

2022 Blue Ridge Old Time Music Instructors

Advanced Old-Time Fiddle & Harmony Fiddle with Bowing:

David Bragger & Susan Platz

David and Susan are excited to present their favorite intensive fiddle workshop at Mars Hill. Students will be learning a variety of old-time fiddle tunes in great depth, broken down phrase-by-phrase. And, yes, all of the **bowing** will be clearly demonstrated and taught in this course. It's David and Susan's specialty since old-time fiddling is almost entirely about the bowing!

For each tune, they will also be teaching harmony parts that emphasize fundamental chords, bowing rhythms and seconding techniques. Additionally, these techniques will be clearly taught independently of a particular tune, so fiddlers can apply them to any tune, anywhere. Expect to learn many great tunes with bowing, harmony parts and the ultimate fiddle seconding toolkit!

"There's twin fiddling, and then there's David Bragger and Susan Platz. Their music really reaches into that space where two instruments become one and draws you right in with it. Their debut CD, [King's Lament](#), is one of the most sonorous and rhythmically locked-in sets of tunes you'll hear." --**Bruce Molsky**

"Bragger and Platz's contrapuntal, droney playing winds through crooked, mysterious, and deeply groovy, minimalist jams that are just as likely to get you dancing as trancing." --**Dusted Magazine**

David Bragger is a Los Angeles-based old-time musician, instructor and founder of [The Old-Time Tiki Parlour](#). After years of studying with his mentors Mel Durham and Tom Sauber and visiting old-time musicians including Dan Gellert, Charlie Acuff, Benton Flippen, Clyde Davenport and Joe Thompson, David has become a go-to-guru for learning old-time fiddle and bowing techniques as well as old-time banjo. He has students all over the world and is in great demand as a workshop teacher at traditional music festivals and camps. David is also the Old-Time String Band Ensemble director in the UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology. In addition to teaching, he documents the greatest living old-time musicians for future generations through his critically-acclaimed label: Tiki Parlour Recordings.

Susan Platz, originally from Illinois, became a permanent member of the old-time band Sausage Grinder after years of studying fiddle with David Bragger. Her bowing rhythms and harmonies fit hand in glove with David's fiddle and banjo. She is also a tremendously powerful singer whose is known to yodel on occasion. After experimenting with double fiddle arrangements for several years, Susan and David recorded the very first American old-time double fiddle album and have been in high demand as workshop instructors ever since.

VIDEO:

[Sally in the Garden - David Bragger & Susan Platz](#)

Fiddle Blues and Rags: Mick Kinney

As very important elements of many old time tunes and songs, ragtime and blues pieces make for exciting string band material. This year we are offering a retrospective of over 10 years of Fiddle Rags & Blues taught by Mick & Evan at Mars Hill! More than 100 pieces will be demonstrated for both melody and rhythm instruments, first slowly, then natural tempo.

Recommended level is intermediate to advancing players.

Mick & Evan Kinney are multi instrumentalists in a number of styles and have been performing and teaching old time music as a team for many years. In addition to their commitment to preserving traditional tunes from their home state of Georgia, they have taught the Fiddle Rags & Blues class at Mars Hill

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BROTMW since 2010, and have been featured at Festival of American Fiddle Tunes, Swannanoa Gathering, Alabama Folk School, Delaware Valley and Brooklyn Folk Fest.

Intermediate Fiddle: Tricia Spencer

Tricia Spencer will teach fiddle tunes her family has played for generations as well as other tunes from masters of old-time music that she has learned throughout her lifetime. She will also unlock the mysteries of seconding, which allows a fiddler to focus on bowing, intonation, and learning tunes more quickly through the use of chord shapes. All tunes and techniques will be learned by ear, so be sure to bring a recording device, paper and pen if you want to take notes, and expect to have a lot of fun.

Tricia Spencer is a Kansas fiddler who grew up on her family's farm learning the tradition of old-time fiddling knee to knee from her grandpa and grandma, Vernon and Iona Spencer. In her youth, she and her family traveled to fiddler's conventions throughout the midwest where she learned from master fiddlers like Pete McMahan, Cyril Stinnett, Violet Hensley, Vesta Johnson, Lyman Enloe, Dwight Lamb, Amos Chase, and Lucy Pierce. Tricia is known for her unique approach to seconding on the fiddle and is an author, teacher, artist, composer, and multi-instrumentalist.

