

## STRINGVILLE

Stringville is one of the few Bluegrass bands that is playing in West Germany. Martin Beckman is the guitarist and lead singer of the band. He is from Anderson, South Carolina, and started playing Bluegrass about 18 years ago. In the states he started playing in a local group which included Al Osteen on banjo, Lewis Osteen on bass, Lance Leroy on fiddle and Vernon Roland on mandolin. In 1965 he started playing in the original group called "The Dixie Bluegrass Boys" with Al on banjo, Larry Jefferson on mandolin, Curtis Blackwell on guitar, and Randall Collins on fiddle. Later he and Al went on to Atlanta, Georgia, and formed the house band at Six Flags over Georgia. Martin now lives in Fuerth, Bavaria, West Germany, where he played in the band "Kulawee" until 1978. In this band Chuck Roe played banjo and Melvin Lindsay was on mandolin. In 1979 at the Erlangen Open-air Folk Festival Martin met Rudi Merkel and Stephan Miltenberger with whom he started his present band called "Stringville" .

Rudi Merkel plays the banjo, autoharp, and dobro. He started playing the banjo in 1973 after hearing old-time banjoist Derrol Adams at a European Folk Festival. Two years later Rudi was a member of the band "Liberty Valance". In 1977 this band parted and to continue playing in a Bluegrass group Rudi started the band "Hotch-Potch" which included Rudi on banjo, Heiner Huemmmer, and Helmut Holobek. The group did not have a mandolin player until Rudi was able to persuade a friend Stefan Miltenberger into playing one. "Hotch-Potch" had many performances in clubs, youth centers and festivals, especially in the North Bavarian area. The group was also on a three week tour through Poland, which was organised by the Erlangen Culture Center. As a studio musician,

Rudi recorded with German folksinger Guenther Stoessel.

Stefan Miltenberger plays the mandolin with Stringville and thought up the name of the group. He was once a member of the German Folkgroup "Hellerbrunner Nervensaege". He recently started playing fiddle and is interested in old-time music.

Stephan Posch is the bass player with the band. He started learning the bass in school and was a former member of the group "Steffelschorsch". In this band their music was old German Folk which is a little like Bluegrass. He now enjoys playing Bluegrass music.

Stringville plays more traditional Bluegrass (Momroe, Flatt & Scruggs, Stanley, etc.). They also change their programs to the wishes of the audience. Stringville is well known to the people of Northern Bavaria, through a debut on the Third German Radio, from appearances at the Erlangen Open-air Folk Festival and the Nurnberg Bluegrass Festival, to performances in all the clubs, pubs, and student centers- Stringville has brought Bluegrass to Germany.