

innovative Appalachian music

SAM GLEAVES

singer | songwriter | multi-instrumentalist



Photo by Graham Whitmore

Sam Gleaves was born and raised in Wytheville, Virginia where he began playing music as a teenager with the help of local mentor Jim Lloyd, a multi-instrumentalist, storyteller and barber. Lloyd introduced Gleaves to nationally recognized ballad singer Sheila Kay Adams who shared with Gleaves the old “love songs” of her community tradition. Rooted in Appalachian sounds, Gleaves’ songwriting sings of contemporary rural life and social issues. While earning a degree in Folklore at Berea College, Gleaves performed with the Berea College Bluegrass Ensemble directed by Al White.

In 2015, Gleaves collaborated with Grammy-winning producer Cathy Fink and released a debut record of original songs, titled “Ain’t We Brothers,” which has been featured by The Guardian, National Public Radio, and No Depression. Gleaves tours extensively in the U.S. and he has performed in Ireland, England, Canada, Japan and Italy. In 2017, Gleaves released a duo recording with Tyler Hughes which received glowing reviews from Fatea, Rock n Reel, fROOTS, and others. In 2018, Gleaves collaborated with Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer on a trio recording, “Shout & Shine,” which Justin Hiltner of the Bluegrass Situation called, “viscerally powerful . . . a perfect illustration of cross-generational mind melds and musical melds.” Gleaves now makes his home in Hindman, Kentucky where he currently serves as the Traditional Arts Director at the Hindman Settlement School. A passionate teaching artist, Gleaves has shared Appalachian traditions at numerous music camps, colleges, and public schools.

“Sam Gleaves is the best young songwriter around . . . courageous as hell and country to the bone.” -Lee Smith

“A stunning first album . . . This one’s a keeper.” -Peggy Seeger

On the new Fink, Marxer & Gleaves recording "Shout & Shine:"
"Themes and music for now, more needed than ever."
-Rhiannon Giddens



Fink, Marxer & Gleaves
Photo by Michael G. Stewart