

Thieves History

Brad and **Greg** have known each other for some time, mostly through the ministry of [Robinson Presbyterian Church](#). Both were instrumental in the leadership of the Charlotte Fire! contemporary worship service at RPC, so music was always an element in the relationship. But it wasn't just music, it was also dance. Brad's daughter Emily took ballet instruction from Greg's wife Amanda for many years until Emily's graduation from high school in 2012. That's where the Province Of Thieves story really begins...

For Emily's senior dance recital, Amanda requested that Brad play a song live for Emily to dance to during the recital (as opposed to playing a recording). Brad went a step further than agreeing to play a song, he wrote a new song, just for Emily. Brad then invited Greg to accompany, and with Brad on guitar and vocals and Greg on mandolin and vocals, the Thieves played their very first "gig," a one song debut, with Emily's dance accompaniment, titled "[Dance Back To Me.](#)" Emily danced beautifully, her mother cried predictably, Brad won all kinds of "Dad" cred.

Of course, at the time of the dance recital, there was no such band name and really, no such band. But the performance went so well, one music performer turned to the other and said, "this was fun, we should keep doing this." And so it began...

After months in the garage working up a set of at least 30 acoustic songs to play, the Thieves set to embark on their first world tour. First stop: Playing two songs for the Metrolina Elvis Fan Club meeting on **October 2, 2012** at the **VFW club in Indian Trail, NC**. You have to start somewhere, and keep in mind that two songs were exactly double the amount of tunes played in the first gig. The Elvis club appreciated the Thieves effort on covering Elvis' "Suspicious Minds"

for what it was worth. The Thieves won the the tip jar haul and took their winnings to Taco Bell for an after-gig celebratory bean burrito.

Next they were on to [Madison's Coffee House](#) on November 10, 2012 for their first full three hour appearance. The Thieves credit Madison's owner, Dawn Stodolski, for really helping them get started gigging. Dawn took Greg completely at his word, booking the Thieves with little recorded evidence to prove that the Thieves were a good band and worthy of taking over Dawn's coffee house for an evening. She would not be disappointed, and the Thieves made regular appearances at Madison's throughout the next two years.

2013

2013 saw 32 Thieves performances, mostly in the greater Matthews, NC area. But the year was punctuated by a huge appearance on September 21, 2013 at City Tavern in Southpark (Charlotte, NC) where the Thieves performed for more than 500 attendees of the [Camp LUCK](#) "Open Your Heart" dinner and auction. The Camp LUCK staff and auction attendees loved the Thieves so much, the Thieves have been regular performers at Camp LUCK events ever since. The Thieves consider Camp LUCK their signature supported charitable cause.

But Camp LUCK is not the only organization the Thieves have supported. They have loaned their talents to fundraising efforts for the Cabarrus Humane Society and numerous small church functions over the past few years. Not only that, it is not uncommon to hear the Thieves announce they will donate their tip jar haul to worthy causes.

2014

2014 saw perhaps the most significant Thieves milestone to date, the completion of writing, recording and producing their first album. The [self-titled debut album](#) was recorded over several weeks in January

2014 at Simple Tune Studio in Indian Trail, NC. Featuring nine original songs and one cover of Chicago's "[Make Me Smile](#)". The album featured guest performances from **Ryan Davis** on bass guitar, **Leslie Nakhle** on backing vocals, and recording engineer **Tom Eure** on fiddle and numerous other percussive tracks. Release on April 12, 2014 the band celebrated with a very well attended CD Release Party at [Moochies Tavern](#) that same week.

2014 saw another 24 appearances by the Thieves in the greater Charlotte area. As the year closed out, Greg became more involved with the worship band at [Next Level Church](#) in Matthews, NC where he met guitarist/banjoist/vocalist **Steve Allen**. Greg felt Steve's instrumental and vocal skills were a natural fit for where the Thieves wanted to progress in their music. An invitation to audition for the band was forwarded and Steve would soon be a regular participating Thief.

