

## Nothin' Fancy

**SPBGMA's 2010, 2009, and 2008 "Entertaining Group of the Year"!**

From the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, comes one of the most entertaining bands in the bluegrass genre, **Nothin' Fancy**. As a matter of fact, they won SPBGMA's award for Entertaining Group of the Year three years in a row!

Nothin' Fancy was formed as a bluegrass band in 1994 to compete in the East Coast Bluegrass Championship in Crimora, Virginia. After winning their auspicious debut, they have grown in popularity, released 8 full length albums and one CD single, played the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, the Lincoln Center in New York City, and the Birchmere in Alexandria, Virginia. They have successfully hosted their own Nothin' Fancy Bluegrass Festival every year since 2001 in Buena Vista Virginia.

Their relentless touring schedule of over 140 dates per year has earned them one of the most loyal fan bases in all of bluegrass music. They are loved by festival-goers and bluegrass fans from the East to West Coast.

In 2002 Nothin' Fancy signed with Pinecastle Records, and quickly released their debut recording for the label entitled "Once Upon A Road." This album earned them a showcase at the IBMA (International Bluegrass Music Association) Convention in October 2002 and a nomination for the IBMA Emerging Artist of the Year Award. Their second release from Pinecastle, "Reflections," received innumerable accolades and proved that they are one of the new powerhouses in the genre. Their 3rd Pinecastle project, "Album #7" continues to receive rave reviews from disc jockeys and fans alike. Listening to the request of fans, Nothin' Fancy has just released their first gospel CD, "Lord Bless This House." This album captures Nothin' Fancy's distinguished playing, vocal harmony, spirituality, and friendly charisma.

For three consecutive years (2010, 2009, 2008), SPBMGA (Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America) has honored Nothin' Fancy with the prestigious "Entertaining Group Of The Year" award. The band was also nominated for SPBGMA's Vocal Group of the Year and each band member was nominated for individual awards as well.

Their strong vocals, powerful instrumentation, and energetic stage presence, along with their friendly down-to-earth charm keeps people coming back for more. Nothin' Fancy is not just carrying on the tradition of bluegrass music;

they are contributing to the creation of a new tradition within the acoustic music genre.

**Nothin'  
Fancy**

**Members**

**Mike Andes**, lead singer for the group, plays the mandolin and guitar and writes original material for the band. Mike began playing music at age ten, influenced by several family members who played, including older brother Randy and his uncles, Curtis Jenkins and Ivan Lantz. He spent time with Jim Orange and the Orange Blossoms, and in 1986, he formed his own band called East Coast Bluegrass Band. In '94 he became a founding member of Nothin' Fancy. Mike considers Charlie Waller his bluegrass "hero." John Duffey, Jimmy Gandreau and Doyle Lawson influence his mandolin playing. His songwriting talent has drawn the attention of several major artists and earned him a 2009 SPBGMA nomination for Songwriter of the Year. Mike is originally from Timberville, VA and now resides in Columbus, Ohio with his wife, Becky and twin step-sons, Dylan and Mason. He has two grown children, a son, Lee and a daughter, Christine and a beautiful granddaughter, Bailey.

**Mitchell Davis** is Nothin' Fancy's banjo man. He also plays guitar and fiddle, which he learned from an uncle, Joe Connor. He fell in love with the banjo after seeing Earl Scruggs and Don Reno on TV shows. Like many aspiring banjo players, he started with an Earl Scruggs Banjo Book. Mitchell is also an alumnus of the East Coast Bluegrass Band, as well as a country band. Mitchell cites The Country Gentlemen and the Seldom Scene as his influences, especially in their selection of songs. Mitchell was the primary producer of the band's three self-released albums. Mitchell was born in Lexington, VA and still lives there with his wife, Sandy.

**Gary Farris** is the tenor voice and guitar player for the group. He is well deserving of the accolades for being one of the finest tenor voices in bluegrass today. Like many singers he started singing in church as a young boy. While attending Rockbridge High School, he honed his musical talents as a member of the glee club, eventually winning honors as a member of the All State Glee Club. After completing high school and a tour of duty with the Air Force, he sang in a local rock band. Unlike his band mates, Gary did not begin playing an instrument until he was almost 35. He had been injured at his job as a factory worker and was flat on his back and bored when his friend, Mitchell Davis, brought him a guitar and showed him a few chords. Gary recalls: "I just laid in bed and picked." He made up for the late start by playing in a country band and then with South River Boys, a local bluegrass band. Gary was born in Waynesboro, VA, grew up in Fairfield, and now lives in Buena Vista, VA with his

wife Brenda. They have three sons, Brien, Chris and Jason who have blessed them with six grandchildren, Sierra, Gabby, Ryan, Andrew, Braylon and Madison.

