

# SWING CARAVAN

## FACT SHEET

**Brief:** Alt-Jazz for Acoustic Music Ears

**Founded:** Summer 2005 by bandleader Matthew Ruby Shippee

**Based:** Northampton, Massachusetts

**Email/Web:** [contact@swingcaravan.com](mailto:contact@swingcaravan.com)\*[swingcaravan.com](http://swingcaravan.com)\*[myspace.com/swingcaravan](http://myspace.com/swingcaravan)\*[sonicbids.com](http://sonicbids.com)

**Booking:** [booking@swingcaravan.com](mailto:booking@swingcaravan.com)

### **Musical Description:**

Swing Caravan is a toe tappin', finger snappin', get it down deep in your soul kind of group. Their music is rooted in the great acoustic Gypsy Jazz tradition of Django Reinhardt from France in the 1930s and 40s. Their sound ranges from uplifting and blazing fast swing rhythms to heartbreaking acoustic ballads with vocals. They play Reinhardt compositions, American jazz standards, original compositions, and some other eclectic surprises. The band is rapidly becoming known throughout the western Massachusetts region for their ability to refresh this traditional music with a modern approach and sound that is all their own. Their performances are considered special because of the fun, spontaneous playfulness that the group shares with audiences. Swing Caravan's instrumental playing, singing, and group chemistry opens up the idea of jazz as a popular music to a broad acoustic music audience.

### **Audience is:**

Aged teens to 80s; Acoustic music lovers who are inspired by improvisational music (like Grisman, Bela Fleck) and jazz-based song stylizations with vocals (like Norah Jones, Diana Krall). Shippee says, "We are a jazz band, but our main idea is to play what I sometimes call acoustic 'alt-jazz', after the alt-country scene of the past decade or so. Its inspiring to always see people have that same turned-on reaction to the music we play, like it's just a perfect fit for their ears. We are rooted in the traditional, but we do our own thing with it and that seems to make it special for people to listen to today. A lot of our fans never considered themselves fans of jazz before hearing our take on the standards."

### **Audiences have said:**

"Swing Caravan gave a stunning performance at Hilltown Music's Memorial Hall that left the audience overjoyed and stomping their feet for more!"

-Gayle Olson, Hilltown Music at Memorial Hall

"Of all the nationally touring acts that come through, Swing Caravan is one of our favorites...everyone glides out the door after with a smile. They will really blow your mind!"

-David Oppenheim, Performing Arts Center of Easthampton

"Lead guitarist Matthew Shippee has fingers that move like flies on sugar...and the way Jack Brown punches out chords on rhythm, you can almost here the metronome ticking in his head."

- Greg Saulmon, Local Buzz Magazine

### **Personnel:**

Matthew Ruby Shippee- Lead Guitar and Vocals

(Professor and Music Dept Chair, Greenfield Community College)

Jack Brown- Rhythm Guitar

(Guitar Instructor and Valley Advocate Film Journalist)

Dave Nelson- "Kitchen Percussion" washboard, pots, and sap bucket

(Freelance Drummer and Drum Instructor)

Michael Dunning- Bass

(Freelance Bassist and Cranio-Sacral Bodyworker)

### **Recordings:**

Debut full-length studio recording, *get it fresh*, to be released 2008. Samples and live tracks currently available online.

### **Performances:**

**Regularly at:** Every Friday at the Yellow Sofa Café in Northampton, Last Sunday of each month at the Sierra Grille Jazz Series in Northampton. Over 100 past shows at cafes, clubs, festivals, and benefit concerts in Pioneer Valley and surrounding region including every other Friday at Mocha Maya's Coffeehouse in Shelburne Falls for over two years.

### **Influences:**

Django, Stephane Wrembel, Angelo Debarre, David Grisman, Cassandra Wilson, Miles, Duke, and Willie