2015

The transition from two part vocals to three part harmony vocals is not a matter of "everybody just sing what you're hearing." With only two people, the harmony vocalist can really just sing anything that harmonizes. But with two harmony vocals, now you've got to get organized to keep from stepping on one another. Many Thieves practices include time-consuming work strictly on vocal parts and discipline. Thieves local popularity rose in 2015 as they broke ground in new venues like [Treehouse Vineyards](#) in Monroe and new fans were gained. 2015 also saw two dozen appearances by the band. It was becoming evident that the harmonic vocals, which the Thieves excelled at, were becoming the chief draw.

Brad and Greg had been discussing all along how an upright bass player would also be a perfect fit to join our band. But, alas, upright bass players are in very slim supply in these parts and don't just walk up to you and ask if they can join your band. Except that one night in late summer of 2015, after a particularly lovely evening on the

Moochies Tavern patio, **Parker Foley** walked up to the Thieves and said: "Hi! I'm an upright bass player, and I'd like to join your band!" Swear to **Fiddler's Green**, that's exactly how it happened. So now, as 2015 drew to a close and with the band more than a year past their last recorded album as a duo, the band was twice the size and new original music, written while keeping a quartet in mind as the performing artist, was emerging...

Over the course of 2014 and 2015, original songwriting, particularly from the band's two founders, continued to occur. Province Of Thieves was becoming a songwriting vehicle for the two, and even Steve Allen began getting in on the songwriting action as well. By December 2015, the Thieves had saved up a sum of money from regular gigging and had also stored up a dozen of their best songs. A date was then set with **Boo English** at **Knothole Recording Studios** in Waxhaw, NC to begin recording work on the new Province Of Thieves album.

2016

But before the Thieves could step into the studio, a month of preparatory practices in January 2016 would ensue in Greg's cold garage. **Jennie Brooks** was invited in (on recommendation from Parker) to help out with drums and percussion. **Tammy Morris**, another close friend of the band from Next Level Church, came in to figure out where the Thieves could fit her powerful rock vocal skills into the mix.

On Friday January 29, 2016, the entire band walked into the Knothole studios and began laying down tracks. This process took nights and weekends over the entire course of February and well into March 2016. Many tedious evenings poring over the recorded tracks, making edits and generally driving studio engineer **Boo English** crazy finally culminated in the production of Province Of Thieves 2nd album "Laverna" released in May of 2016.

The album featured soon-to-be well established Thieves favorites such as "[Greatest Wonders](#)" as well as already well established live favorites like "[Whiskey Saved the World](#)." But the album features ten other great songs that all stand on their own and make this a solid hour of Folk/Americana goodness. No filler here. **Tammy Morris** stands out on "[Higher](#)." **Parker Foley** throws in some nice upright bass solo runs on "[Trails](#)." **Jennie Brook's** drum work and **Greg Moore's** acoustic guitar solos on "[Sweeter Cup](#)" are not to be missed. **Steve Allen's** James Tayloresque voice is the chief draw on "[Carolina Gold](#)." And as always, Brad Davidson's songwriting takes center stage on several tracks including the title track "[Laverna](#)."

This album is also featured cover art from Cary, NC artist [Tim Lee](#). Tim also happens to be a mandolinist himself, playing in the "[Hey Brothers](#)," an NC triangle-based bluegrass band. Tim's "Pretty Red Lips" painting caught the eye of the Thieves on the internet, and the Thieves licensed with Tim to feature the art on the cover of the new album. In fact, the Thieves did not really have a title for the album nailed down until it was decided that Tim's art would be the album cover. Once that was decided, the cover's red-haired mandolin picking beauty would soon be, essentially, LAVERNA Roman goddess of Thieves.

2016 appearances marked another successful year of live music for the band. This included the Sunday June 26th appearance of the Thieves at Symphony Park in Charlotte, NC. This show featured the largest crowd the band has ever performed for (estimate 3000), on the largest stage they had ever appeared on.

2017

The Thieves "Laverna" album broke new ground for the band. **Greg Moore** had set a personal goal of having tracks from the album played on WNCW-FM out of Spindale, NC. WNCW is a trendsetter in the world of Americana and AAA radio, notably kicking off the success of another area Americana act somewhat well-known as The Avett

Brothers. The Thieves were successful in having several tracks played on WNCW's weekly "Local Color" show. In addition, the Laverna album was featured on Gastonia, NC's WSGE-FM and the band even made a live in-studio appearance at WSGE with DJ **Tim Greene**.

