

Review of Concert by the Grascals at the Lucy Opry on January 10, 2009

by Betty Westmoreland

When the Nashville-based **Grascals** ride into Bartlett, TN, on their big ol' Mayberry's Finest bus, bluegrass music fans know that things are about to turn lively at the Lucy Opry. The Grascals rolled in to the Bartlett Performing Arts & Conference Center (3663 Appling Road, Bartlett) on January 10, 2009, and took over. The band of six very talented bluegrass performers is known world-wide, and it is a favorite at the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) World of Bluegrass and at the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music of America (SPBGMA) annual convention. The Grascals appear often at the Grand Ole Opry, the Station Inn in Nashville, and of course, they have toured with **Dolly Parton**! If you get the sense that the Grascals are something special, you are so right!

The band has it down and tight! The vocals are some of the finest; the instrumental work is sublime; and their very presence says that they know what they're doing. This five-year "overnight success" didn't just happen. Every member of the Grascals has come out of very fine, very experienced bands. They just got together and created their own band and it is hot!

So then, who are these folks and where are they from? From left to right as you see them onstage, it is **Danny Roberts** (KY) on mandolin and sweet smile; **Jeremy Adams** (WV) on fiddle and a rather new face—he's good, folks; **Jamie Johnson** (IN) on left-handed guitar, vocals, and spokesman slot; **Terry Smith** (NC) on upright bass and vocals (legendary Nashville songwriter Hazel Smith's son); **Terry Eldredge** (IN) on guitar and vocals; and the 'Grascal-ette' who came on board recently, the amazing **Kristin Scott Benson** (SC) on banjo. Oh my goodness! What wonderful performers these folks are!

The Grascals' song selection—Set One:

1. Leavin's Heavy on My Mind (by Jim Rister)
2. Happy-Go-Lucky (by Aubrey Holt of The Boys from Indiana)
3. I'll Go Steppin Too (by Tom James and Jerry Organ)
4. Keep On Walkin' (by Charley Stefl and Jamie Johnson, title cut of their new album)
5. Pike County Breakdown (instrumental by Bill Monroe and Rupert Jones)
6. Hard Times (by Allan Aaron Crenwelge)
7. Rock-a-bye My Saro Jane (by Louis Gottlieb)
8. Keep Me from Blowin' Away (by Paul Craft from Memphis and Nashville)
9. Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow, Son (by Chris Dodson and Sonny Throckmorton)
10. Today I Started Loving You Again (by Merle Haggard and Bonnie Owens)
11. Bonaparte's Retreat (instrumental by Pee Wee King)

Set Two:

1. My Night to Howl (by Aubrey Holt)
2. Rollin' in My Sweet Baby's Arms (by Lester Flatt)
3. Me and John and Paul (by Harley Allen)
4. Fightin' Side of Me (by Merle Haggard)
5. The Sad Wind Sighs (by Aubrey Holt)
6. Indiana (by Jamie Johnson and Harley Allen)
7. The Only Daddy That'll Walk the Line (by Ivy J. Bryant)
8. Where Corn Don't Grow (by M. A. Springer and R. Murrah)
9. White Lightnin' (by J. P. Richardson [the Big Bopper])
10. Remembering (by Harley Allen)

11. Sally Goodin (Public Domain/Traditional Song)
12. Encore: High on a Hilltop (by Merle Haggard)

It's 'their night to howl' when the Grascals perform—wherever they perform. They put themselves solidly into their show and leave the audience wanting more. Catch the Grascals whenever you can. The only problem with the show was the sound, which needed tweaking in order for the fans to get the full impact of the music of the Grascals.

More information:

The Grascals www.grascals.com

Musicians Against Childhood Cancer (MACC) – benefiting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
www.bluegrassclassic.com (The Grascals enthusiastically support this project)

Skaggs Family Records www.skaggsfamilyrecords.com

Rounder Records www.rounder.com

Lucy Opry www.lucyopry.com

BPACC www.bpacc.org