Swannanoa Gathering

MUSIC & DANCE WORKSHOPS *of* WARREN WILSON COLLEGE

June 28 – August 1, 2026
Asheville, North Carolina



Swannanoa Gathering

JUNE 28 – AUGUST 1, 2026 AT WARREN WILSON COLLEGE, ASHEVILLE, NC

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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Photo by Chloe Trachtenberg

Greetings! This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Swannanoa Gathering. Starting with just three programs and less than 100 students back in 1992, we have grown into a premier five-week event with seven programs that has enrolled over 30,000 participants from across the U.S. and abroad. While a lot has changed since the early 1990s, our model remains the same: to offer exceptional learning opportunities in music and dance that are centered around community, creativity, and cultural heritage.

Our workshops this summer continue that tradition with outstanding lineups of staff, exciting classes, and some new changes. We have increased the number of instructors in four of our programs—Mandolin & Banjo, Traditional Song, Contemporary Folk, and Guitar—to accommodate more students and offerings. For Celtic Week and Old-Time Music & Dance Week, we've added a Luthiers Exhibit similar to those in other weeks, and both programs will have staff musicians and class assistants on hand again to provide support for classes, jam sessions, concerts, and dances. As mentioned in the fall newsletter, Celtic Week and Old-Time Week have swapped places in our order of programs, so be sure to mark this change in your calendars. And don't forget about our second Weekend Workshop this March, an intimate new course in storytelling. (See the ad below!)



Last but not least, I would like to announce that after eighteen months serving in an interim capacity, I will be continuing as the permanent Director of the Swannanoa Gathering. I am honored and thrilled to carry this renowned program forward into the years ahead, and I'm grateful for your support as we work together to make the Gathering the best it can be.

On that note, please enjoy exploring our catalog and the incredible programming that the Swannanoa Gathering has to offer for 2026. I look forward to seeing you in a few months on the beautiful campus of Warren Wilson College in the Blue Ridge Mountains, as music fills the air of the Swannanoa Valley once again.

Warmly,

Kevin Kehrberg
Swannanoa Gathering Director

On the Cover: WWC Morris Pavilion by Ann Vasilik
On the Back Cover: Swannanoa Gathering images by Charles Gupton, Chris Bickford, and Jerry Hsu

WARREN WILSON COLLEGE

President	Dr. Damián J. Fernández
Provost	Dr. Jay Roberts
Executive Director of Strategic Ventures	Amy Frey Ager

THE SWANNANOA GATHERING

Director/Professor of Music	Dr. Kevin Kehrberg
Operations Manager	Kimberly Ann Clark
Director Emeritus	Jim Magill
Logistics Coordinator	David Fee
Housing Coordinator	Wynn Walter
Work Exchange Crew Coordinator	Anna Dean
Children's Program Coordinator	Melissa Hyman

MASTER MUSIC MAKER AWARDS

Ralph Blizard — 1996
Tom Paxton — 1996
Margaret Bennett — 1998
Fiona Ritchie — 2000
David Holt — 2001
John McCutcheon — 2001
Jean Ritchie — 2001
Séamus Connolly — 2002
Mike Seeger — 2003
Billy Jackson — 2004
Stranger Malone — 2005
Phil Jamison — 2008
Alice Gerrard — 2010
Al Petteway — 2013
Robin Bullock — 2016
Liz Carroll — 2016
Joe Craven — 2016
John Doyle — 2016
Ginny Hawker & Tracy Schwarz — 2016
Martin Hayes — 2016
Mike Marshall — 2016
Tony Trischka — 2016

FOUNDER'S AWARD

Dr. Douglas M. Orr, Jr., President Emeritus — 2006

2025 CATALOG DESIGN

Cover Art	Ann Vasilik
Layout and Design	Martin Rice

OUR PROGRAMS

Established in 1992, the Swannanoa Gathering is a continuing education initiative of Warren Wilson College. Our mission is to develop and deliver educational programs in music, dance, and the creative arts that cultivate community, preserve traditions, and enhance cultural legacies for future generations.

Fiddle Week

JUNE 28–JULY 4, 2026 ..... **4-8**

Coordinator: Andrew Finn Magill. Fiddle Week boasts an amazing staff with expertise across an array of fiddle styles and rounded out with exceptional guitar and cello instructors. Runs concurrently with Mandolin & Banjo Week for a lavish jam experience.

Mando & Banjo Week

JUNE 28–JULY 4, 2026 ..... **9-14**

Coordinator: Joe K. Walsh. The instructors for this innovative program comprise top national and international mandolin, banjo, and guitar artists representing a variety of styles. Runs concurrently with Fiddle Week to foster an unlimited amount of collaborations and jamming.

Traditional Song Week

JULY 5–11, 2026 ..... **15-20**

Coordinator: Matt Watroba. These workshops celebrate the power and diversity of community singing, taught by renowned practitioners and culture bearers from Southern Appalachia and beyond. An extraordinary time of human connection through song.

Old-Time Music & Dance Week

JULY 12–18, 2026 ..... **21-31**

Coordinator: Erynn Marshall. One of the Gathering's legacy programs, this week assembles the greatest old-time music and dance musicians year in and year out for one of the most unforgettable experiences you will find anywhere.

Celtic Week

JULY 19–25, 2026 ..... **32-43**

Coordinator: Seán Gavin. Another flagship week of the Swannanoa Gathering, this program remains the gold standard of all other Celtic music workshops due to its remarkable staff and incredible variety of classes, potluck sessions, concerts, céilís, and jams. Come see for yourself!

Contemporary Folk Week

JULY 26–AUGUST 1, 2026 ..... **44-49**

Coordinator: Cliff Eberhardt. Representing an unparalleled collective expertise of song craft, these instructors offer inspiration for all skill levels in songwriting, vocal technique, and creative practice. Runs concurrently with Guitar Week for a rich complement of programming and collaboration.

Guitar Week

JULY 26–AUGUST 1, 2026 ..... **50-57**

Coordinator: Greg Ruby. This legendary program forges a one-of-a-kind workshop experience that salutes the amazingly versatile sounds and techniques of the acoustic guitar, led by an remarkable array of top-flight performers and instructors. Runs concurrently with Contemporary Folk Week to offer even more options and opportunities.

Program Information

CLASS INFORMATION

Each program is a five-day course of study. Some programs are concurrent, and students are free to create their own curriculum from any of the classes in any programs offered during a particular week. Programs accommodate a variety of skill levels. Class titles will use terms (beginner, intermediate, advanced) or Roman numerals (I, II, III) to refer to skill level, while capital letters denote different sections of the same class. Consult the class descriptions in the catalog for more detail on skill level. Class selections are required for registration, so it's best to choose carefully as it will reserve your spot. Many attendees find that two or three classes as a good balance for the week. After the first class meeting, students have until 6pm on Monday of that week to switch into another open class if they wish.

Classes are capped at 15 students unless otherwise noted. Once a class reaches its limit, it is closed and additional students are waitlisted. Swannanoa Gathering Youth Scholars and Work Exchange Crew members remain eligible to register for closed classes, which can result in class enrollments beyond the max cap. The Swannanoa Gathering reserves the right to cancel, add, and/or substitute classes and personnel if necessary. Any such changes will be posted as soon as possible on our website.

GENERAL WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Each program week commences on the Sunday before classes begin with an afternoon check-in and registration period, followed by dinner, an orientation session, and evening jam sessions/socializing. Class sessions typically occur in the morning and afternoon, Monday through Friday. Our mountain campus is beautiful but hilly, so we allow 15-30 minutes between sessions to give folks enough time to get to their next class. Friday evening's activities will conclude the week, with students expected to check-out by Saturday morning. In addition to classes, there is a variety of supplemental programming depending on the week, including "potluck sessions," guest presenters and special visitors, panel discussions, slow jams, open-mic events, community dances, and plenty of informal jamming. Multiple programs also have vendors and luthiers on hand.

TUITION & REGISTRATION

Tuition is $695 per week. A deposit of $100 is required for both student and non-student registration. Students younger than 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable.

To register, simply visit our website and click the "Register" link for more information. Registration operates on a first come, first served basis, so **early registration is strongly encouraged**. Remember that our pre-registration process, available on our website from December through early February, saves your spot and grants early-bird access to sign up for classes. **Full payment is required by May 31** to guarantee your class choices. Registrations after May 31 for any remaining spaces must be accompanied by full payment. If you have questions or are having problems registering through our website, please contact us at **gathering@warren-wilson.edu** or 828-298-3434 for assistance.

HOUSING & MEALS

The optional housing fee of $595 includes lodging in campus dormitories for six nights, supper on Sunday, three buffet-style meals a day in Warren Wilson College's excellent cafeteria, and breakfast on Saturday at the end of the week. Rooms are double occupancy with communal bath facilities. A limited number of single rooms are available for an additional $300. Non-students from outside the Asheville area may accompany an enrolled student for the housing fee of $595 and an activities fee of $200. Small deposits for dorm keys and meal cards will be required on arrival. Linens are provided, but students may wish to bring extra items that will be listed in the orientation information emailed to registrants in late spring. Smoking is not permitted in or near any campus buildings. No pets, please. Motor homes are not permitted on campus. The College is catered by Sodexo (828-298-1041), and low-sodium and vegetarian meals are available. Children 12 and under may stay in a room with two adults, at least one of whom is a registered student, at no charge other than the cost of meals. Our rooms contain no more than two beds, so the accompanying adult must provide each child's bedding (cot, air mattress, etc.), and both adults must request the arrangement. We do not offer Saturday stayovers except for those attending consecutive weeks and we cannot house those wishing to arrive a day early. Adults staying off-campus may purchase a meal ticket for $210, and meal tickets for children 12 and under may be purchased for $155. Meals may also be purchased individually at the cafeteria.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

The deposits required for registration are processing fees credited toward tuition and not student funds held in escrow, and are thus non-refundable and non-transferrable. Should an enrolled student need to cancel, we can issue a refund minus any deposits if notified four weeks before the program begins. No refunds other than the cost of meals ($210 for adults, $155 for children) can be made within four weeks of the Sunday that begins a student's program week.

YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS

The Swannanoa Gathering's Youth Scholarship program covers the cost of tuition and housing in any of our programs for a number of promising young musicians and dancers each year. To complete an application, visit the Swannanoa Gathering website and select "Scholarships" from the drop down menu below the "Register" tab. Applicants must be under the age of 22 during the week they are applying for, and **the deadline for applications is April 1**. These scholarships are funded by generous donations from participants, music organizations, and businesses. Current sponsors include the Austin Friends of Traditional Music, Charlotte Folk Society, Green Grass Cloggers, Shepard Posse, and Tosco Music Parties. Several scholarships are awarded in memory of dear friends and long-time staff members, including **Ralph Blizard**, **Tony Cuffe**, **Robert Dotson**, **Freyda Epstein**, **Regis Malady**, and **Al Petteway**. If you or your organization is interested in sponsoring a Youth Scholar, please contact our office for details.

WORK EXCHANGE & VOLUNTEERING

The Swannanoa Gathering wouldn't be possible without our enthusiastic volunteers. Our popular Work Exchange program offers an opportunity for adult students to work a set amount of scheduled hours, in exchange for a set amount of waived tuition charges. We also welcome those who simply want to volunteer. Needs include various logistics, office operations, and attendee support. To apply for Work Exchange or volunteering, visit our website and select "Volunteer" from the drop down menu below the "Support" tab.

LEGACY ENDOWMENT & ORR MUSIC ENDOWMENT

Led by Doug Orr, founder of the Swannanoa Gathering, and Jon Elion, former WWC trustee and longtime Gathering attendee, the **Swannanoa Gathering Legacy Endowment** was established in 2024 to ensure that our unique summer music workshops will continue for generations to come. Doug Orr and his wife Darcy remain the namesake of the **Doug & Darcy Orr Music Endowment**, an additional fund established to provide long-term financial support for the work of the Swannanoa Gathering. Friends also have the option of supporting the **Swannanoa Gathering Greatest Needs Fund**, which goes directly to support the current needs of our programs. Any contribution to an endowment or fund is deeply appreciated. To make one, simply visit our website and select "Donate" from the drop down menu below the "Support" tab.

WWC CAMPUS AND BEYOND

Warren Wilson College's facilities include a gymnasium, weight room, and tennis courts, as well as nature trails and a working farm. There are also a number of scenic attractions in the Asheville area, including the Biltmore Estate, Blue Ridge Parkway, Folk Art Center, Pisgah National Forest, Great Smokies National Park, and Mount Mitchell, the tallest peak in the eastern U.S.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

During Traditional Song, Celtic, and Old-Time Music & Dance Weeks we offer a full-day program for children ages 6-12 whose parents are participating in the Swannanoa Gathering. Our Children's Program offers a variety of wonderful activities, including water games, skits, scavenger hunts, and other favorites. Throughout the week, staff musicians often visit to teach and perform for the kids. To participate, children must be at least 6 and no older than 12 on July 1. No exceptions please. Bathroom independence is a non-negotiable prerequisite. Some older children (age 13-16) may be able to work as junior counselors. Please email Children's Program Coordinator Melissa Hyman ASAP if interested in a junior counselor position, even if you've discussed it with her before: **melissa.hyman@gmail.com**. The Children's Program fee is $250, which includes a craft/materials fee.

Children's Program Coordinator **Melissa Hyman** is an accomplished and experienced childhood educator. She has taught elementary music at charter schools in Asheville, NC, and coordinated children's programming at regional music conferences. A touring and recording musician, she performs with Asheville bands including The Moon and You, Tina & Her Pony, and Hannah Kaminer & the Wistfuls. Hyman teaches rock band at French Broad River Academy, maintains a private music studio for students of all ages, and is the music teacher for the Asheville chapter of Arts for Life, bringing music to patients in North Carolina's children's hospitals and clinics.

COURSE CREDIT

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has allowed three hours of Teaching Certificate Renewal Credit for each week of the Swannanoa Gathering. Interested teachers should contact their local school board for prior approval.

MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Through its innovative Mountain Institute, Warren Wilson College offers various additional programming for adult learners, including on-campus weekend and week-long workshops and an annual worldwide travel course. Don't miss this great opportunity to be a part of our community and deepen your knowledge in such subjects as art, craft, and natural history. For more info, visit the Mountain Institute website (mountaininstitute.warren-wilson.edu) or email **mountaininstitute@warren-wilson.edu**.

Fiddle Week

JUNE 28–JULY 4, 2026

Interested in studying fiddle for a week with the best fiddlers in the world? The Swannanoa Gathering's Fiddle Week is the premier multi-genre fiddle camp in the country and features an award-winning staff of virtuosos curated for both their teaching ability as well as their playing. Not only does it offer a mix of genres from Irish and oldtime to swing and bluegrass, it also provides classes using the fiddle as a form of self-expression that explore improvisation and your own creativity. We also offer instruction in cello and guitar, and Fiddle Week runs simultaneously with Mandolin & Banjo Week, allowing students to choose classes from that program as well. This diversity of instruments produces a wonderful community atmosphere full of collaboration and jamming. Students can enroll in up to four classes per day (capped at 15 students each), followed by evenings filled with concerts, informal jam sessions, and special-topic jams led by instructors. Our Luthiers Exhibit features professional violin and bow makers who are present all week to help with instrument issues. As music spills into the evenings, food and beverage trucks featuring famous late-night fried okra and local craft brews help fuel the jamming into the wee hours. Come join us!

Courses & Staff



Andrew Finn Magill, Program Coordinator

Fiddle Week coordinator Andrew Finn Magill is a Fulbright Fellow, North Carolina Arts Council Fellow, Seifert Jazz violin finalist in Poland (2024) and National Endowment for the Arts recipient (2025). He has released thirteen albums ranging from Irish to Brazilian choro, which have been featured on PBS and NPR. Magill grew up studying every summer with the best fiddlers in the world at the Swannanoa Gathering. He has performed with dozens of artists including John Doyle, Justin Stanton (Snarky Puppy), and Rising Appalachia.

INTERMEDIATE BLUEGRASS FIDDLE

The Intermediate Bluegrass course will cover a basket of special skills used for bluegrass fiddling, including standard fiddle tunes and kickoffs, tune types (blues, songs vs. tunes, modal vs. raggy tunes), chord progressions, backup concepts, and examples for creating and improvising in the bluegrass style using licks, scales, finger patterns, and double stops. We'll adjust details in these categories to work for the individuals in the class. And we'll have fun doing it! Most of the learning will be by ear, but there will be written music describing what we worked on to take home.

ADVANCED BLUEGRASS FIDDLE

In the Advanced Bluegrass course, more experienced students can examine special skills used for bluegrass fiddling with greater depth and complexity. We'll cover essential tunes and kickoffs, tune types (blues, rags, modal tunes, etc.), song forms, chord sequences, backup concepts, and advanced approaches to improvising in the bluegrass style using licks, scales, finger patterns, and double stops. We'll adjust details in these categories to work for the individuals in the class. And we'll have fun doing it! Most of the learning will be by ear, but there will be written music describing what we worked on to take home.



Darol Anger

Fiddler Darol Anger has helped drive the evolution of contemporary violin, leading and performing with numerous path-breaking ensembles such as Mr Sun, Republic Of Strings, the Turtle Island String Quartet, the David Grisman Quintet, The Duo, and Psychograss. Composing and performing internationally since 1977, he has produced scores of important recordings and is considered one of the most influential fiddlers of the last fifty years. He is professor emeritus at Berklee College of Music, tours with his band Mr Sun, and operates an online fiddle school at ArtistWorks.com.

APPLIED MUSIC THEORY

In this class for intermediate players, we'll explore some of the fundamental chords, scales, and progressions used in jazz/fiddle tunes and ear-opening ways we might practice them, both melodically and harmonically. A partial list of topics to be covered includes pentatonic and blues scales, the major scale and its modes, triads and 7th chords, chord outlining/voice leading through tunes, V7-I progressions, ii7-V7-I progressions, and rhythmic subdivisions. Printed materials will be provided.

JAZZ IMPROVISATION

In this class for advanced players, we'll learn about a style of jazz called Bebop, crafted by master musicians like Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk. Through our study of scales, phrases, ornamentation, and melodies, we'll gain a greater understanding of why this virtuosic music is a cornerstone in the development of one's jazz language. A partial list of topics to be covered includes bebop dominant/minor/major scales, inversion exercises, core riffs and elongations, enclosures, approach tones, and learning melodies. Printed materials will be provided.



Sara Caswell

GRAMMY® Nominee Sara Caswell is recognized as one of today's foremost jazz violinists through her lyricism and technical facility. She has released three solo albums, the most recent of which is *The Way to You* (2023, Anzic Records) and has performed and/or recorded with artists including the WDR Big Band, esperanza spalding, Brad Mehldau, Brian Blade, John Patitucci, and Regina Carter at venues including Carnegie Hall, Village Vanguard, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and Blue Note (NYC and Tokyo). She is on faculty at the Berklee College of Music, Manhattan School of Music, The New School, and New York University.

INTERMEDIATE IRISH FIDDLE

In this class, we will explore some of the bowing patterns and techniques that make Irish fiddle playing sound Irish. We will cover some common repertoire and ways to embellish and ornament these tunes to give them that distinct Irish feel. We will also discuss the subtle and not so subtle rhythmic differences that differentiate Irish dance tunes and learn some less common tune types. An expansive repertoire of Irish tunes is not required. The class will be taught by ear, but sheet music will be provided at the end of class for anyone who wants it.

ADVANCED IRISH FIDDLE

This course is for players with competency in Irish music, including an understanding of the rudiments, a repertoire of common tunes, and mastery of fiddle ornamentation. We will work on expanding repertoire beyond common tunes and tune types and focus on tunes composed by fiddle players. We will also discuss stylistic and regional differences in fiddle playing and ways to make a tune "your own" by elevating your performance from the notes on the page to one that expresses your creativity and emotion. Fluency in learning by ear is an asset for this class.



Eimear Arkins

Eimear Arkins is an award-winning artist from County Clare, Ireland. She has toured extensively with acclaimed bands, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Tomáseen Foley's A Celtic Christmas, and Eileen Gannon. A qualified Irish music and dance instructor, Eimear has taught at festivals worldwide. In 2018, her debut album *What's Next?* was awarded "Best Newcomer" from LiveIreland radio. Eimear released *Here & There* in 2024 and was awarded "Female Vocalist of the Year" from *Ireland Tonight*. In 2025, she was named one of *The Irish Echo*'s "Irish Top 40 Under 40" honorees and released *The Belles of St. Louis* with Eileen Gannon.

REIMAGINING TRADITIONAL FIDDLE TUNES

For Joe, folk music is "a grand old tradition of perpetual transition," proceeding from the belief that "every tradition begins as an innovation." His *Camptown* and *Django* Latino albums are great examples of those ideas. Per requests from his specialty jammers last year, Joe offers a new class this year that will take students on a journey, exploring everything from simple adjustments to radical reworkings of familiar and unfamiliar tunes. Students will take a creative and super fun ride becoming "reimagineers" in the world of fiddle music! All instruments welcome.

INTUITIVE IMPROVISATION

Become more comfortable making stuff up—rhythms and melodies—through spontaneous expression. No formal music theory and no advanced technical skills are required. Connect sounds to what you already know (which is more than you think). We'll spend time with (1) Storytelling, following the beginning, middle and end of your play; (2) Incremental learning and how to practice music anytime/anywhere; and (3) Soloing, giving you the what and how to mirror the way you improvise your speech. The beauty of musical dialogue is less about WHAT you're saying, and more about HOW and WHEN you're saying it. All instruments welcome.



Joe Craven

Joe wears lots of hats. As a creative, he enjoys "playing forward" folk tradition by mashing ideas and sound tools from a variety of unexpected places, creating new music altogether. Joe's been a sideman to many stars, including Jerry Garcia, David Grisman, David Lindley, Alison Brown, Howard Levy, and Vassar Clements. Director of RiverTunes / JAMboree Music Camps, he's presented at over 500 schools and universities. A celebrated festival emcee, Folk Alliance Far-West Performer of the Year, Swannanoa Gathering Master Music Maker, and a PBS featured artist, Joe has taught for many years at the Gathering's Fiddle Week and Contemporary Folk Week.

TEXAS-STYLE FIDDLING

Texas-style fiddling comes alive through bowing, nuance, and inventive variations. In this intermediate class, we'll learn a breakdown, waltz, and rag while exploring the phrasing, ornaments, and bowing choices that make the style sing. Katie will introduce her 10 core bowing patterns plus a system for understanding and building variations. By week's end, you'll feel more fluent in the style and ready to shape Texas-style tunes in your own voice.

WESTERN SWING IMPROVISATION

This advanced class will explore Western Swing through melody, harmony, rhythm, and improvisation—one layer at a time. We'll break the style into layers—beginning with melody and twin fiddle, bowing feel, guide tones, and improvisation—and build each skill progressively. You'll learn classic Western Swing repertoire, craft variations, explore twin-fiddle textures, and develop a personal approach to soloing using Katie's layered improv system. For fiddlers wanting authentic Western Swing phrasing and more freedom on the fingerboard, this class is for you.



Katie Glassman

Katie Glassman is one of today's leading Texas-style and Western Swing fiddlers—an award-winning performer, champion improviser, and sought-after educator. A national Texas-style contest winner and longtime touring artist with The Western Flyers and her band Snapshot, she is known for her soulful tone, inventive variations, and deep command of swing phrasing. Katie has performed and taught across the country, studied with many great Texas masters, and is the founder of Fiddle School, a thriving global learning community. Acclaimed for her clear methodology and creative approach, she helps fiddlers develop stylistic authenticity, improvisational fluency, and confidence onstage and off.

FIDDLE FROM SCRATCH

This course is the beginner's guide to picking up the fiddle for the first time. We will learn details of safe instrument position, setup, bow hold, how the fingering works, etc. This class will be focused more on setup and understanding, rather than placing emphasis on tune-learning. Participants can expect to leave the class knowing one or two new Celtic fiddle tunes, and have the foundation to learn many more! Please come with your own instrument, bow, shoulder rest, and a tuner.

BEGINNING CELTIC FIDDLE

In this class we will talk about the differences in style between Irish, Scottish, and other styles of Celtic music, while learning a few new jam-friendly tunes! Understanding the nuances of style can help beginning musicians find their voice on their instrument and hone their individual sound. We will listen closely to ornamentation, groove, and tune-types as ways to understand the intricacies of the genres.



Maura Shawn Scanlin

Maura Shawn Scanlin is gaining notoriety for her fiddle playing among the Celtic and acoustic music scenes across the country and beyond. Her music, hailed for its inventiveness, fluidity, and tone, brings together influences from Ireland, Scotland, and the American South where she grew up. Maura tours with her duo Rakish, and has shared the stage with many cornerstone musicians in the Celtic music world including Seamus Egan, Maeve Gilchrist, Dervish, John Doyle and Hanneke Cassel. Maura is a 2-time U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion, and a Glenfiddich Fiddle Champion.

INTERMEDIATE OLD TIME FIDDLE

Old-time fiddling and bowing go hand in hand. We will be using this class to work through repertoire that captures common and approachable bowing patterns found in old-time fiddle music. In addition to repertoire, we will talk about how to play in such a way that makes people want to dance, which is one of the fundamental qualities of old-time fiddling. We will sample tunes from North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and beyond!

ADVANCED OLD TIME FIDDLE

In this advanced class, we will mostly explore the wide range of alternate tunings used in old-time fiddling by learning specific repertoire alongside a study of bowing. Open tunings unlock a new world of sound and timbre on the fiddle and will demystify why a lot of old time music and bowing sounds the way it does. While it might sound intimidating, people at any level quickly adjust to playing in a new tuning. It's a great tool to have for anyone hoping to participate in an old-time jam, and it makes playing alone more fun, too!



Libby Weitnauer

Libby Weitnauer is a fiddler, violinist, songwriter, and educator based in Nashville, TN, but raised in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. She has earned degrees in classical performance from DePaul University and New York University and studied traditional music with a slew of esteemed tradition-bearers. Libby has played on the stage of The Grand Ole Opry, toured with the Broadway revival of *Oklahoma!*, and received recognition for her fiddling across such outlets as NPR and *Rolling Stone*. She is also co-founder of the indie rock band Dallas Ugly and the stringband Steamboat.

INTERMEDIATE SWING FIDDLE

This will be an introduction to music of the Swing Era and how to play it on the fiddle. We will look at key rhythmic devices and bowing patterns to get you up and swinging on Day One. We'll also cover ideas for building your improvisational vocabulary for soloing, including phrasing, licks and riffs, and what makes music swing.

ADVANCED HOT CLUB SWING

This class is appropriate for fiddlers who already have some swing experience but would like to expand their skills and learn some more advanced stylistic concepts. It will focus on the finer points of playing swing with a European accent. We will study a few standard jam tunes by Django Reinhardt and others and build our improvisational vocabulary, focusing on essentials like minor 6ths and diminished chords.



