

## LONG ROAD HOME | Bluegrass

### \*\*\*CONDENSED BIO\*\*\*

When Long Road Home formed in 2005 some described it as a “teenage super group”. The band won the 2006 RockyGrass Band Competition in Colorado and quickly became a regional mainstay. After some personnel changes, original members Justin Hoffenberg (fiddle) and Martin Gilmore (lead vocals and guitar) brought together the current lineup in the summer of 2008.

**Martin** grew up in a musical family in Nebraska and Wyoming. At age 14 he started playing guitar and later studied classical voice at the U. of Wyoming. Martin began writing songs at 18 while working for the National Park Service.

Originally from Illinois, **Justin** has been playing fiddle since age 10 and started performing professionally at 13. He is also well versed in classical violin and various other world fiddle traditions. He is the band's main organizer/manager and lives Boulder, CO.

**Jordan** Ramsey (mandolin) arrived in Colorado from his native Tennessee in 2008, and won that year’s RockyGrass Mandolin Championship. He developed his specialty in Jesse McReynolds style crosspicking studying with Jack Tottle at East Tennessee State U.’s bluegrass program.

**Pete** Wernick (banjo) is best known for his 30+ years with the seminal bluegrass band, Hot Rize, and also is noted as a teacher of bluegrass and 15-year president of the International Bluegrass Music Association. Along with LRH, Pete picks with his early jazz-flavored band, Flexigrass.

Native Californian **Gene** Libbea (bass) played 12 years with the Nashville Bluegrass Band, winning two Grammys, before moving to Loveland, CO. "Machine LeBass" is also known to play with jazz and country groups, and is an award-winning filmmaker.

### \*MORE INFORMATION ON BAND MEMBERS

**Martin Gilmore** has been around music for nearly his entire life. Ever since a young age he has followed his father’s band Turtle Creek to festivals and concerts, providing an environment that influences him to this day. He grew up around Bluegrass, Folk, acoustic, Rock and roll, Jazz, and pop music all of which are present in his writing and his performances. Martin started his musical path playing the piano at the age of six. That carried him into choir and band in his High School and College years. The heavy influence of Bluegrass and folk music in his life eventually pushed him towards the guitars when he was 14 years old. From then on his focus has been on bluegrass and acoustic music with an extreme emphasis on guitar and songwriting. Martin has been writing since a very young age although he claims his first real presentable song was written when he was 18. Since then he has become a widely respected songwriter. His compositions have a depth that many songwriters never realize, and the performance aspect of his music brings them to life in a very moving way. In 2005 Martin joined forces with Long Road Home a bluegrass band and has been playing with them since. His songwriting, vocal and guitar abilities really gleam in his performances with this group. In 2006 Long Road Home won the nationally acclaimed Rockygrass band competition with several of Martin’s original compositions. His solo performances and performances with Long Road Home are some of the best the region has to offer.

**Justin Hoffenberg** is originally from Illinois, but now makes his home in Boulder, CO. When he was in the fifth grade, Justin began playing the violin for school orchestra, and shortly after discovered bluegrass. Ever since, he has dedicated much of his life to the music, and is now on the road to achieving his goal of being a professional bluegrass musician. Formerly the fiddle player such bands as Slipstream, Hit and Run, and others, just has shared the stage with such performers as the Yonder Mountain String Band, Open Road, Town Mountain, The Infamous Stringdusters, Cadillac Sky, Growling Old Men, and others. After high school, Justin decided to give full time music a shot instead of going straight into college, and is still touring and producing full time. When not playing with Long Road Home, Justin likes to promote shows under his own name, which often include members of LRH, but also bluegrass luminaries such as Nick Forster, Sally Van Meter, and Danny Barnes. Justin draws his inspiration from a variety of sources, including the classic styles of Benny Martin and Chubby Wise, the blues and jazz of Vassar Clements and Darol Anger, and the newer sounds of Jason Carter and Stuart Duncan.