Early Intermediate Fiddle Jerry Adams Style: Josh Goforth

"It sound like he's playing 3 banjos!" "Where did that note come from?" "Nearly impossible" These are just a few quotes I've heard about the spectacular 2 finger banjo style of Jerry Adams from Madison County, NC. Jerry was a regular at the Old Time Music week and sadly passed away several years ago. I grew up jamming in the back store of his pharmacy and having him haul me around to fiddler's conventions. I was able to soak up his unique sound through the many hours I spent playing fiddle next to him. He utilized what I call "ghost hammers". Sound intriguing? Come join us and learn a one of a kind local style that is perfect for accompanying old time songs as well as fiddle tunes. Recommended for intermediate and advanced. Tab will be provided if needed.

Josh Goforth must have been born musical—he was already playing piano in church at the age of four—but it was an experience he had in the sixth grade that really lit the fuse of his precocious musical career. A performance at Goforth's middle school by [Sheila Kay Adams](#) caused him to start thinking about the musical heritage and stories of his native Madison County, NC. Josh was able to listen and learn from local masters like Gordon and Arvil Freeman and Jerry Adams. Goforth is a highly accomplished storyteller and acoustic musician playing close to 20 different instruments.

After high school he went to East Tennessee State University to study music education with a Euphonium concentration, and to be a part of ETSU's famous Bluegrass and Country Music Program. In 2000, he played fiddle for the movie *Songcatcher*, both onscreen and on the soundtrack. He has toured extensively with a variety of ensembles, including the ETSU Bluegrass band, [David Holt](#), [Laura Boosinger](#), and with several bluegrass bands like Appalachian Trail, the Josh Goforth Trio, the Steep Canyon Rangers and Open Road. He has performed in all 50 US states, all over Europe, Asia, and Australia. In 2000, 2003, and 2005, he was named Fiddler of the Festival at Fiddler's Grove and, after winning the third title, was designated "Master Fiddler" and retired from that competition. He has performed at the Grand Ole Opry, the Lincoln Center, as well as Carnegie Hall. In 2009 he was nominated for a Grammy for his album with David Holt entitled "Cutting Loose". He currently is on faculty at the Academy for the Arts in Asheville and performs all over the world.

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Advanced Banjo: Rachel Eddy

During this week of banjo class, we will focus a lot on how to be solid players, and to use your thumb to make the banjo swing in different percussive ways. We will work through several tunes that have helpful techniques and licks, and talk about how to fit and apply those ideas to tunes you already know. Some time will be spent addressing how to have a really good economy of motion with your claws, how to gain speed and drive, and easily be able to syncopate and texturize your playing by using phantom notes and drop thumbs. It would also be fun to work with some ideas on how to accompany and compliment singing. For this class it is encouraged that you be comfortable using your drop-thumb on all the strings, able to play in different tunings, and know the chords in each tuning. I teach only by ear, video recording is encouraged in a session at the end of class each day, and audio recording is always welcome.

Rachel Eddy is a native of West Virginia who grew up in a musical family steeped in the traditions of Appalachian music and dance. Now based in Alexandria VA, they are known throughout the world as both a dynamic, emotionally powerful performer and an engaging, thoughtful teacher. Rachel's soulful singing and multi-instrumental finesse—including fiddle, banjo, guitar, and mandolin—may be heard on numerous solo and collaborative recordings as well as at dances and jam sessions, where Rachel is dedicated to fostering community and sharing a love of music with others.

Intermediate Banjo: Robby Robertson

If you have a good, solid "bum-ditty" and you can play a few tunes and chords on the banjo in the keys of D, G and A, you are probably ready for this class. Intermediate Banjo will get you more comfortable with techniques such as drop thumb, hammer-ons and pull-offs. It will also help you become comfortable with learning to play tunes and songs by ear. A recording device or phone will be helpful.

Robby Robertson grew up playing music with friends and family around Western North Carolina and Upstate South Carolina. He plays for dances and gatherings that aren't too far from home and has taught old-time music to kids through the JAM program in Haywood County for over 20 years. He's the real deal.

Early Intermediate Banjo: Bob Buckingham

The right hand technique is the key to playing clawhammer banjo with drive and melody. We will focus on getting the right timing, including methods for varying that timing to accommodate a range of melodies. Combined with some simple left hand techniques, we will bring some classic old time banjo pieces to life. Bring a recording/video device, like a cellphone or other and be prepared to trust your eyes and ears to learn these techniques.

Bob Buckingham started playing guitar in the early 1960's and soon branched out to banjo, fiddle and then mandolin. He has played in several bands over the years and done recording sessions for Gospel, Blues, Bluegrass, and old time music sessions. He has recorded one CD under his own name and several in different band settings.

For the past twenty years he has managed to make a living by teaching and performing. He has taught previously at BROTMW, John C. Campbell Folk School and The North Carolina Banjo Clinic, as well as classes for Isothermal Community College, Columbus campus. He teaches private lessons and is on the staff at the Polk County, NC JAM program.

