

Fiddler (from Canada) not married to one genre

It's almost unfair to refer to April Verch as a "Canadian fiddler."

Sure, she's from Canada. She's an award-winning fiddler who even stepdances while she plays. But too many fans associate the phrase "Canadian fiddler" with Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.

Verch wants you to know that her Ottawa Valley roots – melding music of French-Canadian, Scottish, Irish, German and Polish traditions – and her playing of various regional Canadian styles, make her music distinctly different.

She'll prove it when she performs with her band at the Rose Garden Coffeehouse in Mansfield on May 17.

(Also that night, three singer-songwriters will vie for a prize and recognition at the coffeehouse's 11th annual competition: Katrin Roush, Marc Douglas Berardo and Cadence Carroll.)

Verch makes an art of playing styles from Celtic to folk to bluegrass.

"Because I like to play so many different styles I know that I will never master all of them – and so I want to make sure that I'm respecting the tradition," she said. "I'm trying to explore the style, get something from



STEPHEN IDE/The Patriot Ledger

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it, add something to it, but kind of make it my own."

She started playing fiddle at 6, urged by her father who also was musical. Now 25, the Berklee-trained musician is poised for international

attention.

She recently released her fifth CD, "From Where I Stand," with Rounder Records in Cambridge.

The first CD to feature Verch's tender-sweet singing, it includes a mix

MUSIC PREVIEW

APRIL VERCH BAND

At the Rose Garden Coffeehouse in the Orthodox Congregational Church, 17 West St., Mansfield, 7:30 p.m. May 17. \$12. 508-699-8122 or www.rosegardenfolk.com.

of Irish medleys, originals and tunes inspired by Appalachia and the music of the late John Hartford, a performer and riverboat pilot who played several instruments, including fiddle.

One highlight is "August 19," a song she wrote for her own wedding three years ago, a tender melody recorded with viola and cello.

Verch developed an appreciation for Hartford's music only a few years before his death in 2001, and she dedicated another of the CD's songs, "A Riverboat's Gone/Bumblebee in a Jug," to him.

Hartford's music changed her perspective on playing, Verch said. "His fiddle playing – he's not technically perfect at all. And yet, of all the people I've heard play the fiddle, his music touches me in a way no one else has."

– **STEPHEN IDE**
The Patriot Ledger