

Claire Lynch Band Oct. 3 & 4

by [ERIC THOM](#) on [SEPTEMBER 30, 2013](#) · [0 COMMENTS](#)

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If you've never heard [Claire Lynch](#) sing, your life's not quite complete. For never was there a sweeter sound – never more fair from any songbird's trill – than her voice. What she can do to a musical story has helped transform the art of bluegrass music. A true original, she's a joy to behold and as deep, down soulful as can be.

It wasn't always so – she's worked hard for her recognition and deserves all she can get. Surprisingly, her extremely southern-sounding voice was born in

Kingston, New York where, at age 12, she relocated with her family to Hazel Green, Alabama. Upon meeting her husband, Larry, she moved away from her love of singing pop music with her sisters to falling in love with bluegrass. Singing in Larry's band, Hickory Wind – eventually **The Front Porch String Band**, she released her debut, *Breakin' It*, in '81. The rest is history – that and 9 more discs, a family and a touring regimen that would make a Bedouin blush. A faultless writer, her name preceded her own live talents as others covered her music. She's since more than earned her own marquis – treading the boards endlessly, injecting her original material with a sweet soulfulness, proving that nobody does them better than she.

The release of Lynch's tenth disc, [Dear Sister](#), has forever moved the bluegrass goalposts, given her ability to project intensity and gentleness,

vulnerability and strength and all points in-between. The road's not been easy – career detours and family-rearing stopovers resulted in hard-earned changes in her personal tune. But she's proven herself 100% committed to what she's doing, surrounding herself with a phenomenal band who manage to exceed her inflexible expectations. It's the combination of Claire's high, lonesome sound and this band of virtuosic musicians who prove the secret ingredient behind their powerful sound. Award-winning bassist-clawhammer

banjo player-dancer-percussionist **Mark Schatz** joins mandolinist-guitarist Matt Wingate and fiddler and player-of-all-stringed things, **Bryan McDowell**. Acoustic guitars and bass mesh with fiddle, mandolin, banjo



and their supportive harmonies – never fighting for position and always working under Lynch’s one-of-a-kind vocal aeronautics. There’s never an unnecessary break in the action, unless intentional.

Touring behind *Dear Sister* provides the band the opportunity to present fresh, timeless material as it’s meant to be heard – with all the energetic drive of a finger-blistering live show, keeping the bluegrass tradition alive. The [title track](#) provides a good start – a tear-inducing masterpiece – co-written with southerner Louisa Branscomb. It’s an intimate farewell letter shared between two sisters, their lives ravaged by the destruction of the Civil War, delivered with all the tenderness Lynch is known for – ending smartly with the coda from “There’s No Place Like Home” and reinforced throughout by Wingate’s mandolin and McDowell’s crying fiddle. Or consider the frailty and heartbreak revealed in “How Many Moons”, contrasting with the pop-friendly “Need Someone” with its hook-laden chorus and blend of innocence and longing. The upbeat, banjo-driven “I’ll Be Alright Tomorrow” clears the air with its slap-happy acoustic bass, mandolin and guitar while the heartfelt paean to all love songs, “That Kind Of Love”, speaks highly of Lynch’s character, the song wrapped in delicate harmonies, propelled by its sturdy, spirited acoustic underpinnings.



An opportunity to witness such wide-ranging talent, depth and emotional firepower on-stage doesn’t come along very often – especially in a room so acutely attuned to making the most of acoustic performance. The Claire Lynch Band makes for a special occasion not to be missed – so don’t.