

Blue Ridge Old Time Music Week 2023 Instructors

David Bragger

Traditional fiddler and banjoist **David Bragger** has become a ubiquitous figure in traditional American folk music. He is a musician, documentarian, UCLA ensemble director, 78rpm record collector, musical festival director and co-founder of the independent folk label Tiki Parlour Recordings. Having learned the “old-time” art of fiddling directly from two generations of traditional masters, David has been passing down these archaic musical secrets and sounds to fiddlers and banjo players worldwide. His critically-acclaimed debut CD *Big Fancy* instantly put him on the traditional music map and paved the way for his groundbreaking sophomore release. In 2018, he and fiddler Susan Platz released the very first American old-time fiddle duet CD ever recorded: *King’s Lament—Old-Time Fiddle Duets*. David has also recorded and performed with artists as diverse as Brad Leftwich & Linda Higginbotham, Hog-eyed Man, Rafe Stefanini, Bad Religion, Social Distortion, Paula Poundstone, Greg Graffin, and also provided the banjo and fiddle solos for the western feature film “Gone Are the Days.” David has also produced, directed and recorded over 27 CDs and video projects for Tiki Parlour Recordings.



Susan Platz

Susan Platz, originally from Illinois, has been singing and playing the violin all her life. She holds a degree in music from Lawrence University, and 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. Susan serves as the Director's Assistant in the UCLA Old-Time String Band Ensemble, and is a two-time winner of the Santa Barbara Old Time Fiddlers' Convention. She is also a powerful singer known to yodel on occasion. Susan and David collaborated to release the first-ever old-time fiddle duet album, *King's Lament*. Having forged a powerhouse old-time duo with David, she has been invited to teach and perform fiddle duets across the US and abroad.



Howard Rains

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.



Tricia Spencer

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.



Judy Hyman and Jeff Claus

Judy and **Jeff** have a deep and abiding love of Southern traditional fiddle music and have taught at many camps, schools, and festivals throughout the U.S. over many decades.

They're co-founding members of the alt-folk-rock band, The Horse Flies (www.thehorseflies.com), about whom the *New York Times* wrote: "The Horse Flies have figured out how to hold a hoedown in a physics lab." *Rolling Stone* said, "They churn out swirling, addictive songs, blending tradition with invention." The Flies toured extensively in the U.S., Canada, and Europe; recorded 7 albums, including some on Rounder Records and MCA; appeared on a number of national radio and television programs (Prairie Home Companion, All Things Considered, Mountain Stage, eTown, MTV); and played a long list of festivals and concert series, including Central Park Summerstage, Telluride, Vancouver Folk, Winnipeg Folk, Festival of American Fiddle Tunes, and the Smithsonian Festival of American Folk Life.

Judy and Jeff have also created music for over 25 feature and documentary films (www.j2filmmusic.com), including two with The Horse Flies. And, in 2020, they produced Jake Blount's album, *Spider Tales*, which received strong reviews from *NPR*, *Rolling Stone*, *No Depression*, *Paste*, *The Guardian*, *Billboard*, and many more.

Judy's been featured in *Fiddler Magazine*, was selected as one of their top 20 fiddlers in 2013, and was commissioned to create a new waltz to celebrate their 25th anniversary in 2019. She's honored that a number of prominent players have recorded her original tunes (e.g., Jake Blount, Tatiana Hargreaves and Allison de Groot, George Jackson, Rodney Miller, The Moon Shells). She's toured and recorded with Natalie Merchant several times and appears on two of her albums. She released an album of her original waltzes, *Late Last Summer*, with her father, pianist Dick Hyman, and she received an Emmy award for one of her documentary film scores. Critics have described her playing as haunting, gorgeous, sepia-tone, stirring, powerful, rousing, playful, impressive, and beautiful. (www.judyhyman.com)

Jeff plays backup guitar and banjo ukulele, and is a devoted fan of rhythm, groove, and drone. He also writes songs and sings. He's been written about in *Acoustic Guitar* magazine and has had his songs and music used by Natalie Merchant, film director Oliver Stone (in *Any Given Sunday*), MTV's *Rock the Vote*, and the film, *Buck*. In his film scoring work with Judy he both composes and engineers.