**Chris Sexton** plays fiddle for the band. He debuted with the band in 1998 at the Maury River Fiddler's Convention, where the band won first prize in the bluegrass band competition. He appeared as a guest on the band's second and third self-released albums and joined the band in the summer of 2000. His dad, "Buster" Sexton who played banjo in several bands in the 70's and early 80's, introduced Chris to bluegrass. When Chris was seven, his dad discovered that his son had the gift of perfect pitch eventually making Chris one of the best bluegrass singers to hardly ever sing. Although his first instrument was a mandolin, Chris soon focused his energies on the violin. Throughout middle and high school, he grew as a violinist in symphony orchestras, the all-state orchestra, and the National Youth Apprenticeship Program, while keeping his bluegrass roots. Chris attended Shenandoah University in Winchester, VA, graduating with a Bachelor of Music in Music Performance. Soon after, he found himself fiddling with the East Coast Bluegrass Band with his father, and Nothin' Fancy shortly thereafter. Chris' musical tastes run from Pjotr Tchaikovsky to John Lee Hooker, from Peter Gabriel and Mark Knopfler to Sam Bush and Old School Freight Train, and from Kenny Baker and Rhonda Vincent back to Dmitri Shostakovich and Johannes Brahms. You're liable to hear any and all of these influences in concert during Orange Blossom Special. When Chris isn't playing bluegrass, he's teaching strings at private studios in Chantilly, Fredericksburg and Falls Church VA, as well as recording for the Discovery Channel and participating in numerous session projects. In the fall of 2005, Chris released his first solo disc on Pinecastle Records, "Coffee at Midnight."

**Tony Shorter** (actually the tallest member of the band), sets the beat for the band on his S8 Kay upright bass. Tony was introduced to bluegrass music by his dad and uncle's band. He was a teenager before he really developed an appreciation for the music. A Gibson mandolin, a high school graduation present from his parents, accompanied him to Virginia Tech, where as Tony admits, "I may have spent more time pickin' than studying." He was a charter member of the Virginia Tech Bluegrass Association and the Blacksburg area was rich in good pickers with lots of jamming. Tony started to play bass at college when he wasn't switching off on guitar. For a few years after college, music took a back seat to his career with Farm Credit. He joined a local jazz group, and ended up playing electric bass in various groups as he puts it, "from reggae to rock." "At one point I was playing bass with 5 different bands, which was fun learning to play different styles, as I love most all forms of music and just couldn't say no, but it was a scheduling nightmare." In '94, he returned to his roots when he joined Mike, Gary and Mitchell to form Nothin' Fancy. August of 2005 he took a break from the road, but found he couldn't stay away from music and January of 06' accepted a bass player position with S+S Mack recording artist, Keith Bryant, a country artist. "It was a valuable learning experience playing with Keith, but I knew my heart was still in bluegrass and am glad to be a part of the NF team once again." Tony has a son, Colby, and is Branch Manager for Farm Credit in Lexington, Va.

“...Nothin’ Fancy maintains a high level of proficiency and professionalism that unquestionably establishes them as a force to be reckoned with in the world of bluegrass music. Indeed the future for Nothin’ Fancy is boundless and filled with enormous expectations.”

*-Bluegrass Unlimited*

“...A Unique sound that vacillates between smooth, progressive bluegrass and country-tinged Americana.”

*-Cary Virgin, Bluegrass Now*

“Impressive is one of the many synonyms for the word fancy. Despite their name, ‘impressive’ describes Virginia based Nothin’ Fancy to a ‘T’...

*-Sing Out!*

“Group members have developed a strong blend that features tight harmonies and evocative solo performances. The band’s chemistry with each other is superb. Of course it doesn’t hurt that they have a great deal of musical talent and vocals thrown in there, too.”

*-Maverick*

“This bluegrass band personifies the definition of "antithesis" with its name Nothin’ Fancy. It is the opposite, very fancy. Stellar vocals along with impeccable bluegrass harmonies are just the starting point. The instrumental prowess of the group members also likens itself to some of the old pros that have traveled this road before them.

When these guys play, it is everything but nothing fancy. Their name may not be indicative of their music, but I would rather a group use their vocals, instrumental skill, and songwriting abilities speak for them in lieu of their name doing all of the talking.”

*-Bluegrass Works*

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# Contact Info

**For Booking Nothin' Fancy Contact:**

Booking Information

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Information

**Nothin' Fancy**

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## Nothin' Fancy

[www.nothinfancybluegrass.com](http://www.nothinfancybluegrass.com)

**Hometown:** Buena Vista, VA

**Musical Genre:** Bluegrass

**Latest CD:** Lord Bless This House

**Members/Instruments:** Mike Andes, Mandolin/vocals  
Mitchell Davis, Banjo/vocals  
Gary Farris, Guitar/vocals  
Chris Sexton, Fiddle/vocals  
Tony Shorter, Bass/vocals

**Points of Note:** Awarded SPBGMA's Entertaining Group of the Year three consecutive years (2008, 2009, and 2010). Also in 2009, all band members were nominated for individual awards for their respective instruments, vocals and songwriting talents and the band was nominated for Vocal Group of the Year.

Nothin' Fancy has released 8 full-length albums and one CD single, played the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, the Lincoln Center in New York City, and The Birchmere in Alexandria, VA. They have hosted their own bluegrass festival in Buena Vista, VA since 2001.

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