



MerleFest[®]

Music. Moments. Memories.

Presented by



April 23-26, 2015

Wilkes Community College • Wilkesboro, North Carolina
Annual Homecoming in Memory of Eddy Merle Watson

MerleFest brings special shows by over 120 artists

MerleFest is known for four days of special musical collaborations and themes on 13 different stages and this year is no exception.

Ted Hagaman, festival director, said he's also particularly pleased with the combination of artists at MerleFest for the first time and returning festival favorites.

Strong Thursday lineup

One of the newcomers, Asheville-based Underhill Rose, will lead off on the Watson Stage at 3 p.m. Thursday with a blend of Americana, R&B, country and bluegrass, just 30 minutes after the festival gates open. It consists of Eleanor Underhill, Sally Williamson and Molly Rose. "Joining the lineup for Merlefest has been a long-time goal of ours," said Underhill in an interview with the Johnson City Press.

The strong first-day Watson Stage lineup continues with Scythian (festival favorite, particularly among younger fans) at 3 p.m., country music star Lee Ann Womack ("I Hope You Dance") at 5:30 p.m. and husband and wife Bela Fleck and Abigail Washburn, well known to MerleFest fans but not as a duo, at 7 p.m.

Hard driving, progressive bluegrass will be served that night on the Watson Stage by Hot Rize with Red Knuckles and the Trailblazers at 8:30 and by Trampled by Turtles at 10:15 p.m.

Original Hot Rize members Tim O'Brien, Pete Wernick and Nick Forster and Grammy-winning guitarist Bryan Sutton, all familiar names to MerleFest fans, will be at festival for the first time since reuniting a few months ago.

Special sets Friday

Saturday's lineup includes Del McCoury and his band performing new songs with unheard lyrics from the late Woody Guthrie, at 5:15 p.m. on the Watson Stage. Guthrie's daughter, Nora Guthrie, chose 30 songs from over 3,000 in the Woody Guthrie archives to present to McCoury to set to music.

The Marshall Tucker Band performs on the Watson Stage immediately after the Woody Guthrie tribute at 6:45 p.m., followed by the Sam Bush Band at 8:30 p.m. and Jim Lauderdale with the North Mississippi Allstars at 10:15 p.m.

The day ends with Scythian performing as the host in the Dance Tent starting at 10:30 p.m. Friday.

Great old time music will be performed Friday on the Traditional Stage by the Sheets Family Band at 10:30 a.m., by

Mitchell County with William Ritter and Sarah Ogletree at 1 p.m. and by Wayne Henderson and Helen White from 3:30 p.m.

Tributes to Doc and Merle Saturday

Highlights Saturday include three special tributes to Doc and Merle Watson.

"Doc's Show," hosted by David Holt with Carol Rifkin and others, is at 10:30 a.m. at the Traditional Stage.

"Memories of Doc and Merle," hosted by T. Michael Coleman with special guests, is at noon at the Creekside Stage.

"Doc Watson Guitar Tribute," featuring Jack Lawrence, David Holt, T. Michael Coleman and others, is at 1:45 p.m. on the Watson Stage.

The popular Hillside Album Hour, hosted by the Waybacks, is on the Hillside Stage at 4 p.m. Joan Osborne and others will be featured as music from an entire vintage album is performed. The identity of the album remains a secret until it is performed.

The Avett Brothers perform on the Watson Stage at 9:30 p.m. Saturday.

The Midnight Jam, hosted by Steel Wheels, starts at midnight in the Walker Center.

On Sunday

Sunday at MerleFest begins with devotions from 9:30 to 10 a.m. at the Creekside Stage, led by the Rev. Roy Dobyms, former pastor of Wilkesboro Baptist Church and now pastor of First Baptist Church of Boone.

A session on shape note singing, a strong tradition in rural churches of the southern Appalachians, is at 9:30 a.m. at the Traditional Stage. Laura Boosinger will lead this.

Headliners on the Watson Stage on Sunday include Paul Thorn at 12:45 p.m., Robert Earl Keen at 2:30 p.m. and Dwight Yoakam at 4:15 p.m.

The Kruger Brothers will team with the Kontras Quartet to add classical sounds to the MerleFest musical offering at 11:15 a.m. on the Watson Stage.

Just to share a few more names, the 120-plus artists booked for this year's festival also include the Avett Brothers, Steep Canyon Rangers, Nashville Bluegrass Band, Donna the Buffalo, Peter Rowan and Wayne Henderson.

Up and coming artists to listen for include Underhill Rose, Jesse and Noah Bellamy, Brandon Whyde and The Devils Keep, Big Sandy and His Fly Rite Boys, Del Barber and MIPSO.