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He is married to Amy Buckingham and they live in the Blue Ridge area of South Carolina.

Advanced Guitar: Howard Rains

Howard will teach his approach to playing guitar for the fiddle. Although his style is rooted in the midwestern back-up style, his approach is applicable to backing up all styles of American fiddling. He will discuss how he accompanies different regional styles. The importance of the boom-chuck and bass runs will be discussed as well as how to listen for different regional fiddle styles and how to make your playing fit within that style.

Howard Rains is an artist, fiddler, singer, and guitar player from Texas now living in Kansas. His two obsessions are music and painting. He is the fourth generation to play on the same fiddle that was made for his great-grandfather and learned to play the guitar from his dad. The New York Times has said, "Rains has established himself as an authority on old Texas-style fiddling." Howard plays rare, old tunes learned from friends, family, mentors, and old recordings. As much known for his painting as his fiddling, Howard has focused much of his work on his unique watercolor style.

Intermediate Guitar: Hilary Dirlam

This intermediate guitar class will cover what to do after you've learned to "boom-chuck" along with traditional tunes and simple songs in the keys of E,A,D,G and C. We will start with bass runs, including how and when to incorporate them. We will discuss chords, and what to try when there are more than the usual familiar three in a song or tune. Other topics will include:

- Improving your rhythm
- Simple chord forms up the neck
- Backing up your singing
- Use of the capo
- The dreaded circle of fifths
- Learning to use the little finger of your left hand
- Practice routines
- Other topics that you're interested in

This is Hilary's 30th year at Mars Hill and her last year to teach- so if you want to pick her brain for a week, this is the year to do it!

If you're interested in the class, please feel free to email me with questions and suggestions- silvervajra@gmail.com

Hilary Dirlam started playing the guitar at the age of 13. Her performing, recording, and teaching experience includes guitar as well as bass, banjo, and piano. She has taught at numerous music camps, performed at international music festivals, and recorded with many old-time bands. In addition, she has co-authored four All-in-One fiddle/banjo books with Mary Gordon and done extensive recording of traditional music in the country of Nepal.

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Early Intermediate Guitar: Susie Coleman

A New Approach to Old-Time Guitar focuses on using the simplicity of alternating bass to help you become a powerful, reliable and confident old-time rhythm guitarist, featuring effective exercises to build strength and muscle memory in both hands. In addition to learning multiple fiddle tunes every session, students will study arrangement and timing basics, kickoffs, simple bass note runs, how to identify chord patterns by ear, how to navigate both square and crooked tunes, and a comprehensive overview of the Nashville Number System. Course includes a copy of the Pegram Jam Chord Chart Book, a fiddle tune reference for old-time rhythm players. We will work with first-position open chords only. Students should be familiar with most common major and minor chord shapes, be able to strum smoothly and have developed sufficient callouses and hand strength to play for a couple hours at a time.

On **Susie's** living room wall hang many singing awards from the annual Old-Time Singing competition at Middle Tennessee's Smithville Fiddlers Jamboree, from the Indiana State Folksinging contest, plus top awards at Uncle Dave Macon Days, Bluegrass Along The Harpeth and numerous other traditional music competitions. A lifelong musician and rhythm guitar player, she has served multiple years as a judge at regional fiddler's conventions and written a series of four songbooks entitled Fabulous Folksongs Every Girl Should Know. Susie and fiddler-husband Kirk Pickering run the PegramJam.com website offering free audio recordings of hundreds of old-time tunes, and created the popular Pegram Jam Chord Chart Book. In addition to giving rhythm guitar and singing lessons, Susie is a web and graphics designer. Visit her website at folkslingers.com.

Rhythm and Repertoire: Erynn Marshall & Carl Jones

In this rhythm and repertoire class, Carl and Erynn will play several of their favorite, southern, fiddle, mando and banjo tunes at slow and faster tempos. Bluesy to bucolic trad numbers, chestnuts and the obscure, plus an original tune or two will be added to the mix. All instruments are welcome in this class. We will form an all-star stringband – having fun playing tunes from West Virginia, Round Peak, Mississippi and everything in-between. Chord options for unusual tunes and different rhythmic approaches for a variety of instruments will be explored. Repertoire will be taught quickly by ear during the workshop. Music/chord sheets will be provided to take home. Recording devices are recommended. You are invited to join this group of merry music makers! www.dittyville.com

