

HOT ROCK PILGRIMS

Hot Rock Pilgrims seem like they were cooked up in a lab for the kind of music snob who needs even their party band to have impeccable credentials. When a band's bio declares that they defy genre, it's often because they haven't taken the time to master any of them. Our intrepid squirrel hunters, on the other hand, count among their number bluegrass purists, the best Old Time fiddler outside the USA, and in Hubert Murray, an Irish bluesman who's also a fine flatpicking guitarist.

If they felt like it, they could turn their collective hand to country, rockabilly or early rock'n'roll. As it is, what they do is steeped in American roots music tradition, deeply groovy and a great deal of fun. Fiddle, banjo, guitar, bass and dobro, wickedly fast and high. If you're casting around for post-Brexit symbolism, they're also a fine example of European co-operation, or perhaps the start of a joke; a German, an Irishman and three Brits walk into a bar. Before they leave, they'll have everyone on their feet.

Hubert Murray (vocals, guitar) is an extraordinary singer and guitarist from Galway, Ireland. Having cut his teeth on the Irish pub circuit, he moved to London to pursue a solo career, discovered bluegrass music in 2011, and ever since has worked tirelessly on his musicianship, taking lessons from the likes of Grant Gordy, Courtney Hartmann and David Grier. In a short period of time he has become one of the best bluegrass singers and guitar flatpickers in the country, with a high, clear tenor to match.

Dan Edwards (vocals, banjo, guitar) fell in love with the banjo when studying at the University of Oklahoma. Since moving back to the UK he has established himself on the London and Brighton music scene as a renowned musician who also gigs nationally and internationally with the Ben Somers Bluegrass Band and Ben Paley's Long Hill Ramblers.

Sam Rose (double bass) was raised in the unlikely bluegrass hub of Helsby in Cheshire. Graduating with first-class honours in Guitar Performance (BMus) from The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance in London, Rose quickly found himself in high demand as one of London's best session guitarists and double bassists.

Bruno Pichler (dobro) has studied the resonophonic guitar for many years, taking lessons from musical heroes including Sally Van Meter, Rob Ickes, Michael Witcher and Ivan Rosenberg. Drawn towards music from an early age, he played drums in a heavy metal band at the age of 10, electric bass in a blues band at the age of 20 and nylon-string guitar in the closet at the age of 30 before finally finding his calling. He has recently placed 2nd in the prestigious Rockygrass Dobro Contest in Colorado. When he's not performing, he spends most of his time on his day job designing high-end laser scanning microscopes for neuroscience research.

Originally hailing from the Lake District, **Kieran Towers** (fiddle) is deeply rooted in Appalachian mountain music and is equally well versed in both old-time and bluegrass fiddle styles. He has been active in the UK scene for many years, playing with acclaimed bands such as the Loose Moose Stringband and the Ben Somers Bluegrass Band. Kieran has

performed on stage with world-renowned fiddle luminaries such as Rayna Gellert and Bruce Molsky.

With fans far beyond their London home, Hot Rock Pilgrims pack dance floors wherever they go, and following a rip-roaring festival season are ready to unleash their debut album on the world. A charming set of reimagined traditional songs & melodies, the energy is infectious, the vibe raucous yet intricate. It's also the only album you're likely to hear this year featuring a giant, radioactive squirrel with laser eyes.

Squirrel Hunting is self-released, HRPCD01. Visit hotrockpilgrims.com to purchase a digital download

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