

# MUSIC

## Small and Coyote Brothers to howl at Wort

**Who:** Gary Small & The Coyote Brothers

**What:** A funk, blues, rock sound

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday

**Where:** Silver Dollar Bar & Grill, The Wort Hotel

**How much:** Free

*By Abbie Beane*

**T**hey describe themselves as the ZZ Top of Wyoming.

Rock, blues and funk meet cowboy boots, Native American designs and tribal heritage.

They're Gary Small & The Coyote Brothers, and they're riding into the Silver Dollar Bar on Friday and Saturday, with music kicking off at 7:30 both nights.

Small, longtime vocalist and guitarist raised in rural Wyoming and Montana, says the band normally appeals to an older crowd, though the trio plays up its funk sound to suit young listeners as well.

"The energy at the show is good, very danceable, very positive," Small noted. "The three of us love to play. We're like three pigs in a mud puddle. That positive attitude comes right out to the audience."

Other band members are Jobie Jennings on bass and Jim Willey on drums. The trio, based out of Sheridan, plays at The Wort about three times a year.

"The employees love us, and the crowd is always great," Small said of The Wort. "The whole atmosphere is just ideal. It's such a diverse bunch of people who come."

Alicia Russell, in charge of music at The Wort, describes the band's sound as "retro rock" and notes that the musicians



**Gary Small of Gary Small & The Coyote Brothers promises high energy, danceable music at The Wort on Friday and Saturday. "The three of us love to play," he said. "We're like three pigs in a mud puddle. That positive attitude comes right out to the audience."**

play well-known songs from decades past as well as originals.

"I personally enjoy their music very much, and I get many compliments from customers for bringing in such a great and unusual sound to the bar," Russell said.

"Gary Small is an amazing guitar player," she said. "They appeal to all ages. The three of them just rock the house."

Although Small is a mem-

ber of the Northern Cheyenne tribe, which resides in remote Southeast Montana, he is careful about the role his heritage plays in his music.

"I don't make every song an 'Indian song,'" Small said. "When I wrote my *Native Americana* album, that was based in roots, rock, reggae and African American and Native drum beats. That style allowed me to say what

I wanted to say lyrically. I've heard Native songs that were corny. I have to be real particular about what form I put [my ideas] in."

Small believes that his culture and "quirky lyrics" give him and his band notoriety and keep him "apples to oranges" compared to other songwriters.

"Even if I'm not directly talking about 'Indian stuff,'

electric guitar and vocals and Carpenter on bass.

"We are always diving into new and different kinds of music. Our music tastes are always changing," Carpenter said. For instance, Campbell brings a country sound, but also a willingness to "tear it up," Carpenter said. "We play the whole spectrum of rock, from blues rock to country rock, heavy rock to rocky mountain rock."

The Rocky Mountain music-cape — where the band plays most often — is so saturated with bluegrass that audiences seem to relish a rock diversion, Carpenter said. "A lot of people [tell us,] 'I see a bluegrass band every weekend, so it's nice to see some rock,'" he said.

That's not to say the group refuses to dabble in bluegrass. Sometimes the musicians will warm up a crowd with several bluegrass tunes, which "lets them get comfortable with the music style and [then we] throw them into something else," he said.

After releasing an EP almost a year ago, James and the Devil are currently in the studio recording an album slated for release this spring or summer. The band's logo of a hoodie-clad kid — backside to the viewer — holding a devil balloon will likely make an appearance on the album jacket. Eschewing the hard-fast contrast of good and evil, the band instead adopted the more "down to earth" everyman standing, "James," and softened evil's edges by blowing the devil up into a balloon. "It's a metaphor for a man and his problems," Carpenter said.

With its fast-wheeling music, the band seems to be floating on the upside of good.

## Eclectic Colorado band fiddles with rock 'n' roll

**Who:** James and the Devil

**What:** "Rocky Mountain Roll with a Fiddle"

**When:** 9:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday

**Where:** Mangy Moose Saloon, Teton Village

**How much:** \$7

*By Katy Niner*

Some rock bands translate their onstage thrashing into offstage trashing of say, hotel rooms. Not Denver-based James and the Devil. Members of this fivesome save their shredding for the slopes and prefer to camp out: They logged 40-plus nights outdoors on four last year.

The band rolls into Jackson for the first time ever to play two consecutive gigs — Thursday and Friday nights — at the Mangy Moose Saloon. Tickets cost \$7 at the door, and the music starts at 9:30 p.m.

During the winter, the band of avid skiers and snowboarders tries to fuse powder and music by playing gigs in ski towns, mostly in Colorado. Summer time swaps rafting for snow. "There is something about people who are into extreme sports, especially the people who work" in those industries, said bassist Adam Carpenter. "It totally fits our personalities."

The 2-year-old band's self-coined style, "Rocky Mountain Roll with a Fiddle," only gestures to the intricacy of its sound, which melds rock, funk, bluegrass, folk, pop and hip-hop. "We play everything from Metallica to Sublime to Rage Against the Machine, Charlie Daniels and Brad Paisley," Carpenter



**The Mangy Moose Saloon hosts James and the Devil on Thursday and Friday nights.**

said. "We try and touch on everything."

No two originals are alike, and covers wheel away from classic versions. The band weaves fiddle- and country-style chord progressions into distinctly rock arrangements. Live, the band brews kinetic energy. Try not to dance.

The band began in January 2007. Only Carpenter hails from Denver; the rest moved to Colorado from all corners of the country to play with other bands that ultimately dissolved. The band has settled on drummer Matt Stoner, fiddler Dave Ross, Jim Campbell on acoustic guitar and vocals, Matt Spinks on