

# *gambling the muse*

*"Anything that comes out of the South  
is going to be called grotesque...  
unless it is grotesque, in which case  
it is going to be called realistic."  
-Flannery O'Connor*



Just as the fiction of Flannery O'Connor is rooted in a religion-haunted South without being "religious," the music of Gambling the Muse is rooted in a country-influenced sound without being "country."

Jason Butler and Daniel Snyder grew up in the same rural North Carolina county, attended the same small high school, and listened to the same eclectic mix of music. So when they ran into each other at a bar late one evening, it was no surprise that both had been writing songs in a similar vein. Butler had just returned to the county of his childhood after a ten year hiatus. Snyder had just fled from his home in New Orleans after the devastating 2005 hurricane season. They began their music collaboration immediately.

The initial idea was simple: Take the key themes and elements of regional folk, country, and blues music and somehow fuse them with an updated, approachable sound—all while attempting to keep an organic and timeless feel.

After writing a handful of songs built on twangy chord progressions and filled with wayward southern imagery, the two decided to seek out someone who could emphasize the lonesome gaps in many of the tunes, preferably with slide guitar. What they found was even better. Patrick Hicks played guitar, dobro, and mandolin. Originally from Lake Charles, Louisiana, Hicks had grown up heavily influenced by the sounds of regional music and was drawn to that aspect of Butler and Snyder's songs.

In hopes of bringing out a feminine side of the music, the group enlisted the wiles of singer and guitarist Katy Harris. Soon thereafter, Jackson Parrish signed on as drummer/percussionist, while bassist Lance Westerlund stepped in to round out the band's low-end rhythm portion. Finally, Stephanie Attia, a classically-trained violinist, was asked to come in add strings.

Gambling the Muse has shared the bill with regional acts such as Nola, The New Familiars and Randy Whitt and the Grits, and have recorded an EP produced by DeYarmond Edison's Justin Vernon. The result is a sound that evokes a not-too-distant past—perhaps one spent in late night juke joints or early morning roadside motels. But regardless of setting, its appeal lies within the idea of a collective memory passed down by years of songwriters, and shared with the inhabitants of Flannery O'Connor stories.

The members of Gambling the Muse all currently live in and around North Carolina's Cape Fear River Basin.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING BOOKING, PHOTOS OR INTERVIEWS,  
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