Evan Price

Evan Price is a violinist and composer best known for his 10 years with the Turtle Island Quartet and his 26 years with The Hot Club of San Francisco. At home in classical music, jazz, and various fiddling genres, his own music reflects that broad expertise. In 2016, he premiered his own jazz violin concerto with the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and 2024 saw the premier of his concerto for two mandolins, *A Game Of Cat and Mike*, featuring Caterina Lichtenberg and Mike Marshall. He is the recipient of 2 GRAMMY® awards for his work with Turtle Island.

CELLO CHOP TECHNIQUES: SIMPLE TO ADVANCED

This class will start with a simple and basic explanation of "how to chop" on the cello. Next, it will examine more complicated groove patterns in order to build a foundation for rhythmic backings and improvisation. We will explore how to keep a groove going and what bowings to use for different time signatures. By the end of the week, we will touch on triple chops and quadruple chops.

THINKING IN CHORDS ON THE CELLO

This class offers an in-depth exploration of different chord shapes on the cello. It will start by examining fingerings, covering alternate permutations for various chords. We'll move on to more advanced, full-groove patterns that support distinct rhythmic styles of playing and accompaniment. There is more than one way to play a G chord on the cello!



Eric Wright

Eric Wright is a unique cellist redefining what the instrument can do in folk music. Raised on crisp Vermont air and steeped in American old-time and Irish traditions, he's carved out a signature sound built on rhythmic bowing, inventive chord work, and his boundary-pushing approach to the chop. His techniques have made him a go-to performer, accompanist, producer, and session player across the folk world. Eric has toured and recorded with artists such as Ruth Moody, The Fretless, and Mairi Rankin. His work has earned a 2017 JUNO Award for Instrumental Album of the Year (The Fretless).

SWING GUITAR FOUNDATIONS

Open to all mandolin, fiddle, banjo (and guitar) players! This hands-on swing guitar class will introduce you to the skills needed to unlock the joy of playing swing guitar. Using common repertoire, this class will provide a solid foundation for good chord voicings, rhythm guitar strumming patterns, pick technique, melody playing, and accompaniment practices. Participants should plan to have fun and play during class. Sight-reading is not necessary as handouts will be in standard notation, tablature, and include chord diagrams.

SWING ENSEMBLE

Open to all instruments, this class will focus on performance practice through learning arranged swing repertoire. With parts divided between instruments and difficulty level, we will assemble a swing ensemble during class as we address the fundamental aspects of swing eighth notes, dynamics, part-playing, improvisation, and good rhythm section practices. Materials will be provided in standard notation, tablature, and chord diagrams. Open to intermediate and advanced players but no prior experience with swing music is required.



Greg Ruby

Greg Ruby is an acoustic and electric guitarist specializing in instrumental guitar music from the 20th century. From acoustic swing to jazz Manouche to surf guitar, Ruby inhabits many musical spaces and brings his voice to each of them. Greg has authored *Chord Melody Made Easy(ish)*, *The Oscar Alemán Play-Along Book*, *The Pearl Django Play-Along Book*, and co-authored *Frank D. Waldron: Seattle's Syncopated Classic*. He is the Guitar Week Coordinator at the Swannanoa Gathering and writes for Acoustic Guitar Magazine. Greg performs throughout the NYC area and teaches online music classes and private guitar lessons at www.gregrubymusic.com.

LUTHIERS EXHIBIT



Joe Thrift

Joe Thrift is a violin maker living in Elkin, NC, building handcrafted instruments at his home workshop in Surry County. He went to the Newark School of Violin Making in Newark on Trent, England, and also apprenticed with his friend Roger Hargrave in Meyenberg, Germany. Joe is currently in his 12th year of teaching violin making at the Foothills Art Center in Elkin. As a musician, Joe is also an accomplished old-time fiddler and played keyboard for Donna The Buffalo for 9 years.



David Forbes

David Forbes makes bows in the French tradition for all stringed instruments. He also provides repair, restorations, and rehairing. David started as a violin and bow maker in the early 1980s and studied with William Salchow in New York and Stephane Thomachot in Paris. He was director of the Violin Society of America's Oberlin Bow Making Workshop for many years and has been awarded two gold medals and numerous certificates from international competitions. David is a member of the American Federation of Violin and Bow Makers and served on its Board of Governors for two years.

Fiddle Week. JUNE 28–JULY 4, 2026

Classes run Monday-Friday

7:30-8:30am	**BREAKFAST** (Monday-Saturday)				
9:00-10:15am	**Applied Music Theory** (Caswell)	**Fiddle from Scratch** (Scanlin)	**Intermediate Old-Time Fiddle** (Weitnauer)	**Advanced Bluegrass Fiddle** (Anger)	**Swing Ensemble** (Ruby)
10:15-10:45am	**COFFEE/TEA BREAK** (Monday-Friday)				
10:45am-12:00pm	**Jazz Improvisation** (Caswell)	**Beginning Celtic Fiddle** (Scanlin)	**Advanced Old-Time Fiddle** (Weitnauer)	**Intermediate Bluegrass Fiddle** (Anger)	**Swing Guitar Foundations** (Ruby)
11:30-1:00pm	**LUNCH** (Monday-Friday)				
1:15-2:30pm	**Intuitive Improvisation** (Craven)	**Texas-Style Fiddling** (Glassman)	**Advanced Hot Club Swing Fiddle** (Price)	**Intermediate Irish Fiddle** (Arkins)	**Cello Chop Techniques: Simple to Advanced** (Wright)
2:45-4:00pm	**Reimagining Traditional Fiddle Tunes** (Craven)	**Western Swing Fiddling** (Glassman)	**Intermediate Swing Fiddle** (Price)	**Advanced Irish Fiddle** (Arkins)	**Thinking in Chords on the Cello** (Wright)
4:15-5:15pm	**LUTHIERS EXHIBIT** (Forbes and Thrift) **SPONTANEOUS JAMS & DAILY BLUEGRASS JAM** (led by instructors)				
5:00-6:30pm	**SUPPER** (Sunday-Friday)				
6:00-7:00pm	**SPECIALTY JAMS** (led by instructors: bluegrass, swing, blues, old-time, Irish, Latin grooves, etc.)				
7:30pm-?	**EVENING EVENTS** (concerts, jam sessions, community dance, etc.)				

Mando & Banjo Week

JUNE 28–JULY 4, 2026

Mando & Banjo Week features two instruments that are fundamental to acoustic music, taught by a world-class faculty. Mandolin students can study bluegrass, old-time, improvisation, swing/jazz, classical, and more, while banjo students can study both three-finger bluegrass and clawhammer styles. There is also instruction in guitar, and the program runs simultaneously with Fiddle Week, allowing students to choose classes from that program as well. Evening concerts throughout the week feature our inspiring staff, and a student showcase on Friday is an optional performance opportunity. Classes—capped at 15 students—are mostly taught at the intermediate or advanced level, but we also offer introductory classes. For intermediate classes, students should have solid beginning skills, feel comfortable playing in time, and be able to play some common jam tunes with confidence. This level is also appropriate for advanced players exploring a new style. Advanced classes build on previous experience in the style. Advanced students should feel comfortable learning by ear, have some repertoire in the style, and be familiar with more challenging keys. Additional activities include a Daily Bluegrass Jam, a Luthiers Exhibit with expert on-site repair, special-topic jams led by instructors, and informal picking all over the place!

Courses & Staff

BEAUTIFUL TUNES ON THE MANDOLIN

The mandolin is often perceived through a "fast and loud" lens, but as any fan of Peter Ostroushko or Andrew Marlin can attest, it's also lovely for playing tunes that fall more in the "slow and beautiful" category. In this class we will learn a number of these sorts of tunes, finding beautiful notes and beautiful space along the way.



Joe K. Walsh, Program Coordinator

Mandolin & Banjo Week coordinator Joe K. Walsh has been hailed by David Grisman as a "wonderful mandolin player," and by Darol Anger as "one of the best mandolinists I've ever played with." Based in Portland, Maine, Joe is known for his exceptional tone and taste, and for collaborations and recordings with Darol Anger, Brittany Haas, Grant Gordy, Mike Block, Danny Barnes, Scott Nygaard, the Gibson Brothers, and Joy Kills Sorrow. Joe's main touring project is the adventurous string band Mr Sun. He's an associate professor at Berklee College of Music and teaches at camps nationwide and online through Peghead Nation.

DAWG MUSIC LEGACY

Mike joined the original David Grisman Quintet in 1978 and spent five years working with the Dawg, Tony Rice, Darol Anger, Stephane Grappelli, and a host of other incredible acoustic musicians who passed through that group. He considers it his "graduate school" as a musician. In this class, Mike will teach some of David's iconic tunes and other material from the New Acoustic genre, help students understand that musical world, break down the melodies and chord forms, and discuss some improvisational ideas designed to unlock musical creativity.

BRAZILIAN CHORO MANDOLIN

In Brazil during the 1890s, European dance forms, harmonies, and melodies began to mix with rhythms from Africa, forming a new musical genre known today as Brazilian choro. From Jacob do Bandolim—the "Father" of Brazilian mandolin—to the great compositions of Pixinguinha, Waldir Azevedo, and others, this class will explain this musical world, break down its rhythms and chord shapes, and teach students some of the most beautiful melodies that choro music has to offer.



Mike Marshall

Mike Marshall is one of the most accomplished and versatile string instrumentalists in the world and a three-time Grammy nominee. A master of mandolin, guitar, mandocello, and violin, Mike is a living compendium of musical styles and has created some of the most adventurous instrumental music in America today. He has also helped spawn the next generation of young string instrumentalists through his many recording projects and his deep commitment to music education. Mike seamlessly blends his American roots background with a deep understanding of European classical, jazz, pop, and Brazilian music.

BLUEGRASS MANDOLIN IMPROV VOCABULARY

In this class, we will learn two transcribed solos from renowned bluegrass mandolin players. We will then learn how to take the cool licks learned in these solos and make sure they start showing up in your vocabulary for improvisation. This class is for advanced intermediate players. Students must know and be able to play a good number of standard bluegrass songs and be able to play them in various standard keys (C, G, D, A, E, F, B-flat, B).

CREATIVE MANDOLIN BACKUP

Instrumentalists often focus on lead playing, yet 90% of the time we play with others, we are playing rhythm. By developing our backup skills, our entire musical experience becomes more dynamic and fun. In this class, we'll learn chord inversions and double stops that provide multiple voicings for the same chord across the full register of the mandolin. We'll use these voicings to improvise within our backup and respond dynamically to other musicians. These voicings will be applied to I-IV-V chord progressions, dominant 7th chords, minor chords, and chord progressions in minor keys.



Sharon Gilchrist

Sharon Gilchrist began touring the bluegrass circuit in Texas for several years before earning a BA in Mandolin Performance at Belmont University in Nashville. For decades, Sharon has performed with many legends of acoustic music including Peter Rowan, Tony Rice, Scott Nygaard, John Reischman, Darol Anger, Tony Trischka, Laurie Lewis, Uncle Earl, and the California Bluegrass Reunion band. She is a respected and influential music educator who offers private mandolin instruction and multiple online mandolin courses at Peghead Nation and teaches at music camps internationally.

CLAWHAMMER TUNES FROM THE GROUND UP

This class will take melodies and break them down to their most basic form, the core melody. Students will then learn how to build a melody back up and flesh it out with variations on the clawhammer banjo. We'll explore how to add right-hand texture, dynamics, drop-thumb techniques, hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides, maybe a round peak lick or two, and melodic variations. The class will cover skills that can be used by beginner and advanced players alike.

OLD-TIME BANJO LEGENDS

This class will listen to and examine some of the classic old-time banjo players we all know and love. We will break down their styles and apply them to our clawhammer playing. The musicians we will be studying include Esker Hutchins, Fred Cockerham, Hobart Smith, Kyle Creed, Tommy Jarrell, Wade Ward, Virgil Anderson, Grandpa Jones, and more!



Lukas Pool

Lukas is a banjo player and builder whose music and instruments possess an earthiness that reminds us of traditional builders and players who have inspired generations. As a respected performer and teacher of traditional music, he is known for his innovative playing style and respect for old-time music heritage. He lives on a small farm with his family in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, building banjos and teaching thousands of banjo players through his online lessons and music camps.

ALL KINDS OF SWING

This class will help you build repertoire for swing, jazz, and subgenres such as Western swing (Bob Wills), hot club jazz (Django & Stephane), and early jazz (Louis Armstrong, New Orleans, Chicago). It will focus on chord progressions and song forms analyzed by number (I-IV-V, ii-V-I, etc.) and cover mandolin chord voicings that are stylistically appropriate for rhythm playing and accompaniment. Fakebook-style chord charts, chord diagrams, and a fresh batch of cool tunes will be supplied. You bring your ears, tuned up mandolin, and stuff to take notes or record examples with.

CRAFTING INTERESTING SOLOS

Okay, when your turn to take a break comes, what do you do? What do you think about? Are there certain notes that are correct for certain styles? How do we find them on the fretboard? Is it true there's no $$ beyond the 5th fret? Tough questions, but we'll find answers—or better yet—learn approaches you can try that lead to your own answers: ornamenting the melody, scales/chords, harmonic analysis, transcription(s), and finding routes/territories on the fretboard. Handouts will be in standard notation and tab, but we'll strive to learn mostly by ear and eye.



Don Stiernberg

Don Stiernberg has been involved in performing, writing, recording, producing, and teaching, but is best known for his mandolin playing. Early on, Don played various stringed instruments, but he got serious about the mandolin when he heard an ad on a local radio station, "Study mandolin with the great Jethro Burns!" Within a few years he was playing professionally, first in a bluegrass band and eventually standing right next to his hero in the Jethro Burns Quartet. Don is regarded as a leading exponent of jazz mandolin style and a respected teacher. His most recent record is *THE SWINGIN'EST!*

CLASSICAL MANDOLIN BASICS

This class will bridge the gap between folk mandolin and classical mandolin. We will begin by working on the fundamentals of sound production and the philosophy of the classical mandolin sound. Then we'll move to some basic mandolin techniques that include tremolo, crosspicking, warm-up exercises, and some wonderful simple melodies. Lastly, we will work on coordination and speed, but we'll keep the focus on having fun. The ability to read music will really help in this class.

ADVANCED CLASSICAL MANDOLIN

This class requires the ability to read music. We will build on classical mandolin basics and the pieces will become a bit more challenging as we explore an overview of classical mandolin repertoire that spans 300 years. Skills covered include speed, double stops, coordination, tremolo, duo style, and the harp arpeggio techniques from the 18th and 19th centuries. There will also be pieces where we play together, featuring some beautiful original mandolin compositions for our performance on the last day.



Caterina Lichtenberg

One of the most important classical mandolinists in the world today, Caterina Lichtenberg is Professor of Classical Mandolin at the Cologne Music Conservatory in Germany. She also teaches online at ArtistWorks, and her recording, teaching, and international touring regularly garner rave reviews. Caterina has released 13 albums and performed with countless orchestras, including the New Century Orchestra, Gewandhausorchestra, the MDR Sinfonie Orchestra, and under such conductors as Diego Fasolis, Fabio Luisi, Riccardo Chailly, Howard Arman, and Lorin Maazel. Appearances include the Savannah Music Festival, Carmel Bach Festival, Santa Cruz Baroque, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, RockyGrass, and the Met in NYC.

JAM SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR BANJO

This is a "hands on and let's play" intermediate class with practical and easy to understand tips and skills that you can use immediately to get a bonafide bluegrass banjo sound. Topics include developing right- and left-hand playing technique (including volume, tone, and ease of playing), the role of the banjo in a jam session, and how to support different instruments and singers effectively (vamping, roll patterns, and both down- and up-the-neck back-up techniques). You'll also learn licks, classic kick-offs and endings, navigation of various keys using the capo, waltz time, fiddle tune backup, and much more.

BANJO FINGERBOARD EXPLORATIONS

This intermediate/advanced bluegrass banjo class will study the fingerboard from both vertical (meaning chords!) and horizontal (scales!) perspectives. We'll cover major and minor movable chord shapes, 7th and diminished chords, and how great players move from one chord shape to another in common bluegrass progressions and beyond. We'll then examine how notes of major and minor scales are found within and in-between chord shapes, and we'll find melodies and licks out of these shapes in Scruggs, melodic, and single-string styles. We'll play many tunes together as we explore these concepts, with detailed tabs offered for all examples!



Bill Evans

Steve Martin Banjo Prize recipient and American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame member Bill Evans has been involved with bluegrass music and the banjo for over fifty years as a player, teacher, composer, writer, and historian. Bill is celebrated worldwide for his traditional and progressive bluegrass banjo styles and his innovative original compositions. He also enjoys a reputation as both an outstanding instructor and an expert player of 19th and early 20th century minstrel and classic banjo styles. Bill has recorded four critically acclaimed solo albums, and he also hosts five online instructional courses for Peghead Nation.

OLD-TIME MANDOLIN

In this class, we will learn several traditional old-time fiddle tunes in a variety of keys, including some with cross tunings. We will also look at approaches to playing and supporting old-time vocal songs, including double-stops and tremolo. Rhythm playing, both in band settings and duet playing, will also be explored.

BLUEGRASS MANDOLIN FUNDAMENTALS

In this class, we will cover all the techniques required to be a mandolin player in a bluegrass band, including strong rhythm skills, tremolo, single-note fiddle tune style playing, double stops, and more. We'll learn some tunes and songs that illustrate these techniques, including selections from Bill Monroe, Frank Wakefield, David Grisman, and me!



John Reischman

Grammy-winning musician John Reischman has been a foundational mandolinist, composer, bandleader, and musical educator in bluegrass and North American roots and folk music since emerging from the vibrant "new acoustic" music scene of the Bay Area in the 1980s. A founding member of the groundbreaking Tony Rice Unit, Reischman's mastery of bluegrass, old-time, swing, and multiple Latin American musical styles, coupled with an Old Masters sense of tone, taste and musicality, has brought him a global reputation as one of the finest mandolinists of his era.

HOW TO PRACTICE BLUEGRASS BANJO

Bluegrass banjo is a language, and in this intermediate class we'll learn how to practice all the component parts of the language. Right- and left-hand technique, common Scruggs Style phrases, and solid backup ideas are just a few of the topics covered. Students will receive techniques, exercises, listening examples, hands-on feedback, and recommended practice progressions to move from the beginner stages of banjo playing to playing things that "sound like Bluegrass."

BUILD YOUR OWN BANJO ARRANGEMENTS

In this intermediate/advanced class, we'll find simple and comfortable pathways to playing our own arrangements of tunes and songs. Instead of "winging it," we'll approach arranging tunes and improvising by establishing simple melodies by ear, borrowing ideas from recordings, using common sense music theory, and creative musical problem solving. We'll cover vocal bluegrass songs, fiddle tunes, and not-quite-traditional genres like folk and pop.



Eli Gilbert

Eli Gilbert is one of the most-watched banjo instructors online today. His videos have been viewed on YouTube millions of times, with over 100,000 subscribers. Eli has also taught at numerous camps, including Banjo Summit, Augusta, Banjo Camp North, and Ashokan. As a performer, Eli has toured nationally and internationally with such artists as Missy Raines, Dale Ann Bradley, Alan Bibey, Chris Jones, and Rick Faris. Eli is an alum of the Jazz Studies program of the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University, as well as the Bluegrass and Country Music program at East Tennessee State University.

INTERMEDIATE BLUEGRASS MANDOLIN

We will concentrate on double stops, arpeggios, and scales to improve our knowledge of the fingerboard as well as how to use them in vocal tunes and instrumentals. We will also work on ideas or licks that include slides, hammer-ons, and pull-offs to make our playing sound more like a voice. We will incorporate this into standard bluegrass tunes as well as feeling the groove! We will stay at a reasonable pace that will definitely be about having fun!

IMPROVISATION IN BLUEGRASS SONGS

In this advanced class, students will explore the road to true improvisation! We'll play around with different common chord progressions using arpeggios, scales, chords, and licks (ideas!). Students will explore and apply these ideas through songs that span many of the progressions players commonly encounter across the repertoire. A good knowledge of the fingerboard is very helpful in this class. It's gonna be laid back and big fun!



Alan Bibey

Since first hitting the scene in the early 1980s, Alan Bibey has made a name for himself as one of the most technically gifted mandolinists. He was an original member of such ground-breaking bands as The New Quicksilver, IIIrd Tyme Out, BlueRidge, and for the last 18 years, Alan Bibey & Grasstowne. He has been voted Mandolin Performer Of The Year by SPBGMA nine times, as well as 2019 and 2020 IBMA Mandolin Player Of The Year. Alan has held the Alan Bibey Mandolin Camp for the last 9 years, and he most recently joined the award-winning bluegrass band Balsam Range.

BEGINNING CLAWHAMMER BANJO

This class will be the perfect kickstart to your clawhammer banjo playing whether you are a complete beginner or are just mastering the "bum ditty" lick. Particular focus will be on the rhythmic structure that makes clawhammer playing distinct. We will master chord shapes in the G tuning and use them to play simple tunes. Additionally, we will explore common tunings and learn some simple melodies. It will be helpful to have a tuner, capo, recording device, and a pencil!

SINGING WITH CLAWHAMMER BANJO

This class will explore vocal repertoire using the clawhammer banjo. Many folks find it difficult to sing while playing clawhammer. We will break it down so that you can learn how to do it! We will also explore different keys for different vocal ranges. Repertoire will include some common tunes from the Carter Family as well as some songs native to North Carolina. It will be good to have a tuner, capo, recording device, and a pencil!



Laura Boosinger

Laura Boosinger has been a mentor for numerous young musicians in Western North Carolina including Josh Goforth, with whom she has toured extensively in the U.S. and Scotland. Their music combines mountain standards, traditional ballads, and old pop songs. For decades she has served as Master of Ceremonies for The Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, the oldest folk festival in the nation, and at Shindig on the Green every summer in downtown Asheville, NC. Laura serves as a consultant to the Blue Ridge Music Trails of North Carolina and writes and produces the podcast *Down the Road*.

ADVANCED MANDOLIN DOUBLESTOPS

Double-stops are incredibly versatile shapes that are useful not only for a fuller sound, but as a way of better understanding and executing ideas along the mandolin fretboard. This class is geared towards upper-intermediate and advanced players who want to take that next step with their double-stops game. Together we'll flesh out all the different facets and implications of this topic through interval studies, exercises, fretboard mapping, and advanced song arrangements in different genres using double-stops.

LEARNING TO PLAY UP THE NECK

Still struggling to get past the 7th fret on your mandolin? Fret no more with this in-depth, intermediate-and-up class all about how to traverse higher up the neck. Together, we'll explore fretboard navigation by using common shapes and techniques that professional players use to scale the neck. Along the way we'll learn some familiar tunes in high places, and start to unravel the mysteries of the FFCP (Four Finger Closed Position) Method.



David Benedict

David Benedict is one of the leading figures and content creators in the mandolin world today. His mandolin rap sheet includes a unique degree in Mandolin Performance and years of touring experience with 10-time IBMA Bass Player of the Year Missy Raines and 2020 IBMA New Artist of the Year Mile Twelve. In recent years, David's main focus has been his mandolin YouTube channel, with seven million views and counting. He now lives in Travelers Rest, SC, where he makes videos full-time and performs regularly with his wife Tabitha Agnew Benedict in their transatlantic folk project, The Foreign Landers.

BLUES IN MANDOLIN PLAYING

This class will focus on great blues mandolin players of the 1920s and '30s including Charlie McCoy, Coley Jones, Al Miller, and others. We'll check out a few recorded solos by these masters and explore ways of varying solos with blues licks, double stops, and 7th chord forms. Students will also learn how to improve their tremolo (for the long soulful notes) and play backup through several different exercises at various tempos. It will be a great opportunity to get deep into the blues and add some flavor to your solos—whatever style of music you play.

RHYTHM MANDOLIN IN VARIOUS STYLES

This class is intended to help students with playing rhythm—something we do all the time when we play with other people, but tend to neglect in our practice. It will cover distinct styles of rhythm including folk, bluegrass, "newgrass," swing, and blues. Students will be given practical guides to playing in various keys using a variety of chord shapes (open chords, chop chords, 7th chords, 3-note chords, etc.), allowing them to approach playing rhythm in different styles and settings. The goal is to help students have more fun exploring new styles and playing in jam sessions.



Matt Flinner

Matt Flinner has made a career out of playing acoustic music in new ways. Starting out as a banjo prodigy playing bluegrass festivals before he entered his teens, Flinner later took up the mandolin, won the National Banjo Contest at Winfield in 1990, and took the mandolin award there the following year. Since then, he's been recognized as a premiere mandolinist as well as one of the finest new acoustic/roots music composers today. His two solo CDs (on Compass), *The View from Here* and *Latitude*, are now widely considered classics in the new acoustic/modern bluegrass style.

MANDOLIN SPEED DEMYSTIFIED

Unlock the secrets to playing fast with ease in this immersive mandolin course. Hayes will guide you in understanding right-hand anatomy, harnessing tremolo picking for fluid left-hand lines, and using breath and mindfulness to overcome common barriers. You'll leave with tailored exercises, tunes, and a clear practice routine to build speed and precision on your own. Whether you're a beginner to speed playing or looking to refine your technique, this week-long course is your pathway to faster, more effortless mandolin playing.

CROSSPICKING VOCAL STANDARDS ON GUITAR

Ever wanted to crosspick on your favorite bluegrass songs like Doc Watson or Norman Blake? In this class, students will learn some common bluegrass vocal melodies and how to turn them into full crosspicking arrangements with common triad shapes and right-hand picking patterns. We will also cover technique, equipping students with the tools to play with confidence and creativity.



Hayes Griffin

Fueled by bluegrass, Western swing, rock, and metal, guitarist and mandolinist Hayes Griffin turned his childhood obsession into a lifelong passion. With degrees from Denison University and New England Conservatory, where he studied under the legendary John McGann, Hayes has toured the world with April Verch and Newtown. His passion for teaching has inspired hundreds of students at top acoustic music camps including Steve Kaufman's Acoustic Kamp, Great Lakes Music Camp, and Ashokan Western & Swing Week. His YouTube channel has over 600,000 views, and in 2024, he won 2nd Place at the National Flat Pick Guitar Championship!

LUTHIERS EXHIBIT



Lynn Dudenbostel

Among many players, Lynn Dudenbostel's instruments are some of the most highly-prized, and he is often listed among that rarefied group of the very best luthiers. Inspired by the vintage Martin guitars and Gibson mandolins of the 1920s and 1930s, Lynn became a full-time luthier in 1997 and continues to build traditional style guitars and mandolins in his shop in Maryville, TN. This is Lynn's 13th year as our luthier-in-residence, offering repair services throughout the week.