Brad Kolodner

Growing up in a musical family, **Brad** was exposed to old time and folk music from birth. His father Ken Kolodner is a renowned hammered dulcimer player and fiddler who toured for many years in the folk trio Helicon. When Brad picked up the banjo at age 17 after taking a clawhammer banjo course from Richie Stearns, everything started to click into place. Since then, he's charted a path centered on performing, recording, broadcasting and community organizing. He's an acclaimed clawhammer banjo player who performs with the chart-topping Irish, Old-Time, Bluegrass fusion quartet **Charm City Junction**. He's recorded four albums of old time and original music with his father Ken under the name **Ken & Brad Kolodner** including their latest Billboard-charting release *Stony Run* (2020). Joined by their bandmates Rachel Eddy and Alex Lacquement, the quartet won first place in the neo-traditional band contest at Clifftop in 2019. Brad is a five-time finalist in the banjo contest at Clifftop. He's performed across the country on some of the biggest stages for folk and bluegrass music including the Kennedy Center, Strathmore, American Folk Festival, Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival, Charm City Bluegrass Festival and Old Songs Folk Festival. His debut solo album **Chimney Swifts** released in the fall of 2021. He represents the next generation of Old-Time musicians pushing the boundaries of the tradition into uncharted territory. Regarded for his delicate touch, expressive style, and original compositions, Kolodner has rapidly gained national attention for his unique approach to the banjo.



Cathy Fink

Cathy Fink is a multi-GRAMMY® Award winning artist continuing a 49-year love affair with the banjo. Her banjo music includes a wide traditional repertoire plus original compositions played on everything from fretless minstrel-style banjos to modern replicas of instruments from the 1920's. Cathy's first solo banjo recording, "Banjo Haiku" has become an underground bible of the old-time clawhammer style. "Banjo Talkin'", the 2007 release with special guest, Marcy Marxer, won a GRAMMY® nomination in the "Best Traditional Folk Album" category. Nat Hentoff of The Progressive and Village voice stated, "***Her sound, phrasing, and resilient time combine with a compelling presence.***" Cathy teaches banjo online at www.truefire.com, www.homespuntutapes.com, and in person at numerous camps & workshops. She directed "The Old Time Banjo Festival" annual concert in tribute to Mike Seeger and now co-directs the Online Old Time Banjo Contest with Adam Hurt. Cathy took first place in the banjo competition at the Appalachian String Band Festival in Clifftop, WV in 2018 and was the first woman to win the West Virginia State Banjo contest in 1980.



Marcy Marxer

Marcy is a two-time GRAMMY Award winner and fourteen-time GRAMMY nominee whose instrumental playing spans a variety of styles- swing rhythm and lead, bluegrass, old-time, Celtic fingerpicking, folk fingerpicking and some of the most tasteful backup you can hear. She plays signature a Martin guitar, signature National Steel Tenor guitar, signature Gold Tone cello banjo and signature KALA tenor ukulele. Don't forget the mandolin which she teaches on www.Truefire.com. She is a well-loved instructor at many camps she teaches online via Truefire, www.homespun.com and www.pegheadnation.com. Most important, she's a fun-loving music gal.

It is the power of her playing that keeps listeners coming back.

- the alternate route

www.cathymarcy.com



Kellie Allen

Kellie Allen, an accomplished old-time singer and sought-after backup guitarist and bass player, hails from Kansas but now lives in Oxford, Pennsylvania with partner Pete Peterson. She started playing old-time tunes with her brother, fiddler and banjo player Greg Allen, and later toured Europe playing old-time music with the Delaware River String Band. Kellie is known for her old-time guitar backup style with extensive use of bass runs, drawing from such sources as Riley Puckett, Roy Harvey, and Gene Meade, and her deep knowledge of old-time repertoire and styles. She performs with the Orpheus Supertones, Sugar Pie, and other bands, and sings old-time and early country duets with Pete. Kellie has taught and performed old-time guitar, upright bass, and harmony singing at festivals and music camps across the U.S., as well as in the U.K. and Australia. She has judged numerous old-time music contests and has won prizes with the Orpheus Supertones and other bands at the Appalachian String Band Festival (Clifftop) and other festivals, as well as individual awards in old-time singing.

