

# Taarka

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From the acoustic-rich hills of Colorado comes David Tiller, Enion Pelta-Tiller, and Troy Robey, core members of spirited Americana band Taarka. The name brings to mind sizzling spices and vibrating strings – both fitting images for this group whose music explores bluegrass, pop rock, folk, old-time, Gypsy-Jazz, and Celtic – all from a string band setting.

Raised in bluegrass mecca Waterford, Va., Tiller is a singer and player from his youth and a master of mandolin, bass, tenor guitar, and bouzouki. Classically trained five-string violinist and vocalist Pelta-Tiller was born in San Francisco and raised in Oakland, Calif., where she began musical studies at age three. “Their voices sound fantastic together ...,” wrote No Depression regarding the great talent of this most musical couple, “Enion is a marvelous violin player, and David is her equal on mandolin.”

While living and busking independently of one another in New York City, Tiller and Pelta-Tiller met and found themselves sharing physical attraction as well as musical tastes. Once a couple, they played with the group Brooklyn Browngrass before moving west and forming Taarka. Finding their home in the welcoming music scene of Lyons, Colo., the Tillers have shared the stage with artists like Grateful Dead, Phish, Yonder Mountain String Band, Sufjan Stevens, and The Decembrists. Just this year, Taarka was featured in the Rocky Mountain Folks Festival and as part of the PBS special, “Bluegrass Underground.”

Taarka’s musical influences range from Romania to Appalachia, with many stops in between. Relayed instrumentally and lyrically, their sound evolves from life’s deep wells of subject matter. Having lived life – as we all must – with its tragedies, joys and jubilations, their response has been to write and play honest music influenced by songwriting greats – Darrell Scott, Greg Brown, James McMurtry, Gillian Welch, Richard Thompson and others – and the rich traditions of American and English balladry.

Taarka’s newest release, *Making Tracks Home* (March 2015), is a bold exploration of the group’s favorite genres. The lead track, “Heart and Song,” is an anthem that rings from the competent voice (and pen) of Pelta-Tiller, whom Grateful Web called “reminiscent of Regina Spektor, with the vulnerability and slight hint of defiance that the comparison implies.”

Lead vocalist for the group, Pelta-Tiller sings: “Shall we rise up, my darling, and greet the new day with open arms, and shall we be strong and lovely and never give up on heart and song.”

As they tour in promotion of *Making Tracks Home*, the Tillers share the road with Robey (bass, harmony vocals), Mike Robinson (guitar, harmony vocals), and their seven-year-old, Aesop Pelta-Tiller, who is quickly priming for the job of second fiddle.

Troy Robey is an award-winning jazz upright bassist rooted in folk, bluegrass, and rock. Raised in the Midwest, Robey honed his jazz chops while also performing a variety of talented artists including members of Dark Star Orchestra and a who’s who of jazz luminaries.

When not on the road this fall, the band works on a seventh album planned for release by spring 2016. Previous releases include *Adventures in Vagabondia* (January 2013), from which the powerful acoustic rock instrumental, “A Whole New You,” was chosen and included as part of the soundtrack to “1971,” a nationally released, feature-length Maximum Pictures documentary.

Taarka’s live shows are euphonious affairs by pickers who are “gravity-defying in their dexterity” (R2 Magazine, UK). From their cords and from their strings, they generate energy and emotion enough to light any fire.

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