Erynn Marshall and Carl Jones are old-time musicians and inspired tunesmiths from Hillsville, Virginia. They are married - in life and music. Southern song-duets and powerful fiddle, guitar, mandolin, banjo tunes comprise their diverse sets. Erynn and Carl play with ease, spontaneity and vitality. While rooted in the traditional sounds of older players, this duo stays true to their own muse by composing new, tradition-rooted music. Their original tunes and songs are played by many musicians play around the world and Carl's song, *Last Time on the Road* was featured on the Grammy-award winning album "Unleashed" by the Nashville Bluegrass Band. Instrumentally, Marshall and Jones have won many awards for their playing including Erynn's 1st place fiddle win at Clifftop and Mt Airy fiddler's conventions, and Carl's 3rd place fingerpicking-guitar win at Winfield. In 2020 they released *Old Tin* - their 15th recording between them. In 2021, Eryn and Carl were on Old-Time Sweethearts Vol. 1 & 2, (produced by Erynn Marshall and Rachel Eddy featuring 12 old-time music couples from across the United States). For more information on Erynn Marshall and Carl Jones please visit www.dittyville.com

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Beginning Mountain Dulcimer: Margaret Wright

Margaret will focus on Beginner and New Player level dulcimer students. The focus will be fretboard familiarity, rhythmic, musical strumming techniques, and tune acquisition in the keys of D, G and A. All subjects will be presented within the framework of fun, old-time tune material. This class is totally "hands-on!" Tunes will be taught by rote with ear training and muscle memory encouraged. However, tablature will be available. Be sure that your dulcimer is playable (don't just take it down off a wall and make assumptions!) Have it checked for string height and any buzzes. A capo will be needed and an electronic tuner. Your dulcimer should have a 6 ½ fret, but please do not add 1 ½ (unless it is already there.) Bring a set of extra strings and a device for recording. If you are not sure about your skill level, you may contact Margaret. margaretwright@yahoo.com

Margaret Wright has been seriously playing the Mountain Dulcimer since 1994. A not-so-by-chance visit to the McSpadden Dulcimer Shoppe changed the course of her family's life. Margaret teaches all around the country and loves to get folks started and direct them toward Old Time Music and jamming. She and her late husband, Jerry, organized the very popular Palestine (Texas) Old Time Music and Dulcimer Festival in 2002. She utilizes an enjoyable teaching style with a goal of getting you playing! Margaret is also the collector of tunes and author of the Twelve Tune Songbooks, a set of booklets devoted to transcribing tunes into a simple to read dulcimer tablature. She and her family, including sons, Hollis and Lloyd, have 8 cd's to their credit. She would enjoy hearing from you. margaretwright@yahoo.com

Advanced Dulcimer: Hunter Walker

This class will delve into the repertoires of old fiddlers mainly from West Virginia, Kentucky, Virginia, and North Carolina. We will learn tunes commonly found in jam sessions while also exploring some squirrelly, crooked, and obscure tunes whose history is as fascinating as their melodies. In keeping with oral tradition, there will be no tablature for this class, but tools for retention of the material will be offered. Students should have a solid repertoire of tunes, have a working knowledge of various chord shapes along the fingerboard, and be willing to have an open mind about how diverse Old-Time Music can be. Class will be taught in D-A-d, and will require a 6+ fret and capo.

Southern West Virginia native **Hunter Walker** is recognized as an in-demand and driving force in the Old-Time community for his innovation with the mountain dulcimer - as well as his skills as a banjo player. As a five-time WV state mountain dulcimer champion and current WV state banjo champion, and Mid-Eastern Regional mountain dulcimer champion, Hunter has garnered multiple blue-ribbon finishes at many prestigious venues, including the Appalachian String Band Music Festival at Clifftop, WV, The Vandalia Gathering, Coshocton Dulcimer Days, Galax Old Fiddlers' Convention, and countless others. His current work is with Long Point String Band and is a teacher of traditional Old-Time Music.

Old Time Mandolin Intermediate/Advanced: Adam Tanner

This class is designed for those who can already play a few fiddle tunes from any style in the keys of A, D, G and C

Of all the instruments heard in Old Time string band music the role of the mandolin is perhaps the least defined, for this reason it is one of the most creative and satisfying instruments to play.

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Over the course of the week we will cover techniques for embellishment and ornamentation of several fiddle tunes in the keys of A, G, D, C., F and B flat combining aspects of both melody and rhythm.

Other topics included in this course are; chord accompaniment for both songs and tunes.

Using the flatpick to approximate the sound and feel of fiddle bowing.

An overview and dissection of several important mandolin players from the 1920's and 1930's including Doc Roberts and Ted Hawkins.

Adam grew up in northern California, and was exposed to old-time, acoustic blues, bluegrass and early country music in his early teens.

