

# Riverthieves



*The Bodhran's Celtic heartbeat underpins the dramatic landscapes imagined by skirling bagpipes and the mournful Irish whistle. Give me a fiddle and a glass of whiskey, and I'll tell you a story you'll almost remember...*

The core members of Eastern Ontario's Riverthieves have been playing music together since the early 2000s, first as the house band at the Royal Oak on the Canal and in scores of other bars and pubs from Renfrew to Trenton. Eventually, as the bar gigs were interspersed with festival shows and small halls - venues friendly to original music - the Riverthieves began presenting their own songs. In 2009, the band recorded a very memorable live show at the Almonte Town Hall before a sold-out audience. It was released as their first album, *Bandit Queen*, the following year.

But the band went into hibernation for half a decade as the two serving military members of the band

completed back to back Afghanistan tours and Devon also deployed to Haiti before being posted to Valcartier, Quebec. The band was not reunited until the Fall of 2015 when Devon was posted back to Ottawa. The boys dedicated themselves to a second album, composing and arranging relentlessly through 2016, and recording between January and March 2017 with Mike Kay. The tracks were mixed by Chris Bradley. The Riverthieves' first studio album, *Soldier*, consists entirely of original tracks exploring the Canadian military experience, past and present. It considers soberly the cost of service, celebrates the joie de vivre of the soldiering culture, and pays special tribute to family, home, loss and hockey.



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## **Finley Mullally**

Finley Mullally was raised in Weston, Ontario and lived for more than a decade in Halifax, Nova Scotia before moving to Eastern Ontario in 1999. He has been playing acoustic, electric and classical guitars since childhood and, although he has received some formal classical training, his self-taught finger-style folk music is musical home base. Picking up mandolin and bodhran, Finley had a run as a full-time touring musician with the Halifax-based, Alt-Folk trio, Gowan Brae from 1992-1995, an exciting time to have been an East Coast musician. After a stint in the army, Finley married the Salvadoran-born painter and installation artist, Leydin Ramos. With their three children, they split their time between Perth, Ontario and Rock Barra, Prince Edward Island. Finley continues to serve with the Canadian Army Reserve while working as a Vice Principal with the Ottawa Catholic School Board.



## **Chris Knowles**

Originally from Kirkfield, Ontario (90 minutes northeast of Toronto), Chris Knowles currently plays acoustic rhythm guitar and performs vocals for the Riverthieves when he isn't calling fouls on the basketball court or living the "Geordie Howe dream" playing hockey with his sons in Ottawa beer leagues.



## **Sal De Meo**

Inspired by the television production Rock Times Three which aired on a Toronto television station in 1977 featuring Canadian prog rock legends Rush, Sal De Meo realized that the basement-dwelling-Chinese-knockoff-guitar missing its treble strings finally had a purpose – awakening a passion for the four stringed rumble. A bass player for over thirty-five years, the Toronto-born musician has been part of the Ottawa music scene since 1987, performing a variety of genres, including rock, jazz, blues and folk. Sal's portfolio of instruments also includes guitar and is featured on several tracks on the Riverthieves' album Soldier.

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## **Evan Lewis**

An Ontario boy now residing in Chelsea, Quebec, Evan is back for his second stint as the 'Thieves fiddling stunt man. Born in Toronto, he took his first steps and fiddled his first notes in Deep River, Ontario. Primarily classically trained, he studied privately with the Penderecki String Quartet's Piotr Buczek at Wilfred Laurier University and was a three-time finalist (and one time winner) of the Ontario Music Festival Association provincial finals. In the meantime, Evan soaked in the traditional sounds and feelings of fiddle music in the Ottawa Valley, Bruce County, and an extended stay in Ireland (Galway and County Donegal). Evan's musical style is heavily influenced by the likes of Ashley MacIsaac and the classical/ jazz virtuoso Nigel Kennedy, both of whom show that if you're not moving to it, sweating it, and breaking a few bow hairs, then maybe you're not doing it right.



## **Javier Mullally**

Raised in Perth, Ontario, Riverthieves' current fiddler can't remember a time when he didn't have a violin in his hand. Javier Mullally was steeped in both traditional and classical forms, having been trained formally through the Suzuki and Conservatory systems and also fully immersed in Celtic fiddling since early childhood. In fact, he attended his first Irish "session" at three-weeks of age so it is fair to say that he is a "cradle fiddler".



## **Oscar Mullally**

The youngest and newest member of the Riverthieves, Oscar Mullally, is a fan of indie rock, folk and alternative, including the niche folk-punk scene. A high school student in Perth Ontario, Oscar is a classically trained violinist and - more recently and more passionately - a self-taught guitarist and drummer. Oscar also loves electric guitar riffs, telescopes, manual typewriters and anything "old school".



## **Alex De Meo**

Alex De Meo, eldest son of 'Thieves bassist, Sal, has been assisting the band for several years lending a hand in many different capacities. From ticket taker, to merch sales, to stage hand, Alex now finds himself out front as the band's sound engineer. Alex is also an avid guitarist and bassist, and plays second bass for the 'Thieves whenever his dad slides over to guitar.