic and professional level, the duo broke free from conventional rock 'n' roll and singer/songwriter music, opting instead to create an elaborate historical fantasy world, a noir dust-bowl horror story populated with swing-dancing hobos and trash-can Sinatras.

"We started having a relationship and we said, 'Well let's work together, why not give it a try?' We did some really cool shows, and some really silly shows ... and starting figuring out what to do. That was about a three or four year process where we decided we wanted to do something like this," Fuzz said.

In the case of Fuzz and Carrie, "something like this" turned out to be Caravan of Thieves, a musical melting pot of gypsy jazz, swing, storytelling and punk, "a little bit similar to the Misfits," Fuzz said.

The next step was to recruit a band of musicians with the chops and personality to match the music. When Brian Anderson and Ben Dean entered the picture, the group was complete.

"We came up with the concept of what we wanted to do, the other guys personalities, and our personalities, were all similar in the way that we would take to that kind of backdrop. (And) As it's going on it has taken on new forms, it has become like a traveling troupe of characters on the road and on the stage. Everyone adds something fun and interesting — visually and musically," Fuzz said.

At a Caravan of Thieves show it isn't just the stage where characters are found. It's not uncommon for members of the audience to dress the part as well, showing up in period costume or creating alter-egos to match the music.

"We've got this family of freaks that we've been cultivating. A freak means you're different and you're proud of it! I like being an individual," Fuzz said.

"Some people come and see us and they want to sit and watch, some people come and they want to dance, we encourage whatever you want to do to enjoy the show," Sangiovanni said.

If you go - Caravan of Thieves

What: Gypsy/jazz/swing/fantasy

Where: Bell's Eccentric Café, 355 E. Kalamazoo Ave.

When: 9:30 p.m. Nov. 18

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http://www.mlive.com/entertainment/kalamazoo/index.ssf/2010/11/caravan_of_thieves_to_celebrat.html