Ben Pearce

Ben Pearce is a luthier and designer based in Cambridge, MA, where he runs Outlier Workshop and ViolinArching.com. He specializes in custom instruments and precision CNC parts for makers worldwide, including collaborations with Eastman Strings, Bourgeois Guitars, and archtop master John Buscarino. Blending a background in architecture with a traditional apprenticeship under violin maker Karl Dennis, Ben integrates digital precision into historic hand-craftsmanship. Profiled in Bluegrass Unlimited, he is also an active mandolinist and instructor. In his spare time, Ben fabricates architectural millwork and plays with his daughter, Meryl.

Mando & Banjo Week. JUNE 28–JULY 4, 2026

Classes run Monday-Friday

7:30-8:30am	**BREAKFAST** (Monday-Saturday)						
9:00-10:15am	**Dawg Music Legacy** (Marshall)	**Swing Ensemble** (Ruby)	**Mandolin Speed Demystified** (Griffin)	**How to Practice Bluegrass Banjo** (Gilbert)	**Beginning Clawhammer Banjo** (Boosinger)	**Blues in Mandolin Playing** (Flinner)	**Old-Time Mandolin** (Reischman)
10:15-10:45am	**COFFEE/TEA BREAK** (Monday-Friday)						
10:45am-12:00pm	**Brazilian Choro Mandolin** (Marshall)	**Beautiful Tunes on the Mandolin** (Walsh)	**Bluegrass Mandolin Fundamentals** (Reischman)	**Rhythm Mandolin in Various Styles** (Flinner)	**Singing with/ Clawhammer Banjo** (Boosinger)	**Crosspicking Vocal Standards on Guitar** (Griffin)	**Build Your Own Banjo Arrangements** (Gilbert)
11:30-1:00pm	**LUNCH** (Monday-Friday)						
1:15-2:30pm	**All Kinds of Swing** (Stiernberg)	**Bluegrass Mandolin Improv Vocabulary** (Gilchrist)	**Jam Survival Skills for Banjo** (Evans)	**Learning to Play Up the Neck** (Benedict)	**Intermediate Bluegrass Mandolin** (Bibey)	**Classical Mandolin Basics** (Lichtenberg)	**Clawhammer Tunes from the Ground Up** (Pool)
2:45-4:00pm	**Crafting Interesting Solos** (Stiernberg)	**Old-Time Banjo Legends** (Pool)	**Improvisation in Bluegrass Songs** (Bibey)	**Advanced Mandolin Doublestops** (Benedict)	**Advanced Classical Mandolin** (Lichtenberg)	**Creative Mandolin Backup** (Gilchrist)	**Banjo Fingerboard Explorations** (Evans)
4:15-5:15pm	**LUTHIERS EXHIBIT** (Dudenbostel and Pearce) **SPONTANEOUS JAMS, & DAILY BLUEGRASS JAM** (led by instructors)						
5:00-6:30pm	**SUPPER** (Sunday-Friday)						
6:00-7:00pm	**SPECIALTY JAMS** (led by instructors: bluegrass, swing, blues, old-time, Irish, Latin grooves, etc.)						
7:30pm-?	**EVENING EVENTS** (concerts, jam sessions, community dance, etc.)						

Traditional Song Week

JULY 5–11, 2026

Traditional Song Week is a program dedicated to harvesting the rich traditions of roots music by way of singing the songs. It is a place where you can develop and grow in confidence about your singing, and have lots of fun with other folks on their own song journeys. Come gather with us to explore various traditional song genres under the guidance of experienced, top-notch instructors. When singers gather together, magical moments are bound to happen!

This year, we are proud to present a gathering of highly influential singers and musicians who have remained devoted over the years to preserving and promoting traditional song. Students may choose to focus on writing in the tradition, learning duet harmony, singing ballads from the surrounding Appalachian mountains and from across the ocean, improving their banjo and guitar skills, or simply experiencing the healing power of community singing. Many classes allow increased enrollments beyond the standard 15 students. The week will also feature afternoon workshops, evening concerts, and nightly singing sessions, with ample opportunities to participate and perform for an audience. Grab a friend and come join us for a week you will never forget!

Courses & Staff

CHOICES: IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

Bringing your songs and performances alive is all about choices. In this interactive class, Matt will show you the choices great performers make to get the most out of their songs and time on stage. Participants will apply what they've learned to the songs they choose to sing. This workshop offers a safe, friendly place where beginners and professionals alike will benefit from the collective wisdom of the instructor and the group. Phrasing, style, stage fright, and performance techniques are a few areas this class will explore on the way to wowing any audience with the power of your music.



Matt Watroba, Program Coordinator

Traditional Song Week Coordinator Matt Watroba has spent most of his adult life sharing his knowledge and passion for folk music with just about anyone who would listen. As a performer, Matt has delivered thousands of shows in just about every setting you can think of. As a song leader, he is committed to inspiring or facilitating at least 100 community sings every year somewhere in the country. In 2019, Matt was inducted into the Folk DJ Hall Of Fame as part of the Folk Alliance International conference in Montreal, Canada.

GOSPEL MUSIC: COME SHARE THE JOY

Spirituals and gospel music are much more than pleasing songs to listen to—they are powerful representations of the triumphant spirit and faith that have defined the African American journey. Together we will learn and sing uplifting, sacred songs of hope and celebration! Join us to lift our voices and share the joy! (No class limit)

FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM: EARLY ABOLITIONIST AND PROTEST SONGS

For this class we will sing songs that were sung by abolitionists and enslaved people in the U.S. during the 1700s and 1800s. Although most of them have not been heard in over 100 years, these messages about protest and fighting for freedom still ring true and relevant today. The material is inspired by Songs of Slavery and Emancipation, a recently released musical story that is available as a CD booklet, book, and documentary. It will be informative, inspiring and fun. (Class limit 20)



Kathy Bullock

Dr. Kathy Bullock is a Professor Emerita of Berea College, Berea, Kentucky where she taught for thirty years. A workshop clinician, scholar, performer, and choral director, Dr. Bullock has provided presentations throughout the United States, Europe, and Africa, specializing in African American sacred music. She earned a Ph.D. and M.A. in Music from Washington University and a B.A. from Brandeis University. Dr. Bullock brings to her programs a rich cultural heritage and tradition as well as an infectious excitement in the performing and sharing of it with others.

MOUNTAIN SONGS FOR THE SOUL

Appalachian ballads and folk songs help us persevere in times of hardship and celebrate in times of joy. In this class, singers will learn new ballads and folk songs along with strategies for approaching traditional Appalachian song. It will include unaccompanied ballads as well as folk songs with banjo and guitar accompaniment provided by the instructor. We'll create a fun, playful, and safe space in which to explore our voices and share songs that have been a part of the Blue Ridge Mountains for generations. Songs are taught by ear with lyric sheets provided. (Class limit 20)

PRIMITIVE BAPTIST & OLD HYMNS FROM APPALACHIA

So many of the great ballad singers in Appalachia had wonderful hymns and sacred songs as part of their repertoires. This class will cover ornamented and mostly unaccompanied old hymns, primarily Primitive Baptist and camp meeting songs. It will have a strong focus on vocal ornamentation—vocal skills which can be transferred to secular singing. Songs are taught by ear with lyric sheets provided. (Class limit 20)



Susan Pepper

Susan Pepper has been sharing and teaching traditional American and Appalachian folk songs for over 20 years. "My goal is that we find our own meaning in the songs while we celebrate those who sang them before us," she says. Susan has a number of studio recordings, has appeared on WoodSongs Old Time Radio Hour, and was a co-producer and singer in the film *The Mountain Minor*. While working on a Master's degree in Appalachian Studies, she made extensive field recordings of several Blue Ridge ballad singers, which were released on the album *On the Threshold of a Dream*.

PLAY YOUR GUITAR LIKE AN ORCHESTRA

The guitar has six strings, but many play it as if it makes only one sound at a time: either strummed chords or single-note melodies. Some of the most awe-inspiring guitar playing is the kind that sounds like there are multiple parts being played at once. This class will show students how anyone can do this! It will explore traditional and contemporary folk songs to build a storehouse for songs and melodies. The class will also help students learn the fretboard. A knowledge of first position ("cowboy") chords and an openness to playing fingerstyle will be helpful. (Class limit 20)

SMALL GROUP VOCAL IMPROV: GO NEW PLACES!

There's something amazing about creating spontaneous pieces of music with others and using just our voices. It's an inexhaustible well of creativity and fun. In this class, we'll explore principles and practices for creating a cappella improvised musical pieces together. Improvisation invites us to collaborate, explore our imaginations, expand musical vocabularies, create new patterns, sing through mistakes (the bigger the better!), and try things we might not ordinarily do, such as singing wordlessly or using our voices as musical instruments. No improv experience necessary. All you need is an open mind and the ability to carry a tune. (Class limit 30)



Pat Wictor

Brooklyn-based singer-songwriter Pat Wictor makes his home in many musical worlds. Grounded in rural blues and gospel traditions, Pat's lean, poetic songs and expressive guitar playing are seasoned with jazz, pop, improvisational surprise, philosophy, and social commentary. His latest album, *FLARE*, a meditation on political division in America, was called "brilliant" by WFUV's John Platt and reached #1 on the Folk-DJ charts in 2022. Pat currently tours solo and in a variety of duos, and he is an accomplished music educator, teaching workshops on guitar, songwriting, body percussion, and vocal and instrumental improvisation.

COMMUNITY SINGING RIGHT NOW

In this class, we'll explore different ways that a group of people can create satisfying vocal music together with no paper, no screens, and no advance preparation. Come sing songs you know, songs you don't know, and songs we invent on the spot along with rounds, chants, chorus songs, and harmony games. This is a workshop for singers of all levels of confidence and for those who want to develop their skill as song leaders. (No class limit)

THE ART OF THE SING-ALONG CHORUS

From the back room of the pub to the front pew on a Sunday, there's a magical kind of song that invites you to join in the first time you hear it. This class will sing great chorus songs from a variety of traditions, figure out what makes them work, and consider the craft of song-leading. Whether you enjoy singing, leading, or writing your own songs, there's a place for you in the circle! (Class limit 20)



Zoe Mulford

Zoe Mulford's life-long interest in building community through music started around the campfire and has led her into songwriting, old-time music, vocal improvisation, and folk singing, both in the U.S. and—for the last 20 years—in the north of England. As a songwriter, she is best known for "The President Sang Amazing Grace," which was covered by Joan Baez. She has performed around the U.S. and the UK, backing her clear voice with guitar, banjo, or piano. She is most at home wherever old traditions meet new inspiration to create the music we need right now.

TRACING SONGS & BALLADS OF THE WESTWARD EXPANSION

In this class, students will discuss and sing old songs that migrated into the Great Plains, the Panhandle, and the West during the westward expansion of the 1800s. Each day we will explore and focus on songs from different aspects of the West, engaging with lots of singing and wonderful images to go along with the songs. (Class limit 20)

BANJO FOR SONG ACCOMPANIMENT

In this class, Sara will teach a frailing banjo style and a two-finger banjo style for partial melody backup that can enhance a song beautifully without overwhelming it. It is for students who can already play the banjo at an intermediate level, but it may be difficult for beginners. However, beginners are welcome to sit in on the class and take in what they can! (Class limit 20)



Sara Grey

Once you have heard Sara Grey you will never forget her. American born and raised, Sara has sung at most every folk club and arts center in England, Scotland, and Wales, and has performed at over 60 different folk and bluegrass festivals. She has always been interested in the migration of songs across the Atlantic, and just seems to know what is right in the interpretation of a traditional song. Sara's goal is to gather songs and pass them on to future generations so that they will have the pleasure of hearing and singing them just as she has.

SHAPE NOTE SINGING

Western North Carolina has a long history of shape note singing. From the haunting melodies of William Walker's *Christian Harmony* to the complex, moving parts of Stamps-Baxter's convention songbooks, this class will explore the evolution of this practice. Students will hear the differences as we sing, and we'll discuss a variety of singing styles that are most effective for each hymn. We will begin by learning the shapes, so no prior experience is required. Get ready to have lots of fun hearing some amazing harmony and experiencing it with a full group in four parts! (Class limit 30)

MUSIC THEORY

Ever hear a song and wonder why it's so pleasing to your ear? Have you always wanted the ability to sing harmony without approaching it like a math problem? Have you tried learning theory before and just found it uninteresting or way too difficult? Perhaps you're thinking, "Why do I need music theory as a traditional singer? Shouldn't it just come naturally?" Well, this class is for you! We will pleasantly explore the advantages of visual and aural learning in traditional music with theory and ear-training basics. No experience or formal music training is necessary. (Class limit 25)



Josh Goforth

Josh Goforth learned to play fiddle from legends Gordon and Arvil Freeman in his native Madison County, NC. A highly accomplished old-time, bluegrass, and swing musician, he attended East Tennessee State University to study music education and be a part of its famous Bluegrass & Country Music Program. In 2000, 2003, and 2005, he was named "Fiddler of the Festival" at Fiddler's Grove, earning the designation "Master Fiddler" after his third title and retiring from competition. Josh has also toured extensively with David Holt and Laura Boosinger and was nominated for a Grammy for Cutting Loose, a 2009 album with Holt.

SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN OF HARMONY (with Claudia Schmidt)

Cooperating musically in a surround-sound experience is one of the best ways to be in community with our fellow humans. Join us for a week of exploring the many ways we can sing together, from drones to traditional two- and three-part harmony, and onward to trying out dissonance in many forms. Sally and Claudia will lead participants into seas of sound that enrich both melodies we know and new ones we discover. (Class limit 20)

THE SONGS OF JEAN RITCHIE

Jean Ritchie was one of Sally's great mentors as well as a friend. In this class, Sally will share music and stories from this great singer of Appalachian traditional songs and ballads. This class will also include some biographical information about Ritchie and explore some of the songs Jean composed that have become part of the standard repertoire. (Class limit 20)



Sally Rogers

Sally Rogers began her career as a full-time touring musician in 1979, after encouragement from Stan Rogers, the legendary Canadian singer-songwriter. That was followed by an invitation from Garrison Keillor to appear on *A Prairie Home Companion*, on which she performed more than a dozen times in the wake of 14 different albums. Sally's travels have taken her to Europe, China, Hungary, Poland, and across the United States. Much of her time is spent teaching music in public schools as an artist-in-residence. Her gorgeous singing voice, boundless energy, and good humor are welcomed from coast to coast.

IT'S ALWAYS BETTER WITH A BANJO

This class introduces some great songs and explores how to make them better with a banjo. Students will sing a wide-ranging selection of old-time country, Civil War songs, ballads, and more. We'll start with simple accompaniments and even play some blues banjo. Howie will also pass on some secrets about how to spice up an arrangement. Whatever your level of banjo skills, come and sing.

THE SINGING TROUBADOUR

For well over a century, the guitar has been used to accompany American music and song. In this class, we'll sing and play a fine batch of ballads, folk standards, old-time country songs, Carter family classics, and more. It makes no difference whether your guitar playing is simple and basic or more advanced. It's the song that carries the day. Come and sing! (Class limit 20)



Howie Bursen

Howie Bursen has been singing, playing, and teaching for many years. He's been onstage at festivals and camps from Cape Cod to Puget Sound, from the Los Angeles Solstice Festival to *A Prairie Home Companion*. Howie has solo recordings on Smithsonian Folkways and Flying Fish Records. He and his partner, Sally Rogers, have two recordings together. Howie is excited to share his knowledge and songs at Swannanoa as part of Traditional Song Week.

SWIMMING IN THE OCEAN OF HARMONY (with Sally Rogers)

Cooperating musically in a surround-sound experience is one of the best ways to be in community with our fellow humans. Join us for a week of exploring the many ways we can sing together, from drones to traditional two- and three-part harmony, and onward to trying out dissonance in many forms. Claudia and Sally will lead participants into seas of sound that enrich both melodies we know and new ones we discover. (Class limit 20)

LITTLE SONGS DU JOUR

For years, Claudia has practiced letting a melody rise from her heart, through her mouth, and into the air each day—usually early on—as a kind of affirmation of abundance. This class represents her attempt to see what happens when a group pools its energy in a similar fashion to create a new song each day. The results could be bluesy, ballad-like, go-to-meeting style, or a chant, with verses, bridges, and choruses all available. It's a rolling-up of sleeves mixed with the magic of the moment, creating a suite of new songs by week's end! (Class limit 20)



Claudia Schmidt

Claudia Schmidt is delighted to return to the Gathering for her second year. For well over 50 years, she has been using song to uplift and inspire with equal parts tears and laughter, celebrating the human condition and the world in which we seek to survive and flourish. For Claudia, being with the Traditional Song Week community—which is so deeply committed to singing as both a foundation and a testament to our interconnectedness with all things—is endlessly nourishing and joyful.

WRITING NEW SONGS THAT SOUND OLD

In this class, award-winning songwriter Joe Newberry will teach students how to write new songs that sound old! Take your trunkful of ideas and turn them into songs written "in the tradition." Through word play and writing, writing, and more writing, the story in your head can become the song on your lips!

FROM THE APPALACHIANS TO THE OZARKS

Settlers who moved from the Appalachians to the Ozarks took all of their worldly belongings, as well as their music. From ballads and popular hits of the day to songs with floating verses and newer composed material, this class will get folks up and singing, and will help build repertoire. (Class limit 20)



Joe Newberry

Known around the world for his clawhammer banjo playing, Joe Newberry is also a powerful guitarist, singer, and songwriter. A longtime and frequent guest on *A Prairie Home Companion*, he was a featured singer on the Transatlantic Sessions in the UK and the U.S. Growing up in a family full of singers and dancers, Joe took up the guitar and banjo as a teenager and learned fiddle tunes from great Missouri fiddlers. He moved to North Carolina as a young man and quickly became an anchor of the incredible music scene in the state.

SEA CHANTEYS: HOW THEY WERE USED

Ever wonder just how those old sea chanteys were used during the age of sail? Join Chris in a "virtual" demonstration of working a 19th-century square-rigged sailing vessel and the specific group songs that helped get the jobs done. Participants will "sail" a 19th-century vessel through their imaginations, singing as it goes. In addition to the songs themselves, students will learn how the form, pace, and style changed depending on a song's specific use and examine life aboard a square-rigger, as well as some of the shipboard "rituals" that included their own music. (Class limit 20)

SURF & TURF FROM NEW YORK AND NEW ENGLAND

This class explores ballads, songs, and stories of the sea and shore collected primarily from New York state and New England. The "Empire State" and its neighboring New England states are vast and expansive, and their songs of the past can be as varied as the states themselves. Students will study songs collected by some of the leading folk music collectors of the 20th century including Warner, Flanders, Lansing-Porter, Thompson, and Steggert, and they will learn about the source singers who provided them. (Class limit 20)



Chris Koldeway

Chris Koldewey comes from a family rich in maritime traditions, where his lullabies as a child were traditional songs of the sea. In addition to singing folk music, he plays guitar, concertina, banjo, and mandolin. Chris was privileged to sail and chantey on two historic vessels: the barque Picton Castle out of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, and the only wooden whaler left, the Charles W. Morgan out of Mystic, CT. Using his experience from a 32-year career as a public school music teacher, Chris engages and inspires audiences and workshop students as they expand their participation and enjoyment of traditional music.

YOUR AUTHENTIC VOICE

Are you ready to unlock the tools for a joyful, lasting singing voice? Join Cara for a week of relaxed group voice lessons where participants will explore simple wisdoms for good vocal technique. The class will focus on breathing, posture, intonation, and resonance, building habits that will keep your voice healthy for decades to come. Drawing on her rich background in vocal pedagogy and music education, Cara will guide singers in developing a voice that is truly free, authentic, and uniquely theirs. Students will have the opportunity to sing both together and alone. Let your voice shine! (Class limit 20)



Cara Valenti

Through her years of leading morning vocal warm-ups and inspired performances with the Swanettes, Cara Valenti is a well-known fixture of the Traditional Song Week community. A singer, songwriter, music educator, and choral artistic director, Cara lives in Durham, NC, where she teaches at Triangle Day School and serves as Artistic Director of the Common Woman Chorus, a queer feminist ensemble founded in 1983. In 2024, Cara and Laura Jones—her longtime friend and musical collaborator—released an EP under the name Tall Glass. For Cara, helping people find their unique voice and sing together in community is her greatest joy.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

For details about our Children's Program during Traditional Song Week, please see the general program information section at the front of the catalog.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

Traditional Song Week. JULY 5–11, 2026

Classes run Monday-Friday

7:30-8:30am	**BREAKFAST** (Monday-Saturday)					
8:30-8:50am	**VOCAL WARM-UPS** (Cara Valenti)					
9:00-10:15am	**From Slavery To Freedom: Early Abolitionist and Protest Songs** (Bullock)	**Banjo for Song Accompaniment** (Grey)	**The Songs of Jean Ritchie** (Rogers)	**Sea Chanteys: How They Were Used** (Koldeway)	**Community Singing Right Now** (Mulford)	**Choices: Improving Performance** (Watroba)
10:15-10:45am	**COFFEE/TEA BREAK** (Monday-Friday)					
10:45am-12:00pm	**Small Group Vocal Improv: Go New Places!** (Wictor)	**Gospel Music: Come Share The Joy** (Bullock)	**Mountain Songs for the Soul** (Pepper)	**The Singing Troubadour** (Bursen)	**Tracing Songs & Ballads of the Westward Expansion** (Grey)	
11:30am-1:00pm	**LUNCH** (Monday-Friday)					
1:15-2:15pm	**COMMUNITY GATHERING & SPECIAL EVENTS**					
	MONDAY		**TUESDAY**		**WEDNESDAY**	
	Singing With the Banjo (Grey, Bursen, Newberry, Pepper)		**A Life-Long Musical Friendship** (Rogers, Schmidt)		**Sing With Me** (Mulford, Bullock, Koldeway, Wictor)	
2:30-3:45pm	**Little Songs du Jour** (Schmidt)	**Shape Note Singing** (Goforth)	**Primitive Baptist & Old Hymns From Appalachia** (Pepper)	**Writing New Songs That Sound Old** (Newberry)	**It's Always Better with a Banjo** (Bursen)	**Your Authentic Voice** (Valenti)
4:00-5:15pm	**Play Your Guitar Like an Orchestra** (Wictor)	**Surf & Turf from New York and New England** (Koldeway)	**Swimming In the Ocean Of Harmony** (Rogers/Schmidt)	**From the Appalachians to the Ozarks** (Newberry)	**Music Theory** (Goforth)	**The Art of the Sing-Along Chorus** (Mulford)
5:00-6:30pm	**SUPPER** (Sunday-Friday)					
6:15-7:15pm	**SINGING SESSIONS BY GENRE** (Tuesday: Ballads; Thursday: Old-Time, Bluegrass, and Classic Country; Friday: Gospel)					
7:30pm-?	**EVENING EVENTS** (concerts, jam sessions, community dance, etc.)					

Old-Time Music & Dance Week

JULY 12–18, 2026

Our oldest program, Old-Time Music & Dance Week features fabulous jams, great community, a beautiful location, and the best old-time musical line-up in the country! It explores the rich music, dance, and singing traditions of the Southern Appalachian region through a wide variety of classes taught by an experienced and supportive staff. Diverse offerings enable students to explore new areas; fiddlers sing, singers dance, and dancers learn to play instruments. Class titles use Roman numerals (I, II, III) to indicate skill level, and students typically enroll in two to three classes during the week. In the afternoons, instructors present 20 additional workshops called "Potlucks" open to all participants. There are also visiting master artists each day who share their stories and music. Evening activities include jam sessions, singing, square-dances, concerts, a film, a student open mic, and the popular Late-Night Honky-Tonk! To accommodate families, we offer Young Old-Time, a jam for young players, and a Children's Program for ages 6-12. Excellent food and craft beer trucks are open nightly. It's hard to beat the fun, community vibe of evenings at Swannanoa, with folks jamming and visiting amidst the pleasant mountain twilight of Western North Carolina—a hotbed for traditional old-time music.

Courses & Staff

FIDDLE II

This intermediate class will delve into fiddle tunes from the Hammons family of Pocahontas County, WV, and specifically the playing of Burl, Lee, and Edden Hammons. Students will learn intricate left-hand ornaments, some beautiful old tunes, and work on "bow-cabulary" as well. Tunings will include GDAE, AEAE and AEAC#. This class will be taught by ear but handouts will be provided at the end of the week as well. If you haven't cross-tuned before but are willing to try you are most welcome in this class. Cross tunings help create that authentic old-time sound. Please bring a recording device.



Erynn Marshall, Program Coordinator

Erynn Marshall, coordinator of Old-Time Music & Dance Week, is an internationally-known fiddler. She loves to teach tunes from traditional fiddlers she visited over the last 25 years or sleuth out playing secrets from archival recordings. She has won blue ribbons at Clifftop (the first woman to do so) and Mt. Airy fiddlers conventions and performed across Europe, Australia, and China with her husband Carl Jones, an accomplished multi-instrumentalist. Erynn has produced several recordings, is featured in three books, five films, and the *Women of Old-Time Music* exhibit at the Birthplace of Country Music Museum (VA).

FIDDLE III

This advanced class will visit the regional styles that Eddie grew up hearing, including Round Peak, Galax/Grayson County, and West Virginia styles. While each style is unique, they all have a similar Appalachian flavor. Students will learn the tunes in a traditional call and response method, just as Eddie did. In addition to standard GDAE tuning, he will use tunings such as AEAE and ADAE. There is a strong possibility that the class might even hear a story or two! Recording devices are highly encouraged.

OLD-TIME BAND 101

Have you been playing alone all this time? Well, it is time to broaden your horizons. Eddie will teach you what it is like to play in a cohesive group. This is a favorite thing of his experiences in teaching at Grayson County High School. Learn what each instrument's job is in order to make the band sound great! (Class Limit: 20)



Eddie Bond

Eddie Bond is a native of Grayson County, Virginia, nestled in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains. As a youngster he was exposed to many local musicians in the area including his grandparents. A multi-instrumentalist, Eddie describes himself as "mostly a fiddler." He has been the fiddler for the world-renowned New Ballards Branch Bogtrotters since 2001. In 2018 he was awarded a National Heritage Fellowship from the NEA, our nation's highest honor for a folk artist. Eddie also passes on the tradition, teaching the next generation at the local high school in Grayson County.

FIDDLE III

This advanced class combines learning tunes with improving playing on repertoire students already know. Tatiana will approach each tune with focused detail, reflecting what makes the tune and the player unique. She'll explain how that can translate into students' own playing, and how to express creativity through fiddling without losing sight of the essence of the tune or style. It's hard to find the balance between expressing individual style while blending with and responding to others! This class will be approached with an explorative and interactive teaching style rather than just learning a tune each day.