Proficient on fiddle, mandolin, guitar and vocals, Adam spent countless hours slowing down records trying to pick out every detail of the traditional music he loved.

Many years of study have given Adam the flexibility to speak in more than one musical "language".

Adam's approach to playing reflects the diversity of styles heard on the early 78rpm discs and field recordings from which he draws his greatest inspiration.

Over the last 20 years, Adam has toured in both the US and Europe as a member of The Crooked Jades, The Hunger Mountain Boys and The Twilite Broadcasters, and most recently The Vaden Landers Band.

Adam has taught old time fiddle, guitar, and mandolin at The Swannanoa Gathering, Mars Hill College Blue Ridge Old Time Week, Augusta Heritage Old Time Week,

The Port Townsend Acoustic Blues Workshop and Mike Compton's Monroe Mandolin Camp.

Adam currently has eight recordings in his catalog and has written an e book on old time mandolin entitled "Shuffle of the Pick" available in Apple iBooks, and Amazon.

Adam is currently on staff at East Tennessee State University's, Bluegrass, Old-Time and Country Music program.

In 2001 Adam moved from Seattle Washington to take up residence in Weaverville, NC., where he enjoys rural living, and fiddlers conventions every summer.

Intermediate & Advanced Bass: Kellie Allen

As a prerequisite for taking this course, students must be able to play bass up to a moderate speed on old-time tunes. In this course, above all else, the emphasis will be on providing solid bass rhythm in an old-time string band setting. We will move beyond the "ones and fives" bass style by exploring bass runs to move from chord to chord in a given song or tune. We will practice the art of recognizing certain patterns in old-time fiddle tunes. We will address the best ways to interact with guitar players in old-time music and what style of bass playing, if any, works best in various old-time music contexts. We will learn about playing in two and possibly three positions on the neck in the common old-time keys, and we will cover some tricks for playing in the less common old-time keys, such as F and Bb. This course is for those willing to play upright, acoustic bass. Please bring a recording device.

Kellie may be contacted through <https://kellieandpete.net/>

Kellie Allen

An old-time singer and backup guitarist and bass player, Kellie Allen hails from Kansas but now lives in Oxford, Pennsylvania with her partner, Pete Peterson. She started playing old-time tunes with her brother, fiddler and banjo player Greg Allen, while she was in her teens and was inspired to sing and play by her musical family. She served a stint in Pay Attention, a 1980s indie rock band, and later toured Europe playing old time music with the Delaware River String Band. Known for her bass run backup guitar style, she sings old-time and early country duets with Pete and in a trio with Pete and Beverly Smith. Kellie

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teaches old-time guitar, bass, and singing at festivals and music camps, and has won prizes with the Orpheus Supertones and Waking Up Tillie, as well as individual awards in Old-Time Singing. She and Pete have a CD of duets titled "I'll Never Forsake You." <https://kellieandpete.net/>

Appalachian Singing Styles: Kay Justice and Sam Gleaves

This class will explore a variety of singing styles typically found in the mountains of Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina. Each day will focus on a different style, including gospel, unaccompanied singing, the Carter Family, the Stanley Brothers and other songs commonly sung in the region. Many of the songs have beautiful harmony parts that we will break down and explore in class. Song lyrics will be provided and the class is open to everyone.

Sam Gleaves is a singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist originally from Wytheville, Virginia. He began playing old time Appalachian music as a teenager. While studying folklore at Berea College, Sam performed with the Berea College Bluegrass Ensemble directed by Al White. He has recorded five albums, most of which were produced in collaboration with his sheroes, Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer. Sam has performed throughout the U.S. and in Ireland, England, Canada, Japan and Italy. He currently serves as Appalachian Instruments Instructor and Bluegrass Ensemble Director at Berea College.

Kay Justice By now a familiar face at the Blue Ridge Old Time Music Week, Kay Justice along with Sam Gleaves returns to teach harmony singing. As a young student nurse, Kay began playing guitar and singing popular folk music of the day. She soon discovered that she was drawn to the old songs from the Appalachian mountains and began looking for recordings of early artists from the area. Later, as a student at Clinch Valley College in Wise, VA, she was introduced to some of those same artists and their music. She was particularly interested in singers from SW Virginia and Eastern Kentucky. Her love of the music from the Carter Family, the Stanley Brothers, as well as lesser known singers such as Kate Peters Sturgill, Dock Boggs, George Tucker continues today. Kay has performed and recorded with Ginny Hawker, The Herald Angel Band and she has taught at numerous music camps including Augusta, Ashokan, Swannanoa, Cowen Creek and Allegheny Echoes.