

# CD Review: 'God Bless the Mighty Pickle!': Rick & the All-Star Ramblers

By Art Edelstein Arts Correspondent 21 hrs ago

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Rick Norcross and the All-Star Ramblers will celebrate their latest CD, "God Bless the Mighty Pickle!" Sunday at Hotel Vermont in Burlington. Participants include, from left, Coco Kallis, Jon Gailmor and Rick Norcross.

Courtesy Rick Norcross



## Hotel Vermont

Rick Norcross and the All-Star Ramblers' will present their "God Bless the Mighty Pickle!" CD Release Celebration at 4 p.m. Sunday, at Hotel Vermont's Juniper Hall, 41 Cherry St. in Burlington. Tickets (only 40), including CD, are \$25, \$100 for gold circle; call 802-864-6674, or go online to [rickandtheallstarramblers.com](http://rickandtheallstarramblers.com)

Stymied for something to do Sunday? If you are, or want to see a refurbished band tour bus, or are simply a fan of Rick Norcross and his band, The All-Star Ramblers, then head on out to Burlington where at 3 p.m. you can tour "The Chief," formerly known as "The Mighty Pickle."

That bus, a 1957 Flexible Starliner coach, was the Ramblers' tour bus for 22 years. It was bought by country music star Marty Stuart and underwent a three-year restoration. Renamed "The Chief" it resides at Stuart's Congress of Country Music Museum in Philadelphia, Mississippi. But for the release of Norcross' aptly named "God Bless the Mighty Pickle!" album, which will be celebrated by the band at the Hotel Vermont, the bus is heading north for the day's festivities and will be on hand.

Sunday, October 22, 2023

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Rick Norcross and the All-Star Ramblers in the "old days" at the Tunbridge World's Fair.

Courtesy Rick Norcross



The All-Star Ramblers lineup, one familiar to fans includes: Rick Norcross, vocals/rhythm guitar; Taryn Noelle, vocals; Charlie MacFadyen, piano/accordion/lap steel; Dono Schabner, lead guitar/rhythm guitar; Doug Reid, fiddle; Dave Rowell, vocals/bass; and Ian Koeller, drums.

Noelle, the female vocalist, has a number of top albums we've reviewed over the years.

Norcross is also a strong believer in collaboration. On this new album he's brought on several popular Vermont performers for cameo appearances. Amber deLaurentis and Juliet McVicker join Noelle on harmony for five tracks, "Moo Cow Milk," "God Bless the Mighty Pickle!" "Shame on You," "Out In the Cold" and "Have a Heart." Popular country singer Jamie Lee Thurston is heard in duets on "My Kissing Days Are Over." Singer-songwriter Jon Gailmor sings harmony on several songs and we hear "Banjo Dan" Lindner on "Help Us Find Our Song." Pedal steel player Jim Pitman adds his signature sound to four songs.

Jonathan Edwards ventured over from Maine to provide a harmonica solo on "Out in the Cold."

We even hear the voice of Marty Stuart himself in a spoken part about the bus.

The biggest surprise and one greatly appreciated is an appearance by Coco Kallis, of Coco and the Lonesome Road Band fame. For this album she reprises her hit "New England Song." It made that band and forever solidified her position as one of the finest country singers to come out of Vermont.

The 11 tracks include “Moo Cow Milk” that Anson Tebbetts, Vermont’s secretary of agriculture, asked Norcross to write about fake milk. It’s a clever lyric that should have Almond Milk drinkers blushing with embarrassment and switching back to the real thing.

Norcross enticed Thurston to fly in from Nashville for “My Kissing Days Are Over,” a song about the COVID-19 shutdown of Vermont. The lyric gives kudos to Gov. Phil Scott’s leadership during the pandemic.

The album’s title track, “God Bless the Mighty Pickle!” is a catchy, sentimental song about a vehicle that Norcross is obviously very fond of. That this bus has held up as long as it has and attracted the eye of a country music icon says a lot about this old bus. That a tour bus from Vermont can wind up in a Mississippi country music museum says volumes about the reach of this genre.

With “God Bless the Mighty Pickle!” Rick Norcross and The All-Star Ramblers honor their beloved bus while giving listeners a totally entertaining musical ride.

*Rick & the All-Star Ramblers’ “God Bless the Mighty Pickle!” is available at [rickandtheallstarramblers.com/our-cds/](http://rickandtheallstarramblers.com/our-cds/) online.*

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