<https://kellieandpete.ne>



Pete Peterson

Pete Peterson is a legendary (and prize-winning) old-time banjo player, guitarist, and traditional singer. He got his first guitar and banjo over sixty years ago and now plays one of Charlie Poole's banjos. Pete's signature and distinctive sound on the banjo echoes Charlie Poole's old-time three-finger banjo style. Pete also plays guitar with a thumb pick, following in the style of old-time guitarists such as Roy Harvey, Maybelle Carter, and Riley Puckett. His use of these banjo and guitar styles is uncommon and adds to the distinctive sound of the Orpheus Supertones and other bands, and in his duet with partner Kellie Allen. Pete is a stellar old-time singer and teaches vocal harmony techniques. His knowledge, skill, and experience playing old-time music is unrivaled, making him in high demand as a teacher and contest judge as well. Pete has taught and performed at Mars Hill Blue Ridge Old Time Week, Augusta Heritage Camps, and many others, including Gainsborough (UK), MountainGrass (VIC), and Maldon (VIC). He has been a judge at the Charlie Poole Festival, the Appalachian String Band Festival (Clifftop), and many other contests, and has won awards at those as well. Pete is a regular contributor to the Old-Time Herald, the premier U.S. old-time music publication.

<https://kellieandpete.net/>



Suzannah Park

Suzannah Park comes from a family of three generations of traditional singers, storytellers and dancers. She has been touring and teaching for the past twenty-plus years, both in the USA and abroad. A native of Asheville NC, she grew up bouncing back and forth between Asheville and Chicago where she was immersed in the folk music scene in both communities. With her joyous and intuitive teaching style, born of a lifetime of familiarity with traditional music, she can coax complex harmony and powerful performances from her students.

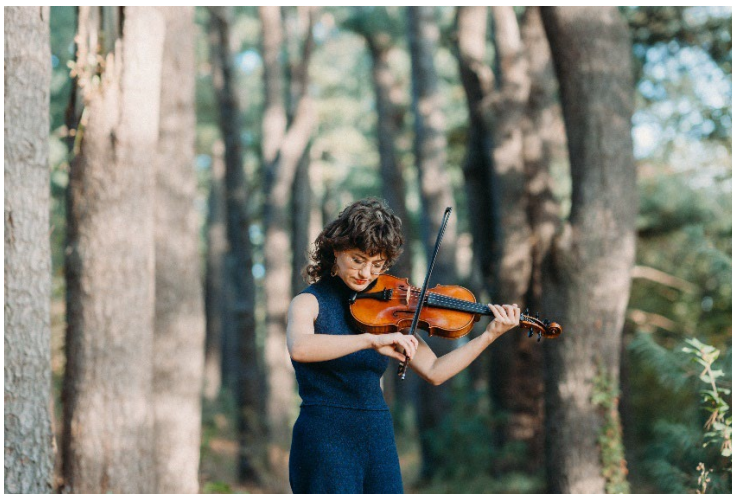
Since 2000, Suzannah has been teaching with Vermont-based world music organization, Village Harmony and additionally is now part of their executive team. Locally, Suzannah is the founder and director of the Wild Asheville Community Chorus, and is also a member of the traditional music faculty and Choir Director at Warren Wilson College. She has a robust collection of private students, offers a wide variety of workshops, coach's vocal ensembles and is a guest teacher and lecturer at schools and universities around the country.

Whether she's teaching ballads, harmony singing or Appalachian clogging, laughter and good times abound. www.suzannahpark.com



Sophie Wellington

Sophie is a Boston-based musician who draws inspiration from old time fiddling, percussive dance, and jazz improvisation. Raised in Staunton, VA by concert pianist Lynne Mackey and old-time musician and dance caller Bill Wellington, her childhood was steeped in shared music and movement. Contra dances, choirs, music festivals and camps shaped her curiosity and inspired her to pursue music professionally. In 2021, after graduating from Berklee College of Music, she recorded and released her debut solo record *Roving Jewel*. This collection of fiddle tunes, dancing duets, and vocal jazz standards marks a new phase of her musical career. Improvisation is at the heart of her relationship with sound and space. By using this spontaneous element to interpret rhythm, harmony, and melody, she engages the listener – and the music itself – in a conversation.



Rachel Eddy

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 Washington, D.C., 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.

