

## Mountain Songbird to play Ganado Thursday Runaway Home brings harmonies to Ganado



Runaway Home will perform in Ganado on Thursday.

By [Melissa Crowe](#) •

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- **IF YOU GO**
- Runaway Home
- 7:30 p.m. Thursday
- Rear Window Listening Room, 107 E. Menefee St., Ganado
- Show with dinner, \$25; show only, \$15

- [rearwindowlisteningroom.com](http://rearwindowlisteningroom.com)

With heart-stopping three-part harmonies, Runaway Home blends life experiences into a signature Americana sound.

The Nashville-based trio will play the Rear Window Listening Room on Thursday in Ganado.

Mark Elliott, known as "The Troubadour" of the group, said his joy is sharing the music live.

What's the story behind your nickname "The Troubadour"?

I just adopted it after people started calling me that. I grew up in the D.C. area - it was a hotbed area for folk and bluegrass. Tom Paxton (a recipient of the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award) came out of that whole Greenwich Village troubadour era. He took me under his wing as a teenager. I'd send him songs; he'd mark them up and send them back.

I grew up in the troubadour tradition with a guitar over the shoulder - a one-man-band traveling about.

Considering you guys call Nashville home, you have successfully avoided a typical "Nashville" sound.

There's been a historical rivalry between Austin and Nashville. They're both industry towns.

Nashville has always been a mainstream industry town, and Austin has been looked at - what cause part of the rub - as an alternate to Nashville. We just don't get caught up in that.

A lot of people don't realize that what you hear on radio is a small amount of what's going on in Nashville in terms of genre and certainly in terms talent.

How do you balance the vocal harmonies with your style of playing guitar?

I think first of all, we really look at the band and the band's harmonies as its main calling card. We make sure that whatever we do, musically, whether it's the type of song we do or the song we write, that harmonies are first.

Our harmonies are pretty stout, and they're even more that way live.

The cool thing about guitar playing and instrumentation is Gary Culley and I have played music together since 1991. We know each other's guitar playing very well. There's as much harmony between us guitar players as there is between the three of us.

Because it's been automatic for us, it's allowed us to concentrate on more complicated, detailed harmonies.

All three of us come to the music business with very different backgrounds - religion, politics, where we come from. We're all very different, but each one of our paths had harmony singing in them.

Do you all have a goal in mind for the band?

We want to play live.

We're all in our mid-40s. The likelihood of being on a major label is pretty low, both because we're doing independent music and our age.

We're not doing what you hear on the radio. We're an indie band. The best thing about being an indie band is playing live.

For me, music is meant to be played live.

We're really looking to play more shows. This year, we're doing 75 shows; we're looking to double that next year. This is a band that wants to travel full time.

Do you have a message you're trying to impart to the crowd during a show?

I would sum it up by saying the message we're sending is a good time...

We realized early on that we were having such a good time - maybe because we're older and doing it for ourselves - it's leaking out all over stage.

People who may not normally like folk, bluegrass, Americana or country and come across us are happening to like us because they're just having a good time.

Tell me about the lyrics in "Can you Hear My Song" - "I don't believe you ever think of me / Tell me I'm wrong / Can you hear my song?"

The blessing and curse of being a songwriter - especially having been a staff songwriter for years - is that most songs, especially the good ones, you pull from your own experiences.

It'd be nice to write them without living them, but that's not how it works. I was married for a while to another singer/songwriter in town, but like a lot of industry relationships, it didn't last.

There's a broader message to "Can You Hear My Song." Here we are in our mid-40s, arguably better at every aspect of what we do than we were young, but in some respect, less able to make hay out of it because the mainstream business is that of youth.

There's this guttural need for people to hear what we do. Part of it is that sense of we're still here; we're better than we used to be; can you hear us?

We want people to hear our songs.

Where did this informal motto "It's the music that makes us smile," come from, and what does it mean to you?

It comes from a song we do. We didn't record it, but we play it live.

We had a fan come up and say, 'Hey, I just love that line because it really does make you smile.' Within a month, we had that on the back of T-shirts and mugs. It's true.

Going back to this rebirth of three singers that have been in the music business for several decades and finding a new ground to forge, we just sit around and smile all the time.