FIDDLE & BANJO DUETS (with Gordy Hinners)

There's nothing like sitting knee to knee with a fiddle and banjo and "locking in." This class will explore and share some of the many ways the banjo and fiddle can complement and encourage each other in an intimate song and dance that gives rise to beautiful music. Tatiana and Gordy will give demonstrations with simple tunes, and students will have an opportunity to dance (duet) with the instructors and each other. Most of all, everyone will have a lot of fun. (Class limit: 30)



Tatiana Hargreaves

Tatiana Hargreaves is at the forefront of an up and coming generation of old time, bluegrass, and new acoustic musicians. From placing first at the Clifftop Appalachian Fiddle Contest to her bluegrass fiddling on Laurie Lewis's Grammy-nominated album *The Hazel And Alice Sessions*, Hargreaves displays a musical fluency that flows between old-time and bluegrass with ease. She has toured with such musicians as Dave Rawlings, Gillian Welch, Laurie Lewis, Alice Gerrard, and Jake Blount. She currently performs with banjo player Allison de Groot and teaches fiddle and improvisation at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

FIDDLE II

This class will focus on danceable fiddle music from northwest North Carolina and southwest Virginia, highlighting tunes that are specific to the region. A recording device and tuner are recommended. Notation and videos will be provided, but learning by ear will be encouraged. Recommended for intermediate players with experience jamming and learning by ear or notation.

FIDDLE III

This advanced class will focus on danceable fiddle music from northwest North Carolina and southwest Virginia, highlighting tunes that are specific to the region. A recording device and tuner are recommended. Notation and videos will be provided, but learning by ear will be encouraged. This class is recommended for more advanced players that are comfortable with jamming, learning by ear, and comfortable with cross tunings.



Kilby Spencer

Kilby Spencer, a native of Whitetop, VA, founded the Crooked Road Ramblers in 2001. He was raised in old-time music and influenced by his parents, Thornton and Emily Spencer, who revived the Whitetop Mountain Band in 1975, as well as his cousin Dean Sturgill and uncle Albert Hash. Known for his powerful, rhythmic fiddling, Kilby has won contests across Virginia and North Carolina. Since 2017, he has been the Whitetop Mountain Band's fiddler while leading the Ramblers. A Field Recorders Collective board member since 2007, Kilby teaches, judges, and performs nationally, preserving Appalachian traditions through recordings and acclaimed festival appearances.

FIDDLE II

Sammy teaches fiddle by jumping right in and sharing some of his favorite tunes the old-fashioned way, by ear. Since bowing and phrasing are crucial in old-time fiddling, Sammy carefully points out the important nuances of each tune and highlights how many melodies are closely related. He also offers practical pointers for picking up tunes on the fly. This intermediate class will also be full of some fun historical and very non-historical tidbits of fiddlers who have inspired him over the years.

COUNTRY HARMONY (with Nadine Landry)

Join Sammy and Nadine for a fun-filled week of singing! This class is perfect for anyone looking to improve their harmony singing skills, regardless of experience or vocal range. Sammy and Nadine will break down the art of singing two- and three-part harmonies, covering terminology, interval recognition, and practical guidelines. Students will explore finding the right key, breathing techniques, and volume control, all set to a lively repertoire of bluegrass, old-time, and country songs. Discover hidden gems and lesser-known singers, and experience the joy of singing in harmony with others. All levels welcome!



Sammy Lind

Minnesota-born Sammy Lind is widely respected as an old-time musician and instructor. After many years in Portland, Oregon, he co-founded Foghorn Stringband in 2000 with friends who shared his passion for traditional music. Since then, he has traveled the world performing and teaching. His playing shows deep respect for fiddlers and archival recordings that he studied for countless hours, and it carries the drive that comes from years of playing for dancers. After a few years in Whitehorse, Yukon, Sammy settled in eastern Quebec in 2016, living in the village of Pointe-à-la-Croix with his wife and bandmate, Nadine Landry.

FIDDLE I

Half of old-time music is bowing rhythm. It's the foundation of the music, and most people struggle with it. If you can get the rhythm solid, the notes will fall into place. This beginning class will focus on rhythm first and melody second in order to set students up for jamming success. Participants will play in an open tuning (GDgd) in order to make bowing easy and pleasant to the ear. Using mnemonics, Michael will put a language to bowing that will make it infinitely easier to remember. Everyone's welcome whether they are a beginner or not.

FIDDLE II

Starting in standard tuning (GDae), this intermediate class will cover the same foundational rhythms, use of a mnemonic language, and bowing-first approach as Michael's Fiddle I class, but students will dive right into mixing and matching rhythms into what he calls "a rhythmic DNA sequence." By the end of the week, the class will venture into the joyous and accessible world of alternate tunings. Expect fun!



Michael Ismerio

Michael Ismerio is a community organizer who got tangled up with the old-time music scene in Portland, Oregon, in the late 1990s. He had a lot of energy for co-creating things up and down the West Coast and beyond as an organizer, fiddler, and square dance caller. He has fiddled and called dances as far away as China. In 2012, he relocated to Asheville, NC, and turned his energy towards connecting kids and adults with nature and the amazing Appalachian mountains that surround the region.

BANJO II

This intermediate class will level-up your clawhammer banjo playing! Students will grow their right- and left-hand tool kit and develop a more comprehensive sense of the instrument's layout as Adam teaches some case-study tunes by ear. These are qualities that add style, dynamics, and efficiency to music already in students' repertoire or yet to be learned. To thrive in this workshop, participants should know at least a few tunes in more than one tuning and have some command of drop-thumbing. Please bring a steel-strung fretted banjo, a capo if you use one, and an open mind!

FIDDLE III

Bowing choices can make or break an old-time fiddler's tune delivery. Rather than painstakingly assigning bowing one stroke at a time for each tune, identifying recurring bowing patterns and deploying them strategically is a way to streamline the process. In this advanced class, students will exercise several, versatile bowing patterns that can add stability, flexibility, and style to any tune—and then superimpose this collection of patterns onto some case-study tunes from a variety of old-time traditions. To fully benefit from this workshop, students should have experience playing in the AEAE cross-tuning and be comfortable learning by ear.



Adam Hurt

Deemed a "banjo virtuoso" by *The Washington Post*, Adam Hurt encountered the instrument at age eleven in his native Minnesota and has gone on to create his own elegantly innovative clawhammer banjo style that fuses several traditional old-time idioms. A respected performer and teacher of traditional music, Adam has played at the Kennedy Center and conducted workshops at many venues around the country and abroad. Since moving south in 2002, Adam has placed in or won most of the major old-time banjo competitions and has claimed several state banjo and fiddle championships. His music can be heard on multiple recordings.

BANJO II

This class will focus on the clawhammer banjo style of northwest North Carolina, with an emphasis on the fretless Round Peak style. A recording device and tuner are recommended. The focal point of the class will be regional style and self-expression. Recommended for intermediate players with experience jamming and learning by ear. Players should be comfortable with D and A tunings.

BANJO III

This class will focus on the clawhammer banjo style of northwest North Carolina, with an emphasis on the fretless Round Peak style. A recording device and tuner are recommended. The focal point of the class will be regional style and self-expression. Recommended for avanced players with experience jamming and learning by ear. Players should be comfortable with D and A tunings.



Kelley Breiding

Kelley Breiding is an award-winning musician skilled in clawhammer banjo, fiddle, guitar, and bass. A full-time member of The Crooked Road Ramblers, she hosts *The Floyd Radio Show* and her own *Blue Ridge Opry*. Kelley occasionally performs with the NC Sacred Steel legends, The Allen Boys. Since 2017, she has taught old-time fiddle and flatpicking guitar in the Ashe County Junior Appalachian Musicians program. Recognized by the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area and NC Arts Council, she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from Music Maker Relief Foundation in 2023. Kelley has performed nationwide alongside legends and at major folk festivals.

BANJO I

In this class, beginners and novice players hoping to reinforce their clawhammer fundamentals will build a solid banjo foundation layer by layer. Ben will discuss how to feel the drive of the clawhammer rhythm, make the banjo ring with clear tone, and listen intentionally to yourself and other musicians. The focus will be on technique, not repertoire, but the class will assemble at least one common old-time tune to play together by the end of the week. Most importantly, students will find a warm and welcoming musical community that offers an encouraging environment for learning!

YOUNG OLD-TIME!

Teenagers have the opportunity to get together each evening after supper for a young-folks-only hour of music and socializing facilitated by Ben Nelson. The Young Old-Time band that forms at this jam session will have the opportunity to play for the square dance on Wednesday night, and at the Friday class showcase! Young string players, singers, dancers, and non-musicians are all welcome.



Ben Nelson

Ben Nelson grew up in a family of old-time musicians in the mountains of southwest Virginia. A passionate educator and community builder, he has worked as an elementary school science instructor, naturalist, traditional music teacher, and square dance caller. Ben has taught music and dance at Warren Wilson College, the Junior Appalachian Musicians program, and traditional music camps throughout the U.S. He was a founding member of the prize-winning string band The Moose Whisperers, and studied traditional music abroad as a Thomas J. Watson Fellow.

BANJO II

For this intermediate class, students should be comfortable playing a couple of tunes in the old-time repertoire. It will explore various tunings, develop foundation skills, discuss how to become a listener, and teach some tricks to add to your tool chest. Students will learn ways to dissect a tune to learn how to play it, and Brian will discuss ways to fine tune your banjo to make it sound better. He'll also introduce 2-finger and 3-finger picking styles (no prior experience required) and how to use them to accompany singing. Bring a song or two with you to share.

BANJO SONGS III

This advanced class will explore further the old-time repertoire, as well as teach more tools to improve your playing. Students will learn how to listen to other players in a group to create that groove sound. Other topics include how to play for waltzes, how to accompany a singer, chord discussions, moveable chords, right- and left-hand techniques, various 2-finger and 3-finger picking accompaniments, singing with the banjo, dancing around the melody, and anything else folks desire to explore. Bring a song or two with you to share with the class.



Brian DeMarcus

Brian DeMarcus began attending fiddler conventions in 1967, and he has been hooked on the music, dance, and culture of the Southern Appalachian Mountains ever since. Starting in 1971, he spent 12 years touring professionally with the Green Grass Cloggers from North Carolina, taking the rich traditional sounds of old-time string band music, dance calling, and Southern Appalachian clogging into venues around the world. He plays in several bands in Alaska, his longtime home, and has been on staff at many music and dance camps around the country..

BANJO II

This class is for advanced-beginner/intermediate clawhammer banjo players who know at least a few tunes but want to improve their playing and expand their repertoire. Students will work on repertoire and techniques, for both the right and left hands, that will be useful for solo playing, accompanying a fiddle or singing, and playing with a stringband. They will also learn how to use chord shapes in several tunings to find melody notes and become a more confident player. Bring a capo to play in the keys of A and D.

SOUTHERN SQUARE DANCE & CALLING

This class, focusing on the traditional square dances of the Southern Appalachian region, is open to dancers and callers with all levels of experience. We will learn about and dance four-couple squares as well as big circle dances, and students will have the opportunity to try their hand (or voice) at calling out the dance figures. All are welcome, and no prior dance experience is required. Mainly, we'll have fun dancing and learning about this Southern Appalachian dance tradition.



Phil Jamison

Founding Coordinator of Old-Time Music & Dance Week, Phil is nationally-known as a dance caller, flatfoot dancer, and old-time musician, playing banjo, fiddle, and guitar. Since the 1970s, he has called dances, performed, and taught at music festivals and dance events throughout the U.S. and abroad. He is a member of the Green Grass Cloggers and a 2017 inductee to the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame. A scholar of Appalachian dance and author of *Hoedowns, Reels, and Frolics: Roots and Branches of Southern Appalachian Dance*, Phil recently retired from teaching traditional music and dance at Warren Wilson College.

FIDDLE & BANJO DUETS (with Tatiana Hargreaves)

There's nothing like sitting knee to knee with a fiddle and banjo and "locking in." This class will explore and share some of the many ways the banjo and fiddle can complement and encourage each other in an intimate song and dance that gives rise to beautiful music. Gordy and Tatiana and Gordy will give demonstrations with simple tunes, and students will have an opportunity to dance (duet) with the instructors and each other. Most of all, everyone will have a lot of fun. (Class limit: 30)

OLD-TIME BAND LAB (with Lloyd Wright)

Students in this class will form string bands and—with some coaching—work on achieving a band sound and dynamic that is more than the sum of its parts. Depending on group capability, topics may include each individual's responsibility in a band, how to start and end tunes, tempo, rhythm, lead, backup, chord choices, singing, choosing tunes, and playing for dances and/or concerts. Bands are encouraged to perform at the student showcase or play for a dance at the end of the week. (No class limit)



Gordy Hinners

Gordy Hinners, known for his driving fretless banjo style and his masterful flatfooting, has been performing traditional Appalachian music and dance for over 50 years. He spent years touring with the influential Green Grass Cloggers and performed with master fiddler Ralph Blizard for over two decades as a member of the New Southern Ramblers. Gordy has won many awards for both his dancing and banjo playing. He taught at the first Swannanoa Old-Time Week over 30 years ago and still attends every year. Gordy lives in the NC high country with his wife, musician and dancer Rebecca Keeter.

OLD-TIME SINGING

This class will delve into some fabulous non-ballad old-timey songs, including songs that overlap with the blues tradition, lullabies, old hymns, and songs with plenty of words. Students will also listen to and take some notes on the wide, wonderful variety of old-time voices. Above all, the class will enjoy singing together! Lyrics provided, with tunes learned by ear. (Class Limit: 20)

BALLADS

This class will cover some beautiful mountain ballad repertoire and discuss such topics as using voices as storytelling tools, the "high lonesome sound," and the lives of some old singers, including what they think about the songs in their own words. Students will listen to some old recordings and spend some time working to get lyrics into their heads. Melodies will be taught by ear. Lyrics will be provided. (Class Limit: 20)



Elizabeth LaPrelle

Elizabeth LaPrelle is a scholar and singer of Appalachian ballads from Rural Retreat, VA. She built her style and repertoire from family, friends, and research into archival recordings. Elizabeth started making recordings with her family as a teen, and received her undergraduate degree from the College of William and Mary with a major in Southern Appalachian Traditional Performance. In the experimental folk duo Anna & Elizabeth, she toured internationally and helped re-popularize the "crankie" performance art form. She's also a banjo player and a visual and interdisciplinary artist. She lives with her husband Brian Dolphin and their young son.

SHAPE-NOTE SINGING

Come engage in musical and social harmony through the recreation of a 19th-century singing school. *The Sacred Harp* tune book (a wondrous new 2025 edition) features intoxicating harmonizations printed in a unique four-shape notation of triangles, squares, ovals, and diamonds that makes learning to read music easy and enjoyable. The class will weave in historical and social context and can accommodate both beginners and veteran singers. Students are invited and encouraged to participate in the annual Swannanoa Singing with dinner on the grounds on Saturday, July 18, from 10 AM-3 PM at the Warren Wilson College Pavilion. (No class limit)

HISTORY OF OLD-TIME MUSIC

What is old-time music? How does bluegrass differ from old-time? What do "authenticity" and "revivalism" really mean? What are drop-thumb, clawhammer, and two-finger banjo styles? Where are Galax, Clifftop, and Mt. Airy? What makes a fiddle tune crooked? This class will ponder these mysteries while presenting a historical and social background of old-time music. Presentations on "Bonaparte's Retreat," the Georgia Fiddle Contest of 1924, Affrilachia, and "hillbilly music" provide insight into the style and culture. Discussions incorporate PowerPoint slideshows, recordings, films, and guest presenters, nurturing an overview of the history from the Skillet Lickers to the Onlies. (No class limit)



Ron Pen

Ron is a performer and scholar of the music of the Appalachian region. A founding member of the Appalachian Association of Sacred Harp Singers, with whom he performed on NPR's *A Prairie Home Companion*, Ron is now Professor and Director Emeritus of the John Jacob Niles Center for American Music at the University of Kentucky. Ron began fiddling fifty years ago in Rockbridge County, VA, and has since participated in various workshops and festivals across the region. He has also performed music across the globe with the Red State Ramblers and recently shared shape-note singing with Sufi chant in Lancashire, England.

SONGWRITING

This class explores tools and techniques for writing original songs that sound ancient. Some of the skills/lessons will include setting time and place, the use of old language, the role of research, immersion in particular styles, the use of flora and fauna, and the power of simplicity. Students will focus on storytelling, writing songs for a particular purpose, and writing from various points of view. (Class limit: 20)

SINGING WOMEN IN OLD-TIME MUSIC

This class will learn and sing songs written by women in traditional music, including Almeda Riddle, Florence Reese, Hazel Dickens and Alice Gerrard, Ola Belle Reed, and also several women currently writing new songs in an old-time style. There will be elements of historical context and singing styles included, but mostly the class will just sing and sing! Open to all. (Class limit: 20)



Laurelyn Dossett

Singer-songwriter Laurelyn Dossett lives in Stokes County, North Carolina. Her songs have appeared in film and television and have been recorded by many artists including Grammy-winner Levon Helm ("Anna Lee") and Rhiannon Giddens ("Leaving Eden"). She has written songs for seven professional plays, as well as a folk song cycle for the North Carolina Symphony. Laurelyn teaches songwriting at the UNCG School of Music.

FUN-DAMENTALS OF BASS

Explore the low end of old-time music! Hazee will teach about the groundwork of old-time bass playing, including everything from where to put the beat, how to find the right note choice, and how to feel comfortable getting out and playing in the community. Students will learn how to listen with intention and respond with their right hand, the nuances of different types of rhythm, and what "getting in the pocket" is all about. The class will also look at variations on bass line patterns and how to lay down the groove! Past experience is welcomed but not required.

SINGING WORKSHOP

Come all ye fair and tender songbirds! This class will explore the various roles that singing plays in old-time music, with an emphasis on community singing. Students will dig into some well loved go-tos and learn some new favorites, leaning on and listening to each other throughout the process. If you love singing songs, shape-note, vocal accompaniment to fiddle tunes, ballads, or hollering with neighbors at the local jam, join us and witness the choral camaraderie! All voices are welcome, including those still finding their comfort level with group singing.



Haselden Ciaccio

Haselden "Hasee" [HAY-zee] Ciaccio (she/they) is a bassist, maker, educator, and dreamer residing in Durham, NC. She has toured and/or recorded with artists such as Laurie Lewis, Alice Gerrard, Sister Sadie, Jake Blount, and Molly Tuttle. Hazee has taught at several camps including Ashokan's Southern Week, Augusta Heritage Center's Old Time & Blues Week, Grand Targhee Acoustic Music Camp, and the California Bluegrass Association's Summer Music Camp. While off tour, she enjoys admiring native plants along the Laurel Fork River, cooking local seasonal victuals, or sitting on the porch at their home in the Carolina Piedmont.

GUITAR I

Want to learn to play guitar in an old-time jam? Come learn the essential tools to play confidently. In this class for beginners, students will work with the six chords you need to play hundreds of tunes (C, D, E, F, G, A)! Beth will address chord shapes, keys, terminology, chord choices, use of the capo and tuner, and basic right-hand technique. Some prior experience with forming chords and simple strumming would be helpful. Students should bring a recording device, tuner, capo, picks, and a pen.

GUITAR II

You've learned your chords and keys. Now what? This intermediate class will address methods for both right- and left-hand to add spice and "change up" your old-time guitar playing. Chords beyond the "basic six" (C, D, E, F, G, A) will be incorporated. We'll discuss techniques like alternating bass, simple runs, and the use of dynamics. Students will have an opportunity to experience Beth's own idiosyncratic, self-created fingerpicking style, as well as use a flatpick to explore class concepts. Bring a tuner, capo, picks, and a recording device, and let's change it up!



Beth Hartness

Raised on a tobacco farm in Caswell County, NC, Beth Williams Hartness began learning guitar at age twelve. A self-taught musician, Beth developed her own unique fingerpicking style of old-time guitar backup. She was a founding member of the Charlotte Folk Society—serving as vice president—and has been a member of numerous award-winning string bands. Her guitar backup, workshops, and facilitated jams are in-demand at both online and in-person events. Beth is featured on various recordings including several with Adam Hurt, Ray Alden's *The Young Fogies II*, and Jim Childress's *Fly Away*.

GUITAR II

This intermediate class will focus on how to provide solid guitar back-up and accompaniment behind the melody instruments in old-time music and related styles. Students will play many fiddle tunes and country songs and work on understanding chord progressions, recognizing patterns, and gradually integrating bass runs without compromising the rhythm. It'll be a fun boom-chuck week! Participants should bring a capo.

COUNTRY HARMONY (with Sammy Lind)

Join Nadine and Sammy for a fun-filled week of singing! This class is perfect for anyone looking to improve their harmony singing skills, regardless of experience or vocal range. Nadine and Sammy will break down the art of singing two- and three-part harmonies, covering terminology, interval recognition, and practical guidelines. Students will explore finding the right key, breathing techniques, and volume control, all set to a lively repertoire of bluegrass, old-time, and country songs. Discover hidden gems and lesser-known singers, and experience the joy of singing in harmony with others. All levels welcome!



Nadine Landry

Raised in a musical family on the east coast of Quebec, Nadine Landry has dedicated herself to music for over 20 years, playing old-time, Cajun, and honky-tonk music. She is equally comfortable on guitar or upright bass, and her deeply passionate and powerful singing has been capturing the hearts of fans everywhere she goes. When she's not touring with the Foghorn Stringband or as a duo with Sammy Lind, she's happy at home on the Gaspe Coast in eastern Canada.

GUITAR III

This advanced class is aimed at experienced guitar players who want to experiment with new ways to play. A few of the topics explored include bass run ideas and techniques, alternatives to the "boom chuck" approach, and Carter family-style thumb and finger picking. A plastic thumb pick is highly recommended!

MANDOLIN I

This class for beginners is the first big step to playing the Mandolin! In addition to teaching a few simple tunes, Adam will discuss strategies for holding and using a flat-pick, how to understand the fingerboard, ergonomic finger placement strategies, basic rhythms for old-time playing, and the best chord shapes to use while playing back up. A strap and two strap buttons is recommended for students playing an A-style mandolin.



Adam Tanner

For the last 25 years, Adam Tanner has been teaching and performing traditional American music including old-time, bluegrass, country-blues and Western swing. A multi-instrumentalist and singer, Adam has taught mandolin, fiddle, and guitar at Blue Ridge Old-Time Week, Monroe Mandolin Camp, Augusta Heritage Old-Time Week, East Tennessee State Roots Music Program, and Acoustic Blues Workshop. Adam has also played the stages of Merlefest, Hardly Strictly Bluegrass Fest, *Song of the Mountain*, *Woodsongs Radio*, and most recently at the Ryman Auditorium.

MANDOLIN II

In this intermediate class, students will use basic music theory to gain confidence on the fingerboard and learn two-string chord shapes ("slants" and "reaches"). Using fewer strings gives us more textures, is easier, and sounds great. We will learn some great old-time tunes and songs and how to back them up using these "smaller chords" as well as octaves, unisons, and drones. Some handouts will be provided but a recording device, notebook, and pencil is recommended.

UKULELE II

In this intermediate class, students will learn a variety of old-time songs along with a bit of blues and jazz material for good measure. Carl will also introduce strumming and fingerpicking techniques as participants improve their theory and chord knowledge. Everyone will have fun and discover that it is true: you cannot play the ukulele and be blue!



Carl Jones

Carl Jones is a songwriter and multi-instrumentalist born in Macon, Georgia, and living in Hillsville, Virginia. He is widely respected for his instrumental talents and original songs about the joys and tribulations of life in the South. Carl's songs have been recorded by The Nashville Bluegrass Band, Kate Campbell, Rickie Simpkins with Tony Rice, and others. He was part of the Rising Fawn String Ensemble with James Bryan and Norman and Nancy Blake. Today he tours the globe with his wife, fiddler Erynn Marshall. Carl is known for his fine musicianship, sense of humor, songwriting, and charismatic teaching.

UKULELE I

This beginner class will teach fundamental ukulele chord shapes for playing in the most common old-time keys. Cary will cover basic strumming patterns and work on moving quickly between chords. Students will practice these skills on some classic old-time songs and tunes, starting with simple 2-chord songs and moving to those with more chords. Cary will also discuss how to play the uke in an old-time jam. All types of ukuleles are welcome.

HARMONICA

The harmonica is a complex instrument capable of great expressiveness. This class begins with simple old-time tunes to learn how to play clear notes and move around the instrument. Students will gradually move to more challenging tunes, working on breath control and phrasing with a fiddler's feel. They will learn to read harmonica tablature and how notes are laid out across the instrument. The class will end with basic harmonica maintenance. Students need a good harmonica in the key of A in "paddy richter" tuning; these will be provided on loan or for sale for those who need them.



Cary Moskovitz

Cary grew up in Greensboro, NC, in a musical family. He began playing guitar at age 12, joined his first band at 15, and began teaching guitar lessons while still in high school. Cary performs a variety of American string band genres including old-time, blues, country, and swing, and he has won competition ribbons for guitar, banjo, harmonica, and singing. He is the author of *How to Play Old-Time Fiddle Tunes on Harmonica*. His recordings include a tribute album honoring blues pioneer Papa Charlie Jackson, *Old-Time Fiddle Tunes on Harmonica*, and two albums of banjo duets with Mark Olitsky.

MOUNTAIN DULCIMER

In this class for both beginner and intermediate players, Lloyd will teach the basics of the mountain dulcimer, covering proper strumming and rhythm, clean fretting, and finger placement. Students will learn concepts of scales and chords through old-time tunes and song material, with Lloyd teaching the class by ear supplemented with tablature. He'll address the challenges of a diatonic instrument through alternate tunings and the use of a capo (students must have a capo). Lloyd's knowledge of other stringband instruments will enhance students' understanding of the dulcimer's role in old-time music.

OLD-TIME BAND LAB (with Gordy Hinners)

Students in this class will form string bands and—with some coaching—work on achieving a band sound and dynamic that is more than the sum of its parts. Depending on group capability, topics may include each individual's responsibility in a band, how to start and end tunes, tempo, rhythm, lead, backup, chord choices, singing, choosing tunes, and playing for dances and/or concerts. Bands are encouraged to perform at the student showcase or play for a dance at the end of the week. (No class limit)



Lloyd Wright

Lloyd Wright's musical experience began in 1994, when he and his family discovered the mountain dulcimer. He quickly entered the old-time scene and learned mandolin, guitar, banjo, and fiddle. He won the National Dulcimer Contest in 2000 and performs and teaches at multiple festivals year round. He helped his parents start the Palestine Old-Time Music and Dulcimer Festival and runs the Old Mill Music Festival with his wife April. Among other accomplishments, Lloyd tours with cowboy singer Pipp Gillette and has been involved with several documentary soundtracks. He now enjoys performing with April and their son Elijah.

AUTOHARP

This class is for both beginning and intermediate autoharp players. John will work together with students to refine their playing skills. He'll cover strum patterns, chord changes, timing, beginning and intermediate melody playing techniques, and playing well with others. The class will be set up so that students will all work on the same tune at the same time, but tailored to each person's own skill level. Some time will be devoted to individual practice so that the class can play tunes together as a group. It should be fun!



