

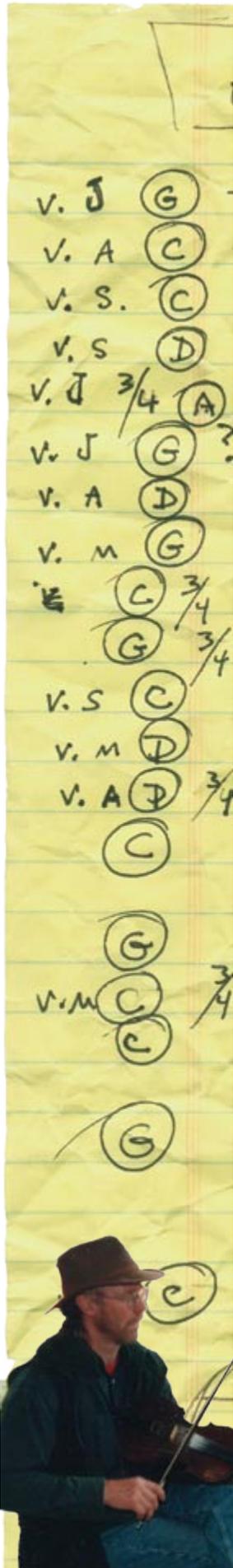
The Hushpuppies

The Hushpuppies have chosen their band name from those little fried cakes that are always in plastic baskets on the table at Southern BBQ joints. At first glance the humble hushpuppy seems to be a toss-away non-food, its name suggesting that it is something you throw to the dogs to distract them from barking as you eat the real meal. Watch out, though. Hushpuppies, despite their silly name and innocent appearance, are actually quite serious food. The Hushpuppies band, like hushpuppy cakes, provides musical entertainment that is actually substantial fare. With their easygoing manner and informal almost throwaway presentation, this band that puts out some satisfyingly hearty music - music that is as nourishing as it is delightful. Though they have a lot of fun with it, the Hushpuppies are very serious about their music and for each of them the hobby of collecting, playing and singing old-time music occupies much of their time and energy. All four play several instruments well and all four are unaffected, natural singers.

Jon, Molly, Amy and Steve are involved in the music on several levels. They are actively involved in playing music with their peers at social gatherings, music conventions and for dances; they learn from archival and early commercial recordings and they seek out and learn from living tradition-bearers. The Hushpuppies can be seen and heard regularly at Fiddlers Conventions throughout the South. They also love the classic string band recordings of the 20s and 30s, particularly those of the Southwestern Virginia bands centered on Ernest V. Stoneman, Eck Dunford and Fields Ward. They search out and learn interesting versions of songs and tunes that fit their style, and at the same time really make an effort to capture the loose jointed but tight feel of the music on the old recordings. They load up their old cars with instruments and recording equipment, and take off on road trips to visit and learn from the elderly musicians who are carriers of this music.

What truly sets the Hushpuppies apart for me and makes them an outstanding revival old-time band is that they have integrated all of these sources of music and folded it all into a natural style of their own. They've picked up elements of the sound of the bands on the old recordings, they've captured the feel of the music of the elderly fiddle and banjo players they visit and yet they still sound deliciously like themselves. Though the Hushpuppies can rock out on a breakdown and match excitement and drive with any of the best contest-winning bands active today, they have a charming rakishness that is all their own. While they do not attempt to slavishly mimic every technical detail from the recordings, they can still capture the essence of that "old sound" so well that you almost expect to hear the crack of the needle as it jumps the scratches of the old 78. Above all, they have managed to absorb something essential in all these sounds and influences and use the ingredients to whip it up into their own savory recipe: so enjoy the tasty treat of the musical Hushpuppies!

-Gail Gillespie
Editor, *The Old Time Herald*



The
Hushpuppies

BEST BETS

Independent Weekly • September 4-10, 2002 •

In string bands

PineCone brings one of the state's top old-time string bands to the Museum of History in downtown Raleigh for a free concert Sunday afternoon. Formed in 1996, **The Hushpuppies** consist of respected veterans Jon Nowlin, Amy Davis, Molly Stouten and Steve Terrill, who were playing roots music long before the *O Brother* phenomenon. Superior vocals and playing

distinguish The Hushpuppies beyond the excellent taste in material that great old-time music demands. That the band can convey their joy in performing makes them a special ensemble. Hear them this Sunday, Sept. 8, 3 p.m., at the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh. For details, call 990-1902 or visit www.pinecone.org. —Art Menius

Selected Performances

- **Merlefest**, Wilkesboro, NC
- **WPAQ's Merry-Go-Round**, Mount Airy, NC
- **Museum of History**, Raleigh, NC
- **Weaver Street Market**, Carrboro, NC
- **Festival for the Eno**, Durham, NC
- **Autumn Leaves Festival**, Mount Airy, NC
- **Seafood Festival**, Morehead City, NC
- **The Garage**, Winston-Salem, NC
- **The Old Town Breakdown**, Winston-Salem, NC
- **City Stage**, Greensboro, NC
- **Bynum General Store**, Bynum, NC

Critical Praise for The Hushpuppies CD

"These folks know what constitutes good singing and good songs. They are one of the few old-time bands today who can arrange their harmonies in exciting three parts that are as exciting as they are fun to listen to."

BOB BUCKINGHAM- *The Old Time Herald*

"The Hushpuppies' superior vocals distinguish them beyond the excellent taste in both playing and choice of material that great old-time music demands."

ART MENIUS-*The Independent*

"All four are multi-instrumental, yielding a rich mix of fiddle, banjo, guitar and mandolin in a variety of arrangements. Better than that, though, they can all sing- and well- a rarity for an old-time band."

BRUCE BAKER-*Dirty Linen*

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