

PINEY CREEK WEASELS

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The Piney Creek Weasels is an old-time string band based in Sacramento, California. The Weasels feature a high-energy old-timey sound that combines highly entertaining arrangements with tight harmony and dynamic musicianship. A typical performance by the Weasels will feature originals penned by band members, obscure Old Time tunes and a few well-known favorites. Performances will often end with the audience howling like dogs along with the band. The late banjo virtuoso Rick Abrams formed the group in 1987. Past members of the group include fiddler Dave Rainwater and guitarist Hugh Hoeger.

The Weasels have recorded 7 albums during their existence and has released a new CD, called "Off to California" on its own Weaseltone label. The CD features fiddler Eric Anderson's own lively dance tune, "Three Cups Short", and an elegant waltz-time setting of the traditional Irish hornpipe "Off to California". Other CDs recorded by the band include "Squirrel Heads and Gravy" with Hay Holler records (www.hayholler.com) and "Go Long Mule" with Heritage Records.

Eric Anderson has been fiddling and singing with the band since 1995. Eric won the California State Old-time Fiddler's title three times. In addition to the fiddle, Eric also plays mandolin and guitar. He is the current president for District 5 of the California Old Time fiddler's Association. Eric has over 40 fiddle students and is a veteran of the Gulf War.

Rocky Rioux, the bass player, sings lead, baritone and harmony vocals, is the heartbeat of the band. He not only keeps the band moving with his up-tempo bass style, but also plays an occasional lead on the bass while he sings along. Rocky joined the Weasels in 1994 when Rick Abrams convinced him to try playing old-time music. He began playing Bluegrass music in 1975 and when he isn't picking, he is a rocket scientist at Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Playing guitar with the band is Dan Baker, a truck driver who lives with his family in Antelope, California. He began playing music when he was a teenager, singing and playing in church. He also played rock and roll with a 22-piece big band.

Andy Alexis of Sacramento, California plays banjo and sings lead vocals. He started playing traditional music 25 years ago and in addition to the banjo, plays hammered dulcimer and finger style guitar. He is a former member of the bands Whiskey Before Breakfast and Off To California, winning first place in banjo at the Santa Barbara Banjo and Fiddle Contest. Andy works as an air pollution specialist for the California Air Resources Board.

Performance History

California Bluegrass Assoc. Father's Day Festival, Grass Valley, California

Plymouth Bluegrass Festival, Plymouth, California

Professional Engineers in California Government

Woodland Bluegrass Festival, Woodland, California

Winter Bluegrass Festival, Tacoma, Washington

Bowers Mansion, Washoe Valley, Nevada

Burns Lake Bluegrass Festival, Burns Lake, British Columbia, Canada

Nanton Bluegrass Festival, Nanton, Alberta, Canada

Anchorage Bluegrass Festival, Anchorage Alaska

What others are saying about the Piney Creek Weasels...

"This is a delightful album, with fine musicianship and production. I was pleased to hear a new recording of 'Darling Nelly Gray'. It's been the inspiration for many other songs, including a well known Australian folk song called 'Eumeralla Shore'. You include clever interpretations of familiar tunes I wouldn't have expected to find being recorded by an old time string band, and they work just fine on this album."

-- Bruce Cameron, 2MCE-FM, Bathurst NSW Australia

"Boy, are these folks good. I found the disc in my mailbox when i arrived at the station, and they are one seriously hot string band. if you like old-time music, you really ought to check them out. "

-- Paul Stamler, KDHX-FM, St. Louis, Missouri

"I really like The Piney Creek Weasels. I'd buy a CD of the band tuning up."

-- CD Customer, Lake Cormorant, Mississippi

"The Piney Creek Weasels are based in Sacramento, California and were formed by the late banjoist Rick Abrams 15 years ago. They perform a variety of obscure old-time tunes, sincere heart songs, wacky vocal numbers and driving dance classics.

The band is typical for most old-time aggregations in that all the members have "real jobs" mostly away from the music. Fiddler Eric Anderson is the lone full-time musician in the band. Rocky Rioux is a dynamic bassist and in his other life works as rocket scientist at Vandenberg Air Force Base. (Who says you don't have to be a rocket scientist to play old-time music?) Guitarist Dan Baker keeps good solin rhythm and banjoist Andy Alexis has played in a variety of California old-time bands for 25 years.

Off to California draw from a numbers of sources. Classics like "Boatman", "Rabbit in the Peapatch", "Cluck Old Hen" and a "D Medley" consisting of "Spotted Pony", "Waiting for Nancy", and "Quince Dillon's High D" reside quite comfortably beside more obscure selections. Dillon Bustin's "Around My Barn" is given the wacky Weasels vocal treatment. The rousing dance tune "Three Cups Short" is an Eric Anderson original and "Music for a New-Found Harmonium" works just as well as an old-time tune as it does in a Celtic session. "The Dog Song" is an audience favorite complete with howling and baying. This band must be a scream when seen live!

It's good to hear that the Weasels are still intact after the tragic loss of Rick Abrams and if *Off to California* is any indication, they'll be around for many years to come."

-- Sing Out! Magazine review, Winter 2004

About Weasels Banjo Player Andy Alexis and former band Whiskey Before Breakfast...

"Alexis provides a haunting chime-like backdrop on hammered dulcimer and doubles on clawhammer-style banjo. His strong tenor voice is featured on most of Whiskey Before Breakfast's pieces."

-- Davis (California) Enterprise

"Whiskey Before Breakfast plays a nice mixture of bluegrass and early folk music with a good ongoing energy and a steady beat"

-- Sacramento Bee (California)