



cir-ca [sur-kuh]

preposition, adverb

Origin: 1860–65; < Latin: around, about

“Circa Blue” is the perfect description of what we represent. We are “about” bluegrass ... not completely traditional, not completely contemporary. We write a substantial portion of what we perform, and any covers that we do, we make them our own via arrangements and our own interpretations. Good music is good music, regardless of its origin!

We strive to be unique and entertaining to all audiences, so everyone will discover something they enjoy. Tight vocal harmonies, clean instrumentation, and creative arrangements keep audiences tapping their toes or dancing in their seats ... whichever they prefer.

Our self-titled debut CD was released in February 2012. Comprised of five original tunes and five covers, it was received very well. The album featured guest appearances by the late great Mike Auldridge and fiddle virtuoso Christopher Sexton. *Bluegrass Today* and *Bluegrass Unlimited*, to name a few, gave it rave national reviews, and it continues to receive radio airplay from DJ’s through the US and abroad.

Our sophomore album, “A Darker Blue”, was released March 2014. Comprised of 8 original tunes and 5 covers, it was also well-received. *Bluegrass Today* and *Prescription Bluegrass* gave it great reviews, and the new album held the Roots Music charts for overall album for over one year. “To Mabel with Love” charted as high as #15 for single song, and the overall album charted at #38 for the top 100 Bluegrass albums in 2014.

Recent Performances:

Gettysburg Bluegrass Festival, Gettysburg PA
WAMU Live Studio and Black Box Theatre, Washington DC
Bluegrass in the Park Folk Life Festival, Henderson KY
NEPA Bluegrass Festival, Tunkhannock PA
South Branch Bluegrass Festival, Romney WV
Barns of Rose Hill, Berryville VA
Camp Sinoquipe Bluegrass Jamboree, Fort Littleton PA
Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, Winchester VA
Lucketts Schoolhouse, Leesburg VA
Tamarack Theater, Beckley WV
Shenandoah Valley Music Festival, Orkney Springs VA
Smoked Country Jam Festival, Cross Fork PA
Bluemont Concert Series in Winchester and Fredericksburg VA
Freshgrass Festival, MASS MoCA, Massachusetts





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Meet the band:



Steve Harris grew up in a family of bluegrass lovers. When he was 14 years old, his dad purchased acoustic instruments for each of his five children. The ultimate result was Steve playing guitar, dobro and banjo in *The Harris Family Band*. The group played mostly gospel bluegrass and performed at various churches and other gatherings. He took a break from playing for many years and, in 2007, the fire was rekindled after attending the Gettysburg Bluegrass Festival. Steve started playing the banjo and guitar again, and started writing music. In 2010, he decided it was time to start his own band, and that band is *Circa Blue*. Steve plays guitar and sings lead and harmony vocals.



Matt Hickman is a talented, self-taught banjo player following in his grandfather's footsteps. At age 11, his parents bought his first banjo and he soon began to learn the clawhammer style of playing. Matt's desire to learn to play the "bluegrass" style began when he was introduced to Earl Scruggs' music. Over the years, he honed his skills in not only Scruggs' style, but melodic as well. He has performed with bands such as *Long Meadow Mining Company*, *Red Moon*, *Southern Sage*, and *Hickory Ridge*. In addition to playing banjo for *Circa Blue*, Matt is an accomplished instrumental songwriter.



Wayne Lanham Wayne Lanham is originally from Manassas, VA and now lives near Winchester, VA in the Shenandoah Valley. He grew up listening to bluegrass and classic country music and was exposed to live performances early on through his father. He started playing mandolin in the mid 70's and over the years has developed his own fluid style as a soloist. Vocally, he sings all the parts and has a strong sense for harmony lines and arrangements. He has played and recorded with many different artists including *Wayne Yates*, *Smiley Hobbs*, *Porter Church*, *Emory Lester*, *Cliff Waldron*, and was a founding member of *Bill Emerson and Sweet Dixie*. In addition to playing mandolin and singing lead and harmony vocals for *Circa Blue*, Wayne is an accomplished songwriter and fiddle player.



Malia Furtado from the Northern end of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, grew up surrounded by music. She started playing classical violin at the age of three; at age seven, her family started playing bluegrass after going to the Galax Old Fiddler's Convention. Combining her classical and bluegrass repertoire, she established herself as an award winning musician, placing first at the Loudon County, Chesterfield, Burlington, and Galax Fiddle Contests, to name a few. She has also performed at some notable venues that include the Kennedy Center, Ryman Auditorium, America's Cup of Polo, ROMP, and the Carter Family Fold. Previous bands she has played in and for include her family band, *All 4 Hymn*, *Blue Light Special*, *Driving Force*, *No Speed Limit* and *Heather Berry*. Although recently on a three-year hiatus to travel and do full-time volunteer work, Malia has returned to her true passion. Malia plays fiddle and sings harmony vocals with *Circa Blue*.



