



Member Bios

Steve Gardner

Steve Gardner plays fiddle, guitar and sings for Culann's Hounds. He began his musical education at San Francisco State University under Paul Yarbrough on the Viola and continued on to graduate school at The Aaron Copeland School of Music in New York under Danny Phillips. After returning to San Francisco, his love of Irish music led him to form Culann's Hounds and he has spent the last decade playing roots music; Irish, blues, country and folk-rock. His fiddle style is characterized by fast tempos and driving rhythm.

Steve pursues a number of side projects. He has been a guest performer with Blues Traveler at Red Rocks Amphitheater, and toured Europe and America with country diva Danni Leigh. Steve also toured with blues rock outfit The Darktown Rounders, and founded the Gypsy Jazz ensemble Beso Negro. He's appeared with Danny Montana and the Bar Association, Matt the Electrician, Shilelagh Law, The Trespassers and many more. He's recorded tracks for Grammy Award-winning producer Bobby Ozuna and for Bob Mandel, adding hip-hop recordings to his list of credits. He is the founder and Artistic Director of Roots Music Marin, a non profit folk music school.

Renée de la Prade

San Francisco, CA

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Folk musician, rock-n-roller, street performer, accordion teacher, instrument repair tech, groove addict.

Renée grew up with a love of French culture and a love of rock n roll. She played piano and guitar as a kid, then fell in love with the button accordion one night backstage at a Shane MacGowan and the Popes concert. Irish music, zydeco, and her love of street performance led to her current configuration: a button accordion in a low-slung harness, a stomp box, and a funky fusion of old Celtic melodies with raw blues soul and rock power. Her constant touring with Culann's Hounds since 2005 has solidified her stage performance and taught her a giant repertoire of tunes about whiskey and rebellion. Much of Renee's best original material was co-written with Mike and Steve from the Hounds.

Her other projects include the female Americana trio Whiskey and Women, and recording with many bands including the Hooks, the Bog-Savages, the Shut-Ins. She sat in with Black 47, the Zydepunks, Tommy Peoples and Paddy Keenan, and is a regular guest at the Hubba Hubba Review. This winter, she'll be on tour with Jason Webley and the Monsters of the Accordion. Renée is the creator of the Accordion Babes Album and Pin-Up Calendar, which showcases the songs and sexy photos of a variety of female indie artists.

When she's not onstage, look for Renée at Smythe's Accordion Center in Oakland, CA, where she's the resident button accordion specialist and teacher. With her laughing, boot-stomping, high energy performances and wild pink hair, she's a hard woman to forget.

Mike Kelleher

Mike has been performing onstage for thirty years, more than twenty of those with fellow Hound, Steve Gardner. In addition to singing Irish ballads he learned as a boy around the parties of his Boston-Irish extended family, Mike has been writing pop, folk, rock and rap songs since his college days.

Mike learned to play guitar while acquiring an undergraduate degree in mathematics at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, twice winning the International Mathematical Contest in Modeling, and going on to get his MS in Operations Research at Stanford University. Mike sums up his connection between math and music thusly: "Using mathematics to solve problems requires skill. Using mathematics and language to describe a solution to a non-mathematician is very akin to performance. You have to have the skills and be sensitive to the audience."

Steve and Mike both stepped up when Culann's Hounds lost their first lead singer, but the addition of Renee de la Prade brought technique and emotional support to his singing. Music Connections Magazine said, "Kelleher's gut level vocals are expressive and compelling."

Rebel songs, traditional and original, abound in The Hounds' repertoire and for good reason. Tyranny in any form raises Mike's hackles, from the minor tyranny of auto-tune undermining faith in our own voices, to the corporate tyranny of today and military tyranny of centuries past. Mike connects to the past through folk traditions and will rock against oppression forever.