

MASS MoCA

PRESS RELEASE

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FreshGrass Award Announces All-Star Jury for 2014

Chris Pandolfi of the Infamous Stringdusters, the Gibson Brothers, and Alison Brown comprise the contest panel

North Adams, Massachusetts — Storied bluegrass and roots performers **Chris Pandolfi** of **The Infamous Stringdusters**, **Leigh** and **Eric Gibson** of **The Gibson Brothers**, and longtime FreshGrass co-conspirator **Alison Brown** select the best new acts in banjo, duo, and band competitions as the FreshGrass Award jury during the eponymous festival, September 19-21, 2014, at MASS MoCA.

A highlight of FreshGrass, the museum's fall bluegrass and roots music festival, the Award crowns up-and-coming musicians who offer a fresh take on the genre. The proceedings expand this year from one musical category to three – giving unsigned bands, duos, and banjo players a chance to compete for cash prizes totaling \$15,000, recording time at Compass Records' studio in Nashville, and a main stage slot at FreshGrass 2015. The competition takes place during the festival, and contest performances are open to the festival audience.

The jury for the band contest is led by Alison Brown, multi-Grammy winning banjoist and founder of Compass Records, who has blended elements of bluegrass, jazz, and blues throughout her illustrious forty-year career. Presiding over the duo contest are International Bluegrass Music Awards favorites The Gibson Brothers, who are today's foremost torchbearers of the old-time duo, a medium that the FreshGrass Award is honored to usher into the future with them. At the helm for the banjo contest is the shape-shifting Chris Pandolfi, best known as the banjoist in The Infamous Stringdusters but also as an avid collaborator and electronic music experimenter.

"We are thrilled to have this wonderful group representing the mission of the Award and helping FreshGrass handpick the next generation of bluegrass greats," says festival producer Chris Wadsworth. "We've watched the career trajectory of last year's Award winner, Cricket Tell the Weather, and know similar success is in store for more great musicians out there."

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About FreshGrass

Three days of concerts and pop-up performances in the museum's galleries, on its stages, exterior courtyards and its urban concert meadow; music clinics organized by instrument, and insider presentations by players in the bluegrass music trade, as well as a bounty of fresh Berkshire food and spirits, are planned for the weekend festival. The contest, workshops, and camping expand this year, as do luthier demonstrations and children's programming. Admission to MASS MoCA's galleries — where festival-goers find concerts set amidst dramatically scaled exhibitions of contemporary art such as Darren Waterston's *Uncertain Beauty*—is included in the price of festival admission.

Festival passes are available for \$92 for adults, \$82 for students, and \$48 for kids 7-16, and are free for children 6 and under, making FreshGrass one of the best values on the festival circuit. Early-bird tickets are available until mid-June before increasing to full price. Museum members receive a 10% discount on full-price tickets. Single-day tickets may be offered closer to the event. FreshGrass details will be updated on the festival website, FreshGrass.com, and on Facebook at FreshGrass Festival. FreshGrass tickets are general admission, and the festival will be held rain or shine.

Sponsorship and Partners

FreshGrass is sponsored by Compass Records, American Roots Music Program at Berklee College of Music, the Porches Inn, Chronogram, Stop & Shop, Tractor Supply Co., the Arcadian Shop, and The Fretboard Journal. FreshGrass is a coproduction of MASS MoCA and FreshGrass, LLC.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest!) centers for making and enjoying the best new art of our time, across all media: music, art, dance, theater, film, and video. Hundreds of works of visual and performing art have been created on its 19th-century factory campus during fabrication and rehearsal residencies in North Adams, making MASS MoCA among the most productive sites in the country for the creation and presentation of new art. More platform than box, MASS MoCA strives to bring to its audiences art and shared learning experiences that are fresh, engaging, and transformative. MASS MoCA is the home of Solid Sound, Wilco's music and arts festival; the FreshGrass festival of bluegrass and roots music; and the Bang on a Can Festival of contemporary music.