Rachel's performances, workshops, and festival appearances have featured both a creative range as a soloist and an energetic engagement with fellow musicians' part of various ensembles, including the Ken and Brad Kolodner Quartet, the Early Mays, and a European tour with Uncle Earl. Rachel has shared a passion for music teaching at the Alabama Folk School, Augusta Heritage Center, Common Ground, Kauffman Kamp, Nashville Fiddle and Banjo Camp, Sore Fingers, and many others. While living in Sweden from 2008-14, Rachel invigorated the

Swedish old-time scene and inspired dozens of people to take up Appalachian music and dance. Always up for new artistic challenges, Rachel collaborated on the soundscape for, and performed in, the Indiana Repertory Theatre's 2019 performance of *Amber Waves*.

A passionate teacher, Rachel regularly teaches private lessons as well as workshops. They are committed to ensuring an inclusive classroom, in which all students can succeed and experience the joy of developing their own musical talents—whether as beginners or long-time players. Indeed, Rachel's students frequently remark on their teacher's ability to lead them through a well-thought-out musical journey that leaves them more deeply connected with their instruments and inner creativity.



Amy Buckingham

Amy Buckingham says she is living proof that life begins at 40. That's when she received a fiddle as a birthday present, and nothing has been the same since then. Her deep love and appreciation for old time music also began at 40, and she has never looked back. Amy learned fiddle and banjo from Dwight Diller, Marvin Gaster and her husband, Bob Buckingham. She now teaches bass, fiddle, banjo, guitar and mandolin in JAM programs and privately. Bob and Amy play folk music, blues and old time together as The Blue Ridge Rounders, and Amy sings and plays fiddle, guitar and mandolin in the all-female, old time BattleAxe Band, based in the Upstate of South Carolina. Amy first attended Blue Ridge Old Time Music Week as a student in 1999 and has been on staff as assistant/program director since 2005.



Bob Buckingham

In 1973 **Bob Buckingham** started playing mandolin when he realized that it would be a natural fit for someone who already played guitar and fiddle. He went on to play bluegrass, blues, old time and in jam bands over the years. He has taught mandolin (and many other instruments!) for decades and is perpetually enthralled with the instrument's potential.



Lloyd Wright

Lloyd Wright has been performing music with his family and solo in the old-time scene for over 25 years. He is an accomplished dulcimer, banjo, fiddle and guitar player. Lloyd puts on The Old Mill Music Festival in Kennard, Texas, where he hosts a wide array of artists every November. He and his wife April and son Elijah are enthusiastic and well-loved performers in East Texas and beyond.



Margaret Wright

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!



Karen Mueller

Karen Mueller is one of the top mountain dulcimer and autoharp players performing and teaching today. Her exciting and innovative performing style has been applauded by critics and audiences from LA to Boston, and *Bluegrass Unlimited* magazine has said "Karen Mueller's touch, timing and taste make her a true virtuoso. Her talent and clarity...deserve a wide audience." Karen won the 1986 International Autoharp Championship and was a National Dulcimer finalist in 1985, both at the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kansas. In 2006 she was inducted into the Autoharp Hall of Fame. A native of Winfield, she first attended the Walnut Valley Festival while in high school and was inspired to learn to play the autoharp and dulcimer by the performers she saw there.

She has appeared at major dulcimer, autoharp, and folk music events across the US as well as in the UK, including Walnut Valley, Augusta Heritage Center, Dulcimer U at Western Carolina University, Swannanoa, Kentucky Music Week, the Ozark Folk Center, John C. Campbell Folk School, North Georgia Foothills, QuaranTune Dulcimer Festival, the Mountain Laurel Autoharp Gathering, Sore Fingers Week in England, and many more. She also has over 30 years of experience teaching private lessons and school classes. One workshop student wrote that "Karen is a skilled, articulate teacher who is both focused and goal oriented. She has the ability to help students achieve a high level of competence in a short time frame." Karen performs both solo and with old time and Celtic bands, and also plays guitar, mandolin, Irish bouzouki, and ukulele.

Karen has released six solo recordings and authored three music books, including "Celtic Autoharp," published by Mel Bay Publications, and "Favorite Dulcimer Arrangements." She has also contributed selections to numerous anthology recordings, including two volumes of "Masters of the Mountain Dulcimer," and "Autoharp Legacy." She is based in Minneapolis, and her website is karenmueller.com.