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Some basics on MerleFest

MerleFest 2015, an annual homecoming music celebration held since 1988, is April 23-26 at Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro.

The core missions behind MerleFest are to honor the memory of American music legend Doc Watson, who helped found MerleFest, and his son and musical partner, Eddy Merle Watson; to offer the very best in "traditional plus" music; and to raise funds for WCC. The festival is the primary fundraiser for the Wilkes Community College Endowment Corp.

Free parking and shuttle services are provided from the Blue Lot (Lowe's Park at River's Edge), located off N.C. 268 West. The Blue Lot is also an easy half-mile walk to the festival grounds.

Public parking for people with state-issued handicapped parking credentials is at Shuttle Stop H in the Blue Lot. Designated shuttles, including wheelchair accessible vans, provide transportation to the main festival entrance.

Four-day reserved seats are in front of the Watson Stage with chairs provided and set up. Seating is arranged to meet codes and provide comfort and safety. Festival policy allows unoccupied reserved seats to be used by anyone before 5 p.m. or until owners return. Special wristbands are needed to enter the reserved seating area after 5 p.m.

General admission seating is first-come, first-served at all stages. At the Watson Stage, general admission seating is directly behind the reserved seating area.

Children 12 and younger are admitted for free when with a paying adult, except in the reserved seating area, where a four-day reserved seating wristband is required regardless.

All chairs and blankets must be removed daily except festival-owned "reserved seats."

On-site, overnight storage is available for free at the Lost & Found Tent. Children 12 and under get front-of-house seating at the Little Pickers Stage.

Tobacco and alcohol products are prohibited at MerleFest.

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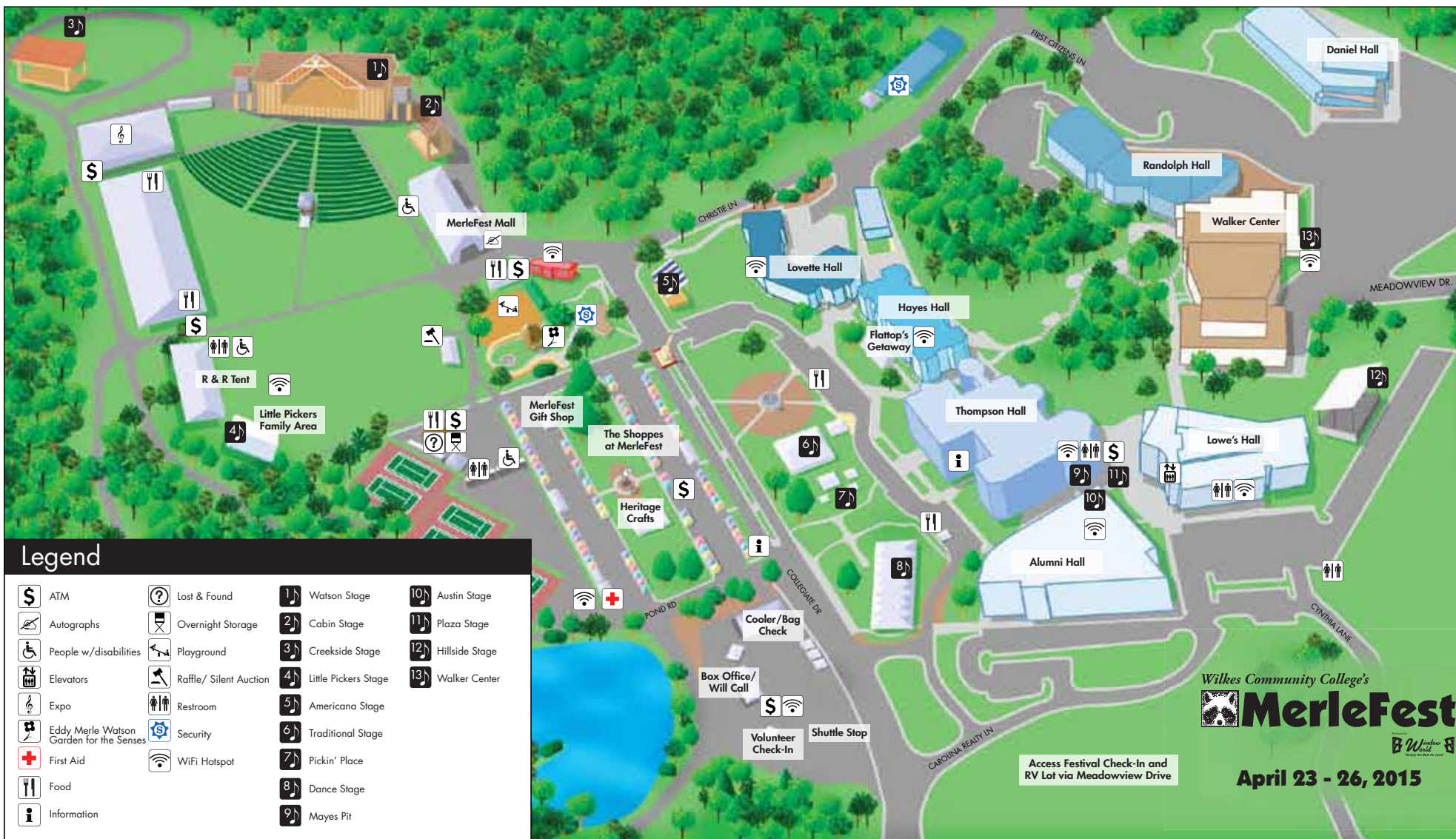
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Music of MerleFest is presented on 13 different stages