John Hollandsworth

John Hollandsworth of Christiansburg, VA, has performed and led autoharp workshops at festivals and schools across the U.S. and in the UK. In 1991, he was the first winner of the prestigious Mountain Laurel Autoharp Championship, and he was inducted into the Autoharp Hall of Fame in 2010. He has been named the "Best All-Around Performer" of the Galax Old Fiddlers' Convention three times. His custom-made Blue Ridge Autoharps are highly sought-after by discriminating players worldwide.

CLOGGING I

This class features a "fool-proof" process of teaching the basics of American clogging and flatfoot percussive dance. Though the class is geared for beginners or those unconvinced that they are dancers, any experience level is welcome. Rodney will also weave in stories behind each step and the history of who they were collected from, including personal friends of the instructor such as Willard Watson, Robert Dotson, and some of the early Green Grass Cloggers. NO taps please. Smooth-bottomed, low-heeled, oxford-type lace-up shoes are recommended, and leather soles are best! (No class limit)



Rodney Sutton

For over 50 years, Rodney Sutton has arguably taught more folks the basics of clogging and flatfooting than any other dancer! He is particularly known as a traditional step-dancer, adept at both flatfooting and clogging, and also as a dance caller. He continues to teach locally, online, and nationally at workshops and festivals. Rodney prides himself on being able to take anyone who can walk and teach them clogging and flatfoot dance steps, allowing them to be percussive dancers and a foot drummer to any kind of music!

CLOGGING II

Dive deeper into making more sounds with dance steps. This intermediate class will build beyond the foundational clogging steps. Students will work on adding rhythm with steps they may already know and additional steps and choreography. They will also learn how to be a strong partner and team-mate in group dances as well as how to further their individual style and strengths. The class will go through a variety of steps and moves used in traditional southern square dance style, partner dancing, and taking solos.

SINGING FOR FIDDLERS

This class is for fiddlers who want to sing and singers who want to further their fiddle playing. We will focus on tunes with singing, ornamentation to support the singing, and how to play more and less complicated versions of a tune. Fiddlers in this class will learn new music with lyrics to support learning by ear, building a memory bank of tunes, playing in different keys, and incorporating the low and high octave. Students can sing when they want and build confidence and comfort to sing out, but they won't have to sing alone.



Emolyn Liden

Emolyn Liden is an artist, educator, musician, and dancer. She grew up in Brasstown, NC, and loved dancing at the John C. Campbell Folk School. She has danced with the Cane Creek Cloggers, the Green Grass Cloggers, the Twisty Cuffs (a Cape Breton step-dancing team), and has earned ribbons of every color at old-time music conventions. She teaches art, music, and dance in public schools, around the country, and currently at Warren Wilson College. Emolyn also regularly performs old-time fiddle and banjo. Through her business, The Roving Knitter, Emolyn teaches people to knit and spin, and sells her handmade work.

GUEST MASTER ARTISTS



Bruce Greene & Don Pedi

"KY & NC Tunes and Stories"

Bruce Greene and Don Pedi have been playing music together for more than forty years. Both have spent a good part of their lives working, playing, and living alongside traditional musicians in North Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee, bringing authenticity, depth, and respect for their elders to their music. Don is a pioneer in fiddle-style dulcimer, and Bruce is known for introducing countless obscure and unknown fiddlers and fiddle tunes to contemporary old time music. They enjoy sharing stories and anecdotes from their friendships with the old musicians.



Sheila Kay Adams

"NC Ballads & Stories"

A seventh-generation ballad singer, storyteller, and musician, Sheila Kay Adams was born and raised in the Sodom Laurel community of Madison County, NC, an area renowned for its unbroken tradition of unaccompanied ballad singing dating back to early Scottish, Scots/Irish and English settlers in the mid-17th century. Sheila is a 2013 recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship Award for her contributions to America's folk and traditional arts and efforts to conserve them for future generations, and she is a 2016 recipient of the North Carolina Heritage Award, the state's highest award for the arts.



John Herrmann & Meredith McIntosh

"Been All Around the Old-Time World"

Meredith McIntosh and John Herrmann have been playing and singing together for over 35 years. They've recorded on such projects as The New Southern Ramblers, Bigfoot, The Rockinghams, Ida Red, The Ruglifters, Art Stamper Band, The Wandering Ramblers, and several Dirk Powell CDs. John's interest in how pre-blues and black traditional music can inform old-time music influences their duo style. As a result of injuries, John has recently taken up the harmonica. They will be joined by friends who are on staff at the Gathering.

GUEST MASTER ARTISTS



Thomas Maupin, Daniel Rothwell, & Friends

"TN Dance Traditions"

Thomas Maupin is a self-taught buckdancer and winner of the senior flatfooting competition at Clifftop and the Silver Stars contest at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium. He was featured in the documentary *Let Your Feet Do the Talkin'* and inducted into the American Clogging Hall of Fame in 2013. He has received a Tennessee Folklife Heritage Award and the NEA National Heritage Fellowship. His grandson Daniel Rothwell is a banjo player, singer, and storyteller. Together they have appeared at the *Grand Ole Opry*, Museum of Appalachia's Fall Homecoming, Uncle Dave Macon Days, the Berkeley Old-Time Music Convention, and the National Folk Festival.



Jarrett Grey Wildcatt

"Cherokee Culture, Music, & Dance"

Jarrett Wildcatt is a musician, storyteller, and dancer of the Anikawi (Deer Clan). He is from the Yellowhill and Wolftown Communities in Cherokee, NC. For over 10 years, he has been performing traditional Cherokee dances, telling stories, playing native flute and guitar, and singing (traditional and contemporary). In his free time, Jarrett enjoys attending ceremonial dances, weaving, and spending time with his grandma.

LUTHIERS EXHIBIT



Joe Thrift

Joe Thrift is a violin maker living in Elkin, NC, building handcrafted instruments at his home workshop in Surry County. He attended the Newark School of Violin Making in Newark on Trent, England, and also apprenticed with Master Luthier Roger Hargrave in Meyenberg, Germany. Joe is currently in his 13th year of teaching violin making at the Foothills Art Center in Elkin. Joe is also an accomplished musician. He was the keyboardist for Donna The Buffalo for nine years and currently plays old-time fiddle with his band The Red Hots.

YOUNG OLD-TIME! AND CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

Young Old-Time! is our program for young musicians. See the description with Ben Nelson for more info. For details about our Children's Program during Old-Time Music & Dance Week, please see the general program information section at the front of the catalog.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

Old-Time Music & Dance Week. **JULY 12–18, 2026**

Classes run Monday-Friday

7:30-8:00am	**MORNING QI GONG** (Laura Wheeler)														
7:30-8:30am	**BREAKFAST** (Monday-Saturday)														
9:00-10:15am	**Fiddle II** (Spencer)	**Fiddle II** (Ismerio)	**Fiddle III** (Bond)	**Banjo II** (Jamison)	**Banjo III** (Breiding)	**Guitar II** (Landry)	**Ukulele I** (Moskovitz)	**Mountain Dulcimer** (Wright)	**Songwriting** (Dossett)	**Fiddle & Banjo Duets** (Hargreaves, Hinners)	**FUN-damentals of Bass** (Ciaccio)	**Old-Time Singing** (LaPrelle)	**Shape-Note Singing** (Pen)	**Clogging II** (Liden)	
10:15-10:45am	**COFFEE/TEA BREAK** (Monday-Friday)														
10:45am-12:00pm	**Fiddle II** (Lind)	**Singing For Fiddlers** (Liden)	**Fiddle III** (Hargreaves)	**Banjo I** (Nelson)	**Banjo II** (Hurt)	**Banjo Songs III** (DeMarcus)	**Guitar II** (Hartness)	**Guitar III** (Tanner)	**Mandolin II** (Jones)	**Old-Time Band 101** (Bond)	**Clogging I** (Sutton)	**Singing Workshop** (Ciaccio)	**Ballads** (LaPrelle)	**Autoharp** (Hollandsworth)	**History of Old-Time Music** (Pen)
11:30am-1:00pm	**LUNCH** (Monday-Friday)														
1:15-2:15pm	**COMMUNAL GATHERING** (Guest Master Artists, announcements)														
2:30-3:45pm	**Fiddle II** (Marshall)	**Fiddle I** (Ismerio)	**Fiddle III** (Spencer)	**Fiddle III** (Hurt)	**Banjo II** (DeMarcus)	**Banjo II** (Breiding)	**Guitar I** (Hartness)	**Mandolin I** (Tanner)	**Ukulele II** (Jones)	**Harmonica** (Moskovitz)	**Old-Time Band Lab** (Hinners, Wright)	**Singing Women In Old-Time Music** (Dossett)	**Country Harmony** (Landry, Lind)	**Southern Square Dance & Calling** (Jamison)	
4:00-5:00pm	**POTLUCK SESSIONS, LUTHIERS EXHIBIT** (Thrift)														
5:00-6:30pm	**SUPPER** (Sunday-Friday)														
6:00-7:00pm	**SLOW JAMS, SINGING, & YOUNG OLD-TIME**														
7:30pm-?	**EVENING EVENTS** (concerts, jam sessions, community dances, etc.), **LATE-NIGHT SONG SWAP** (nightly except Thursday)														

Celtic Week

JULY 19–25, 2026

Celtic Week is the largest stand-alone program at the Swannanoa Gathering, uniting musicians, singers, and dancers in a celebration of the rich living traditions of Ireland and Scotland. Set against the breathtaking Blue Ridge Mountains, the week offers an inspiring blend of workshops, lectures, and sessions while preserving the intimate, welcoming atmosphere that defines the Gathering.

This year's faculty span some of the most influential ensembles in Celtic music, including Planxty, Patrick Street, Sweeney's Men, and other renowned touring and recording projects across Ireland, Scotland, Cape Breton, and the U.S. Their collective experience brings a vibrant mix of stylistic insight, creativity, and cultural knowledge to every class. A team of staff musicians will provide live music for dance and accompaniment classes and enhance concerts and sessions throughout the week, and a new Luthiers Exhibit will offer on-site instrument repair throughout the week. As evenings overflow with concerts, sessions, and spontaneous collaborations, the energy of the week builds toward the beloved Thursday-night céilí. Celtic Week balances the excitement of a major gathering with the warmth of a close-knit community. With small class sizes, it offers a unique opportunity to learn, grow, and connect in a truly special setting.

Courses & Staff



Seán Gavin, Program Coordinator

A master of the uilleann pipes, Irish flute, and tin whistle, Seán Gavin serves as Coordinator of Celtic Week. He is one of the most highly regarded performers and teachers of traditional Irish music. Seán is the first musician born outside Ireland to win the prestigious Seán Ó Riada Gold medal, and the author of a popular tin whistle book published by Hal Leonard. He is also the founder and director of the Irish Music Institute, a non-profit music school based in Southeast Michigan.

ADVANCED IRISH FIDDLE (double-length class)

This class offers comprehensive instruction in traditional fiddle playing, with a focus on both foundational technique and musical interpretation. Topics include bow mechanics, fingering, timekeeping, tone, ornamentation, relaxation, and developing effective practice systems. Students will also explore approaches to learning tunes, including coordination of left and right hand, tempo control, and listening strategies. The course covers a variety of styles—reels, jigs, polkas, hornpipes, slides, and slow airs—and provides guidance on stylistic nuances and practical application. Emphasis is placed on steady, mindful progress tailored to each student's abilities. (Class limit: 30)



James Kelly

James Kelly, one of Ireland's greatest living traditional fiddlers, learned from his father, the famed Clare musician John Kelly. He launched his career at sixteen, winning "Fiddler of the Year" and recording his first album. A former member of Planxty and Patrick Street, he has toured worldwide and appeared with The Chieftains and on *A Prairie Home Companion*. Kelly has received major honors including the TG4 "Irish Musician of the Year," the Florida Folk Heritage Award, and the Florida Individual Artist Fellowship. With 18 albums and over 800 compositions, he remains a leading force in Irish music.

INTRODUCTION TO SINGING AS *GAEILGE*

Explore the Irish language through the joy of song in this introductory class. Participants will learn a selection of songs as *Gaeilge* (in the Irish language), gaining a taste for the language while developing musical skills. No prior experience with Irish is required, and all singers and language enthusiasts are welcome. This workshop offers a fun and engaging way to connect with Irish culture through music and language. (No class limit)

INTERMEDIATE IRISH FIDDLE

In this class, we will focus on bowing techniques and ornamentation and how to get that elusive "lift" into your playing. Students will get into the nitty-gritty of cuts, rolls, and crans, and Eimear will discuss not only how to do them, but also where to put them and ways to make them reflect your own unique voice within a tune! The repertoire for this class will draw on music from County Clare, Ireland.



Eimear Arkins

Eimear Arkins is an award-winning artist from County Clare, Ireland. She has toured extensively with acclaimed bands, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Tomáseen Foley's A Celtic Christmas, and Eileen Gannon. A qualified Irish music and dance instructor, Eimear has taught at festivals worldwide. In 2018, her debut album *What's Next?* was awarded "Best Newcomer" from LiveIreland radio. Eimear released *Here & There* in 2024 and was awarded "Female Vocalist of the Year" from *Ireland Tonight*. In 2025, she was named one of *The Irish Echo*'s "Irish Top 40 Under 40" honorees and released *The Belles of St. Louis* with Eileen Gannon.

UILLEANN PIPES (double-length class)

Joey's teaching style is highly sought-after for his in-depth analysis of piping fundamentals, as well as his extensive studies in uilleann pipe styles and repertoire. In these classes we will be focusing on uilleann piping repertoire, ornamental foundational elements, exercises and examples in tonal variance, staccato and legato phrasings, practice routines, tuning, and harmony. We'll also be doing some in depth listening to piping masters and discussing their styles. We will be working all of these elements into dance tunes, marches, and song airs. (Class limit: 30)



Joey Abarta

Joey Abarta has spent more than half his life teaching and performing on the uilleann pipes. In 2014, he won first prize at An tOireachtas, becoming the first American uilleann piper to do so since 1969. In 2020 he received an Artist Fellowship in the Traditional Arts from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, recognizing him as a bearer of cultural tradition. Based in Boston, Joey balances his time between performing, teaching, and recording. He currently serves as acting President of the Boston Pipers Club and also organizes the Patrick J. Touhey Memorial Weekend.

SONG ACCOMPANIMENT ON GUITAR

Explore a more expressive, Celtic-inspired approach to accompanying songs with the guitar. Drawing on the lift, lilt, and power of John's playing, this class introduces rhythmic flatpicking, basic pick-and-fingers techniques, alternate tunings, chord substitutions, and melodic touches that support—rather than overshadow—the song. We'll study classic artists, analyze their versions, and build skills for both sessions and performance. Best for players comfortable with basic chords and rhythm who are eager to move beyond standard strumming.

ADVANCED SESSION GUITAR

In this more advanced class, students will further develop different strumming techniques to a variety of types of tunes. Topics include syncopation and emphasis, chord substitutions, fingerpicking techniques, tips and tricks for playing in sessions, approaches to working out the right chords for tunes, and alternate tunings for the guitar. Students should be familiar and comfortable with strumming and have a good working knowledge of Irish music and music theory. Chord sheets in drop D tuning will be provided. Students should bring a capo.



John Doyle

John Doyle is one of Ireland's most talented and innovative musicians. Originally from Dublin and now a longtime resident of Asheville, NC, John is an accomplished singer and songwriter, multi-Grammy nominee, and an extraordinary master of the Irish guitar. A founding member of the acclaimed group Solas, his powerful guitar playing provided the signature rhythmic backbone for the band. John regularly performs solo, and he has also toured the world with such artists as Joan Baez, Mary Chapin Carpenter, Linda Thompson, Jerry Douglas, Usher's Island, Liz Carroll, Eileen Ivers, Alison Brown, and Mick Moloney.

ADVANCED SCOTTISH FIDDLE (double-length class)

Take a deep dive into the essence of Scottish fiddling in this joyful yet intensive class. Students will deepen their understanding of the tradition while honing the specific technical and stylistic tools needed for a more authentic Scottish sound. Through traditional and modern tunes taught by ear, we'll explore expression, tone, rhythm, bowing and ornamentation, variation and set building, groove development, and more. The week may also include composition or arranging projects, deep listening exercises, and individual masterclass performances. All material will be taught by ear, so definitely bring your recording device! (Class limit: 30)



Mari Black

Called "one of the brightest fiddlers around today," Mari Black has delighted audiences around the world with her energetic playing, sparkling stage presence, and dazzlingly virtuosic fiddling. Mari emerged on the international stage when she became the Glenfiddich Fiddle Champion of Scotland, a two-time U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion, and a two-time Canadian Maritime Fiddle champion, all within a three-year period. She's performed in Brazil, Scotland, Canada, China, Korea, Zimbabwe, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Italy, and France, and she works as a teacher, performance coach, dancer, competition judge, and musical ambassador dedicated to connecting people through music.

PLAYING IN SESSIONS

Participating in sessions can be a challenging endeavor, particularly when exploring them in new places. Every area has a different repertoire, feel, and culture that has to be identified and navigated quickly so all can enjoy. It is crucial to recognize the significance of session etiquette, not only for personal benefit, but for the collective experience. Knowing when to actively engage in playing and when to observe is a fundamental aspect of fostering a harmonious session environment. This class—open to all instruments—will focus on proper session etiquette, choosing appropriate tunes, and overall musicality when playing with others.

DADGAD TUNE ACCOMPANIMENT

This guitar class will explore various methods for accompanying traditional Irish music in DADGAD tuning. Emphasis will be on rhythm, chord selection, phrasing, and both right- and left-hand techniques. Participants will learn when to play specific chords and when to hold back, along with how to identify different keys and tune types.



Josh Dukes

Josh Dukes is an All-Ireland champion accompanist and a highly sought-after teacher in the Baltimore/Washington D.C. area. A talented multi-instrumentalist who plays guitar, bouzouki, bodhrán, flute, and tin whistle, Josh has established a reputation for providing sensitive, tasteful support for traditional Irish music. In 1997, Josh enlisted in the Army, earned the rank of Master Sergeant, and served as one of three Drum Majors for the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, "The Official Escort to the President," the only military unit of its kind. Now retired, Josh performs and teaches Irish music throughout the U.S.

NEVER TIRE OF THE ROAD: SONGS OF TRAVEL & EXILE

Celebrate the music of Andy Irvine, a legendary troubadour, folk innovator, and towering figure in the Irish tradition. This class explores the ballads of travel, exile, and adventure that define his remarkable career, as well as the people whose stories he amplifies with depth and compassion. Students will listen, sing, and discuss Irvine's powerful blend of tradition, creativity, and social conscience, tracing how his work reshaped modern folk music. Open to all who love great songs and great storytellers. (No class limit)

SONG ACCOMPANIMENTS FOR BOUZOUKI

Explore the signature bouzouki style that helped make Andy a legend in Irish and folk music. This class breaks down his distinctive accompaniment techniques—modal voicings, driving rhythms, subtle counter-melodies, and inventive arrangements—and shows how they bring songs to life with clarity and lift. Students will study hallmark examples from Irvine's repertoire and experiment with applying his ideas to their own playing. Ideal for bouzouki players looking to deepen their craft through one of the tradition's most influential innovators.



Andy Irvine

Andy Irvine is one of Ireland's most iconic singers, hailed as "a tradition in himself." A driving force behind Sweeney's Men, Planxty, Patrick Street, Mozaik, and Usher's Island, he has shaped modern Irish and folk music for over 55 years. His influential duo album with Paul Brady remains a classic, and his solo work blends Irish song, Balkan influences, and original compositions like "Never Tire of the Road." A global touring artist and lifelong troubadour, Irvine received the RTÉ Radio 1 Folk Awards Lifetime Achievement Award in 2018.

BEGINNER BODHRÁN

This class will cover basic technique and position, focusing on developing speed, comfort, and versatility. The goal is to become skilled, knowledgeable, and flexible players who can accompany any style. Students will learn simple approaches to accompanying jigs and reels, with a focus on ornamentation and tonal variation. Time permitting, we'll explore other traditional tunes based on class interests. Beginners are welcome, as are more experienced players seeking a refresher. We'll use written notation but also allow time for students to make audio or video recordings for reference. Bring questions, favorite recordings, and discussion topics! (Class limit: 25)

INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED BODHRÁN

This class will enhance students' playing with tonal variation, alternate sticking patterns, syncopation, and ornamentation (single/double-ended), and begin crafting parts to accompany traditional melodies. We'll deepen our understanding of jigs and reels, explore other traditional tunes based on class interest, and work on breaking out of rhythmical ruts. Students should be comfortable accompanying jigs and reels and playing at session speed with consistent timing. Bring questions and discussion topics—we'll have fun! We'll use written notation in class and leave time for students to make reference recordings for practice. (Class limit: 25)



Anna Colliton

Anna has performed and taught at festivals nationwide, including Catskills Irish Arts Week, The Swannanoa Gathering, Gulf Coast Cruinniu, O'Flaherty Irish Music Retreat, and the North American Comhaltas Convention. She inspires students of all levels to blend traditional and modern elements in their playing, emphasizing personal style. Currently, Anna performs with Eileen Ivers's project The Brigideens and the Boston-based quartet Ship in the Clouds. She also performed as a sub in the original Broadway production of *Come From Away* and completed a three-year residency at Walt Disney World in Orlando from 2014-2017.

BEGINNER IRISH FIDDLE

This class is intended for players with minimal experience on the fiddle, or those who want to learn the fundamentals of traditional Irish fiddling. Students will learn simple, accessible tunes while being introduced to genre-specific rhythms and flourishes characteristic of the tradition. At the same time, guidance will be provided on essential fiddle techniques like basic bowing, posture, tone production, and fingering. No prior experience with Irish music is required.

GUITAR ACCOMPANIMENT IN STANDARD TUNING

This class explores how to accompany traditional Irish music on guitar using standard tuning, a practical alternative to the more common use of alternate tunings in the style. Participants will learn how to develop a rhythmically strong, stylistically appropriate accompaniment approach while staying fully flexible in session and performance settings. Topics include finding the key by ear, recognizing chord changes, and listening for accidentals and unexpected harmonic shifts. Ideal for guitarists who want to deepen their session skills without re-tuning.



Michael Gavin

Michael Gavin is a seasoned Irish musician and educator with over 30 years of experience. Growing up in a musically rich environment, he learned from his father, County Clare fiddler Mick Gavin. A virtuoso multi-instrumentalist, Michael excels in guitar, fiddle, banjo, bouzouki, mandolin, and vocals. He has performed with legends like Liz Carroll, Kevin Burke, and Ashley MacIsaac and is a member of the Detroit-based band Blackthorn. In addition to his music career, Michael is a professor of philosophy with degrees from the University of Michigan and Wayne State University, mentoring students who have achieved success worldwide.

BEGINNER FLUTE

This course for beginning flute players will mainly focus on creating a strong tone, indicative of traditional Irish flute playing. Students will work on embouchure and breath control to help their flute playing become as easy as playing the tin whistle. They will also learn a few tunes and explore places to add breaths to create a nice rhythmic flow to their playing.

INTERMEDIATE FLUTE

This course will reinforce techniques to sustain a strong tone throughout students' flute playing. Brian will discuss various regional styles but primarily focus on the flute playing of East Galway. He will also discuss various settings of tunes, teaching some unique settings to common tunes as well as a few rare gems. In addition, the class will listen to various old recordings of flute players including many non-commercial recordings of legendary players.



Brian Holleran

Brian Holleran, from Jersey City, New Jersey, developed an interest in traditional Irish music at age 12, influenced by a session recording and his father's vinyl collection. He received tin whistle lessons from Maura Vesey and flute instruction from Mike Rafferty, who became his biggest influence. Brian was also shaped by musicians like Willie Kelly, Patrick Ourceau, and Jack Coen, and inspired by recordings of Joe Cooley, Bobby Casey, and Matt Molloy. He has taught at events like the Chris Langan weekend in Toronto and Irish Week at the Augusta Heritage Center.

INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED CELTIC HARP

Class topics will include arranging, ornamentation, and accompaniment. A selection of Scottish and Irish material will be taught at a more advanced level and individual interests of participants will be taken into account. Gráinne and Billy Jackson will each lead the class at various times during the week. In order for classes to commence on time, students are kindly requested to be tuned and prepared well in advance and ensure their instruments are in good working order. Students are also encouraged to bring a recording device, music stand, and spare strings.

ANGLO CONCERTINA

This class is intended for students playing Anglo C/G concertinas, and is open to all levels, from beginners with some basic playing experience upwards. It is not suitable for complete beginners, however, and all students should be familiar with their instrument (location of the notes, etc). We'll cover basics of technique and style, including bellows control, phrasing, and alternative fingerings, as well as ornamentation in the context of Irish traditional dance tunes. Participants are encouraged to bring an audio recorder. Written music will also be provided.



Grainne Hambly

Gráinne Hambly, from County Mayo, Ireland, is an internationally recognized Irish harpist, celebrated for her live performances and recordings. In great demand as both a performer and teacher, she tours Europe and North America extensively. A qualified teacher, Gráinne holds the T.T.C.T. certificate for teaching traditional Irish music and a Graduate Diploma in Education (Music) from the University of Limerick. She is a sought-after instructor at summer schools and festivals worldwide, known for her ability to showcase the full range of the harp through both performance and education.

BEGINNER CELTIC HARP

The beginning student will be introduced to the fundamentals of this grand and ancient instrument, including basic harp technique (hand position, posture, exercises, etc.). Arrangements of simple Scottish and Irish melodies will be taught by ear, with written music provided as well. Billy and Gráinne Hambly will each lead the class at various times during the week. In order for classes to commence on time, students are kindly requested to be tuned and prepared well in advance and ensure their instruments are in good working order. Students are also encouraged to bring a recording device, music stand, and spare strings.

TIN WHISTLE FROM SCRATCH

This course is the beginner's guide to picking up the tin whistle for the first time. Instruction will start with the most fundamental techniques and a few very simple tunes. By the end of the week, you'll be well on your way to playing. Please bring along a recording device and a tin whistle in the key of D.



Billy Jackson

Billy Jackson was a founding member of the influential folk group Ossian in 1976, a band whose recordings remain a benchmark for Scottish music, and a member of the Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame. Acclaimed for his musicality on the Celtic harp, he's also a renowned composer whose work is inspired by the history and landscape of Scotland. In 1999, his song "Land of Light" was selected by *The Glasgow Herald* as the winner of its year-long "Song For Scotland" competition—coinciding with the restoration of the Scottish Parliament—to select a "new anthem for a new era in Scotland."

INTERMEDIATE SESSION GUITAR

This class is for newer guitarists and those new to Irish traditional music. Students will learn chord shapes and patterns for DADGAD guitar tuning and strumming patterns for jigs, reels, and other melodies. We will focus on common keys within Irish traditional music, how to be creative with your own playing, and also discuss the "ins and outs" of playing with others. An audio recorder is recommended, and chord charts will be provided.

