

# overtherhine

Cincinnati veterans return with a trumpet call to 'wake up'

**RODNEY WILSON** |  
CIN WEEKLY CONTRIBUTOR

The scene is Kaldi's. Book-lined walls tower over the long space while slowly turning ceiling fans move hot, August air. A venerable Cincinnati institution, Kaldi's has seen its share of struggles, has changed hands a few times and, in the end, stands tall on Main Street much unchanged from the boho haven it was when it first opened so many years ago.

Seated at one of the tables is a lanky, bespectacled gentleman with shaggy hair and a wide smile. Linford Detweiler is here as a representative of the duo he helms with his wife Karin Bergquist, *Over The Rhine*, a musical entity whose history in many ways mirrors the coffee shop's — a venerable Cincinnati institution, batted about by the music industry for many years, traded hands a few times. And, in the end, it is still making music that feels like home.

## THE PIANO CHILD

"I lived right across the street for about 10 years," says Detweiler, pointing through the storefront's windows. "This building was empty when I first moved in. Karin and I were over there watching them clean up. She walked over when we heard it was a coffeehouse and was one of the first waitresses here when Kaldi's first opened."

Looking back over a 15-year career, Detweiler considers the story of Over



Linford Detweiler and Karin Bergquist are the married duo behind the hometown band *Over The Rhine*.

## JUST THE FACTS

**WHAT:** *Over The Rhine's The Trumpet Child* album release gala with special guest Josh Rouse

**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 31

**WHERE:** Coney Island Moonlite Gardens, 6201 Kellogg Ave., Anderson Twp.

**PRICE:** \$20 advance, \$25 day of show

**PARKING:** \$6 in large lot

**CONTACT:** 513-232-8230, [www.coneyislandpark.com](http://www.coneyislandpark.com) or [www.overtherhine.com](http://www.overtherhine.com)

## THE SHOWPONY

Over The Rhine's new album, *The Trumpet Child*, finds the band throwing a party for American music. One of the CD's most upbeat songs, "I'm on a Roll," is, according to Linford Detweiler, inspired in part by the Showpony, a New Zealand drink that his wife and band member Karin Bergquist hopes to see offered during the upcoming Moonlite Gardens show. "Karin wants to talk to the bartenders out there, give them the recipe and see if they can serve the Showpony," he laughs. "So that's the big plan."



The Rhine as an epic, one that starts long before he ever set foot in the neighborhood after which he named his band.

"I would probably start with my father," he says, recalling tales of an Amish upbringing at odds with artistic inclinations, resulting in the decision to forge a unique path.

"When my dad was 21, my grandfather offered him the family farm if he would stay in Delaware and farm it. Two hundred fifteen acres would have made him a wealthy man, but my father said the only thing he knew for sure when he was 21 was that he wasn't a farmer."

These are more than just the nostalgic musings of a man sitting across the street from his own humble beginnings. For Detweiler, born to a family that bordered Amish lifestyle with mainstream culture, learning the language of music was a family activity and an ingrained element of his upbringing. "Music for me was just something that I was sort of swept up in, caught up in. It was bigger than me," he says. "My dad bought a record player and started bringing home records - Beethoven's 6th Symphony, Eddie Arnold, Mahalia Jackson - and he didn't know that it was against the rules to play all of that in the same evening."

The mysterious power of music drove the young Detweiler to do more than just listen to the sounds coming from the

record player.

"My dad actually bought us an upright piano, which was a big deal," he says, pointing to the Amish belief that musical instruments have no place in the home.

## LET'S THROW A PARTY

On *The Trumpet Child*, the duo's most recent album, the couple are looking at where they've been and how they got where they are now - the sounds they've followed, the voices that have guided them.

"When we first started Over The Rhine and Karin moved to Cincinnati, we took a moonlighting gig at the Cincinnati Hotel and played a lot of Cole Porter, George Gershwin and Frank Lesser tunes," he says. "We weren't jazz musicians - we had to kind of figure our own way out, and that music did influence us more than we probably ever acknowledged."

"I think part of *The Trumpet Child* is us celebrating the giants of song, the musicians or songwriters that we really admire," he continues, pointing to the musical shout-outs that pepper the album.

Detweiler calls the album "a party," a conscious lightening-up of a band that's been known to strike a melancholy chord or two. Indeed, *The Trumpet Child* is playful, at times borderline raucous, with New Orleans clarinets, Memphis horn sec-

tions and Nashville slide guitar adding a jubilant edge to Over The Rhine's songs.

It's a house party, the sounds of friendship, of comfort and of love - it feels like home.

## GREAT SPECKLED DOG

Detweiler and Bergquist have taken their music from what Detweiler calls "the vegetable stand" ("you had to come to us to get the music") to being the first act on a major label imprint.

Now the two are trying something new with Great Speckled Dog, their very own independent label with distribution into stores nationwide.

It's a move that seems logical for a band so acutely attuned to its own creative capabilities - the members have seen what passes for "success" and decided their pursuits reflect something different.

"Songwriting, to me, is a search for soulfulness so intense it's a spiritual discipline," Detweiler says.

"I feel like the world wouldn't think twice about robbing us all of the soul that is our birthright, just living richly in a way that nourishes our relationships. So songs for me are a sort of defense against anything that would rob me of my ability to live life fully awake. We live so much of our lives half awake, and songwriting is a really alluring call to wake the f-- up."



“Music for me was just something that I was sort of swept up in, caught up in. It was bigger than me”

— Linford Detweiler