

NINA MOINI: It's time for some live local music. If you listen to *Minnesota Now*, we love live local music. Brothers Page Burkum and Jack Torrey grew up in Minneapolis. There are no strangers to the Minnesota State Fair or the MPR stage, but their name and their music brings to mind a different scene maybe, the desert. The Cactus Blossoms are known for rich vocal harmonies and twangy guitars that create a rich old country sound.

Let's give it up for them, everybody. They've been playing together for more than a decade now and have six albums to their name, most recently the 2024 release *Every Time I Think About You*. And next month, they'll be touring with some other Twin Cities favorites, the Jayhawks. So we're going to chat with them in just a minute. But first, they're going to play us a song. Please give a warm welcome to the Cactus Blossoms.

[THE CACTUS BLOSSOMS, "LONELY HEART"]

(SINGING) No one could come between us

We were as close as we could be

I always thought I had a friend I could trust

But now I see that all I got is me

Running around out on the town on my own

Having a time forgetting that I'm alone

Nowhere to go

Taking it slow

Worlds apart

I hope you don't mind

Spending some time with a lonely heart

If you ever call my name

I'd come running

If I called yours

I hope you'd do the same

Nowhere to go

Taking it slow

Worlds apart

I hope you don't mind

Spending some time with a lonely heart

Someday I'll find somebody new

And leave my loneliness behind

Can we keep this between me and you?

What I want is hard to find

Running around out on the town on my own.

Having a time

Forgetting that I'm alone

Nowhere to go

Taking it slow

Worlds apart

I hope you don't mind spending some time with a lonely heart

I hope you don't mind spending some time with a lonely heart

[APPLAUSE]

Woo-hoo! Let's give it up for The Cactus Blossoms, beautiful as they're setting down their instruments. And we'll give them a minute to make their way over here to these chairs. Thank you both so much, Jack and Page.

Oh, that was beautiful. Thank you for being here.

PAGE BURKUM: Good morn-afternoon.

NINA MOINI: Good morn-afternoon. That's what I'm going to start saying. Thanks for dropping that. So, Jack, I'd love to start with you. Tell me a little bit about the song that we just heard.

JACK TORREY: Page wrote that one. I helped a little bit. So maybe I'll--

NINA MOINI: Oh, sure. Page, go for it.

PAGE BURKUM: So that song idea came out after we were on tour with Nick Lowe years ago, and I think that he infected my brain with that kind of melody or something. And yeah, it's just trying to write a song about being the lonely one, walking around aimlessly and thinking your own thoughts. And we actually went back on tour with Nick Lowe recently, and he really liked that song. So I was thinking maybe we can get him to do it one day, and it'll be full circle.

NINA MOINI: Sure. So tell everybody who may not just a little bit about you two. You're brothers. Jack, tell us a little bit about your story. We're brothers.

JACK TORREY: We've been playing together for about 16 or so years, maybe a little more. We didn't start playing music together until we were in our early, mid-20s. And a lot of people think we grew up as some family band of trained singing siblings, but that's not the case.

NINA MOINI: Donny and Marie.

JACK TORREY: Yeah. We're just a little like Donny and Marie. We'd like to have our own television show someday, during the day. Yeah, but we've been touring a lot the last 10 years. And yeah, we've just followed wherever the music takes us and whoever invites us to do things, and we try to carve our own way a little bit. But we're just on a weird little brother adventure.

NINA MOINI: Aw. So you do have a show coming up tonight, I understand, at 8:00 at the Schilling Amphitheater. And you also played last night. Page, how did that go? What do you guys like about the state fair in particular?

PAGE BURKUM: It was really fun. It has been quite a while since we played here. And we were just reminiscing, actually. So years and years ago, by chance, it's very uncharacteristic for us, but we entered a duet competition. We're not a very competitive with our singing, usually, but we were backing up a friend's band that day. And the competition was going on, so we decided we'd put our hat in. And we won the competition.

And by chance, Prairie Home Companion was doing a show that night at the Grandstand, and they invited us up to play in front of like 7,000 people that night. So that was a pretty big memory. But that's actually-- where that competition was is the same spot where we're playing tonight.

And don't judge me. We didn't have the money to go to the fair when we were kids. I don't know why we didn't. But I think that was my first day at the fair ever. And it started at the Ramburg Senior Center, right behind us, playing three sets with our friend, our lovely friend Glenn Hanson, who we lost a month ago. But we played with him, did the duet competition and then the Grandstand all in one big day. So that was the biggest day we've ever had here.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, wow. I feel like the music that you all perform, the nostalgia, it just makes you want to go for a drive in a way. It brings people to that place. And I feel like there are some other country Americana stars that have been on the Grandstand stage this year, Bonnie Raitt, Tanya Tucker, Sierra Ferrell. Ferrell paid tribute to Dolly Parton, who, of course, we lost last week at age 80. What's special to you both about this genre of music and at this moment in time? I'll start with you, Page.

PAGE BURKUM: Well, I went and caught those shows you were talking about. Bonnie Raitt and Sierra Ferrell, they're amazing. We just found ourselves in making the music we do. I don't think we really like to think about genre and intending to do a certain thing. But everyone ends up doing something.

