

Meet Magnolia Drive

Magnolia Drive, a Mountain Fever Records recording artist, from our home state is a group of tenured and seasoned bluegrass musicians who have worked together for over 10 years. They've garnered attention and gained a following since that time through performing at live shows extensively throughout the Southeast and Midwest, at festivals, concerts, and various other venues.

The group delivers a hard-driving, contemporary, and traditional sound with tasteful instrumentals, smooth blending vocals, and all the energy that you can stand! Just one listen and you'll know that these guys possess the desire and ability necessary to perform and record high-quality bluegrass. Pair that with their 100+ years of combined experience and professionalism both on and off-stage, and you have a group that is turning heads in the bluegrass music world. Want to get to know them a little bit better? Take a look at our 5, fast facts Q&A below:



1. Who are the members of Magnolia Drive? Tell us a little bit about each of you.

MD: Steve Nowell, of Madison, plays upright bass and hails originally from Starkville. He is an IT professional working with a Mississippi-based wireless company. He has one adult son and he and his wife have provided Steve with a newborn grandson to spoil. Steve loves to spend time outdoors, taking trips, site-seeing and spending time with family and friends.

Don Robinson, who grew up in Sandersville and currently lives near Hattiesburg, plays the 5-string banjo. Don and his wife Karen operate a financial advisory firm and have two grown children and two grandchildren. When not spoiling the grandkids, Don likes to fish, be involved in his local church activities, and learn more about the banjo.

Mike Nowell, Steve's older brother, plays guitar and lives in his hometown of Starkville with his wife Julia. He is an engineer in the roads, bridges and transportation industry. Mike and Julia like to travel, visit the mountains, and enjoy the great outdoors as often as possible. Mike likes to talk, trade and rescue guitars, as he puts it, as time permits.

Cory Burton plays mandolin and lives near Ackerman with his wife Leslie and their teenage daughter. He does heavy truck driving and maintenance in Choctaw County. Cory enjoys hunting and fishing when there is an opening in his schedule. Cory also has fun getting together with family and friends and jamming around his home.

2. How did Magnolia Drive start and when? How did y'all all come together and form this band?

MD: Magnolia Drive was formed in 2010. All the band members have been playing music over 40 years and had come to know each other while performing in other groups or jam sessions at festivals and other shows. Don and Steve made the decision to start a new band with new goals in mind, and Mike and Cory were the first calls. We all wanted to do bigger and better things with our music from the beginning, so it just clicked when we first got together. We all share the same fondness for traditional bluegrass, gospel, and classic country music, so working together was a natural fit. The band goals were to reach for a higher level with our music and industry engagement goals. We are proud to still be moving forward.

3. Please describe the style of bluegrass that you play and what music and feelings really speak to you as musicians.

MD: We call our sound "Mississippi Bluegrass," and we think of it as taking the classic, traditional sound we love so well and melting it together with a solid contemporary drive - hence the name, "Magnolia Drive." We like to focus on the vocal arrangements as well as the taste, timing, and tone of the music. That's our passion. We also write many of our songs or select rare material that capture the themes of everyday life: love, loss, home, family and faith.

4. Where all have you played, locally and nationally? If someone would like to book you, how they would go about doing that?

MD: We have performed all over the Southeast and parts of the Midwest, including at one of the oldest and largest festivals at Bean Blossom, IN. The festival is home of the Bill Monroe Memorial Park where thousands of fans come to see top musicians perform yearly. We've played many bluegrass festivals, fairs, restaurants, community celebrations, churches, theaters, corporate and private events, wedding receptions, as well as other types of venues in our tenure. To book us, send us an email: info@magnoliadrive.com or contact us directly at: 601-499-5010.

We would like to perform more around the state and in Madison. We love Madison and everything that it stands for and provides for family and community. We've learned that what we have here is not everywhere, and we don't take that for granted.

We are blessed to have such great support and can't wait until events are back to fully operational so we can get back to performing and seeing everyone everywhere, especially in our communities. In the meantime, in the Madison & greater metro area we are blessed to have WTWZ Radio (102.5) and streaming online and MPB Radio – Grass Roots (91.3) spinning Bluegrass and Bluegrass Gospel music over the airways. Contact them and ask them to play your Mississippi's Magnolia Drive. We hope everyone enjoys our music as much as we enjoyed putting it all together and hope to see everyone soon.



5. Please tell us a little bit about your record deal and how that came to pass. MD:

In 2011 we self-produced an CD/EP of 6 songs, which was primarily to use with promotional material to send, as an introduction, to promoters of music events. The self-titled album gained significant airplay and is still spinning today. Several years later, we decided to challenge ourselves and take our music to a wider audience within the industry channels. We began working on our now soon-to-be released project while maintaining our family and work priorities.

Tracking for the album was completed in 2019 with the editing, mixing, and mastering finished late 2020. The tracking for project was done at Steve's resident-based studio, and the mix and mastering was completed by bluegrass industry giants Ricky Wasson and Ronnie Stewart, at the studio located in Clay City, KY. At the same time all this was happening, in February 2020, we were honored to be asked to perform a showcase for the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) held in Raleigh, NC in September of 2020.

With Covid-19 shutting down most all venues, the format was changed to a virtual showcase. We self-produced a 25-minute video, stage-show performance, and it was a was well-received by fans and industry leaders. Fresh off the success of this showcase, we were introduced to Mark Hodges, CEO, of Mountain Fever Music of Willis, Virginia. After meeting with him and his staff, we felt right at home from the start! The agreement became official in February 2021 and our first single, "I Won't Call You", written by our banjo player, Don Robinson, releases worldwide in late March 2021 with others to be released throughout the year. We anticipate a long and productive relationship with Mountain Fever as project number two is already in the works!

For more information on Magnolia Drive, visit them on the web at:
<http://www.magnoliadrive.com>

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