2017 saw 33 live appearances by the Thieves, the busiest live appearance schedule for the band to date. Several new venues became regular spots for the band, including 26 Acres Brewing, Dreamchaser's Brewery, Legion Brewing, Cabarrus Brewing and Catawba Brewing. It seemed as though the Thieves sound was a great fit for the ever-popular and exploding brewery scene in the Charlotte area. Not only that, but the Thieves were beginning to venture further afoot, establishing regular appearances, thanks to **Parker Foley's** outreach, at the Town Pump Tavern in Black Mountain, NC, made famous by its appearances in popular movies and its rather eccentric and motley clientele, who seemed to love the vibe the Thieves were bringing into the dive. The Thieves even had a run-in with rock legend Artimus Pyle (Lynyrd Skynyrd drummer and survivor of the plane crash that killed several members of that band) at the Town Pump, with Artimus awkwardly standing directly in front of **Brad** for an entire song, and then declaring to the Town Pump audience that the Thieves were "great" and demanding audience appreciation via vociferous applause. The Town Pump clientele dutifully gave Artimus what he'd requested.

The Thieves saw two notable high-profile appearances in 2017. The "Taste of Charlotte" festival in Uptown Charlotte in April saw the Thieves perform on a street stage with thousands moving by and hundreds staying to listen. But, the biggest "win" for the Thieves in 2017 was easily their appearance at the **Tosco** Holiday Party at the beautiful McGlohon Theatre at Spirit Square in Uptown Charlotte on December 9, 2017. The Thieves performed a vibrant rendition of "Go Tell It On The Mountain" in front of a friendly Tosco audience that jumped right into the fray with the Thieves, singing, dancing, and clapping along in the Thieves' musical joy. The Thieves were joined

onstage by **Brian Hicks**, a regular stand-in Thief on banjo and **Greg Moore** was honored to join John Tosco's house band on mandolin for several Christmas singalong numbers during the show.

Sadly, the Tosco Holiday Party would be one of the last live appearances by **Steve Allen** (his last official appearance being the **Gabriel Bello** "Real Music Hangout" recorded live and available on YouTube). Steve's wife **Shelly**, had recently been diagnosed with lung cancer, and Steve would soon notify the band that he could no longer dedicate time to Province Of Thieves' rehearsals and performances in order to focus his attention on Shelly's care. On a brighter note...Steve WOULD remain involved in recording the Thieve's new album project, set to begin recording in 2018 and featuring one Steve Allen penned song titled "Too Late."

2018

Songwriting for the band went on unabated by live appearances and busy schedules. **Brad Davidson**, in particular, was taking the lead in generating new song material prodigiously. The pressure behind the dam to go back in the studio and begin work on a new original album was mounting. This time however, the band would be approaching a new album with a few different strategies. The most notable new strategy was the hiring of a producer for the new album. After consulting with several local musician friends in the Charlotte area, the band was pointed to producer **Eric Lovell** of Blu Bubble Studios in Charlotte.

Work on the new album had actually begun in late 2017, with Eric sitting in a few Thieves' rehearsals and digging into the new song material. The primary difference in using a producer for an album, as opposed to the band just going into the studio and laying tracks with a studio engineer, is that the producer is given considerable latitude in song arrangement and development. Eric would become, in his producer role, a thorn in the sides of the Thieves, demanding a higher level of excellence in their songwriting and recording work. The

recording process however, would take FAR longer than a few months as did previous Thieves projects. The band would find themselves in Blu Bubble Studios, one at a time for the most part, all throughout the calendar year of 2018, laying tracks...then laying tracks again...then laying tracks again until Eric was satisfied with the product. The new album was poised to be groundbreaking in its attention to detail and crisp delivery. It will prove to be the finest album in the Thieves repertoire and see a considerable improvement in performance, particularly instrumentally, for the Thieves. Perhaps the only negative about the new album is the length of time it took to complete, most of the calendar year 2018.