And we were inspired by early folk and country music, and that's how we ended up where we are. But we try to incorporate any musical taste we have, anything from the Beatles to Wilco to Hank Williams.

NINA MOINI: Yeah, anything you'd add to that, Jack?

JACK TORREY: Not really, no.

NINA MOINI: OK, nailed it. Yeah, I think a lot of people don't want to be boxed in anywhere. They're just looking for inspiration everywhere and anywhere, it seems. So you've been touring for a decade, you mentioned. That's a really long time to be out and on the road. It's amazing.

And I understand you are going on tour with the Jayhawks next month. Or are you just playing a show with them? Is that a full tour? Page, are you looking forward to that?

PAGE BURKUM: Yeah, we're really looking forward to it. We've been fans of them for a long time. They're a great Minnesota band, but they're a great treasure of our United States, the Jayhawks. I think we're doing five shows with them, four or five.

And it'll be on the East Coast, like New York, Boston, I think. And anyway, it'll be a lot of fun. We've only played with them one or two times, and this will be really fun. We'll just be a duo opening for them, but really looking forward to it.

NINA MOINI: OK, great. Is there anything that you like to do at the state fair? I know you haven't been a ton of times, it sounds like. But is there something that you are either looking forward to or maybe something delicious in particular that either of you want to share? Do you want to share your favorite fair food? That's what I've been asking most of the guests. Jack?

JACK TORREY: Well, I've already had a pancake and a donut today. But I was just informed that there's these great things called chimney cake. Maybe I got it wrong. But it's some sort of--

NINA MOINI: Can anyone--

PAGE BURKUM: I've heard of that, yeah.

JACK TORREY: So I might get into that soon. All right, Page, what about you?

PAGE BURKUM: Everyone else, I want to check out the seed art. I'm an art lover. So art made of seeds sounds great. But I heard it's pretty popular. You got to stay in line for a while.

NINA MOINI: The crop art. Yep, there is usually a line. How about food wise? Anything stand out to you?

PAGE BURKUM: I like the garlic fries at the ballpark, yeah. I try anything, though.

NINA MOINI: OK, good to know. So what is next for both of you? I know you're doing the tour, the sets of shows with the Jayhawks. But I mean, what are you looking forward to? Another album? What do you think is next, Jack?

JACK TORREY: Yeah, we're working on a new record right now, and that's always exciting. It's just how it works, the time in between. You tour a lot after you release a record, and you start working on-- continuing to work on whatever songs and recordings. So that's where we're at now. Yeah, and we might be doing a fun thing we've done before in January again. But you'll have to just keep an eye out for that.

NINA MOINI: Oh, stay tuned for a fun thing. So before we let you go, you're going to play another number for us. Thank you both for that. It's a song called "Adios Maria." Page, will you tell us just a little bit about it before you take the microphone there?

PAGE BURKUM: "Adios Maria." Well, this is one of the first songs we started playing together. I'll let Jack explain that.

JACK TORREY: Yeah, it's one of the first songs we started playing together. I wrote it a long time ago. I had just gone on a giant semi-dangerous adventure in a '70s camper that I got for a few hundred bucks, and I spent my first winter outside of Minnesota ever, in Austin and just was playing a lot of music on the streets and hanging out, meeting people. And when I got home that summer, this song came out of some of those experiences.

NINA MOINI: Wonderful. All right, we'll let you all move to the other set of microphones here and get your instruments. Let's give round of applause for Page Burkum and Jack Torrey. The Cactus Blossoms, they're playing tonight again at 8:00 PM at the Pryes Stage at Schilling Amphitheater here at the Minnesota State Fair. Thank you both. And take it away.

But first, I want to thank everyone who puts the show together. We had such a wonderful team on this, senior producer Aleesa Kuznetsov, producers Alanna Elder, Ellen Finn, and Maja Beckstrm. Engineers are Tessa Bloch-- these are all real people, everybody. Give it up for them-- Cameron Wiley and Randy Johnson, Anika Besst. And the crowd, give it up. And our senior producer of events is Tom Campbell.

Thanks to our audience and those listening at home. Again, you can visit us on the corner of Judson and Nelson. In just 30 minutes, the Minnesota Opera will be here on stage with your classical. Then *The Current's Morning Show* will be here reporting live in the afternoon from 3:00 to 7:00.

Minnesota Now will be back on the air after Labor Day for you. Nice to see you all. Thank you again. Give yourselves around of applause. Here we go with The Cactus Blossoms, playing us out with "Adios Maria."

MAN: All right, here we go.

[THE CACTUS BLOSSOMS, "ADIOS MARIA"]

Beautiful flowers are all that I dream of

You don't know what you've got

So you want what you can't have

I love to laugh at all of the hours

All the jokes that I know some way make you sour

Adios Maria

I'll meet you in paradise

Run my hands through your hair

At the break of sunrise

Adios Maria

I'll meet you in paradise

If the good Lord is willing

And the creek don't rise

New Orleans town

On my way up to Austin