

The ASYLUM STREET SPANKERS

For nearly 15 years, the magnificently indefinable **Asylum Street Spankers**' incomparable blend of string-band virtuosity, vaudeville panache, and countercultural wit has made this all-acoustic revue one of America's most distinctive live bands.

Since founding the group in 1994 at a booze-fueled party at the Dabbs Hotel along the river in Llano, Texas, vocalist **Christina Marrs** and harmonica/washboard player/vocalist **Wammo** have led their constantly mutating musical troupe from country-blues revivalism toward smart, challenging music of boundless variety, sophisticated arrangements, stunning showmanship and determined inventiveness.



Though the Spankers are occasionally raunchy and can be more than a little funny, a serious assessment of their catalog reveals a musical inventiveness and formal restlessness that defies easy categorization. Early forays into ragtime (1999's *Hot Lunch*) and country blues (2000's *Spanker Madness*) pushed the boundaries of those genres, while more recent records like 2007's family oriented, multiple award winning *Mommy Says No!* and 2004's innovative *Mercurial* abandon genre altogether with complex musical and vocal arrangements.

Along the way, they've been lauded by the most prestigious of media outlets, including *The New York Times*, NPR's *All Things Considered*, *Rolling Stone*, *Newsweek*, *The Hollywood Reporter*, *The Village Voice*, *Variety*, and *The Bob & Tom Show*, and garnered nearly a million views on YouTube with their anti-oil war, pro-soldier anthem "Stick Magnetic Ribbons on Your SUV."

Defiantly acoustic, fiercely independent and absurdly good, the Spankers have snowballed from a local favorite at Austin dives to an internationally renowned underground institution. Fueled by an ethos born of their punk roots, Marrs and Wammo have built their lives around making unique music that surprises and entertains.

"The Austin collective tapdances on the thin line between stunning virtuosity and goofy farce, an eight-person dervish of washboard / dobro / harmonica / clarinet / singing saw / upright bass / violin / etc., minimally amplified for maximum impact..." — *Variety*

"Audacious, genre-defying music of considerable substance. A national treasure!"
— *JazzWeek*

"Dedicated to acoustic instrumentation, but mischievously unorthodox in every other way."
— *The New York Times*

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