

# The Scooches



Perhaps one of the only bands blending world rhythms and Global Folk with Americana, Folk Traditions, New Orleans Influences, alt grass, music of the 1920s and bluegrass.

"A heart as big as the sky...full of high energy and higher spirits." **Elmore Magazine**

"This is a band that has to be seen to be believed." **John Platt (WFUV)**

"Americana music at its purest and most impressive" **No Depression**

"...an amazing group which a lot of us dreamed would happen some day where the different genres of music all get together..." **David Amram**

"...it's unlike anything most listeners will find elsewhere." **San Diego Troubadour**

"It underscores, too, how sounds from another time can be renewed and re-imagined, by creative minds and right hands, in the present moment. Banjo Nickaru & Western Scooches are ridiculously fun." **Rambles**

"Unfailingly high-spirited." **London Times**

"Remarkable musical dexterity with songs that bask in a genuine roots regimen and a sense of timeless tradition." **Elmore Magazine**

This chart-topping band electrifies audiences with an eclectic mix of Roaring '20s, Global Folk, blues, gospel, New Orleans jazz, Americana, and more. Curated sets of toe-tapping, hand-clapping music leave audiences with no choice but to dance along. The Scooches' performances are like master classes in musicology that quite simply embody joy and excellent musicianship.

# The Scooches

## \*\*\*\*Bios:

Band members have worked with the likes of Paul McCartney, Julia Roberts, Sam Mendes, Paul Simon, Jon Batiste as well as performed on ABC's Good Morning America, WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour, Kansas City Folk Festival main stage, Folk Alliance International 2017, Blue Plate Special, Extended Play Sessions (The Alt. Root), Relix featured videos and appeared in moves such as Mona Lisa Smile, Away We Go and Disney's Enchanted.

**Nick Russo** leads the charge as bandleader and composer. Russo plays guitar, banjo, and resonator and has appeared on "Good Morning America" as well as the **Sam Mendes** film, *Away We Go*, and was a sideman with the greats - **Jimmy McGriff**, **Teddy Charles** and **Sonny Dallas**. Russo had the honor to jam with **Sir Paul McCartney** while performing at **Gwyneth Paltrow** and **Chris Martin's** home, regularly accompanies **Antonique Smith**, **Jon Batiste** and recently performed for actor/comedian/composer, **Jim Dale** in **Jon Weber's** band.

**Betina Hershey** appears as the principle dancer in featured films, Disney's *Enchanted* and *Mona Lisa Smile* with **Julia Roberts**. Hershey performed on international and national tours of Broadway shows such as "West Side Story," "Phantom of the Opera," "The Fantasticks," and "Pump Boys & Dinettes," just to name a few. She composes music and plays guitar.

**Miles Griffith's** (vocals/scats) non-traditional use of the voice as a percussive instrument, combined with an uncanny harmonic sense, rounds out the band beautifully. He is a composer and has performed with Max Roach, Reggie Workman, T.S. Monk, Barry Harris and others. He played the lead role in Wynton Marsalis' jazz oratorio "Blood On The Fields," which premiered at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall.

**Harvey Wirht** (drums/percusstion) has performed alongside Grammy Award artist Angelique Kidjo, appeared on the Jay Leno Show, the Late how with David Letterman, the NAACP awards, Good Morning America, and the Peace Ball for the Inauguration of President Obama. He has also performed at the Kora Awards with Best East African Artist Winner Eric Wainaina and Lionel Loueke. He tours internationally with renowned world music artists, and with his own musical projects.

Gullah-Geechee percussionist and composer – **Dr. David Pleasant** has performed with Wynton Marsalis, Paul Simon, Cecil Taylor and many others. David also performed on Nickelodeon, TED talks, ABC with Ted Koppel, Broadway, and all around the world.

**Angie Workman** (gospel vocals) is known as the Funk Balladress. She has sung throughout the world with Ray Charles, Ben E. King, Patti La Belle, B.B. King, George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic. Gospel performances include singing with International Choir of Harlem, NYC Rescue Mission, Redeemer Baptist Church NYC, and at Rockefeller Center. You can hear her on TV, Film, albums such as Prince's "Soul Psychedelic", Eminem's "Infinity" and many more. Her original global infused compositions and standard renditions are full of soul. Her goal is to change the world one note at a time.

# NEW ALBUM STREET RELEASE JULY 14, 2023



## THE SCOOCHEs

### *LIFT YOU UP*

Arranged/produced by: Nick Russo, Betina Hershey, Len Monachello

Label: On the Bol Records

Available on DSPs **July 14**: Apple Music, Amazon, Spotify, Pandora, Bandcamp, etc.

*"A band that has to be seen to be believed."*

*- John Platt (WFUV)*

Led by vocalist **Betina Hershey** and multi-instrumentalist **Nick Russo**, **The Scooches**, formerly known as Banjo Nickaru & Western Scooches, have assembled a world-class lineup of musicians from New York, Suriname, Sapelo Island (Georgia), Mexico, and the Caribbean on *LIFT YOU UP* (due July 14). The vital new 12-song collection builds upon the exuberance that made 2018's 'Get Us Out Of Fearland' (#2 on the International Folk Alliance Chart) and 'Very Next Thing' (2016), a transcendent breath of fresh air.

Inspired by the current social climate, the songs on *LIFT YOU UP*, including "Stop This Climate Change", "Spread Your Wings And Fly", and "Open A Door" call upon society and the human race to believe that we, collectively, can make a difference, a change for the better.

**"Not just music forged from myriad sounds and cultural styles garnered from genre and geography but the music of the world, about the world." - The Big Takeover**

Other highlights include the reggae-dub groove of the title track, the playful, country break-up song "I Broke The Egg," the 1920s-inspired "What's Meant To Last Will Last," the smoky Motown-inflected duet "Give It To Me Real" (featuring Griffith and Hershey trading lines), the gospel-tinged "Leavin'," the eerily lilting "Run," about trafficking and gun violence, and the rollicking bluegrass-driven "Let's Grow Our Roots Deep And True," about finding home.

The ever-timely traditional protest song "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round" is presented in two versions and both are stunners; the first a celebration to lift the spirits, the second a **Gullah Geechee** version featuring stirring improvisational vocals from **Miles Griffith** and drumfolk riddim percussionist/vocalist **Dr. David Pleasant**.

With additional contributions from **Aditya Phatak** (tabla), **Mamadou Ba** (bass), **Harvey Wirht** (drums), **Angela Workman** (vocals), **Kenny Kosek** (fiddle), and Brooklyn rapper **Ra\$h Ca\$h**, **The Scooches** raise their voices, their instruments, their consciousness, with an eclectic melting pot of original music inspired by world folk traditions, global Americana, New Orleans and 1920s. *Elmore Magazine* championed the group's "remarkable musical dexterity with songs that bask in a genuine roots regimen and a sense of timeless tradition."



Cover Art: Seriana Russo / Band Photo: Norman Wong

**"Americana music at its purest and most impressive" - No Depression**

*VERY NEXT THING* #6 Album - International Folk DJ Chart (Sept 2016)

*GET US OUT OF FEARLAND* #2 Album - International Folk DJ Chart (April 2018)

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