Teri Chism grew up in a music loving family. She started playing guitar as a teenager, singing with her brothers and sisters, and became interested in Bluegrass music in her early 20's. She played guitar in several local DC area bands until transitioning to bass in the early 80's, and subsequently honed her bass skills with various local Northern VA bands. In 1991 she moved to the Northern Shenandoah Valley near Winchester, VA and became the permanent bassist for *Patent Pending*. She later was a member of *Cliff Waldron and the New Shades of Grass*. When Cliff retired from music, she joined her long time friend, Bill Emerson, and was a founding member of *Bill Emerson and Sweet Dixie*. Teri lives near Winchester, VA and provides lead and harmony vocals for *Circa Blue* in addition to her bass duties.





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What folks had to say about our debut album:

"In today's music world there's a whole lot more to starting a band than merely getting together with four to five guys, hacking out some tunes, booking, and playing shows. Each band must strive to create their own sound, generate original material, and ultimately find a band name which catches the listeners' attention. West Virginia-based band Circa Blue has accomplished just that with the release of their debut self-titled album ... a quite interesting combination of ten tunes equally distributed between new originals and previously recorded material. With tunes ranging from a Johnny Cash cover of *I Still Miss Someone* to the dark minor chord timbre of Gillian Welch's *Annabelle*, the song selection is likely to please a wide range of listeners with varied musical tastes." -- *Bluegrass Today*

"It isn't often you get to begin a bluegrass album review by talking about Latin. But Circa Blue's name says it all. Circa by definition means "around" or "about," as mentioned in the CD liner notes, and that is certainly the best way to describe the content. The West Virginia-based band covers five tunes and adds another five original tunes in their self-titled debut album. The work does not fall cleanly or clearly into one category; it is not purely traditional, nor is it purely progressive ... All in all, Circa Blue has a well-done first effort, and one that is easy to listen to more than once. The vocals are smooth, varied, and well-arranged to appeal to a range of listeners." -- *Bluegrass Unlimited*

"Circa Blue offers what a lot of newer bands do not. Uniqueness. Great vocals and musicianship coupled with excellent original material puts these guys in a league of their own." -- *LocalGrass Radio*

And, what they have to say about "A Darker Blue":

"The new release from Circa Blue is accurately named. In *A Darker Blue*, this Northern Maryland trio puts the blues in bluegrass. The title gives a solid hint, of course. Further evidence comes from a glance through the titles of the 13 songs included here – *Haunted*, *Drunkard's Moan*, *Dark as a Dungeon*, *Ain't Got No Money*, *Dark Hollow*, and *I Still Look for You*. And if those clues elude you, you won't miss it once the music starts, even when the tales of woe are set to a blazing bluegrass tempo. You can hear the despair in the fiddle of Chris Sexton and the resophonic guitar of Gaven Largent and in the mournful voices of Steve Harris and Ron Webb. The best of the best here is a Webb and Harris original, *Ain't Got No Money*, the sad tale of a guy who lost his wife, lost his job and lost his money transformed perfectly into a swing tune. It's far and away the best original song in this collection... Other standouts are *Dark as a Dungeon*, a Merle Travis song popularized by the Country Gentlemen, *I Still Look for You*, a musician's lament about too many miles on the road and too little time at home by Tom Clowser, and *Dark Hollow*...I'm also partial to *Let the Lower Lights Be Burning*, an old hymn lifted by the pairing of Harris' lead vocal and Webb's tenor and a simple but elegant guitar break from producer Aaron Ramsey. And if all the blues get you down, Circa Blue tucked a pick-me-up in the middle of the darkness, a rip-roaring





instrumental from the band's banjoman, Matt Hickman. I have to confess that I don't always "get" how instrumentals are named, even when I hear the composer's explanation. But I "got" *Lead Foot* right off the bat. The tune, which races along from start to finish, propelled by Marshall Wilborn's tasteful bass playing, was named after a friend of Hickman's was caught speeding.

At the moment, Circa Blue's picking and singing are stronger on balance than their writing. But as the band mates develop as songwriters to the point where most of their originals are as solid as *Ain't Got No Money* and *Lead Foot*, Circa Blue's following is sure to grow." – *Bluegrass Today*

"After listening to "A Darker Blue" several times over several days and after reading the twelve panels of liner notes and lyrics in the CD case, I feel I've gotten to know Circa Blue fairly well. With the release of "A Darker Blue" this Virginia based group throws their hat in the crowded ring of bluegrass bands looking to be heard above the din. Not an easy task, but this is a band that knows how to dig in, this is a band that knows how to make instruments hit on all eight. This band knows how to drive.

The core of Circa Blue is Steve Harris / guitar & vocals, Ron Webb / mandolin & vocals and 5 string banjo player Matt Hickman. Instrumentally this is a very talented trio. It is evident that they give ample thought to arrangements, intros, solo structure and well-placed syncopated timing.

