



The Alan Munde Gazette

Alan Munde, long regarded as one of the world's foremost 5-string banjo players, has returned as a bluegrass band leader. Joining Alan in The Alan Munde Gazette are some of the finest pickers and singers in the Southwest – Elliott Roger, Bill Honker, Steve Smith, and Nate Lee. The music they produce is just what you'd expect from this group of talented, creative, and experienced musicians - stellar instrumentation, a mixture of traditional and original material, and some of the best harmony singing you'll hear anywhere - all driven by air-tight rhythm and Alan's trademark banjo playing. The band brings you true bluegrass music with heart and soul, delivered in a powerful, straight-ahead style which is both compelling and entertaining.

Alan Munde needs no introduction to long-time Bluegrass fans. From his early creative work with Sam Bush in Poor Richard's Almanac to his traditional bluegrass apprenticeship with Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys to his 21-year stint anchoring the landmark Country Gazette, Alan has blazed a trail as one of the most innovative and influential banjo players of all time. Along the way, Alan also recorded and contributed to numerous instrumental recordings, including the 2001 IBMA Instrumental Album of the Year - Knee Deep in Bluegrass. Alan has supplemented his recorded work with several instructional publications for the banjo, and, since 1986, Alan has taught Bluegrass and Country Music at South Plains College in Levelland, Texas, a program which has produced many professional musicians nationwide. In recent years, Alan has performed and recorded as a duo with his South Plains faculty colleague (and former Gazette-mate) Joe Carr. Alan's extensive body of recorded work, his instructional materials, and his work at South Plains (including the annual Camp Bluegrass) has solidified his status as one of the true gurus of the 5-string. Alan currently serves on the Board of Directors of the International Bluegrass Music Association. He was profiled in the June 2005 issue of Bluegrass Now magazine.

Elliott Rogers was born in Osceola, Arkansas and grew up in Albuquerque NM. He fell in love with bluegrass music at an early age by hearing local bands like the Big River Boys and the Clear Ditch Ramblers. His trio in High School opened for Doc Watson. "That was a mighty big deal for me and pointed me in the direction I took with music." That path led Elliott to Austin Texas after a hitch in the Army at FT Hood. There he worked for years with songwriters like Townes Van Zandt, George Enslie and Blaze Foley, and recorded with Lyle Lovett, Nancy Griffith and Robert Earl Keen on Roberts first album, 'No Kinda Dancer'

"Along with everything else, we hosted a weekly Musician Night at the Soap Creek Saloon and had a great time in Austin." Elliott and his wife Janice moved back to Albuquerque and as fate would have it, started a band with 2 members of the Big River

Boys, the band that he would sneak in to see as a kid. “Wayne Shrubbsall has taught me everything I know about Bluegrass and is an outstanding banjo player and musician.” (Look for his CD with Alan Munde, ‘Old Friends’.) He and Claude Stephenson on mandolin and super talented wife Janice on Bass make up the current Elliott’s Ramblers and have been festival favorites in the southwest for nearly 20 years. Elliott is also a member of the ADOBE BROS. a popular band that plays a huge variety of songs and styles. The Brothers are Moby Adobe (Wayne Shrubbsall), Toby Adobe (Bruce Thompson), Obi Juan Adobe (Tim DeYoung) and Hydrophoby Adobe. They recently added the lovely Anita Pricechek on bass. What a band! Elliott’s songs have won awards and have been recorded by Jill Jones, the Bluegrass Patriots and Sons and Brothers. Elliott brings driving rhythm guitar, smooth lead and harmony vocals and contributes original material to the Gazette.

Bill Honker was born in Pennsylvania, but spent his formative years in Alan’s hometown, Norman, Oklahoma. His interest in bluegrass music developed while in high school and college in Norman/Oklahoma City area, which was rich with acoustic players. After playing with a Norman band in the early 70’s, Bill moved to Dallas in 1975 and was a member of a series of north Texas bands, including Roanoke, Lone Star Grass, the memorably-named "Grounds for Divorce", and the Stone Mountain Boys. He joined with Billy Joe Foster and Phill Elliott to re-form the Special Edition in 1996. Bill has taught bluegrass bass at Camp Bluegrass the last three years, as well as other camps and workshops. Bill is also a songwriter and occasionally performs as a solo act, playing original material. He has received several songwriting awards and was a Featured Regional Artist at the Kerrville Folk Festival in 1996 and 2005. Bill plays bass, sings lead and harmony vocals, and contributes original material to the group.

Steve Smith has been performing for over thirty years in about as many types of musical situations as one can imagine. He has appeared as a solo artist, bandleader, an in-demand sideman and session player and producer in traditional bluegrass (his first love), old-time, Celtic, new acoustic jazz and chamber music. His solo shows incorporate original vocal and instrumental works and include unique arrangements of traditional and modern tunes from delicate fingerstyle to hard driving rhythms on mandolin, guitar, mandola and vocals.

