



PRESS RELEASE

For more information contact
Shelley Johansson
Johnstown Area Heritage Association
P. O. Box 1889
Johnstown, PA 15907
888-222-1889 x 308
sjohansson@jaha.org
www.jaha.org

TIM DABBS AND RUSSELL LAUF— HOMEGROWN TALENT AT THE FOLKFEST

The AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest always programs local talent, and this year is no exception. Jazz in Your Face, Tim Dabbs and Russell Lauf are locally-based musicians who will be a part of this year's festival – and Dabbs and Lauf especially share similar stories.

Tim Dabbs

Tim Dabbs spent his early years in Johnstown, but moved with his family when he was about 7. However, all through his childhood he would return to visit his grandmother in Minersville. During his college years he met Amy DeRubis, a native of Armagh, and the two were soon married – and Dabbs began a career in the military that would take the couple across the country. At the same time, he was developing his talents as a folk singer and songwriter, and began to record along with wife Amy, who is a singer, flutist and piano player.

Eventually his work attracted the attention of FolkFest Chairman Ron Carnevali, who plays a key role in programming decisions. Carnevali invited Dabbs to play at FolkFest 2000, which became a key moment in the Dabbs' lives.

"It was incredible to come to Johnstown and play at the FolkFest. Being a part of the homecoming atmosphere that FolkFest creates was really powerful to both of us, and we decided it was time to get back home," Dabbs explains.

Dabbs found a job with the Air Force Battlelabs program at Concurrent Technologies Corp. The family, which includes son Ryan and daughter Ellory, moved into a house in Old Westmont. For Dabbs, returning to Johnstown has been a musical homecoming as well as a physical one.

"There are a lot of Western Pennsylvania themes that run through my music," Dabbs says. "I'm inspired by local people and places."

Dabbs has been featured on National Public Radio and reviewed in national music publications such as *Dirty Linen*. Tom May, host of the national radio show *River City Folk* describes him as "a very talented songwriter writing in the tradition of Stan Rogers and Gordon Lightfoot, and people who actually write about real events and real places."

Since his return to Johnstown, Dabbs played at FolkFest 2003 and is on the schedule for FolkFest 2005. He is a dedicated volunteer at the festival, often serving as a stage manager for other performers.

“I really enjoy stage managing—in fact, I’ll be the stage manager at Russell’s shows—and I know from experience that the FolkFest is a great place to play,” he says. “I see how much JAHA does for the performers, and I love being part of it. Getting to play is just a bonus in my mind.”

Tim Dabbs will be seen on the AmeriServ stage from 12:30-2:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 4.

Russell Lauf

Russell Lauf grew up in Johnstown, graduating from Westmont High School in 1985 – and his path from there led him to Pittsburgh, Chicago and Houston, working in the software business. In 2002 he bought his own business, Central Facility Services Inc. In 2004, he and wife Mary decided to come back to Johnstown to raise their new daughter, Casey.

“We wanted to be closer to family,” explains Lauf, whose mother, brother and two sisters live in the area.

Lauf, who started playing in bands in 1990 and soon began honing his songwriting skills, now creates a country rock sound with the Russell Lauf Band. He will release his second CD, entitled “Johnstown,” over the Labor Day weekend, and all of the songs on the disc are written by Lauf.

“Some of the songs on the new disc are about Johnstown, and most of them were composed here,” Lauf says. “There’s so much energy here, just from being in these traditional, historic places I’ve really grown to appreciate.”

Lauf’s goal is to get his songs published and performed, and he has received positive feedback from well-known Nashville songwriter and producer Bob Corbin, who has written eight #1 singles performed by country artists such as LeAnn Womack and Kenny Rogers.

“Russ is an exceptional songwriter. With every song I hear it gets better all the time. I’m certain you will start hearing his songs on country radio stations very soon,” says Corbin, who also performs as part of the duo Corbin/Hanner.

Lauf is excited about playing his first FolkFest, and has become friends with Tim Dabbs as the two look forward to FolkFest 2005. Like Dabbs, Lauf volunteers for the festival during the time he is not onstage.

“It’s a real honor to play FolkFest, to be sharing the bill with so many incredibly talented musicians,” he explains. “I so appreciate Tim and his work. I’m looking forward to experiencing this year’s festival as a musician, but also as a volunteer and as a fan.”

The Russell Lauf Band, which includes Lauf and eight musicians, is scheduled to play on the Atlantic Broadband stage on Saturday, Sept. 3 from 7:00-9:00 p.m., and again on Sunday, Sept. 4 from 3:30-5:30 p.m.

The AmeriServ Johnstown FolkFest is a 3-day music festival held annually over Labor Day weekend in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Four mainstages are continually programmed over the course of the festival, and admission is free. The FolkFest is produced by the Johnstown Area Heritage Association. In 2005, the festival will be held on September 2, 3, and 4. Major sponsors include Dodge, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Atlantic Broadband, and Conemaugh Health System. For more information, visit www.jaha.org.

###