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Greensky Bluegrass reveals new album details, influences from Slash to the Beatles

By [Dylan Owens](#) | February 26th, 2013 | [No Comments »](#)

On paper, they read like a traditional, five-piece bluegrass band. When a banjo, mandolin, stand-up bass, dobro and guitar get together, what other sound could possibly result?

It's right there in the band's name: **Greensky Bluegrass**. But while their music might pass for bluegrass in many circles of the FM dial, traditionalists beg to differ: this is something else.



1 of 190 Yonder Mountain String Band's Kinfolk Celebration at Planet Bluegrass ranch in Lyons, Aug. 25-26, 2012. Featuring YMSB, Split Lip Rayfield, Todd Snider, Greensky Bluegrass and Larry Keel. Photos by Candace Horgan, heyreverb.com.



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mandolinist and chief songwriter, Paul Hoffman. "We really get placed in a lot of interesting positions. You know, we get pegged as a bluegrass band, we get pegged as a jam-grass band, we get recognized as a great songwriting band. I think it's really awesome."

It's all a matter of perspective—one that doesn't bother the band in the slightest.

"I really enjoy all of the crossovers and all of the places we're able to walk," said Greensky Bluegrass

Like the band itself, who are at any point as likely to cover **Springsteen** as they are **Prince**, Hoffman's musical points of reference are as varied as they are telling. From the folk-wheelhouse the Lumineers to Hoffman's hometown rap collective, Detroit's Dirty Dozen, his scope of interest is as open as you like in the digital age. "The style of music is sort of irrelevant to me in a lot of ways," he said. "I like the writer."

For fans of GSBG, it's the kind of talk you want to hear right now. The band has just finished recording the successor to 2011's "Handguns," a Billboard-charting upstart of a record that, in Hoffman's own estimation, is interesting to follow up. "It did mean more success for us and it did go a

little further than all the other records did,” he admits. “We’re charting progress, hoping that everything we do does a little better than what we did before, or a lot better. Maybe [the new record] will do that.”

The band recorded the album in a 12-day period that they managed to spare from their rigorous tour schedule, which, by the way, brings them to Colorado Tuesday and on through Saturday. To hear them tell it, it was rigorous, full of 13-hour days of eating, sleeping and drinking music. It sure looked that way on [their Instagram](#). As for what it sounded like, it depends on who you ask—and what you can imagine.

“We definitely try to think, ‘What would the Beatles do?’ a lot of the time,” says GSBG dobro player Anders Beck. “When you’re making an album, that’s sort of what you have to think.”

Certainly, there’s no better music role model than the Beatles. But then again, there’s always Axel Rose.

“Another thing that came up a lot was ‘November Rain,’ by Guns n Roses,” Beck continued. “I don’t know why. We kept being like, ‘This really needs to be a November Rain-type solo.’ Not necessarily the sound, but the video. Like Slash by the church with the wind blowing in his hair, you know?”

In other words, they wanted it to feel “big.”

From a songwriter’s perspective, Hoffman offered one possible inspiration for the new album in doe-eyed indie songwriter Benjamin Gibbard, an expectedly unexpected choice. “I just love the way he writes,” Hoffman said. “His lyrics, his sense of melody. When I listen to stuff like that that’s from that genre...I come up with a lot of really good ideas.”

Both agreed, however, there is something distinctly indie about the new record, a choice they know could alienate some current listeners, but attract others. Such is the give and take of change.

Regardless of how these clues will coalesce into the next Greensky Bluegrass album, the concept sure looks incredible on paper. As for what the combination will sound like? If anyone can pull it all together, it’s Greensky.

Greensky Bluegrass will play Carbondale, CO tonight, Fort Collins on Feb. 28 and Boulder on March 1 and 2. For tickets, check out the band’s website [here](#).

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