2018 saw 37 live appearances for the band, including some new social media live video recording appearances like **Gabriel Bello's** "Real Music Hangout" (available on YouTube) and a video blog appearance on **Karen and Louis Beeler's "Tiny Stage Concerts,"** also available on YouTube. The Thieves were chosen from among several thousand band entries, to occupy a prestigious spot playing live for Charleston SC's "**Cooper River Bridge Run**" in the spring. This appearance saw the Thieves performing right on the Cooper River Bridge itself, in front of forty thousand runners. The band also performed twice at the lovely **Anne Springs Close Greenway** in Fort Mill, SC including a performance on ASCG's find outdoor stage at the Fiddle 'n Pig Shindig in the Fall. The Fall also brought an appearance, for the first time, at Charlotte's iconic "**Festival in the Park**" where the Thieves did an hour-long set on the Charlotte Folk Society's stage.

The biggest news for the band in 2018 was Province Of Thieves' work being recognized via an award win! The Thieves had been nominated previously for local music awards, twice being nominated for best Country Band category in the **Queen City Music Awards** but never winning the honor (and arguably not the correct musical genre for the band to be nominated for). 2018 was the first year the band had been nominated for a **Carolina Music Award** in the Folk/Bluegrass category and to the surprise and delight of the band,

winning the award! The Carolina Music Awards, unlike other local awards that relied on online voting exclusively, used judges to evaluate the different acts nominated for the prize. The Carolina Music Awards recognize independent and unsigned music artists from throughout both North and South Carolina. The Thieves were deeply honored to be both nominated and chosen for this particular award and are humbled by the recognition.

2019

Province Of Thieves' third album, titled **Weight of the Sky**, was release on January 25, 2019 after a nearly year-long recording process at Eric Lovell's Blu Bubble Studio in Charlotte. On Sunday January 27, 2019, the Thieves performed to a sold-out capacity audience at the legendary Evening Muse club in NoDa, Charlotte for their album release party. Some unfortunate folks, warned by the band not to come if they didn't already hold a ticket, nonetheless traveled distances only to find themselves turned away at the door! **Weight Of The Sky** contained 12 new songs, 10 of which were original, a cover of "**Wave The Ocean**," that Tim O'Brien had previously recorded in the late 80's and reworked by the Thieves (some of the Thieves' version is original, but we still have to acknowledge O'Brien) and another cover of a Scottish Traditional song called "**I'm A Rover**." Out of the gate, tracks from the album, most notably "**Henry**" were getting radio airplay, albeit in small scattered quantities, across the country. The album got enough airplay to track at #7 on the Relix/Jamband radio charts in March 2019!

Additionally, for the first time ever, the band filmed and produced a VIDEO to a song on **Weight Of The Sky** that turned out to be perhaps the band's most-surprise hit. You could describe "**Who Shot John**" as an entirely studio-built song. The band had not written the song prior to entering the studio, but while working Brad Davidson had quickly written it and introduced it to Eric and the band. Brad wrote

the song fully intending for it to be an a capella piece and the idea of "stomping" for percussive was a studio-add. In fact, the stomping you hear recorded are actual wood planks brought into the studio, set up on blocks with microphones positioned underneath the planks. Then members of the band smacked the planks with work boots they held in their hands. The intent to record a stomp sound similar to an old front porch.

For the video, the band employed recent UNCW grad and daughter to Brad, Sarah Davidson as producer. The video has won recognition on Reverbnation.com several times, being selected for various online music video playlists.

2020

Most might immediately think of 2020 in a poor light, what with the global pandemic striking in the spring of this year. The entire year was not a total loss though.

Province Of Thieves gladly accepted an invitation from Sam and Resa Treadaway to perform at their house-party style venue they named **The Shady Grove Concert Series** in January 2020 (pre-Covid). The show was a sell-out and a huge success. Seems the Thieves adapted to and fit the house party music presentation quite well. The hosts enjoyed the band so much they invited the Thieves back to play another Shady Grove show in the fall of 2020, but the fall appearance was played outside in the yard at the Treadaways. The band still maintains a warm relationship with the Treadaways, so future shows with Sam and Resa are definitely possible.

Still though, the story of 2020 was primarily Thieves shows booked and then Thieves shows cancelled thanks to the pandemic. The Thieves only appeared live seven times in this year. Like most of the rest of the world, the Thieves hunkered down and tried to stay away from one another to avoid spreading the virus. Any rehearsals and shows during this year were outdoors and lightly attended.