Smith has been involved in a number of theatrical productions including composing the score for the Sam Sheppard play Curse of the Starving Class. He honed his skills with a stint in music school studying 20th century composition and theory; most recently his music was used in the PBS film The Bataan Death March, a New Mexico Story and Portraits of the Southwest.

When not with The Alan Munde Gazette, Smith tours with his group Steve Smith and Hard Road, as a duo with Chris Sanders and as a solo artist which has taken him from Florida to Alaska, the Caribbean to Europe. Steve maintains a busy teaching and workshop schedule including twelve years as mandolin instructor at Camp Bluegrass (www.campbluegrass.com), the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop, and the California Coast Music Camp along with a broad palette of recordings on mandolin, mandola, mandocello

and guitar.

The fact is... NATE LEE, the musician, has been drawing attention ever since he hit his first double digits. His cheerful commitment to refining his game has been a hot topic in the press as well as among his listeners, instructors and fellow musicians.

To quote bluegrass icon ALAN MUNDE, "He is one of the very best students—the most talented instrumentalist, equally adept at both fiddle and mandolin—I've had in my tenure." Banjo master and scholar WAYNE SHRUBSALL, playing with NATE in HARD ROAD states, "That boy is playing in the league of some of the best fiddle players I have worked with...and I have worked with Byron Berline, Kenny Baker, Dale Morris and Jim Chancellor, among others."

NATE'S early fiddle and mandolin style were shaped under the tutelage of VALERIE RYALS O'BRIEN of Burleson, Texas and STEVE SMITH of Las Cruces, New Mexico. As a child, Nate appeared onstage with his teacher Valerie and in local country bands. By the age of 14, Nate had become an experienced teacher and competitor in fiddle contests. Even in his early days, his forte emerged in performance with other musicians where his ability to listen and blend coupled with his amazing chops made him a player in high demand.

NATE became a professional early, performing with the MARK GORMAN BAND (country) and at venues including Six Flags Over Texas with THE CRUCIGERS (folk/grass). He currently tours with THE ALAN MUNDE GAZETTE (bluegrass). NATE has shared the stage with Joe Carr, Jim "Texas Shorty" Chancellor, Roland White, Chris Jones, Ned Luberecki, Rich O'Brien, Robert Bowlin, Slim Richey, Adam Granger, Brad Davis, Richie McDonald, Dale Morris Sr., Tim May, Bill Evans, Tommy Allsup, Mike Siler and Ted Scanlon to name a few.

NATE is making his mark as a gifted teacher in his private studio and at workshops including Camp Bluegrass and Gerald Jones' Acoustic Music Camp. He "works well with others" both young and old, relying on keen musical intuition to challenge and encourage his students.

Having completed two music-intensive years at South Plains College, Nate has returned to Levelland, Texas to finish his Commercial Music Degree. Current recordings include Alan Munde Gazette, Made To Last (2008) and Steve Smith and Hard Road, Only So Fast (2008).

The group's debut CD, "Alan Munde Gazette" (Munde's Child Records MCR001), was released in the summer of 2004 and is receiving airplay on bluegrass and folk music radio shows worldwide. The group also recorded two of the tunes on the recently-released Stelling Banjo Anthology CD

The Gazette has begun working on its second CD, which is planned for release in early 2007.

Other selected recordings by the group members:

Alan Munde

Festival Favorites Revisited - Rounder

Blue Ridge Express - Rounder

Welcome to West Texas (w/Joe Carr) - Flying Fish

Windy Days and Dusty Skies (w/Joe Carr) - Flying Fish

Texas Fiddle Favorites (w/Joe Carr) - Mel Bay

Banjo Sandwich - Ridge Runner

The Banjo Kid Picks Again - Ridge Runner

Traitor in Our Midst (Country Gazette) - United Artists

Country Gazette, Don't Give Up Your Day Job - United Artists

Knee Deep In Bluegrass - Rebel Records

Bill Honker (with Phill Elliott , and Billy Joe Foster and Special Edition)

Before the Prairie Met the Plow - Hay Holler

Wild Horse Creek - Weed Hollow

Billy Joe Foster & the Special Edition - Weed Hollow

Steve Smith

Steve Smith and Hard Road, Meet Me By The River, dn545 (August 2005)

Steve Smith -Hard Road, dn444 (June 2004)

Desert Night -DN 343 (2000)

Other Places Times and Lives- DN 242 (1996)

Distant Lands- DN 141 (1992)

The Desperados - Till The Cows Come Home, Rio Records (1994)

Cloud Valley-Live in Europe, Strictly Country (1984)

A Bluegrass Ensemble, Prime Time Records (1982)

The Nothin' Doin' Band, Prime Time Records (1979)

Jim Hurst (2006)

Stephen Bennett - River-C/RR-22CD - harp mandolin (2001)

Bill Evans - Bill Evans Plays Banjo-Mighty Fine Records 906-3- mandola (2001)

Missy Raines -My Place in the Sun-mandolin, mandocello (1998)

Nate Lee

Rites of Mandolin (2003)