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Friday, September 22, 2006

## Eclectic Brave Combo Is More Than a Polka Band

By [David Steinberg](#)

*Journal Staff Writer*

After 27 years in business, Brave Combo is more than the band that's credited with reviving a love of polka in the United States.

Much more.

In fact, almost anything is fair game for Brave Combo.

"Our attention span is too short for just polka," said Carl Finch, the band's founder, in a phone interview from Denton, Texas.

That means Brave Combo can groove on a waltz, salsa, huapango, merengue, twist, zydeco, rock. Really, whatever rhythm the band gets a charge out of playing.

"We play festivals with lots of different acts and we listen to them play and we'd think, 'This (song) is ideal for us,'" Finch said.

For example, on Brave Combo's 25th anniversary CD "Lets Kiss", the band does a polka version of "Bumblebee," originally done by the British invasion band The Searchers."

Another tune Brave Combo polka-ized on the album is the venerable baseball song "Take Me Out to the Ballgame."

"That started out as a piece that was commissioned by a local (Denton) radio station. They wanted us to write a version for the (professional team) Texas Rangers. That was the original plan," Finch said.

As it turned out, the commission fell through but Brave Combo liked the polka sound for it plus three other rhythmic versions it did.

(For about 15 years Brave Combo did have a connection to baseball. It was the sponsor of a Little League team in Denton.)

"I've learned that if the material is good you can mess with it a lot and we've always looked for good material," said Finch, who sings and plays accordion and guitar.

"The excitement of discovery is just as important as performing and what we learn about a song."

Brave Combo's five musicians find musical treasures it reinterprets in the darndest places— checking out old vinyl cutout albums or listening to small-town radio stations late at night.

Brave Combo will be in concert Saturday, Sept. 23, at Puccini's Golden West Saloon.

After 27 years with one band, Finch said he's hardly ready to retire.

"I guess there's more music to be played. People keep coming up with cool things to explore and people are still writing music and we keep coming to do polkas," he said.

### **Brave Combo**

WHEN: 9 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 23

WHERE: Puccini's Golden West Saloon, 622 Central SW

HOW MUCH: \$12 at the door

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