



The MARQUEE



Greensky Bluegrass

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Greensky makes Colorado gigs dual parties for CD release and Halloween

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By Hap Fry

You can't fault Anders Beck for referring to the present state of time as being the "suicide years" for the Michigan-based quintet Greensky Bluegrass.

And he means it both figuratively and literally.

Just a bit earlier on this mid-September day, Beck faced the daunting task of navigating the band's new tour bus along a lengthy patch of interstate along the East Coast. "I mean, we're all accomplished van and trailer drivers, but this definitely has been a new adventure these past few days," Beck said during a recent phone interview with *The Marquee*. "It requires all out attention when driving."

Beck and company were able to get back to their day, er, night jobs later that night when Greensky performed at the 8x10 in Baltimore.

Nevermind that the group played the night before in Pittsburgh and would be playing five of the next six nights in Philadelphia, New York, Cambridge, Mass., Burlington, Vt., and Ithaca, N.Y., Beck and company rapidly are becoming proven road warriors, even though friends and family are a little concerned.

"We've been working so hard that people have been making sure we're OK," Beck said from the greenroom at

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The 8x10. "They'll kind of look at our schedule and then we'll start getting calls and they'll be like: 'Wow, are you OK?' They're truly concerned with how much we're playing. But we're all totally into it.

"We play almost 200 nights a year. We're busy as hell, but we're not going to be on MTV or VH1 or anything like that. That's not our model for success. Our model for success is word of mouth and live shows, and just throwing a party everywhere we go," he said.

The party will come to Colorado later this month, with gigs slated in Aspen, Fort Collins, Denver and Boulder — the last of which is on Halloween.

Not only will Greensky be armed with some additional Halloween bell and whistles (think '80s), they will enter Colorado riding high, having just released their new studio album *Handguns* — scheduled release date is Oct. 4.

"We're super excited about it," Beck said. "I feel like we created the record we always wanted to."

The album — the band's fourth — has created even more of a buzz among the group and its fans because *Handguns* is the first album Greensky has produced itself.

The album contains 14 tracks, with the opening two, "Don't Lie" and "Handguns," paving the way for the entire album.

"We sort of figured it was time to do it on our own," Beck said. "I went into it thinking that it could be a train wreck or it could be awesome. I think it turned out pretty awesome, and I'm probably our harshest critic if that tells you anything."

Beck, who plays the dobro, also is the group's newest member — joining Greensky in 2007 from Colorado-based group the Wayword Sons. While leaving behind Colorado for Michigan was difficult, Beck, who still has a 303 number, said it was the right play.

"I was kind of looking to get into a band that was a full-time gig," Beck said. "I sort of made a list of bands I thought were awesome and had similar desires as me in wanting to take over the world and make awesome music. Greensky was kind of on top of that list because, well, their song writing was really good. When I first heard Greensky, the first thing that really stood out to me was how good of songwriters they really are. As a dobro player, I kind of fill in around the songs so it really helps to have killer lyrics to do that around."

The other members who make up Greensky are Michael Arlen Bont (banjo), Dave Bruzza (guitar), Mike Devol (upright bass) and Paul Hoffman (mandolin).

As one might expect, Beck said spending roughly 200 days a year together may be asking a bit much at times, but the band gets along and everyone is on the same page. "It's like having four other brothers but instead of living in a house, you live in a van," Beck said. "So you can sort of imagine it from there. But we get along great. I think that's why we can play so much and not get burned out."

Rest assured Beck and his bandmates won't be burned out when they hit Colorado. "When we're in Colorado, we're going to be able to have kind of a dual CD release/Halloween party," Beck said. "Just yesterday in the bus we decided it's going to be 'Totally Bitching '80s Halloween.' We're going for it. I know how Colorado parties."

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