

Roots N Blues field guide: Pokey LaFarge and the South City Three

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Who they are: Led by the gregarious gentleman LaFarge, this St. Louis act are artfully dodgy ambassadors for old-time music, presenting and representing the glories of hot swing, early jazz and ragtime blues.

What they've done: In short, they've singlehandedly made riverboat chic cool again. Whether by landing on NPR's radar, scoring high-profile gigs at the likes of the Newport Folk Festival, opening for Jack White and Old Crow Medicine Show or playing to standing-room crowds in practically every speakeasy, gin joint and rock club across the United States – and abroad – the band has revived a wonderful sound with both an iconic savoir faire and a humble acknowledgment of the debt owed its musical ancestors.

NPR's Stephen Thompson [wrote](#) of LaFarge, "His music evokes the old-timey spirit of a thousand crackling 78 RPM records ... and even when you encounter him face to face, he seems to gaze at you out

of a dusty archival photo. To witness him as a flesh-and-blood man in the present is to feel tricked; it's as if he's somehow being colorized in a Ted Turner-owned laboratory somewhere.”