Steve Harris plays solid rhythm guitar, not much lead, but when he does it is in the right place at the right time. Ron Webb's mandolin work is impressive at every speed, great chops and intricate solos. Matt Hickman gets worked like a rented mule. The good news is that he keeps up and then some. His combination of Scruggs and melodic style banjo works like a charm...

When recording a project over a period of time the fix is relatively easy. You call in favors from friends and sidemen to fill the missing elements. I would love to have a Rolodex full of friends like Circa Blue. They went 3 for 3 when planning the line-up for the recording of *A Darker Blue*. They invited the great Marshall Wilborn to play bass. You cannot do better than the 2009 IBMA bass player of the year. Marshall is just plain solid.

Fiddle player Chris Sexton's style fits this band like a glove. Very tasteful, full of tone, hot leads and sneaky fills, and through the wonder of studio magic, Chris Sexton gets to play double fiddle with Chris Sexton. Yummy.

This brings us to Dobro player Gaven (pronounced Gayv-in) Largent...ok, time out...what the what? This guy, this kid, is all of 18 years old. I don't know if he grew up next door to Jerry Douglas or is Rob Ickes' secret twin or what, but wow, just wow. Nasty. His lead-ins alone raised the hair on my neck. I want to, and more than likely will, hear more Dobro pyrotechnics from Gaven Largent in the coming years.



CIRCA *** BLUE

Ok, back to reality. Circa Blue managed to successfully put their own spin on standards such as “John Hardy” and “Dark Hollow”, I especially liked the mojo they whooped on “Dark as a Dungeon”. Very well done. Steve Harris and Ron Webb included half a dozen originals on this recording, two of which, “Drunkard's Moan” and “To Mabel with Love”, rise to the top along with Matt Hickman's hard driving instrumental “Lead Foot”.

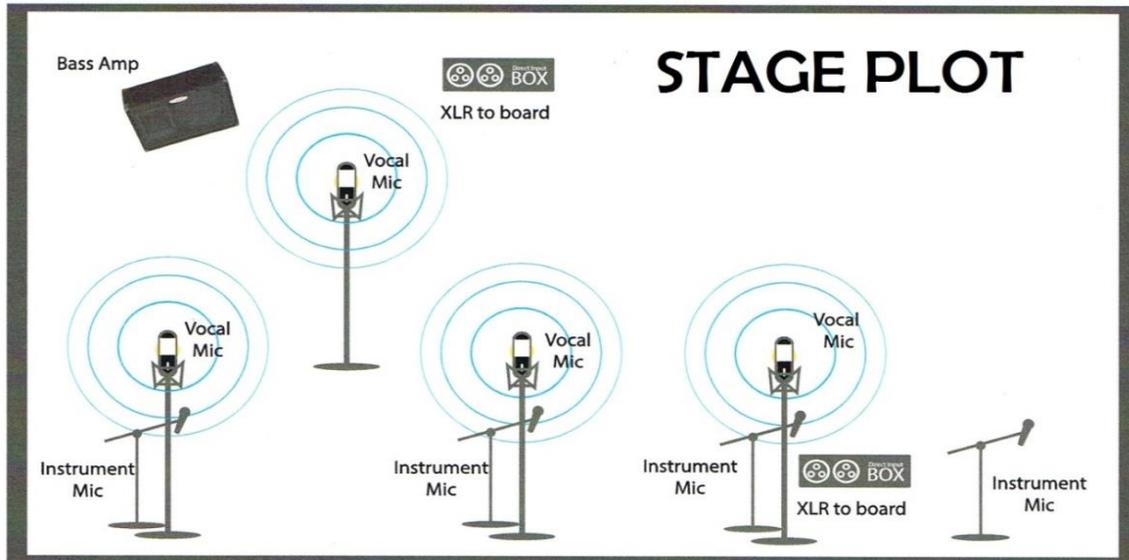
The diverse vibe of the album is rounded out with the 1871 hymn “Let the Lower Lights be Burning” on one end and The Rolling Stone's 1971 “Wild Horses” on the other. Circa Blue is a good band, but I am probably just as anxious as they are for the day when their vocal capabilities reach the lofty heights of their instrumental firepower. My advice to them would be to keep on pickin' and singin'....and either kidnap or adopt Gaven Largent. I hope to be able to see them perform live sometime and look forward to their next project. Good job boys.” – *Prescription Bluegrass*



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CIRCA BLUE



Notes: We use inner ear monitors and will provide the transmitter.
 We use a bass amp on stage for the stage wash, however we use a slight amount of bass in the inner ears as well.
 The guitar uses a Fishman box with an XLR out to the board AND uses a break mic.
 The bass amp and guitar Fishman box require an electric plug-in on stage.
 The inner ear transmitter can be connected via a 1/4" plug or XLR. Body packs worn by the performers are remote and we use one band mix for everyone.

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