



TRADITIONAL & ORIGINAL BLUEGRASS MUSIC AT ITS BEST!



Straight Drive's name comes from the type of music they play—straight bluegrass with plenty of drive. In a time where much of bluegrass music has veered towards the more polished and commercial sounds of “Music Row,” Straight Drive has kept its identity firmly grounded in the grit and intensity of the classic, first generation performers of bluegrass music. As bluegrass great Ron Thomason has said, “Straight Drive plays bluegrass the way Bill Monroe or Carter Stanley conceived of it.” A fan once described Straight Drive’s sound as “bluegrass with no apologies.”

Straight Drive was started in 2001, following the release of Terry McGill’s first solo recording, “Straight Drive,” when Terry asked featured vocalist Jen Larson to help him expand on the straight-ahead sound created in the studio. Since then, the band has evolved into an even more traditional sounding unit, known for its hard-driving music, as well as its dedication to evoking the spirit and warmth of the vintage performances and radio broadcasts of bygone days. At the same time, Straight Drive cannot be labeled as an ensemble that merely relives the past. Striking original material in combination with fresh arrangements of older songs insures that Straight Drive has an appeal and relevance that speaks to the heart of anyone who appreciates the balance between tradition and innovation. Straight Drive plays at Bluegrass and Americana festivals, major market radio broadcasts, traditional country music shows, and in various music clubs. On the heels of their highly acclaimed 2005 recording, “I’ll Take A Page from Your Book,” Straight Drive even spent a month performing aboard the famed Mississippi Queen steamboat, where they were enthusiastically received. In May 2007, the group played at the world famous Carnegie Hall in New York City.

Whether singing lead or tenor parts, **Jen Larson's** voice is a major part of the Straight Drive sound. Jen is at home singing everything from traditional Bluegrass and Country pieces to the Old-Time modal ballads of the southern Appalachians. Once described as having “a voice that could cut metal,” Jen delivers each song she sings with a raw intensity and emotion not often heard from contemporary female bluegrass singers. In addition to Straight Drive, Jen has recorded with banjoist Tom Hanway and most recently Miller’s Crossing. Jen has also made four appearances on Garrison Keillor’s “A Prairie Home Companion” over National Public Radio, Ralph Stanley's Hills of Home Festival, and many other events around the country.

Terry McGill has played the banjo since age 13. Within two years of starting to play, Terry was playing locally with several bands. For five years starting in 1988, Terry hosted The Country and Bluegrass Round-Up on WFDU fm in Teaneck, NJ. In demand in the studio, Terry has recorded with several artists/groups including The David Hampton Band, The Old Time Bluegrass Singers, The Dixie Bee Liners, jazz singer Alan Harris

and others. In 2001 Terry released his first solo recording entitled “Straight Drive.” The recording has received airplay nationwide and was even featured on Hairl Hensley’s “The Early Bird Gets the Bluegrass Show” on WSM in Nashville, TN. Terry has also been highlighted in the Banjo Newsletter and has just completed work on a banjo instruction manual for Mel Bay Publications. In addition to banjo picking chores, Terry sings and serves as Master of Ceremonies.

Mandolinist **Ben Fraker**, who hails from the rolling hills of western Massachusetts, is the son of two bluegrass musicians, Robert and Lillian Fraker, founders of the popular traditional bluegrass group, Bear Bridge. This laid a strong foundation for his Monroe-flavored mandolin style. Among Ben’s many credits, he’s had the honor of performing with Grand Ole Opry legend, Charlie Louvin, in addition to appearing with Big Appalachia, John Herald, and many others. Ben is a welcome addition to Straight Drive.

Fiddler **Ron Feinberg** has been involved in bluegrass music for many years. Ron has been a member of The Fox Family and runs his own group, Miller’s Crossing. He has appeared with Bill Monroe, Mac Wiseman, Patsy Montana, Rose Maddox, The Lewis Family, Mitch Harrell and many other talented bluegrass musicians over the years. In 1995, as a member of the Fox Family, Ron was nominated for I.B.M.A. Emerging Artist of the Year. Ron has also written many bluegrass songs that have been recorded by several Long Island based musicians as well as a few nationally recognized groups. In addition to Straight Drive, Ron has recorded three projects with the Fox Family, two with Back Roads and has done lots of session work in the New York area.

David Hampton has been steeped in bluegrass music his entire life. This Danville, Pennsylvania native started playing guitar at age fourteen and quickly grew into one of the most notable players in the “Keystone State.” In addition to his driving rhythm and skillful lead playing, Dave is also known for his outstanding vocal skills. His style is original, instantly identifiable and always tasteful. Dave is a talent not easily forgotten.

Keith Edwards has been playing his unique brand of “slap-bass style” on the upright bass since he was twelve years old. Raised in the company of Bluegrass musicians on a dairy farm in the heart of the Catskill Mountains, it was only natural for Keith to spend countless childhood hours “parkin’ lot picking” at Bluegrass festivals where he honed his style of playing. Keith has had the opportunity to play with several groups including South Wind, Chestnut Creek, Steve Toth and Rippling River, Horse Country and the Dick Smith-Mike O’Reilly Band. He has been featured on several recording projects alongside such musicians as David Grisman, Jon Sholle, Tony Trischka, Andy Statman and Kenny Kosek



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Straight Drive has the best feel for roots of bluegrass traditions of any young band I've heard in recent years. And they still manage to sound fresh and new! I can't wait to see them live.

— Fred Bartenstein,

“Banks of the Ohio: Music From the Homeplace of Bluegrass”, WAMU, HD-3, 88.5 FM

Straight Drive is an excellent bluegrass band. Jen Larson is not only a great singer; she is a fine songwriter. Terry is one of the best hard driving banjo players around. They play the type of bluegrass I love, WITH HEART AND SOUL!

— Danny Paisley

Dan Paisley & The Southern Grass

Straight Drive is a thoroughly professional bluegrass band, committed to the highest standards of the traditional sound. These are seasoned musicians with a most satisfying show. And what's more, they're nice folks!

— Ben Freed

President of the Westchester Bluegrass Club

Straight Drive consistently demonstrates a high level of musicianship, artistry, and flexibility, performing engaging concerts for general audiences and interactive workshops. Under the excellent direction of Terry McGill, their performances reveal thoughtful reparation of repertoire tailored to each individual venue.

— Jennie A. Wasserman

Manager, Neighborhood Concert Series, Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall

Straight Drive is awesome!... Jen Larson's inspiring vocals, combined with Terry McGill's mastery and the band's creative solos and solid backup weave a musical fabric that compliments the story and theme of every song they perform....if you're looking for a special treat, ask Terry and Jen to sing harmony duets from the old-time country or classic bluegrass traditions...they are all great folks to work with!

— David M. Kleiman

Program Chair, Folk Music Society of New York. 2007