**Pete Wernick** is renowned worldwide for his accomplishments and contributions to bluegrass music: the hot-picking force in several trend-setting bands including Hot Rize, respected author and teacher, songwriter, and long-

term President of the International Bluegrass Music Association. Pete's national music career started in 1971 with the first records by northeast instrumental wizards Country Cooking. Founding Hot Rize in 1978 led to an enduring stint as a performing artist, appearing throughout the U.S. and three continents, on national television and radio. Pete took up banjo as a teenager in his native New York City, closely studying Earl Scruggs records. While completing B.A. and Ph.D. sociology degrees at Columbia University, he played in local bands and hosted the New York metropolitan area's only bluegrass radio show in the 1960's. In the early 70's while a sociologist by day at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, he formed Country Cooking whose innovative recordings helped usher in a new wave of contemporary bluegrass. In 1976 Pete moved to Colorado where he recorded Dr. Banjo Steps Out and soon after started Hot Rize, with Tim O'Brien, Charles Sawtelle, and Nick Forster. The foursome became a major attraction and creative force in bluegrass, famous for their dynamic stage shows and finely crafted recordings. The group scored repeated #1 bluegrass radio hits, including the Wernick-penned "Just Like You", and was the first recipient of the IBMA's coveted "Entertainer of the Year" award in 1990, as well as a Grammy nomination the following year. Pete went on to join forces recording and performing with cutting-edge musicians Jody Stecher & Kate Brislin, Jeff White, Chris Thile, Peter Rowan, and Jerry Douglas. Pete's 1993 solo album On a Roll, won high praise, presenting a wide-ranging mix including traditional and progressive bluegrass and the debut of his innovative bluegrass/early jazz band, the Live Five, later renamed FLEXIGRASS. The album rode the bluegrass chart for over a year, with another #1 hit, Wernick original, "Ruthie". Pete has performed with many musical legends, from Doc Watson, Earl Scruggs, and Steve Martin to Bill Monroe and Jerry Garcia.

**Gene Libbea**, formerly of the Nashville Bluegrass Band, is a two-time Grammy winning bass player. Gene's resume reads like a veritable who's who of bluegrass royalty. From his prolific work and recordings with the Nashville Bluegrass Band to his work with greats such as Allison Brown, Charlie Louvin, and the New Christy Minstrels, Gene's playing is always a highlight on anything that he's a part of. Now making his home in Loveland, Colorado, Gene works as a sound engineer, and is also a part time filmmaker.

**Jordan Ramsey** is a graduate of East Tennessee State University's bluegrass program, where he played with the school's top performing ensemble. Under the direction of former Jim and Jesse banjo player Raymond McLain, he honed his McReynolds' style cross-picking skills and as a part of the ETSU "Pride Band" had the opportunity to share the stage with stars like Porter Wagoner, Ralph Stanley, Curley Seckler, Tater Tate, Alison Krauss, Dan Tyminski, Hunter Berry, and Adam Steffey just to name a few. He studied under mandolin master and cross-picking devotee Jack Tottle, founder of the ETSU bluegrass program and one of the only second generation players to dissect and transcribe Jesse's playing. Jordan specializes in McReynolds' style cross-picking, but is well versed in most other bluegrass styles, as well as jazz, swing, and classical idioms. Since moving to Colorado in 2007, Jordan has quickly made a name for himself as one of the hottest new mandolin players in the Front Range, sharing the stage with local stars like Vince Herman (Leftover Salmon), Billy Nershi (String Cheese Incident), K.C. Groves (Uncle Earl), Sally Van Meter (Grammy winning dobro player), Dr. Banjo Pete Wernick (Hot Rize), Gene Libbea (former Nashville Bluegrass Band bassist, two-time Grammy winner), Eric Thorin (Open Road), and many others. Jordan is the current Colorado State mandolin champion, taking first place in the prestigious RockyGrass mandolin contest earlier this year.