



This is a printer friendly version of an article from [www.southbendtribune.com](http://www.southbendtribune.com)  
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

For a printer friendly version **without** the article's picture click here: [Print Story without picture](#)

[Back](#)

Article published Jun 12, 2008

## After hasty start, Outfit on the rise



The Belleville Outfit performs Sunday at LVD's Concert Hall in Goshen. Photo provided

By **TOM CONWAY** *Tribune Correspondent*

The kind of music The Belleville Outfit makes — a mixture of gypsy swing, big-band jazz and Americana roots music — seems ready-made for the public radio program “Prairie Home Companion,” but, Rob Teter says, they haven’t appeared on the show ... yet.

### In concert

The Belleville Outfit performs at 3 p.m. Sunday at LVD's Concert Hall at The Old Bag Factory, 1100 Chicago Ave., Goshen. Admission is \$15. For more information, visit the web site [www.lvds.info](http://www.lvds.info).

“They had a contest this year called ‘Talented Twenty-somethings,’ and we entered it,” the band’s main singer and songwriter says by phone from his home in Austin, Texas. The contest drew more than a thousand bands and artists. “We made it to the top 20. At least,

we are on their radar.”

Given that the group has been together for just over a year, that is an impressive achievement.

With their debut album, “Wanderin’ ” — holding in the top 20 of the Americana radio chart for several weeks — and a steady touring schedule that has taken them across America, including a critically lauded performance at South-By-Southwest 2008 Music Festival in Austin and an upcoming slot at the 2008 Austin City Limits Music Festival, The Belleville Outfit is a band on the rise.

“It has been an insane year,” Teter says.

The Belleville Outfit came together when Teter’s previous band, The DesChamps Band, was invited to play at Merlefest 2007 in Wilkesboro, N.C. The only problem was that The DesChamps, which also included Belleville’s guitarist Marshall Hood and upright bass player Jeff Brown, was no longer a functioning group.

With only a few days of rehearsals, a new band — including singer-violinist Phoebe Hunt, pianist Connor Forsyth and drummer Jonathan Konya — was formed. Teter met Forsyth and Konya when they were students at Loyola University in New Orleans.

“It didn’t even have a name yet,” Teter says. “We sat around my house drinking beer and playing a lot of Django Reinhardt tunes. One in particular that we were really on was called ‘Belleville.’ So, we wanted to give a nod to that, and also we figured ‘belle ville,’ meaning ‘beautiful city.’ We figured that naming it Belleville was a nod to Django and also a nod to the city of New Orleans. It was also a product of having to come up with a name in 24 hours.”

The group of 20-somethings — the oldest is 23 — has been heavily influenced by music released long before they were born.

“I think we were just kind of lucky growing up to be pointed in the right direction,” Teter says. “I think it

was, also, most of us were attracted to good music. We all had our phases of crap that you listened to when you were 14 and 15. As far as I can remember back, I have always listened to what I play.”

In addition to Reinhardt, Teter says Walter Hyatt has been a major influence on the band. The Belleville Outfit performed, along with Lyle Lovett, at the tribute to the Texan singer-songwriter at the Austin Music Awards.

“Ever since I can remember, those tunes have been a massive influence on me personally and my songwriting,” he says. “They are just some of the flat-out most amazing songs ever written.”

The Belleville Outfit play a couple of Hyatt covers on “Wanderin’,” as well as songs written by Teter and Hunt, that encompass country, bluegrass, gypsy swing and blues. The band released the CD independently.

“There is just so much more opportunity there for you than if you immediately sign away everything you’ve got to some Joe Schmo who has got a label,” Teter says.

“If you can just hold on long enough, and you can battle through two years of being devastatingly broke, if you can get through that, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.”

---