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Greensky, Fruition share journeys to arrive at Vinyl

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Greensky Bluegrass performs at Vinyl Music Hall on Thursday. / Special to the News Journal

Written by Michael Smith

Anders Beck's childhood dream is quickly turning into an adventure he never could have imagined.

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As a member of Greensky Bluegrass, Beck has performed at Red Rocks and Bonnaroo; major accomplishments for any artist, but especially monumental for a bluegrass group from Kalamazoo,

Mich.

"Every kid dreams of being an astronaut when they grow up," said Beck, "but only a couple of us really get to land on the moon. That was my metaphor for getting to play at Red Rocks. It's pretty amazing to get to live the dream."

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Thursday, Greensky Bluegrass plays Vinyl Music Hall, 2 Palafox Place. The day after their Pensacola concert, the band will perform in

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the Austin City Limits Music Festival.

Since forming in 2000, Greensky Bluegrass has earned national recognition, earning praise from Rolling Stone magazine and winning the band competition at the Telluride Bluegrass Festival in 2006.

This will be the group's first performance in Pensacola.

"There are not a lot of places we haven't played in this country anymore," Beck said. "It's a unique and kind of scary feeling, too. We get to create something together and share that memory of the first time."

Beck added, "Whether you like bluegrass, rock, jam bands, jazz, indie or country, come check out what we're doing. Trust me on this one."

Fruition

Jay Cobb Anderson remembers the first time he felt the power of music.

"When I was 8 years old, my best friend moved away," said the frontman for Portland folk/rock group Fruition. "I got home from school and took one of my dad's Beatles' tapes and I played the Beatles' song "In My Life" and I just sat there listening to it over and over, and just crying.

"I thought it was the end of the world. My best friend was moving away and that was the first time that music really hit me emotionally like that."

Anderson started to believe in a music career soon after playing his first show at 14.

"I started feeling the connection of being able to dig deep inside and pull something out and have people enjoy it," Anderson said. "I always knew that I wanted to play music, but it wasn't until then, that I knew that that's what I was going to do for the rest of my life."

In 2008, Anderson formed Fruition with fellow Idaho transplant/bassist Keith Simon. The band has traveled the country playing music that draws from their bluegrass, R&B and rock roots.

Opening for Greensky Bluegrass has given Anderson the opportunity to play historic rock venues like the Bowery Ballroom in New York City and the Fillmore in San Francisco.

"The next step is to get to the point where we can pack out places all on our own, all over the country," Anderson said. "A dream of mine has always been to travel the world playing music."

Thursday, catch Greensky Bluegrass and Fruition at Vinyl. Tickets are \$15, plus a \$5 surcharge if you're younger than 21. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. Visit www.vinylmusicchall.com.

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