DROP D GUITAR ACCOMPANIMENT

This class is for newer guitarists and those new to Irish traditional music. Students will learn chord shapes and patterns for drop D guitar tuning (DADGBE) and strumming patterns for jigs, reels and other melodies. We will focus on common keys within Irish traditional music, how to be creative with your own playing, and also discuss the "ins and outs" of playing with others. An audio recorder is recommended, and chord charts will be provided.



Will MacMorran

Will MacMorran is a multi-talented musician, audio engineer, and educator based in Johnson City, TN. Will had the honor of touring with The Chieftains and has spent 15 years touring nationally and internationally with well-known artists in the Celtic, pop, and country genres. He started piping at a young age and quickly added the guitar, whistles, accordion, and bouzouki to his skillset. In addition to touring, Will teaches in East Tennessee State University's Bluegrass, Old Time, and Country Music Studies Program, and he is the department head of Entertainment Technology at Northeast State Community College.

TECHNIQUE FOR SINGERS

This class is a deeper dive into the craft of singing. So much goes into creating sound and delivering a song. Students will explore how the voice works, warmups for maintenance and vocal health, exercises that help explore the range of our unique voice, ornamentation, phrasing and breath control, tone, variation, delivery, finding songs, session etiquette, performance preparation, some listening, and of course singing songs! Bring a song, poem, or melody to share and a recording device if you have one. (No class limit)

SONGS FROM IRELAND, NEW YORK, & BEYOND

Growing up in Boston, Liz learned songs from grandparents and family friends, fiddle tunes from her dad, recitations and stories from her Grandad, violin harmony in the church choir, and second violin in the youth orchestra. She loves making music with others, finding harmonies, and working out arrangements. In this class, Liz teaches songs she learned from Mick Moloney (who learned from Frank Harte in Dublin) and from session scenes in New York, Boston, and Sheffield, England. Bring a song, poem, or melody to share and a recording device if you have one. We will learn by ear! (No class limit)



Liz Hanley

Liz Hanley is a Brooklyn-based singer and fiddle player. She learned traditional tunes from her father, fiddler Andy Hanley, and in the homes of her grandparents, as well as Brian and Lindsay O'Donovan. She studied at NYU with Dr. Mick Moloney and was a member of Moloney's Green Fields of America, as well as the progressive folk-rock ensemble Frogbelly and Symphony. Her debut album *The Ecstasy of St. Cecilia* was hailed "a gentle work of beauty" by FolkWorld. *Paint this Life* is her latest release. Both records feature longtime collaborators Jefferson Hamer and Eamon O'Leary of The Murphy Beds.

CAPE BRETON FIDDLE

Explore the rich traditions of Scottish and Cape Breton music in this lively class! Students will learn marches, strathspeys, slow airs, jigs, and reels by ear, with a strong emphasis on authentic style and ornamentation. Dan will introduce new tunes, strengthen favorites, and delve into the rhythmic drive and expressive phrasing that give this music its unique character.

FREEDOM ON THE FIDDLE

Stop struggling with your fiddle and start playing with confidence! This class focuses on developing the skills that allow fiddlers to maintain strong rhythm, accurate intonation, and faster, more fluid playing. Dan will address common barriers that hold players back and provide practical strategies to overcome them. Join us to build freedom, control, and expressive power in your fiddle playing.



Dan MacDonald

Originally from Ironville, Cape Breton, Dan MacDonald began fiddle studies with his father, Lloyd MacDonald. Immersed in Cape Breton's rich musical culture, Dan has developed a versatile voice, performing globally across genres. Now based in Toronto, he is sought-after as a soloist, session musician, and recording artist. A member of the acclaimed trio North Atlantic Drift, he has performed at festivals throughout Ontario and the U.S. His debut solo album, *Rural/Urban* (2018), was sold out and widely praised, cementing him as a dynamic force in contemporary and traditional fiddle music.

BEGINNER/INTERMEDIATE CELTIC FINGERSTYLE GUITAR

This class covers accessible Celtic tunes with emotional depth, exploring Celtic rhythms, chords, and scales. It focuses on drop D (DADGBE) and DADGAD tunings, with beginner-friendly approaches to both. The class incorporates songs, encouraging participants to use vocal ornamentation in their guitar playing, along with exploring harmonic ideas and alternative chords. It is suitable for beginners or those new to the Celtic genre, with a flexible approach that allows students to bring in songs or tunes they wish to learn. The class emphasizes learning and playing in a fun, approachable manner.

INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED CELTIC FINGERSTYLE GUITAR

This class focuses on arranging songs and dance tunes for guitar. It explores Celtic music beyond Ireland and Scotland, including Brittany and Galicia, highlighting their unique rhythms and instruments. The class will cover altered tunings (DADGAD, DADGBE, CGCGCD) and techniques like triplets and ornamentation—inspired by fiddle, flute, pipes, and voice—to make guitar playing more idiomatic to the style.



Tony McManus

Born in Scotland with Irish roots, Tony McManus is acclaimed as one of the world's leading Celtic guitarists. He has masterfully adapted complex fiddle and pipe ornamentation for guitar while preserving the music's emotional depth. His 2002 recording *Ceol More* was named *Acoustic Guitar Magazine*'s "Critic's Album of the Year" and Live Ireland's "Album of the Year," and he was recognized among "50 Transcendent Acoustic Guitarists of All Time." McManus performs globally in solo and duo settings and collaborates with renowned musicians worldwide.

INTERMEDIATE FLUTE

Join renowned flute player Louise Mulcahy for an inspiring intermediate workshop designed to refine technique, strengthen style, and build confidence. Drawing on her powerful playing and deep knowledge of the tradition, Louise focuses on ornamentation, phrasing, lift, tone production, and repertoire development. Students will learn carefully selected tunes, explore stylistic nuances, and receive guided feedback in a supportive learning environment. Ideal for intermediate players already comfortable with basic ornamentation, this workshop offers a rare opportunity to deepen your musicianship with one of Irish traditional music's leading flute exponents.

ADVANCED FLUTE

Join renowned Irish traditional musician Louise Mulcahy for an immersive advanced workshop designed for flute players seeking deeper stylistic understanding and refined technique. Known for her powerful tone and nuanced phrasing, Louise will guide students through tune interpretation, repertoire development, breath control, tone production, ornamentation, and phrasing for lift and flow. With her extensive performance and teaching experience, she creates a supportive environment where players can ask questions, explore stylistic nuances, and strengthen their individual voice. A rare opportunity to learn from one of Irish music's leading flute exponents.



Louise Mulcahy

Louise Mulcahy is one of the leading flute, uilleann pipes, and whistle players in Irish traditional music. A member of the acclaimed Mulcahy Family, she has toured internationally and released multiple albums, including her critically praised solo recording *Tuning the Road.* She is a recipient of major honors such as the Féile Liam O'Flynn Award and the Gradam Ceoil TG4 award. A respected educator and researcher, her groundbreaking work on women in uilleann piping led to the landmark TG4 documentary *Mná na bPíob*.

BEGINNER/INTERMEDIATE TENOR BANJO

This class focuses on the methods involved in playing Irish traditional music on the tenor banjo. Students will learn a variety of Irish tune types and will cover rhythm, melody, ornamentation, and technique. The class is geared towards intermediate players, but it will also be suitable for beginners with a knowledge of the basic skills. Personalized feedback and practice materials will be provided to support your progress.

BEGINNER/INTERMEDIATE MANDOLIN

This class explores the techniques and approaches required for Irish mandolin playing, with a focus on melody and rhythm. Students will learn a range of Irish tune types and develop their understanding of phrasing, timing, ornamentation, and technique. It is suitable for intermediate players, but beginners with a knowledge of basic skills are also welcome. Practice materials and individual guidance will be provided.



Shane Mulchrone

Shane Mulchrone is a banjo player from Ballina, County Mayo, now based in Toronto, Canada. He began learning music at an early age, initially on tin whistle before moving to stringed instruments, namely the banjo, mandolin, and fiddle. Shane has been playing tenor banjo and mandolin for over 25 years and his music is primarily influenced by the local musicians of Mayo and Sligo. He has taught and performed for many years at numerous summer schools, workshops, and festivals across Europe and North America. In 2018, Shane released his debut album *Solid Ground* on Raelach Records.

ADVANCED FLUTE

Master musician Laurence Nugent tailors his advanced flute workshops to the needs of experienced players. Focusing on performing Irish music with greater ease and expressiveness, he emphasizes rhythm, breath, phrasing, and ornamentation while working through tunes. Laurence guides students in addressing the flute's technical and musical challenges through effective practice strategies and refined playing techniques, helping them develop precision, confidence, and deeper musical insight. This class is designed for advanced musicians seeking to elevate their mastery of traditional Irish music.

ADVANCED TIN WHISTLE

Master musician Laurence Nugent tailors his advanced tin whistle workshops to the needs of experienced players. Focusing on performing Irish music with greater ease and expressiveness, he emphasizes rhythm, breath, phrasing, and ornamentation while working through tunes. Laurence guides students in addressing the tin whistle's technical and musical challenges through effective practice strategies and refined playing techniques, helping them develop precision, confidence, and deeper musical insight. This class is designed for advanced musicians seeking to elevate their mastery of traditional Irish music.



Laurence Nugent

Laurence Nugent, a virtuoso All-Ireland champion of the flute and tin whistle from Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, is renowned for his masterful performances and expansive repertoire. Over three decades, he has toured the U.S., Europe, and Japan, recording three CDs for Shanachie Records, including his acclaimed *White Island*. Nugent has performed with The Chieftains, Shane McGowan, Kevin Burke, Liz Carroll, Martin Hayes, Dennis Cahill, and Arty McGlynn. Praised for his ability to both soothe and inflame the soul, he is recognized as one of the leading traditional Irish musicians of his generation.

SEAN-NÓS DANCE

Sean-nós ("old style") Irish dance is improvised, rhythmic, and expressive step dancing, closely tied to traditional music. The footwork is low to the ground and accessible to dancers of all ages and abilities. Throughout the week, the class will build a repertoire of sean-nós "timing" steps along with some fun rhythmic and visual variations. As students progress, they will explore strategies for improvisation and increase their understanding of the music that drives the dance. If time allows, Jackie will teach a couple of steps from a related tradition, "old-style Irish step dancing." Low-heeled leather-bottomed shoes are ideal.

SET, CÉILÍ, & TWO-HAND DANCING

Irish set dancing is a social or community dance form. It's not a performance tradition reserved for the virtuosic, but rather danced by all ages and abilities for the sheer pleasure of moving together and battering out footwork to the music. Over the course of the week, students will focus on building a foundation in the movements, rhythms, and terminology of set dancing by working through popular sets encountered at céilís. Jackie will also teach some favorite céilí (figure) and two-hand dances, to broaden our repertoire. No partner required. Low-heeled leather-bottomed shoes are ideal. (No class limit)



Jackie O'Riley

Jackie O'Riley is a Boston-based Irish dancer and teacher known for her work in old-style step, sean-nós, and set dancing. She's researched and gathered a unique repertoire of older steps from masters and archival sources, alongside her own choreography. Jackie has performed throughout the US, Canada, and Ireland, including with the touring sean-nós show *Atlantic Steps* and at Dublin's Abbey Theatre. In 2023 she became the first dancer to join ITMA's *Saothar* (composer) series. Jackie founded O'Riley Irish Dance, a non-competitive program now in its 16th year, and in 2019 co-released the groundbreaking visual album *From the Floor*.

BEGINNER TIN WHISTLE

In this class, Caoimhín will focus on the fundamentals of the tin whistle. He will teach simple traditional tunes that include some ornamentation, but students will mainly focus on playing with good rhythm and lilt to the tunes. Tunes will be taught by ear, phrase by phrase. Make sure to bring a recording device and a whistle in the key of D.

INTERMEDIATE TIN WHISTLE

This intermediate class will introduce some finer points of tin whistle playing. Students will explore cuts, rolls, crans, tonguing, and other techniques, incorporating them into a variety of tunes and tune-types throughout the week. Caoimhín will discuss how these techniques and ornamentations help to articulate and add to the lilt of the tune. Styles of some of the most well-known whistle players will be referenced and analyzed. There will be an emphasis on developing individual style and playing with feeling.



Caoimhín Ó Fearghail

Caoimhín Ó Fearghail is a multi-instrumentalist who comes from An Rinn in the Waterford Gaeltacht. A piper, flute player, whistle player, and accompanist, he is influenced by the many great traditional musicians and singers from his home area. His latest album *Uilleann Piping from County Waterford* is part of Na Píobairí Uilleann's *Ace & Deuce of Piping* series. He recorded an album with fiddler Paddy Tutty in 2018 called *Flute & Fiddle*. A frequent teacher and performer, he's toured with groups such as Caladh Nua and Danú all over Ireland, the U.S., the UK, Europe, Newfoundland, and New Zealand.

BOUZOUKI ACCOMPANIMENT

Explore the unique role of the bouzouki in the Irish tradition in this dynamic class focused on accompaniment. Students will delve into chordal and melodic approaches for both songs and tunes, working with voicings, rhythmic patterns, and tasteful counter-melodies that support and elevate the music. They will gain practical tools for creating rich, expressive accompaniment rooted in tradition. Open to all players interested in expanding their bouzouki skills and musical creativity.

SONGS OF THE PEOPLE

"The story of Ireland—its graces and shortcomings, triumphs and sorrows—is told by ballads, dirges, and humorous songs of its common people." *Songs of the People* is a hugely influential volume of Irish traditional songs that began life as a newspaper column. Come learn about this unique collection put together by Sam Henry in the 1920s and '30s. We'll talk about them, but more importantly, we'll sing as many of these great songs together as time allows. (No class limit)



Eamon O'Leary

Originally from Dublin, Eamon has lived in New York City for the last twenty years. In addition to his performance schedule, Eamon has taught at numerous music programs including the Augusta Heritage Center, the Catskills Irish Arts Week, and many years at the Gathering. In 2004, he and Patrick Ourceau released a live recording, *Live at Mona's*, documenting their many years hosting a session on New York's Lower East Side. His 2012 recording of traditional songs with Jefferson Hamer, *The Murphy Beds*, was described by the Huffington Post as "ten beautiful, crystalline songs."

INTERMEDIATE TIN WHISTLE

This intermediate class will delve deeper into the techniques of playing the tin whistle. Students can expect to work on tone, phrasing, tonguing, and beginning ornamentation using traditional Irish tunes learned by ear. Adrienne will discuss different styles, techniques, and tune types, teaching a variety of traditional tunes aurally. Please bring a recording device and a tin whistle in the key of D.

WOMEN'S VOICES IN TRADITIONAL SONGS

In this class, students will explore the place of women's voices in traditional songs. Beginning with the ways women are typically portrayed in song, the class will listen to and learn songs that emphasize women's narratives and use of agency, as well as the significance of their roles in song. Pulling from different styles and roots, students will learn an array of songs focused on women's experiences and voices. (No class limit)



Adrienne O'Shea

Adrienne O'Shea is a traditional Irish musician and dancer born in Dublin and raised in St. Paul, Minnesota. She is an avid performer and has been the lead singer and flute player in several touring music and dance productions, releasing her debut album *Threads of Gold* in 2023. She earned a B.A. in Music at the University of Minnesota and an M.A. in Irish Traditional Music Performance at the University of Limerick. She teaches with the Center for Irish Music and O'Shea Irish Dance and works for the Celtic Junction Arts Center promoting Irish culture and arts.

ADVANCED IRISH FIDDLE (double-length class)

In this advanced class, part of the focus will be on repertoire. Patrick will share a selection of some of his favorite tunes, from simpler ones to those that are more complex. The class will use those tunes and others from various recorded sources to discuss and work on expression, tone, and of course phrasing and ornamentation. Patrick will teach this class by ear but can make sheet music available. Students should bring a recording device. (Class limit: 30)



Patrick Ourceau

Patrick Ourceau is a renowned French-born traditional Irish fiddle player, now based in Toronto, Canada. With over three decades of experience, he has toured Europe and North America, performing in various groups including Chulrua and with concertina player Gearóid Ó'hAllmhuráin. A respected teacher, Patrick has taught at numerous festivals and music schools worldwide. Since moving to Toronto in 2005, he has helped promote Irish music, notably through a popular weekly session at Noonan's Pub. His discography includes collaborations with notable musicians and appearances on celebrated Irish music albums and TV compilations.

INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED TENOR BANJO

Unlock the full potential of your fretboard in this intensive masterclass with renowned tenor banjoist Enda Scahill. Designed for experienced players, the class focuses on the "Scahill Standard" of technique, covering tune interpretation, dynamic phrasing, and rhythmic groove. Students will explore creating tasteful melodic and rhythmic variations, refining tone and efficiency, and mastering the mechanics of ornamentation to enhance speed, clarity, and musical expression while honoring the tradition.

INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED MANDOLIN

Take your mandolin playing to the next level in this more advanced workshop. Drawing on Enda Scahill's approach, the class emphasizes tune interpretation, phrasing, and rhythmic drive. Students will learn to create tasteful melodic and rhythmic variations, develop tone and picking efficiency, and master advanced ornamentation techniques. This class is ideal for experienced players seeking to expand their musical expression and technical precision while staying rooted in tradition.



Enda Scahill

Enda Scahill, Galway-born banjoist, is a founding member of *Billboard* #1 band We Banjo 3 and one of Ireland's most acclaimed traditional banjo players. He has performed with The Chieftains, Béla Fleck, Sam Bush, Carlos Núñez, and Eileen Ivers; recorded with Grammy-winners Ricky Skaggs, Bryan Sutton, and Aubrey Haynie; and toured with Frankie Gavin and Stockton's Wing. Enda also authored the top-selling Irish Banjo Tutor series, widely praised for its technical clarity and pedagogical approach, and is recognized for his extraordinary technique, musicianship, and teaching abilities.

INTERMEDIATE SCOTTISH FIDDLE

In this course, Maura will teach some favorite Scottish dance tunes including strathspeys, reels and jigs. In addition to learning the melodies, Maura will discuss intricacies of style, groove, and ornamentation that help the tunes come to life with a recognizably Scottish character. The goal of this class will be to thoroughly explore each tune so that participants can depart knowing each one like an old friend and possessing conceptual knowledge to apply elsewhere!

FIDDLE FROM SCRATCH

This course is the beginner's guide to picking up the fiddle for the first time. Students will learn details of safe instrument position, setup, bow hold, how the fingering works, etc. This class will be focused more on setup and understanding, rather than placing emphasis on tune-learning. Participants can expect to leave the class knowing one or two new Celtic fiddle tunes, and have the foundation to learn many more! Please come with your own instrument, bow, shoulder rest, and a tuner.



Maura Shawn Scanlin

Maura Shawn Scanlin is gaining notoriety for her fiddle playing among the Celtic and acoustic music scenes across the country and beyond. Her music, hailed for its inventiveness, fluidity, and tone, brings together influences from Ireland, Scotland, and the American South where she grew up. Maura tours with her duo Rakish, and has shared the stage with many cornerstone musicians in the Celtic music world including Seamus Egan, Maeve Gilchrist, Dervish, John Doyle and Hanneke Cassel. Maura is a 2-time U.S. National Scottish Fiddle Champion, and a Glenfiddich Fiddle Champion.

BRETON MUSIC

In this class, students will learn some tunes from Brittany. John will teach a variety of Breton dance tunes, as well as marches and song melodies, primarily from the bombarde and biniou repertoire. Alongside the tunes, participants will learn a little more about the music traditions of Brittany. The class is open to all instruments, and tunes will be taught by ear with some sheet music available.

INTERMEDIATE FLUTE

This class covers all of the aspects of Irish flute playing, including ornamentation, phrasing, breathing, and rhythm. It will also spend some time on repertoire and developing a personal style. John will teach a few tunes and then "deconstruct" those tunes to help the class understand different styles. Students should be proficient in playing tunes at a moderate tempo. The class is taught by ear but sheet music is available for those that need it.



John Skelton

London-born flute and whistle player John Skelton is probably best known to American audiences for his work with The House Band, with whom he recorded eight albums on the Green Linnet label. He has also released a solo album, *One At a Time*, and *Double Barrelled*, a highly regarded album of flute duets with Kieran O'Hare, as well as a series of tune collection books, imaginatively titled *A Few Tunes*, *A Few More Tunes*, *Yet More Tunes* and *Some Breton Tunes*. John has performed at most of the major folk festivals in North America, Europe, and Australia.

INTERMEDIATE IRISH FIDDLE (double-length class)

Through guided listening to masterworks by both historical and contemporary Irish fiddle players, students will analyze key stylistic traits—including ornamentation, bowing, phrasing, and rhythm—to cultivate a deeper appreciation for the nuances of Irish fiddle playing. Emphasizing older fiddle traditions, the class will engage with archival recordings, developing the ability to identify connections among regional styles while also recognizing and valuing their distinctive characteristics. (Class limit: 30)



Jesse Smith

Jesse Smith, born into a musical family in Baltimore, is a skilled Irish fiddler mentored by renowned musician Brendan Mulvihill. He has recorded several acclaimed duet albums and performed at festivals across Ireland, Europe, and the U.S. Now based on Arranmore Island, County Donegal, Jesse organizes Féile Róise Rua, an annual festival honoring the legacy of celebrated sean-nós singer Róise Rua. His deep connection to traditional music and active role in promoting Irish cultural heritage mark him as a leading figure in the tradition.

STAFF MUSICIANS



Hannah Harris

Hannah Harris is a celebrated Irish fiddler and singer based in Detroit, known for her mastery of traditional Irish music and her distinctive lilt. She holds a Master's in Ethnomusicology from University College Cork and has released two acclaimed solo albums, *Tea for Tunes* (2020) and *At the Core* (2025), that were featured in *Irish Music Magazine*. Hannah teaches internationally, leads sessions and workshops, and inspires students through her online studio and live performances.



Ben Jaber

Ben Jaber has been immersed in Irish traditional music since his early teens, inspired by recordings of the great master uilleann pipers. Entirely self-taught on uilleann pipes, flute, and tin whistle, he has earned growing recognition through multiple visits to Ireland. Alongside this, he is an accomplished French horn player, serving as Principal Horn of the San Diego Symphony Orchestra since 2008, and is an active Los Angeles studio musician with numerous film and television credits.



Alberto Whitmer

Alberto "Bear" Whitmer is a Detroit–based fingerstyle acoustic guitarist and educator specializing in Irish traditional music and contemporary acoustic guitar. He holds a Master of Arts in Irish Traditional Music from the University of Limerick and is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee's fingerstyle guitar performance program under John Stropes. Bear has shared stages with and opened for renowned artists including Tony McManus, Richard Gilewitz, James Keelaghan, and Stefano Barone, and he is a regular performer at Irish sessions throughout Metro Detroit.

LUTHIERS EXHIBIT



Jay Ham

Jay Ham is an accomplished flute maker based in Asheville, NC, who is known for exceptional craftsmanship and uncompromising attention to detail. A seasoned flute player and uilleann piper, his musical experience informs a deep understanding of acoustics, tuning, and response. Jay handcrafts high-quality simple system flutes for Irish traditional music, tuned to modern pitch and prized for their power, tone, balance, and consistency. His original designs, inspired by historic instruments, are made using centuries-old techniques.



Kate Rickenbacker

Kate Rickenbacker, a native of Lexington, KY, began violin lessons at age two and performed in orchestras throughout her youth and at the University of Kentucky. Combining her passions for music and woodworking, Kate graduated from the Chicago School of Violin Making, studying under Tsh Ho Lee, Rebecca Eliot, and Fred Thompson, followed by seven years at Seman Violins in Skokie, IL, specializing in repair and restoration while continuing to perform in both classical and pop settings. Now based in Black Mountain, NC, Kate runs her own repair shop where she builds violins, violas, and cellos using traditional techniques.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

For details about our Children's Program during Celtic Week, please see the general program information section at the front of the catalog.



Photo by DesGallagher

Celtic Week. JULY 19–25, 2026

Classes run Monday-Friday

7:30-8:30am	**BREAKFAST** (Monday-Saturday)													
9:00-10:15am	**Uilleann Pipes** (Abarta)	**Intro to Singing *As Gaeilge*** (Arkins)	**Adv. Scottish Fiddle** (Black)	**Playing in Sessions** (Dukes)	**Tin Whistle from Scratch** (Jackson)	**Beginner Flute** (Holleran)	**Int. Session Guitar** (MacMorran)	**Int. Irish Fiddle** (Smith)	**Beg./ Int. Celtic Fingerstyle Guitar** (McManus)	**Beg./Int. Mandolin** (Mulchrone)	**Adv. Flute** (Nugent)	**Int. Tin Whistle** (O'Shea)	**Sean-nós Dance** (O'Riley)	**Int./Adv. Tenor Banjo** (Scahill)
10:15-10:45am	**COFFEE/TEA BREAK** (Monday-Friday)													
10:45am-12:00pm	**Uilleann Pipes cont'd** (Abarta)	**Int. Irish Fiddle** (Arkins)	**Adv. Scottish Fiddle cont'd** (Black)	**Adv. Session Guitar** (Doyle)	**Beginner Irish Fiddle** (Gavin)	**Anglo Concertina** (Hambly)	**Technique for Singers** (Hanley)	**Int. Irish Fiddle cont'd** (Smith)	**Freedom on the Fiddle** (MacDonald)	**Int./Adv. Celtic Fingerstyle Guitar** (McManus)	**Beg./Int. Tenor Banjo** (Mulchrone)	**Int. Tin Whistle** (Ó Fearghail)	**Int. Flute** (Holleran)	**Int. Flute** (Mulcahy)
11:30am-1:00pm	**LUNCH** (Monday-Friday)													
1:15-2:30pm	**Adv. Irish Fiddle** (Ourceau)	**Beg. Bodhrán** (Colliton)	**Guitar Accomp. in Standard Tuning** (Gavin)	**Never Tire of the Road: Songs of Travel & Exile** (Irvine)	**Adv. Flute** (Mulcahy)	**Beg. Tin Whistle** (Ó Fearghail)	**Fiddle From Scratch** (Scanlin)	**Int./Adv. Mandolin** (Scahill)	**Drop D Guitar Accomp.** (MacMorran)	**Adv. Tin Whistle** (Nugent)	**Breton Music** (Skelton)	**Bouzouki Accomp.** (O'Leary)	**Beg. Celtic Harp** (Jackson, Hambly)	**Adv. Irish Fiddle** (Kelly)
2:45-4:00pm	**Adv. Irish Fiddle cont'd** (Ourceau)	**Advanced Irish Fiddle Cont'd** (Kelly)	**Song Accomp. for Bouzouki** (Irvine)	**Songs from Ireland, New York, & Beyond** (Hanley)	**Int. Flute** (Skelton)	**Songs of the People** (O'Leary)	**Int./Adv. Celtic Harp** (Hambly, Jackson)	**Cape Breton Fiddle** (MacDonald)	**Women's Voices in Traditional Songs** (O'Shea)	**Int./Adv. Bodhrán** (Colliton)	**Set, Céilí, & Two-Hand Dancing** (O'Riley)	**Int. Scottish Fiddle** (Scanlin)	**DADGAD Tune Accomp.** (Dukes)	**Song Accomp. on Guitar** (Doyle)
4:15-5:15pm	**POTLUCK SESSIONS, PANEL DISCUSSIONS, LUTHIERS EXHIBIT** (Ham and Rickenbacker), & free time													
5:00-6:30pm	**SUPPER** (Sunday-Friday)													
6:00-7:00pm	**SLOW JAMS/SONG SWAPS**													
7:30pm-?	**EVENING EVENTS** (concerts, sessions, céilí, etc.)													

