

Sam Bush and Rockin' Acoustic Circus play Tulsa

Summer in Tulsa is filled with the sounds of concerts, outdoor shows, live festivals and more. Many are perfect outings for families, especially families with kids who love music. As the summer heat intensifies, indoor activities become more appealing. What better activity than a downtown event?

On Thurs., July 10th, the Sam Bush Band plays at the Blank Slate, located on the corner of First Street and Cincinnati in the Blue Dome District. The show starts at 7:00 p.m., is non-smoking and open to all ages. Anyone who knows Bluegrass music knows Sam Bush. Bush is one of the founding members of the New Grass Revival, an influential band in the '70s and '80s. Bush remains inspirational and continues to influence a whole new generation of Bluegrass musicians.

Among those inspired by Sam Bush is Oklahoma's own young and talented Rockin' Acoustic Circus, who will be opening the show. Any aspiring musician or music lover, young or old, should come ready to be dazzled by these kids.

The Rockin' Acoustic Circus consists of five youthful musicians: Emma Hardin, 15, a classically trained cello player and vocalist; her brother, Zac Hardin, 13, playing bass; Carson Clemishire, 14, picking away at the banjo; Eric Dysart, 15,



THE ROCKIN' ACOUSTIC CIRCUS WILL PLAY AT THE BLANK SLATE, THURSDAY, JULY 19.

vocalist and fiddler; and Sterling Abernathy, 14, original member and mandolin player. The sixth member is Rick Morton, the ringleader, teacher, and mentor for the group.

The band was formed four years ago at a Silver Dollar City contest. Since that time, members have been added and lost; only the truly committed remain. They practice together three times per week and periodically have "boot camps" with Morton. These practices do not include the individual hours each spends daily

perfecting his or her craft.

Already seasoned musicians, these kids are invigorated by a crowd. They play 70 to 80 shows yearly at venues throughout the region. The pressure of stardom does not faze them. They have mastered improvisation, so if the dreaded fear of 'messing up' does occur, few in the audience would notice.

"After all," says Eric, "it's the mistakes you can learn from." Learn they have, as their biggest accomplishment to date has been the invitation to play at the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas,

this September — an honor for such a young Bluegrass band.

Commitment and passion for music and for each other resonate through the Rockin' Acoustic Circus sound. They are currently working on a second CD to follow their first album "Stay Tuned." Their newest album will be released early this month and includes original tunes along with special arrangements of familiar Bluegrass hits.

When the group is asked what advice they would give other Tulsa kids interested in music, their responses are simple and thoughtful. "Have fun," says Eric, which Emma quickly follows, "Don't give up." Sterling's advice, "Find the music that fits and make a routine for practicing." Carson adds, "Practice with a metronome and make the music your own."

Morton's advice reinforces his prodigies, "An aspiring musician should enjoy the sound of the instrument, and then learn how to play it correctly." The band obviously heeds this advice. Anyone who hears them will find a new appreciation for Bluegrass and the capability of young people to make beautiful music.

To learn more about Rockin' Acoustic Circus, go to www.rockinacousticcircus.com.