

Biography

The story of the band:

Steve Smith and Hard Road evolved into a full working group as a result of the success and chemistry of the musicians who came together to work on Steve's original live studio recording *Hard Road* (dn444) released in 2004. The chemistry in the studio became an excellent rapport onstage and on the road. In the *Hard Road* line-up Aaron brings exciting new guitar tunes to the group and a musical sophistication beyond his years. Nate brings virtuoso fiddling and both elegant and searing hot licks to the *Hard Road* sound. Ashleigh is the foundation keeping exquisite time with exquisite tone, be it bluegrass or jazz. It is easy to hear that singing has been Chris' life and she has found an ideal song-writing partner in Steve. And Steve is the wise man who unites this diverse group of musicians with his compelling songs and inspiring musicianship. When his smoky tenor joins with the other voices in the band, a deep connection is heard and felt.

Meet the band:

Steve Smith hails from Virginia and holds his father and Herman Tomlin as his earliest musical influences. He has been performing on mandolin and guitar for over 29 years in a wide variety of musical styles from old-time, bluegrass, western swing, Irish and jazz to chamber music. He has toured nationally and internationally as a solo artist and with groups including the 1980's progressive bluegrass band *Cloud Valley* based out of Charlottesville, Virginia, the *Jim Hurst Band* and the *Bill Evans String Summit* as well as appearing with the *Alan Munde Gazette* and *Hard Road*. He is in demand as a session musician, producer and teacher; he conducts workshops at *Camp Bluegrass*, *California Coast Music Camp* and the *Puget Sound Guitar Workshop*. See the mandolin sessions at www.melbay.com. Find Steve at www.desertnight.com and www.myspace.com/stevesmithmando.

Massachusetts native Aaron McCloskey first picked up the guitar in college and has rarely put it down since. He began studying jazz, blues and folk music, playing in a number of bands, most notably the progressive acoustic trio, aka *laser bunny*. Aaron recently graduated from the commercial music program at *South Plains College* in Levelland, TX where he honed his bluegrass chops with *Joe Carr* and *Alan Munde*. He lives in Lyons, CO where he can be found hiking, fly-fishing and teaching guitar at the *Swallow Hill Music School* in Denver.

Bassist *Ashleigh Caudill* grew up in *Montrose, CO* and graduated from *Berklee College of Music* in May 2007. An accomplished singer and song-writer, her soon to be released debut CD "*I'm Not Fallin'*" features bluegrass and original *Ashleigh* tunes. She, her dog *Ruby* and her cat *Lump* reside in *Ft. Collins, CO*.

Chris Sanders, vocals, grew up in the Midwest singing in choirs in Minnesota. Her diverse background includes singing and playing keyboards in a variety of bands, delivering singing telegrams, teaching middle school music and ten years as a voice professor at *NMSU*. In the '80's she co-founded the *Actor's Training Project* in *Oakland*,

California. She is currently working with two other writers on the great American musical, WE ARE ENRON, which will debut in February '08 with the Dona Ana Lyric Opera.

Originally from the Dallas area, fiddler Nate Lee now lives in Lyons, CO and can sometimes be caught playing mandolin and banjo. Nate is also a product of South Plains College and to quote teacher and banjo legend Alan Munde, "He is one of the very best students and most talented instrumentalists, equally adept at both fiddle and mandolin, I've had in my tenure." He currently appears with Steve in the Alan Munde Gazette in addition to Hard Road. He truly lives up to his reputation: "Plays well with others."

What sets this band apart:

Steve Smith and Hard Road is a tight ensemble led by one of the outstanding mandolinists of our generation. This band brings together virtuoso playing from veterans and newcomers alike coupled with compelling original tunes. Everyone in the group shares a diverse musical background including classical, jazz and world music as well as a deep respect for traditional and folk music. A high level of musicianship feeds an infectious groove, and strong individual vocals blend as if these singers were family. This group is generous with each other and generous with each audience, sharing award-winning original music that presents a personal take on a universal experience.

Instrumentation

HARD ROAD features Steve Smith (mandolin, mandola, guitar, vocals), Nate Lee (fiddle, mandolin, banjo, vocals), Chris Sanders (vocals, guitar), Aaron McCloskey (guitar, vocals) and Ashleigh Caudill (bass, vocals).

Discography

Steve Smith and Hard Road: Meet Me By the River

© 2005 Desert Night Music BMI

Steve Smith and Hard Road:

Only So Fast @2008 Desert Night Music BMI

(To be released 2008)