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## The Alison Brown Quartet Visits Seldovia

by *Charity Winters*



The Alison Brown Quartet will be performing in a concert in Seldovia on Sunday October 1, 2006, 7:30 pm at Susan B. English School.

everything else.” Working 9-7 on an average day and touring 50-60 days a year the family is still always together.

Banjo-virtuoso Alison Brown will be visiting Seldovia for the first time this coming weekend. An internationally recognized artist, Alison has taken her bluegrass quartet (banjo, piano, bass, and drums) all over the U.S. and the world, visiting places like Surinam, Guyana, and the Shetland Islands. Her talents have earned her a Grammy nomination for her first solo effort *Simple Pleasures*, a Grammy in 2001 for her album *Fair Weather* in the Best Country Instrumental category and the Banjo Player of the Year award from the International Bluegrass Music Association. Her latest release, *Stolen Moments* contains a unique blend of bluegrass, jazz and Celtic music.

Growing up in California, bluegrass music wasn't part of Alison's day-to-day culture. Stumbling upon a Soggy Mountain banjo record at a young age, Alison was drawn to the sound of the instrument. At the age of 10, Alison began taking banjo lessons and what followed was an early musical career playing with several Southern California bands with fiddler Stuart Duncan. After high school, Alison gave her full attention to college and work attending Harvard University, earning her MBA from UCLA, and then working as an investment banker. Alison continued to play, joining a regional bluegrass band, but banjo had taken second fiddle to her career. Then in the late 1980's, Alison quit her day job to tour with Alison Krauss & Union Station for three years and later as Michelle Schocked's bandleader. Soon she began writing her own music and releasing solo albums.

In 1995, Alison co-founded Compass Records with her husband, Garry West. Billboard Magazine has called it "one of the greatest independent records of the last decade." Indeed, 11 years later, this roots music label has made a name for itself, signing 200 records with names like Glenn Tilbrook, Paul Brady, and Beth Nielsen Chapman. Knowing little about the business side of things, Alison said she and Garry were confident they could learn as they went along. As artists, (Garry plays bass in the quartet) they hoped to bring another perspective to the music business world.

A new challenge to life as an artist came with the birth of daughter Hannah. Now 4 years old, Hannah has traveled every where with the quartet and has seen a lot of interesting places. Being able to mix music and family inspired the name for her last album *Stolen Moments* as Alison explained that they felt as though they "were literally stealing moments between



Joe Craven

This will be the Alison Brown Quartet's first trip to Alaska. Playing first in Fairbanks, then Anchorage, it will be an honor to have the quartet visit our quiet little town. Joining her will be a former member of the quartet, Joe Craven playing mandolin, fiddle and percussion. Alison commented that they hadn't realize initially that Seldovia was not on the road system. However, the prospects of squeezing on a small plane or boat didn't seem to faze her much when she stated that they had been to some "pretty exotic places". Though there won't be much time to sightsee, Alison said she was hoping Hannah would be able to see a bald eagle or two along the way.

On Sunday, October 1st, Alison will share her skills with other interested musicians through an afternoon workshop. Later that evening, the Alison Brown Quartet will perform at the Susan B. English school at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$15 for adults.

