

**Review of Concert by
Donna Ulisse & the Poor Mountain Boys
Harrell Theatre – Collierville, TN
August 20, 2011**

by Betty Westmoreland

Bluegrass music fans in Collierville and the Memphis area are more than a little bit hungry for some 'live professional bluegrass music! The fans got their fill on August 20, 2011, when **Donna Ulisse & the Poor Mountain Boys** hit the stage of the Harrell Theatre in Collierville. **Mark and Sharrye Holder** (MCH Music Group) were instrumental (pun intended) in working with the Collierville Arts Council, the American Cancer Society Relay for Life: Collierville, and major sponsor, Mary Jean Smith, owner of Banyan Tree Realtors and Collierville's Silver Caboose Restaurant, in kicking off what promises to be some really great performances in the near future.

While this writer knew a little bit about Donna Ulisse & the Poor Mountain Boys, she was pleasantly surprised with what a solid sound came from the band! From the first note, it was apparent that this band would honk! Donna's amazing voice sends chills down the spine. Her supporting musicians are: **Greg (Papaw) Davis** (banjo, vocals), **Jon Martin** (mandolin, vocals), **Tony ('Sweet Tea') King** (guitar, vocals), **Bobby King** (upright bass), and Donna's husband, **Rick Stanley** (guitar, vocals). Along with Donna's powerful vocals, she writes most of her material and plays guitar. The Stanley name is surely not new to bluegrass fans, and Donna chose wisely when she married into the Ralph and Carter Stanley family. It's a comfortable fit. She and her band, the Poor Mountain Boys, are taking the long-standing Stanley tradition into the 21st century in a fine way.

Mingling a bit of light-hearted chatter into their show, Donna and the band shared bits of information from her Italian background in a metropolitan city to Virginia, where bluegrass music has echoed through the hills for at least two centuries. Songwriting is an important part of what Donna Ulisse brings to bluegrass. She recalled that it is just her and her dog Daisy there at the house when some important music comes to life.

Here is what the audience was treated to in a couple of delightful sets:

1. In My Wildest Dream, 2. This Crazy World, 3. I've Got Nothing, 4. Doin' Time, 5. Who Will Sing for Me (dedicated to the Stanley family), 6. Train 45 / Hallelujah I'm Ready to Go, 7. Don't This Road Look Rough and Rocky, 8. I Know a Heartache When I See One, 9. She Goes Sailing (for her nana), 10. Another Town, 11. I Wanna Grow Old with You, 12. Walk This Mountain Down.

1. Callin' Heaven Down, 2. Caney Creek to Canaan Land, 3. Hand-Me Down Home (tribute to the Stanley cabin), 4. Katy Daley (Donna said a musician said that when the band played this one, they were "mashin' it"), 5. Where the Cold Wind Blows (dedicated to soldiers and military families), 6. Flat Broke in Arkansas (a family situation at Turkey Track in Waldron, AR), 7. Hold Whatcha Got (Greg [Papaw] Davis featured), 8. Fist City (in honor of Donna's sassy personal hero, Loretta Lynn), 9. Levi Stone, 10. Let It Rain, Encore: Somebody Somewhere Don't Know What He's Missin' Tonight (another tribute to Loretta Lynn)

Donna Ulisse & the Poor Mountain Boys is a fine band with a solid bluegrass sound! The rest of the world needs to hear this group. They've recently returned from Russia, Connecticut, and Nashville's own Station Inn, so they are off to a good start. Professional in every way, the band drives that bluegrass sound. They "mash it," and we hope that you have a chance to hear them soon! Follow the band on Facebook and other sources.

More Information:

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