Contemporary Folk Week
JULY 26–AUGUST 1, 2026

Whether you're a new performer trying out material at a local open mic, a working musician looking for help to reach your next goal, or someone who would simply like to feel more confident playing and singing in front of others, Contemporary Folk Week is here to help. It features an extraordinary staff with expertise in both the art and business of contemporary acoustic music. Our size and format encourage community-building at its best with frequent and informal interaction between students and teachers, ensuring that you go home energized and empowered to make the most of your music. Choose from a variety of classes (capped at 15 students each) in songwriting, performance, vocal technique, and creative practice, all of which stress individual attention to students' needs. Social activities include open-mic events, concerts, song circles, and plenty of spontaneous music-making. Contemporary Folk Week runs concurrently with Guitar Week, so it's easy to take classes in either program. Please note, however, that our open-mic events are open only to those registered as Contemporary Folk students and enrolled in at least two of the program's classes.

Courses & Staff

SONG ARRANGEMENTS
This class will tighten up your song so that it's ready for recording or performing. Cliff will help students evaluate their song's beginnings and endings, and consider whether they may benefit from a bridge, solo, or other device. Cliff has produced 15 albums, and this is how he spends most of his time with artists—making sure their songs sound professional and well-crafted.

WRITING MELODIES
This class will begin with a brief history of melodic writing and then show how to incorporate a melodic vocabulary into songs while avoiding repetition. Students should bring in songs that are incomplete or need improvement, and they'll be asked to start with just a verse and a chorus. We will discuss how to improve melodic writing through different chords and intervals, make songs have more memorable melodies, and insert intros, bridges, and endings. By the end of the week we will try to reconstruct your work into a complete, beautiful song..



Cliff Eberhardt, Program Coordinator

Contemporary Folk Week coordinator Cliff Eberhardt has written songs for TV, movies, plays, and an Emmy-winning theme song for CBS News New York. His songs have been covered by over 30 artists including Buffy Sainte-Marie, Richie Havens, Lucy Kaplansky, and Erasure. Cliff has nine internationally distributed albums and frequently tours. He has also produced over a dozen albums for other artists, teaches at several song camps, and offers private instruction one-on-one.

MAKING IT PERSONAL
Have you ever heard a song that gripped you because it seemed so true to life, only to discover that it couldn't have been written from the songwriter's real experience? In this course we'll look at how to get inside the voice of a song, even if you are telling somebody else's story.

KEEP IT SIMPLE, STUPID!
Some of the best songs have the simplest formats. From time to time we all want to say more, to pack in one more verse and really explain everything that we're trying to get across. In this course, students will boil their ideas down to the bare bones and see how strong they can be without the extra weight.



Amanda Anne Platt

Amanda Anne Platt has been writing and performing original songs for nearly two decades. With her band, The Honeycutters, she has released ten albums and toured extensively throughout the U.S. and Europe. Her last six studio releases have placed in the top five of WNCW's annual listener-voted Top 100, most recently at #5 with her 2024 album *The Ones That Stay*. In 2011, Platt won second place in MerleFest's Chris Austin Songwriting Competition. She has shared the stage with such songwriting greats as Guy Clark, Amy Ray, Billy Joe Shaver, Kathy Mattea, and Radney Foster.

THE SOUND OF THE FEELING

This class will focus on writing new songs and finishing promising, incomplete pieces. I'll share my experiences as a performing songwriter, and then we'll dive into students' interests. We'll explore different approaches to songwriting—whether driven by lyrics or music—and create a positive atmosphere where writing a song is not just possible but inevitable. Additionally, we'll discuss how to enhance chord progressions to inspire new melodies. Both experienced and novice songwriters are welcome!

EVERYBODY HAS A STORY

This course will focus on songwriting, as well as presenting your songs live. We'll work on writing new songs and honing the craft of songwriting. Additionally, we'll cover ways to connect with an audience, such as song introductions, pacing sets, handling opening acts, sound system advice, and mic technique. I'll share my experiences and mistakes to help you tell your story and present your songs. Bring printed lyric sheets if you have them. My approach is personalized, adapting to each songwriter's needs and interests. This description is just a starting point!



John Gorka

Born in 1958 in Newark, New Jersey, John Gorka is an accomplished singer-songwriter renowned for his role in the New Folk movement. He began his career at Godfrey Daniels coffee house and gained notoriety after winning the New Folk competition at the Kerrville Folk Festival in 1984. Gorka's debut album, *I Know*, was released in 1987. Known for his rich baritone voice and poignant storytelling, he has collaborated with many artists and continues to perform in the U.S. and internationally. Gorka resides in the St. Croix Valley area of Minnesota.

PERFORMANCE & SONGWRITING

Vance's dicta is that songwriting and performance are inextricable entities, so his classes will focus more on one or the other aspect, depending on individual needs. All of this is done in a supportive atmosphere as if it were an "instructive open mic," with Vance helping one student as the others watch. Then it's YOUR turn! In these practical classes, Vance gets "under the hood" of what you do and want to do in a supportive and entertaining way. This stage/song boot camp is a class you don't want to miss!

ADVANCED VANCE

This offering is for any of you "graduates" who want to go further in performance and songwriting with one of the best. Got the basics? Then here's an opportunity to dig into the performance/songwriting connection a little bit deeper. Patter, pacing, and constructing a set are among the advanced performance skills you can review in this class. It's a great opportunity to tweak and hone techniques previously acquired in a Vance class. Or heck, sure, if you missed the first one, c'mon in! There's plenty for you to do here, too.



Vance Gilbert

In 1992, Vance Gilbert rose to prominence as a special guest on Shawn Colvin's Fat City tour. The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* swooned over him, saying he had "the voice of an angel, the wit of a devil, and the guitar playing of a god." Vance's songwriting/performance combo workshops are legendary at the Rocky Mountain Song School, UC Denver, and Berklee College. After 14 albums, two years with George Carlin, opening for The Milk Carton Kids and Paul Reiser, and songs recorded by rocker Mike Posner and Trout Fishing In America (on their Grammy-nominated *Infinity*), his workshops are essential.

THE AUTHENTIC, BELIEVABLE SINGER A & B (two sections offered)

Genuine singing from the heart has the power to captivate listeners and leave them wanting more. This class will help students increase the believability of their voice, which makes a more powerful impact on audiences and moves them emotionally deeper. We'll explore a variety of simple, actionable things that allow students to achieve greater authenticity: connection to the song, connection to the audience, enunciation, phrasing, dynamics, confidence, melodic variation, play, and health. The environment will be warm, supportive, judgement-free, and focused on growth. You'll leave this class a better singer than when you arrived.



Laurie MacAllister

In late 2024, Laurie MacAllister launched her solo career with a sold-out show at Club Passim. Two decades earlier, she co-founded the beloved Americana trio Red Molly, who toured the U.S. and abroad for 16 years, including appearances at MerleFest, Cayamo, and Boston Symphony Hall. Along the way, Laurie was tapped to sing the iconic Folgers Coffee jingle in a national TV commercial. Her 2018 self-produced solo album *The Lies the Poets Tell* was hailed by SiriusXM as "Defining. A curated collection packed with emotional vibrancy." In 2025, she headlined shows at Caffe Lena and Godfrey Daniels.

THE MUSE LOVES TO SEE YOU AT WORK

It's a beautiful moment when a wave of inspiration hits. However, if you're like most people, it can be a long time between those moments. Fortunately, the Muse is kind to those who are busy at work! Inspiration never travels without the companion of craftsmanship, and we're going to use the whole toolbox: hard and soft rhymes, cadences and chord changes, cut and paste, puns and juxtapositions. In the process we'll conquer three distinct challenges: assignment writing, writing lyrics without an instrument, and putting music to a co-writer's lyrics. Come explore how creativity can blossom from boundaries!

DON'T DROP THE BALL, TEAR DOWN THE WALL

Tired of writing yourself into a corner? How often have you found yourself up against the wall of writer's block? Have no fear! There's always a way through, and we're gonna find it together. In the process, you'll acquire some tools that can help you overcome future writer's block. Bring a problem song with 16 copies of the lyrics, and together we'll tame that sucker!



Don Henry

Grammy-winner Don Henry has written songs recorded by a number of artists, from Ray Charles and Patti Page to Blake Shelton and Miranda Lambert. Lambert had a big hit in 2013 with Don and Phillip Coleman's song "All Kinds Of Kinds." (That's Don singing background vocals on her record!) He's played with performers as diverse as Joey Ramone at New York's Bottom Line and Keith Urban at Nashville's Bluebird Cafe. Kathy Mattea's version of Don and Jon Vezner's "Where've You Been" won song of the year awards at the Grammys, ACMs, the CMAs, and the N.S.A.I.

THE POETRY OF METAPHOR

This class examines the visual and emotional power of metaphor in songwriting. Metaphors can shape an entire song or simply deepen a single line, adding layers of meaning and imagery. Many writers feel unsure about using metaphor, believing it requires more abstract thinking, but in this course we'll discover that metaphors are everywhere and highly accessible. I'll share the ways I approach finding and shaping metaphors, offer practical tools and tricks, and encourage students to trust their instincts while using metaphors to enrich clear, grounded stories.

BETWEEN EARTH & SKY

In this course, students will explore how to strike a balance between plain imagery that is grounded in realism and metaphorical abstraction that is not. We'll analyze how you can support your literal storytelling with an additional layer of emotionally buoyant poetry and an element of surprise. In reverse, students will also learn how they might attempt to ground their message if it is lacking in accessible granularity and detail, so as to ensure that it connects.



Antje Duvekot

Antje Duvekot is an award-winning singer-songwriter known for her intricate songcraft. She has toured internationally, performing at major clubs and festivals including the Newport Folk Festival, Celtic Connections, Tønder Festival, and TEDMED. Her songs have been recorded by such artists as Solas and Mindy Smith, and she has been featured by NPR, CNN, the *Boston Globe*, and *HuffPost*. Her song "Merry Go Round" was used in a national Bank of America ad campaign that aired during the Super Bowl. Antje's awards include the Grand Prize in the John Lennon Songwriting Competition and the Boston Music Award for "Outstanding Folk Act."

WATER FROM A DEEPER WELL

In this class, we start where you're stopped. Bring in a song fragment that felt like it was going somewhere but then got stuck, and we will explore the different directions it might go. Figure out WHO is talking to whom and why. As a class, we will give you ideas of how to fill out the characters in the song and imagine all the different ways the story could end.

SIMPLE SKILLS

This class builds confidence by breaking the complex craft of songwriting into simple, focused skills practiced one at a time. In one exercise, students create a melody to a given lyric and then discuss how each person approached it. The different possibilities open our imaginations. In another game, we'll start with a common melody and find words that suit the particular pattern of accent and rhythm. There are no wrong answers, and the momentum and freedom we feel from simple exercises give us confidence to be more playful with our writing.



David Wilcox

More than three decades into his career, quintessential folk singer/songwriter David Wilcox's music tells stories full of heart, humor, hope, substance, and style. Wilcox's latest release, *My Good Friends*, is a fan-requested record with stripped-down, acoustic renditions of some of his recent prodigious output as a songwriter. *My Good Friends* is a true showcase of his devotion to and mastery of the craft. Wilcox's prior album release, *The View from the Edge*, featured "We Make the Way By Walking," the Grand Prize winner in the 2018 USA Songwriting Contest.

SONGS THAT SOUND OLD

There is an old-time feeling in some of my favorite contemporary songwriting, giving it that timeless flavor and vintage sound. These songs evoke deeply human feelings through familiar themes, stories, and imaginings. If you love traditional songs and want to experiment with writing in that style, this class is for you. We will examine old songs that sound old as well as some contemporary songs that sound old. We will talk about what gives them that sound, discover some tricks and strategies, and implement these as we try our hand at some old-fashioned songwriting for a new era.

THREE CHORDS AND THE TRUTH

This quote from the late, great Harlan Howard about what makes a great song still rings true today. In this class, both first-timers and experienced songwriters will experiment with what it takes to make a great song with three chords—or fewer! If you don't play an instrument, no problem. We will look at how simple song structures and down-to-earth, truthful lyrics can combine to create an elegant, uncomplicated song. Think Hank Williams, and you get the picture. Let's run with the notion that less is more and create some songs together!



Kari Sickenberger

Kari has been coaching and leading singing classes and workshops since 2004. With Laurelyn Dossett, she is a founding member of the original roots country band Polecat Creek. With another musical partner, Vollie McKenzie, she sings country and honky-tonk in various configurations. She has toured widely, recorded four albums, and performed and recorded with WV musicians Ginny Hawker and Tracy Schwarz. She draws on her experience as a Spanish and English teacher and her lifelong love for and experience with traditional and original roots music to create a safe and encouraging teaching environment for new and experienced singers alike.

SNOW GLOBE SONGS A & B (two sections offered)

A great song is like a snow globe. You look through the glass into another world. You're pulled in by imagery and details, and suddenly the real world disappears! Pop! You're inside! You're walking down the actual street of a Bob Dylan song, but the details—the characters, places, and experiences—are from YOUR life. In this magical way, you've exchanged Dylan's images with your own. This is why people say, "That's my song"—because it tells OUR life story so vividly that we claim ownership. How do we pull people in and make them part of our world? Come find out!



Ellis Paul

Ellis Paul doesn't just write songs—he's a guitar-carrying reporter who covers the human condition and details the hopes, loves, and losses of those he observes. He turns their stories into luminous pieces of music that get under your skin and into your bloodstream. Paul is a songwriter, author, illustrator, and teacher. He has been a constant presence on the American folk circuit for almost 30 years, with 24 albums recorded and 5,000 shows played. His songs have been featured in major films and recorded by country stars. His latest album, released in 2023, is called *55*.

AN IMPROMPTU GLORIOUS CHORUS™

Low pressure, high pleasure community singing! Elise teaches in a style so easy that, before you know it, the room is in perfect harmony. Drawing from her love of diverse melodies and rhythms, Elise may introduce a Brazilian samba, an Italian round, 4-part harmonies from Zimbabwe, and of course songs in English, including songs from the African American tradition, quirky rounds, food songs, Bobby McFerrin-style circle songs, and Elise originals. We'll explore the far reaches of our vocal color palettes. Singers of all abilities, styles, and experience are welcome. No music reading required. (No class limit)

SINGING FOR FUN FOR EVERYONE

Discover, explore, and expand your natural voice. Explore fresh, physical ways of songwriting while at the same time strengthening your confidence, clarity, and presence. We'll include body and voice integration, calling in elements of Qigong and vocal improvisation to focus on breath and creativity. We'll learn songs that explore the wild and vast expressions of harmony. All songs are broken down into easily learnable parts and become thrilling to sing in a group. Even shy singers, in no time, find themselves part of a harmonious community and find new inspiration for their own songwriting. (No class limit)



Elise Witt

Elise's concerts of Global, Local & Homemade Songs™ and her Impromptu Glorious Chorus™ workshops create and connect singing communities around the world. Born in Switzerland, raised in NC, and living in Atlanta since 1977, Elise speaks 5 languages fluently and sings in at least a dozen more. She has released 12 recordings on EMWorld Records and recently published her original songs in *All Singing: The Elise Witt Songbook* and *Imagine A Circle: The Global Village Songbook*, from her work using singing and songwriting for new English speakers. Elise loves teaching and collaborating with multidisciplinary artists around the world.

SPARKING IN THE GAP

There are many effective ways to write a song, but the best songs often spark a listener's imagination in a way that makes them part of the song as they hear it. It's not just a passive thing; they are in it! But how do we get there? Starting with a discussion of imagery and the senses, we'll use some simple writing exercises to work your way into a new song. Listening and encouraging as we go, we'll explore things like metaphor, storytelling, sideways thinking, using rhyme to find new directions, and other ways to find that spark and wonder.

BRING IT!

I want to hear what you've been up to. Bring in one of your songs and play it for me and the class. Having other ears on something new—or even new ears on something that's been around awhile—can be so helpful. Have you been working on something that feels in flux? Let's open up some possibilities! This isn't about tearing songs down. It's about finding ways to make them even better, pointing out cool things someone did, and starting a discussion that helps everyone think about their work in new ways. Please bring lyric sheets for everyone, if possible.



Buddy Mondlock

Buddy's songs have been recorded by Guy Clark, Nanci Griffith, Janis Ian, Garth Brooks, Art Garfunkel, and Peter, Paul and Mary, among others. In 2003, he toured internationally with Art Garfunkel and Maia Sharp in support of their trio album *Everything Waits to Be Noticed*. With several acclaimed solo recordings on EMI and his own label, Buddy's most recent, *Filament*, hit #4 on the folk charts. He has taught at the Kerrville Song School, Sisters Folk Festival, the New England Songwriters Retreat, Cedarsongs, and the Swannanoa Gathering, in addition to workshops in Dublin, Copenhagen, and at Berklee College of Music.

SONGWRITING 101: STORYTELLING

Stories help us understand and process the world we live in. A story set to music possesses an added power to penetrate hearts and minds. In this class for all levels, we will work on honing the craft of telling a story through song. Whether you seek to write a modern-day folk-hero classic, magnify a fragment of forgotten history, paint a picture of your hometown, or immortalize a series of events from your own history, this class will give you the tools to craft something memorable and meaningful.

DISTILLATION

As writers, we all attempt to find and convey truths. When we sit down to work on a song, the first question we should ask ourselves is "What am I trying to say?" The second question is "How can I best say it?" In this class, we will work first on distilling our intentions down to their essence and then on our delivery of those intentions through lyrics, melody, and performance. Bring a song or a piece of a song that you feel has promise but lacks focus. We will create a safe space to generate, hone, and share our work together.



Nora Jane Struthers

Nora Jane Struthers is guided by fire. "Struthers has come up with some of the most quietly powerful narratives within the new wave of Americana artists" – Ann Powers, NPR. A singer-songwriter and bandleader with a clear, powerful voice, Nora Jane grew up in New Jersey singing bluegrass brother duets with her banjo-playing dad. Based in Nashville since 2008, she has recorded and released nine full-length albums of original material. After over a decade of touring, Nora Jane stays closer to home these days with her three young children.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

Contemporary Folk Week. JULY 26-AUGUST 1, 2026

Classes run Monday-Friday

7:30-8:30am	**BREAKFAST** (Monday-Saturday)						
9:00-10:15am	**Water from a Deeper Well** (Wilcox)	**Writing Melodies** (Eberhardt)	**Making It Personal** (Platt)	**The Sound of the Feeling** (Gorka)	**Singing for Fun for Everyone** (Witt)	**Performance & Songwriting** (Gilbert)	**Sparking in the Gap** (Mondlock)
10:15-10:45am	**COFFEE/TEA BREAK** (Monday-Friday)						
10:45am-12:00pm	**Songs That Sound Old** (Sickenberger)	**Songwriting 101: Storytelling** (Struthers)	**Song Arrangements** (Eberhardt)	**Bring It!** (Mondlock)	**Don't Drop the Ball Tear Down the Wall** (Henry)	**The Authentic, Believable Singer A** (MacAllister)	
11:30am-1:00pm	**LUNCH** (Monday-Friday)						
1:00-2:15pm	**FREE TIME** (participants may attend Guitar Week's Seminar/Faculty Panels and Luthiers Exhibit)						
2:15-3:30pm	**Three Chords & the Truth** (Sickenberger)	**Distillation** (Struthers)	**Keep it Simple, Stupid!** (Platt)	**Everybody Has a Story** (Gorka)	**Snow Globe Songs A** (Paul)	**The Poetry of Metaphor** (Duvekot)	**The Authentic, Believable Singer B** (MacAllister)
3:45-5:00pm	**Between Earth & Sky** (Duvekot)	**Snow Globe Songs B** (Paul)	**An Impromptu Glorious Chorus** (Witt)	**The Muse Loves to See You at Work** (Henry)	**Simple Skills** (Wilcox)	**Advanced Vance** (Gilbert)	
5:00-6:30pm	**SUPPER** (Sunday-Friday)						
7:30pm-?	**EVENING EVENTS** (open mics, song circles, concerts, jam sessions, etc.))						

Guitar Week

JULY 26–AUGUST 1, 2026

For thirty years, Guitar Week has brought together a world-class teaching staff and dedicated students for a one-of-a-kind workshop that celebrates the amazing versatility of the acoustic guitar. Removed from the pressures and schedules of everyday life, participants are immersed in what one student has called "guitar utopia." Providing exceptional guitar instruction within a variety levels, genres, and traditions, Guitar Week will help you grow as a musician in a supportive community of acoustic guitar lovers, many of whom will become lifelong friends. Students enroll in as many as four regular classes during the week, and community "seminar classes" each afternoon offer different panels where instructors play a little, discuss what goes into their music-making, and answer questions. The evenings are highlighted by dazzling faculty performances and informal jamming that often goes late into the night. With classes in blues, swing, bluegrass, flamenco, jazz, Celtic, flatpicking, percussive, fingerstyle, composition, theory and performance, there is truly something for everyone. Guitar Week also runs concurrently with Contemporary Folk Week workshops and students may take classes from either program.

Courses & Staff



Greg Ruby, Program Coordinator

Based in New York City, Guitar Week coordinator Greg Ruby specializes in instrumental guitar music from the 20th century. From acoustic swing to jazz Manouche to surf guitar, Ruby inhabits many musical forms and brings his voice to each of them. Greg has authored *Chord Melody Made Easy(ish)*, *The Oscar Alemán Play-Along Book*, *The Pearl Django Play-Along Book*, and co-authored *Frank D. Waldron: Seattle's Syncopated Classic*, and is a regular contributor to *Acoustic Guitar Magazine*. Greg performs nationally and throughout the NYC area and teaches online music classes and private guitar lessons at www.gregrubymusic.com.

JAMMIN' WITH CHARLIE CHRISTIAN

Charlie Christian was the first well-known electric guitarist in jazz, and his contributions to American music were monumental despite his short life and recording career. He created an infectious improvisational language that has influenced generations of jazz, blues, Western swing, country, and rock musicians across nearly every instrument. In this class, students will learn and assimilate a few of Charlie's classic solos and his swinging rhythmic sense, and have fun finding myriad ways to use his phrases, licks, and concepts to create their own personal language.

FUN WITH THE DUKE

Duke Ellington wrote some of the classic tunes of the 20th century. His compositions have been a big part of the core repertoire across almost every style and permutation of jazz for many years. In this class, students will make some of his melodies their own, and have fun creating harmony parts, counter-melodies, and riffs that can add dimension and personality to some of his compelling themes.



Howard Alden

Howard Alden is considered a "Modern Maestro" and one of the "75 Great Guitarists of all time" by *Downbeat Magazine*. Originally from California, Alden moved east in 1979 with vibraphone legend Red Norvo. In New York, Alden's skills were sought out by an array of jazz stars, including Joe Williams, Dizzy Gillespie, and Woody Herman, as well as pop/rock icons Steve Miller and J. Geils. Howard's playing for Woody Allen's film *Sweet and Lowdown* helped spark a world-wide revival of Django Reinhardt's music. Leo Kottke calls Howard's most recent release, *Guitar*, "the best recording of the seven-string guitar I've ever heard!"

CREATIVE COMPOSITION WITH FINGERSTYLE

This class will focus on a creative approach to composition on acoustic guitar. It will introduce a variety of open tunings, fingerstyle patterns, approaches to writing memorable melodies, musical sequences, and song forms. Students will be encouraged to compose a piece of music during the week, with opportunities to share with the class and receive workshop feedback. We will focus on song development, creative harmonic twists, chord progressions, and ways to make your compositions unique by developing your own musical voice. This class is open for both guitar and songwriting attendees. (Class limit 16)

LIVE INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE

Learn tools to create an engaging performance that will be memorable for both the musician and the audience. This interactive class will include workshopping songs you're planning to perform and explain various techniques to enhance them and create more arc in your delivery, including repetition, physical movement, breathing and pausing, audience participation, and dynamic tricks. As musicians and performers, the art is not only in expressing the music itself, but also in sharing and conveying it to create a connecting experience for everyone involved. Performance includes solo techniques alongside musical interplay. All levels are welcome. (Class limit 16)



Christie Lenée

Music Radar's "Acoustic Guitarist of the Year," celebrated singer-songwriter and "International Fingerstyle Guitar Champion" Christie Lenée is more than a musician – she's an experience. Integrating melodic pop lyricism with catchy hooks, percussive technique, and harmonic textures, Christie won 1st place at the International Fingerstyle Guitar Championship in 2017. Featured at the Grammy Museum and a two-time finalist in the USA Songwriting Competition, she's also been the subject of various articles in *Guitar Player Magazine* and *Acoustic Guitar Magazine*. Recently featured among the "Best Acoustic Guitarists in the World Right Now" (*Guitar World Magazine*), Christie continues to awe crowds.

GUITAR GROUP

This class is for all levels. The group will explore three contrasting pieces: a 16th century dance tune, a swing number from the 1940's, and something more up-to-date! Clive will use tablature and chord charts to present the music, and the parts will include bass lines, chord shapes, and—of course—the melody! This is a rare opportunity for guitar players of all abilities to play together in a relaxed and informal setting. (Class limit 16)

GUITARISTS OF THE 1960S BRITISH FOLK REVIVAL

This class will delve into the styles of key figures during the 1960s British Folk Revival including John Renbourn, Bert Jansch, Davy Graham, Martin Carthy, Wizz Jones, and Nick Drake. Influential pieces such as "Anji," "Blackwaterside," and "Scarborough Fair" will be covered along with favored tunings, techniques, and grooves. Apart from Nick Drake, Clive has been fortunate to spend a little time with all of these players, and he looks forward to exploring their styles with students and sharing occasional anecdotes along the way! (Class limit 16)



Clive Carroll

Award-winning guitarist Clive Carroll is widely known for his compositions, versatility, and unmistakable sound. Clive holds a 1st Class Honours Degree in Composition and Guitar from Trinity College of Music in London and has worked with such guitar greats as John Williams, D'Gary, Tommy Emmanuel, Xuefei Yang, Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Ralph Towner, and Al Petteway. As a session player, he recently performed the banjo parts for Pete Seeger's character in the Bob Dylan biopic *A Complete Unknown*. Clive has given many workshops and masterclasses across the globe from Aldeburgh Music's Britten Pears Arts to the Swannanoa Gathering.

HOT JAZZ I

This class is an introduction for guitarists curious about the sound, style, and spirit of Hot Jazz. Students will work to build the essential skills that define the genre. Throughout the week, you'll learn the foundations of rhythm guitar, harmony, and standard chord shapes. We'll also work on improvising, technique, and core repertoire to get you playing in no time. (Class limit 16)

HOT JAZZ II

Designed for players with more of a foundation in the style, this intermediate class takes you deeper into the nuances that make this genre fun. We'll explore more involved rhythm guitar skills, harmony and theory (and how to use it), improvising through changes, developing technique, and applying all these concepts to songs. (Class limit 16)



Emeline O'Rourke

Born and raised in rural Vermont, Emeline O'Rourke is one of the most in-demand and versatile guitarists—and one of the few trans women—in New York's traditional jazz scene. O'Rourke began touring with Gonzalo Bergara, Rhythm Future Quartet, and John Jorgenson while enrolled at Berklee, which she dropped out of in 2016, and has not slowed down since. O'Rourke has performed at venues throughout New York City—including Jazz at Lincoln Center, Birdland, and the Blue Note—as well as internationally. She's performed/recorded with artists including Hamilton de Holanda, Matt Munisteri, and Vince Giordano, and guest-lectured at Harvard University.

TANGOS FLAMENCOS

Not to be confused with the Argentine tango, this "palo," or flamenco form, is typically a quick-tempo eight-beat cycle in quadruple meter that utilizes mixolydian and harmonic minor scale tones. In this class, students will learn marking patterns with the right hand that accompany flamenco singing, as well as flamenco strumming techniques and the relative chords that are generally used within tangos. Mark will also teach "palmas" clapping patterns and a "falseta," or melodic guitar motif, within this tango form. (Class limit 16)

SOLEÁ

This "palo," or flamenco form, often utilizes a slow 12-beat cycle distinguished by mixolydian and harmonic minor scale tones. Students will explore the rhythm of soleá and become more familiar with how it flows and how the accents are used as pinnacle points for vocal accompaniment, working toward a goal of accompanying flamenco singing. They will also learn right-hand techniques to mark the rhythm, as well as chords for the left hand. Mark will also teach "palmas" clapping patterns and a "falseta," or melodic guitar motif, for soleá. (Class limit 16)



Mark Ferguson

Mark Ferguson has been playing flamenco guitar since 1995. Mark has studied with many maestros including Pascual de Lorca, Flecha, Antonio Jero, Niño Jero, Juan Maya Marote, David Serva, José Antonio Rodríguez, Jason McGuire, Jesús Álvarez, Domingo Rubichi, and Santiago Lara. He has also played with a variety of flamenco artists including Luis de la Tota, Mitsue "La Pura" Johnson, Estefanía Sánchez, Timo Lozano, Jesús Montoya, Ali de la Tota, Jesús de la Esperanza, and Vicente Griego. Mark lived in Spain to study the art of the flamenco guitar and learn the flamenco guitarist's role as an accompanist.

THE MUSIC OF AL PETTEWAY

Al Petteway (1952-2023) was a Grammy Award-winning fingerstyle guitarist and composer whose work drew on elements of Celtic, Appalachian, blues, Renaissance, and many other influences. He served as Coordinator for Swannanoa Gathering's Guitar Week for many years and is fondly remembered by its community. As a close friend and collaborator of Al's, Robin is offering this intermediate-and-up class to teach a number of the late guitarist's unique compositions and arrangements, revealing how surprisingly accessible many of them are. Altered tunings will be used extensively (and demystified). (Class limit 16)

CELTIC FINGERSTYLE

This intermediate-and-up class will explore the world of possibilities presented by traditional Irish, Scottish, and Cape Breton repertoire arranged for solo fingerstyle guitar. Some tablature will be offered, but students will also create their own individual settings of airs, jigs, reels, and the 18th-century harp music of Turlough O'Carolan, sharing arrangement ideas in an informal, hands-on environment. Alternate tunings such as DADGAD, "Canine" tuning (CGCGCD), and "Werewolf" tuning (CGDGAD) will be used extensively to open up the instrument's full sonic potential. A good time will be had by all. (Class limit 16)



Robin Bullock

Ranked among the "100 Greatest Acoustic Guitarists" by DigitalDreamDoor.com, Robin Bullock has been hailed as "one of the best folk instrumentalists in the business" by *Sing Out!* magazine, "breathtaking" by *Guitar Player*, and a "Celtic guitar god" by Baltimore's *City Paper*. His honors include Editor's Pick and Player's Choice Awards from *Acoustic Guitar Magazine*, the AFIM INDIE Award (with the trio Helicon), and the Swannanoa Gathering's Master Music Maker Award. Robin toured for ten years with Grammy-winning folk legend Tom Paxton. He now lives in Black Mountain, NC, where he teaches privately and performs throughout the region.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

INTRO TO AFRICAN FINGERSTYLE

This class will cover guitar styles and traditions from around the African continent as Cory explains the playing of East and West African players of yore. Through the use of tabs, audio, and live demonstrations, he will delve into tunings, scales, polyrhythms, and two-finger picking patterns. Cory will then discuss how he incorporated elements of these styles into his own playing and songwriting. This class is not meant to be "scholarly," but to merely demonstrate the possibilities of expanding one's fingerstyle game by looking at players and traditions from different parts of the African continent. (Class limit 16)

GROOVY FINGERSTYLE

This intermediate/advanced class will unveil a "bag of tricks" for fingerstyle guitarists seeking to explore new styles. The goal will be to develop both right-hand techniques (rumba-style, thumb-dragging, bass movement, African two-finger picking patterns, polyrhythms, etc.) and left-hand techniques (passing chords, inversions, New Orleanian and African ornamentation, and more). It will be a one-stop-shop that delves deeply into Cory's approach to the guitar. Students will be encouraged to take a song they know and apply some of the techniques learned in class. Tabs will be provided as support for the lessons. (Class limit 16)



Cory Seznec

Cory Seznec is a French-American musician whose work traces connections across musical cultures, allowing the past to resonate in the present. A distinctive, cross-pollinated guitarist, he also sings, plays banjo, and draws deeply from American song traditions. Extensive travels in Africa—including three years in Ethiopia—profoundly shaped his music. While based in Addis Ababa, he held down a gig at Mulatu Astatke's jazz club, recorded two albums, and undertook field recordings across the Ethiopian highlands. Seznec tours regularly with the group Touki, and is currently researching East African guitar music as a graduate student in ethnomusicology at the University of Maryland.

SLOWEST FLATPICKING CLASS EVER

In this class, students will learn tunes one note at a time and take the time to savor each note. It is great for beginners or folks who play chords but haven't had the chance to explore playing melodies yet. The class will be taught by ear; notepads and small recording devices are welcome. Although this is a great opportunity to start learning to use a flatpick, fingerpick players are also welcome to come learn the tunes. Danny will also teach the chords to the tunes to facilitate some jamming! (Class limit 16)

FLATPICKING AND RHYTHM TRICKS

In this intermediate/advanced class, students will learn flatpicking tunes and work on the picking hand's shuffle and "bum-ditty" that drives the music. Do you ever wear yourself out trying to keep up with the tempo of a fast tune? Danny will reveal some tricks to increase tempo and stamina, and he'll also share some of his favorite bass runs, fills, and passing chords for spicing up all of your favorite tunes and songs. This class is taught by ear and students are welcome to bring small recording devices and take notes. (Class limit 16)



Danny Knicely

Danny Knicely comes from a musical family steeped in mountain music for generations in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. He uses his roots to explore various types of music and has collaborated with musicians in over a dozen countries. He's won awards for his mandolin, guitar, and fiddle expertise and has taught at many camps including Augusta Heritage, Common Ground, Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival, and the Swannanoa Gathering. He's also twice been a Master Artist in the Virginia Folklife Organization's Apprenticeship Program. Danny has performed with Tony Rice, Vassar Clements, Tim O'Brien, Mac Wiseman, Rodney Dillard and John McEuen.

THEORY FOR GUITAR I

This class builds a solid foundation in music theory to enhance your guitar skills. Students will explore scales, intervals, chords, keys, and progressions, with unique tools to apply these concepts to their music. Using theory, the class will analyze well-known songs to answer, "Where'd they come up with that?" Suitable for all levels, including beginners, it's also great for returning students seeking a deeper dive. Bring your guitar and note-taking materials; handouts are provided. Perfect for guitarists and songwriter-guitarists eager to understand how music works in a fun, engaging way. (Class limit 16)

THEORY FOR GUITAR II

Theory for Guitar II expands on the fundamentals from Theory I with a quick review before diving into advanced topics. Explore seventh chords, diminished chords, chord extensions, playing melodies in harmony, modes, V chord applications, chord morphing, and the blues. Learn comprehensive methods to find and play these elements on the guitar. Bring your guitar and note-taking materials, and prepare for a hands-on, engaging experience. This workshop balances hard work with fun, deepening your understanding of music theory and elevating your playing skills. (Class limit 16)



Ray Chesna

Atlanta's *Creative Loafing* calls Ray Chesna a "local treasure who sings with the teddy-bear softness of Leon Redbone while playing some of the gentlest, most appealing guitar you're likely to hear." He has performed with Hazel Dickens, Kenny Baker, Josh Graves, and Béla Fleck. A private music teacher since 1971, Ray has taught at camps and festivals including the Augusta Heritage Center, the Kerrville Folk Festival, Guitar Intensives Bar Harbor, Club Passim, and the Swannanoa Gathering. Currently he performs in Western North Carolina with the acoustic trio Bones Creak and the jug band Moonshine, Stills & Mash.

FINGERPICKING BLUES & RAGS

In this advanced class, Mary will delve into left- and right-hand moves that drive both Delta and Piedmont guitar styles. Expect some Gary Davis and some of Mary's original songs that demonstrate syncopation, movable chords, alternating thumb, and dead thumb. Students will come away with new tunes as well as tools to apply to their own arrangements. Fingerpicking experience and the ability to read tablature will be helpful! (Class limit 16)

BAND IN THE HAND

This class for advanced beginners and up is all about pulling the best arrangement out of your guitar to best suit the song. It will explore how to make arrangements more compelling for songwriters or just those who want to make a song shine. This might include open tunings, bass runs, or just finding the right key for the melody. Mary will bring some example songs but we may take a look at your own songs. This class is not about the lyrics; it's all about the guitar accompaniment. If you need ideas, this class is for you. (Class limit 16)



Mary Flower

The award-winning guitarist and singer-songwriter Mary Flower is a prodigious talent whose seasoned skills have established her as one of America's foremost roots performers. She was honored to receive the Far West Folk Alliance award for "Best of the West" in 2025. Mary continues to teach and has just celebrated 12 years of Blues in the Gorge, her own guitar camp near Portland, OR. Her 13 recordings show a deep command of and love for blues guitar music. Mary's dedication to the art form is a vital contribution to American music, with Jorma Kaukonen calling her "a national treasure in your own backyard."

CLAWHAMMER GUITAR

This simple technique, once internalized, enables guitarists to create an astonishingly smooth groove, allowing melody, rhythm, and bass to flow effortlessly from your guitar. This intermediate class will be a total boot-camp immersion experience, with lots of playing and great fun as students watch themselves learn and grow over the week. (Class limit 16)

ORKNEY TUNING

Do you ever wish you sounded better than you do but feel unwilling and unmotivated to do the work? If so, try Orkney. With this wonderfully accessible and versatile tuning, students will experience textures and voicings that they've never heard come from their guitar before. Participants will also be jamming together by the end of the second class. (Class limit 16)



Steve Baughman

You may have heard Steven Baughman's solo guitar playing featured multiple times on NPR. His recordings have made several "best of" lists in *Acoustic Guitar Magazine*. The magazine recently described Steve's latest album as "a glorious and thoroughly satisfying collection" of ancient Irish harp music performed on solo guitar. Steve's old-time banjo and guitar playing have won him performance and teaching gigs across the United States, Canada, and Europe. He has taught at the Swannanoa Gathering over twenty times.

THE PERFORMING SONGWRITER'S GUITAR TOOLKIT

This advanced-beginner/intermediate class will explore tricks of the trade that will bring students' guitar arrangements to the next level. It will look closely at tone, rhythm work (both fingerstyle and flatpicking), and dynamics, as well as creating intros and outros, instrumental breaks, ornamentation, and strategies for variation and innovation when writing original music. (Class limit 16)

BLUES SOLOING & ACCOMPANIMENT

This advanced-beginner/intermediate class covers lead guitar playing in blues settings, including rhythmic phrasing, note choice, timing choices, soloing over changes, accompanying a vocalist, and more fun stuff! Students will play over slow blues, country blues, jazz blues, you name it. Ideally, students should have a little bit of music theory background. (Class limit 16)



Jon Shain

Hailing from Durham, NC, Jon Shain is a veteran singer-songwriter who's been turning heads for years with his fiery acoustic guitar work and his evolved musical style that combines improvised piedmont blues with bluegrass, swing, and ragtime. His newest album, *Restless Soul Syndrome* reached #5 on the Folk DJ chart. Shain is also the author of *Gettin' Handy With the Blues: A Tribute to the Legacy of W.C. Handy* and *Jon Shain's Fingerstyle Guitar Method*, both published by Mel Bay Publications. In 2019, Shain won the International Blues Challenge in Memphis, TN, in the solo/duo category.

FLATPICKING FOUNDATIONS

This class is a deep dive into getting the most out of your flatpicking approach. Setting aside the hot licks and flashy solos, students will instead uncover the fundamental techniques that develop drive, tone, and musicality. Alternating picking, string crossing, rhythmic variation, sustain, pick attack, tempo, volume, left-hand coordination, and more will be explored through exercises, examples, and concepts. Alan will also discuss practice techniques and how to most efficiently build skills. The class is intended for all levels, where newbies won't be left behind and experienced players may have the most to gain. (Class limit 16)

FLATPICKING FOR SELF-ACCOMPANIMENT

Following in the footsteps of Doc Watson and Norman Blake, this class will explore creating tasteful flatpicking arrangements for the solo guitarist. We will first learn to play the melody and chords for some well known songs, and then combine the melody and harmony to build fully developed unaccompanied solos. Participants will individually work out this process for a song already in their repertoire, and songwriters will be encouraged to try it on one of their own compositions. Bluegrass flatpicking experience is not necessary, but you should be comfortable using a pick. (Class limit 16)



Alan Barnosky

Alan Barnosky is a flatpicking guitarist, upright bassist, educator, songwriter, and working musician. He has performed and recorded as a multi-instrumentalist with such artists as The Barefoot Movement, Chatham Rabbits, and Omar Ruiz Lopez. Alan is also a columnist with *Acoustic Guitar Magazine* and teaches private lessons. He gigs regularly and co-leads a weekly bluegrass show every Sunday afternoon in Cary, NC, with The Eastside Ramblers. Originally from Michigan, Alan has made his home in central North Carolina since 2012.

SLIDEWAYS

This class explores bottleneck slide guitar for open D and G tunings. It will emphasize tone and technique as Mike teaches strategies for creating slide ideas based on time-honored songs from such artists as Mississippi Fred McDowell and Tampa Red, as well as tunes from his own original slide repertoire. With a toolbox of tips utilizing fretted chord forms, turnarounds, and crisp righthand techniques, participants will learn how to use a slide to add expression, color, and texture to their playing. Students should be able to play a simple alternating bass fingerpicking pattern. Handouts provided; audio recorders welcome. (Class limit 16)

RIFFS, RAGS, & BOOGIES

From the Delmore Brothers' infectious boogies to Louis Jordan's jump-style grooves, Mike uses tunes from blues, swing, and ragtime to show you techniques that will sharpen your ears, tighten your timing, and broaden your playing horizons. Learn new syncopations and chord progressions that will lay the foundation for improvisation. Students will play a lot in class and they might just pick up some practical music theory along the way. The course is suitable for both flat pickers and fingerstylists. Handouts provided, audio recorders encouraged. (Class limit 16)



Mike Dowling

When the late, great Vassar Clements heard Mike Dowling play guitar back in 1975, he did the sensible thing. He hired him. Clements called him simply "one of the finest guitarists there is, anywhere," a sentiment that's been echoed throughout his long career by peers and fans alike. A Grammy award-winner, Mike is known for his teaching as well as his playing. He's mentored countless students from throughout the world at music camps, guitar workshops, in lessons, and via the internet. He currently lives near St. Paul, MN, where he continues a busy schedule performing, teaching, and composing. And fly fishing.

SIGNATURE LICKS OF THE BLUES MASTERS

All the blues guitar greats from Memphis Minnie and Blind Blake to T-Bone Walker and B.B. King had a personal sound and distinct set of licks that set them apart. Slides, hammer-ons, pull-offs, bends, and chord forms all contributed to these players' engaging sounds. In this class students will examine these identifying characteristics and guitar expressions of the players we love, with an eye toward using them in our guitar playing to create our own original sound. (Class limit 16)

PROGRESSING WITH PROGRESSIONS

All songs have chord progressions. Whether a progression is simple or complex, there are many fun guitar chording tricks and licks that can enhance your playing. Using blues, swing, country, and folk styles, this class explores many common chord progressions, turnarounds, sequences, diminished chords, and bass lines that professionals use to create flowing accompaniment and melodic chord soloing. (Class limit 16)



Pat Donohue

Grammy-winning fingerpicker Pat Donohue's devotion to the acoustic guitar has made him an American standard, drawing on the tones of Robert Johnson, Blind Blake, Merle Travis, and Muddy Waters. Chet Atkins called him one of the greatest fingerpickers in the world, and Leo Kottke described his playing as "haunting." For over twenty years, Pat served as lead guitarist and songwriter for the Guy's All-Star Shoe Band on *A Prairie Home Companion*. He now tours widely, performing in concert halls, coffeehouses, and eclectic listening rooms, and teaches workshops at leading guitar camps across the country.

RHYTHM, HARMONY, & MELODY

Rhythm, harmony, and melody are a deeply intertwined trinity. This class will broaden students' understanding of each aspect individually while simultaneously examining their elasticity and interconnectedness as they relate to improvisation. It is not a traditional theory class but is instead a holistic view into the workings of music that can help your creativity as a performer, composer, or arranger. (Class limit 16)

THREE NOTES AND THE TRUTH

Triads are made of three notes. They can be used as the building blocks of a chord or applied as harmonic extensions. They can also be the foundation of an improvisational style that is both simple and complex. This class will walk students through the process of learning triads, which will in turn open up their understanding of the fretboard while enhancing their use of triads as a tool of improvisation and harmonic depth. (Class limit 16)



Grant Gordy

For many guitarists, performing with David Grisman's trailblazing quintet would be a career pinnacle, but for Grant Gordy it began his evolving musical journey. Now a leading voice in American acoustic music based in New York City, Grant's work has appeared on NPR and in major publications including *Jazz Guitar Today* and *Acoustic Guitar Magazine*. *The Fretboard Journal* described him as "An exciting young player who, despite a plethora of influences, now sounds like nobody but himself." Grant currently performs with Mr Sun, in a duo with Ross Martin, and with his own Quartet featuring Alex Hargreaves and Dominick Leslie.

LUTHIERS EXHIBIT



Steve Nall

After four years in the 82nd Airborne, Steve Nall ("Nully") set out to build a life around his passion for guitars. A lifelong player, he became fascinated with the sound of one of his acoustic guitars, leading him to study luthiery and enroll at Roberto-Venn in 1999. After working in repair and restoration at Woodsong's Lutherie in Boulder, Nully realized his true calling was building. In 2001 he joined Collings Guitars, eventually managing the neck department for a decade. Since 2016, he has served as Director of Manufacturing, remaining deeply inspired by the instruments, the builders, and the guitar community.



David Sheppard

David Sheppard began his career as an instrument repairman in Greensboro, NC, in 1974. His shop soon became a hub for musicians and collectors seeking expert repair work and a deeper knowledge of stringed instruments. After nearly 30 years, he relocated to Charleston, SC, where he continued his repair business for a decade and toured extensively with the old-time string band The South Carolina Broadcasters, a group he co-founded. David now lives in Mount Airy, NC, providing high-quality repair and restoration services for professional and amateur musicians, collectors, and dealers nationwide.



John Slobod

John Slobod began his career in 1993 at the Timeless Instruments guitar-building intensive in Moose Jaw, Canada. He then went to work for Dana Bourgeois at Pantheon Guitars in Maine. There, he carved necks, voiced hundreds of tops, and completed binding and final voicing on nearly 4,000 instruments. In 1998, he began working with Julius Borges and Eric Schoenberg and soon launched Circa Guitars, his own line of vintage-inspired instruments using traditional methods. John builds guitars for many top players, working closely with clients to optimize voice and feel so they can better express their art through the instrument.



Photo by Jerry Hsu

Guitar Week. JULY 26–AUGUST 1, 2026

Classes run Monday-Friday

7:30-8:30am	**BREAKFAST** (Monday-Saturday)							
9:00-10:15am	**Blues Soloing & Accompaniment** (Shain)	**Groovy Fingerstyle** (Seznec)	**Guitarists of the 1960s British Folk Revival** (Carroll)	**Theory for Guitar I** (Chesna)	**Flatpicking Foundations** (Barnosky)	**Celtic Fingerstyle** (Bullock)	**Tangos Flamencos** (Ferguson)	**Clawhammer Guitar** (Baughman)
10:15-10:45am	**COFFEE/TEA BREAK** (Monday-Friday)							
10:45am-12:00pm	**Live Interactive Performance** (Lenée)	**Flatpicking & Rhythm Tricks** (Knicely)	**Theory For Guitar II** (Chesna)	**Three Notes and the Truth** (Gordy)	**The Music of Al Petteway** (Bullock)	**Jammin' with Charlie Christian** (Alden)	**Soleá** (Ferguson)	**Signature Licks of the Blues Masters** (Donohue)
11:30am-1:00pm	**LUNCH** (Monday-Friday)							
1:00-2:15pm	**SEMINAR/FACULTY PANELS, LUTHIERS EXHIBIT** (Nall, Sheppard, and Slobod)**, DAILY DJANGO JAM SESSION**							
2:15-3:30pm	**Creative Composition with Fingerstyle** (Lenée)	**Fingerpicking Blues & Rags** (Knicely)	**Hot Jazz II** (O'Rourke)	**The Performing Songwriter's Guitar Toolkit** (Shain)	**Progressing with Progressions** (Donohue)	**Slowest Flatpicking Class Ever** (Knicely)	**Rhythm, Harmony, & Melody** (Gordy)	**Slideways** (Dowling)
3:45-5:00pm	**Intro to African Fingerstyle** (Seznec)	**Flatpicking for Self-Accompaniment** (Barnosky)	**Hot Jazz I** (O'Rourke)	**Orkney Tuning** (Baughman)	**Fun with the Duke** (Alden)	**Guitar Group** (Carroll)	**Riffs, Rags, & Boogies** (Dowling)	**Band in the Hand** (Flower)
5:00-6:30pm	**SUPPER** (Sunday-Friday)							
7:30pm-?	**EVENING EVENTS** (concerts, jam sessions, etc.)							



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"Beatuiful. We made new friends, renewed a few others and shared the love of music."

2025 ATTENDEE



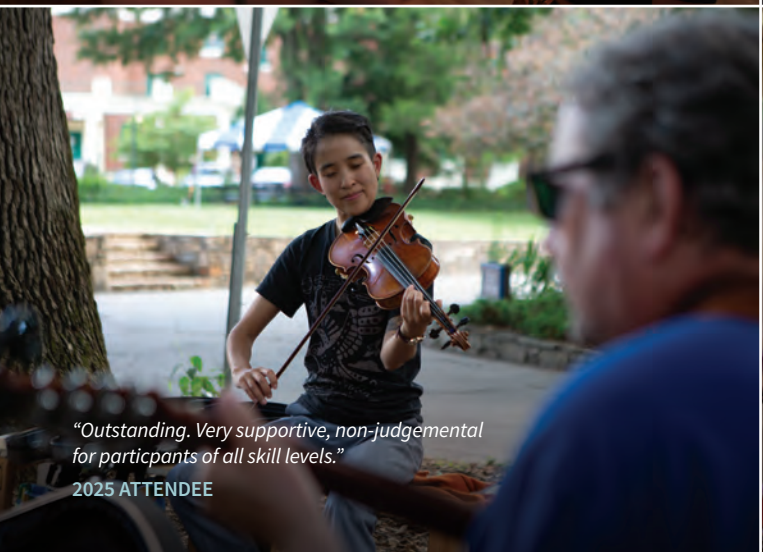
"The campus is beautiful, the food is healthy and excellent, the fellow campers are a community, the teaching staff is world class."

2024 ATTENDEE



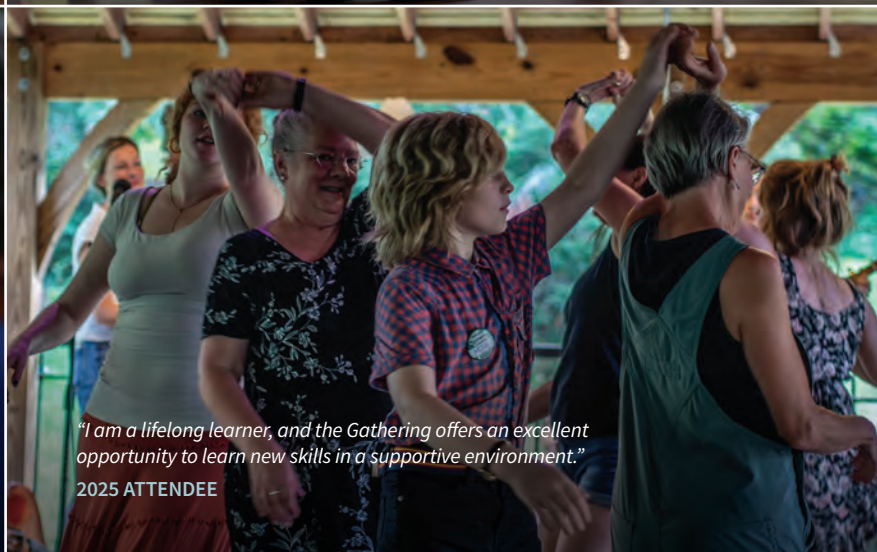
"Top notch teachers, lovely setting, well-organized from start to finish."

2024 ATTENDEE



"Outstanding. Very supportive, non-judgemental for particpants of all skill levels."

2025 ATTENDEE



"I am a lifelong learner, and the Gathering offers an excellent opportunity to learn new skills in a supportive environment."

2025 ATTENDEE