1. **Watson Stage**, with some of the largest acts and collaborations;
2. **Cabin Stage**, next to the Watson Stage, with some of the best acoustic music;
3. **Creekside Stage**, under tent near Moravian Creek, a pleasant spot for performances;
4. **Little Pickers Family Area**, offering activities, games and live music for the young;
5. **Americana Stage**, offering a relaxed venue on the lawn near the Visitors Center;
6. **Traditional Stage**, beneath large tent, featuring traditional music at its best;
7. **Pickin' Place**, an area for music fans and musicians to pick and sing together.

8. **Dance Stage**, beneath large tent, with everything from clogging to Cajun dances.
9. **Mayes Pit Learning Stage**, with instrument instructional sessions and more;
10. **Chris Austin Stage**, with some of the best songwriting and blues music;
11. **Plaza Stage**, with guitar, banjo, and mandolin contests and songwriter's coffee house, workshops and special performances.
12. **Hillside Stage**, with MerleFest artists up close and jammin';
13. **Walker Center**, providing an indoor venue. Home of the Midnight Jam;



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Legacies of Doc, Rosa Lee, Merle Watson remain

When the late Doc Watson became nationally known in the folk music revival of the '60s, he brought forth an image of simple dignity and sensibility for a region stereotyped by comical hillbilly characters.

Watson went on to profoundly influence guitarists worldwide, including Bob Dylan, while living his life as a testimony to high Christian character.

Despite his death on May 29, 2012, at 89, Watson's musical influence and his positive ambassadorship for his beloved southern Appalachians continues.

MerleFest helps insure that the legacies of Doc Watson and his wife, the late Rosa Lee Watson, and their son, the late Merle Watson, remain a vibrant and positive force - particularly in northwest North Carolina.

Arthel Lane "Doc" Watson was born in Deep Gap in Watauga County. His father, General Dixon Watson, was a farmer and laborer who led singing at church. His mother, Annie, sang old ballads while doing household chores and at night sang the children to sleep.

Left blind by an eye infection as an infant, Doc had a few years of formal schooling at the Raleigh School for the Blind. He was 5 or 6 when he received his first harmonica and 11 when his father made him a fretless banjo. After Doc taught himself the Carter Family's "When the Roses Bloom in Dixieland," Doc's father bought him a \$12 Stella guitar, and soon he was learning the rhythm chords. He learned to flat pick and then Jimmie Rodgers' picking style.

After his marriage in 1947 to Rosa Lee Carlton, a neighbor and daughter of fiddler Gaither Carlton,

when he was 24 and she was 16, Watson tuned pianos to support his growing family.

Eddy Merle was born in 1949, and Nancy Ellen in 1951. In 1953, Doc got a job playing electric guitar in a local country band and traded his Martin for a Gibson Les Paul. The group often lacked a fiddler and Watson taught himself fiddle tunes on the electric instrument, in addition to the popular finger-style music of Merle Travis and Chet Atkins.

Smithsonian Institute folklorist Ralph Rinzler "discovered" Watson in 1960 at the Union Grove fiddler's convention.

Merle joined Doc in 1964 as rhythm guitarist and eased most of the burdens of the road from his father's shoulders. Doc and Merle made about 20 albums together and won two Grammys.

Merle was killed in a tractor accident in 1985. Although broken-hearted by the loss, Doc said Merle told him in a dream to press on with the music. He did this and helped start MerleFest in Merle's memory.

Doc is revered for his flatpicking and finger-picking styles, as well as his voice. He received seven Grammys, including the Lifetime Achievement Award, and was inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame.

Rosa Lee Watson died six months after Doc died. She was 81. They performed together and co-wrote "Your Long Journey," featured on the Grammy Award-winning album "Raising Sand." Their grandson and Merle's son, Richard Watson, performs at MerleFest.



WATSON FAMILY-
Clockwise are Doc and Rosa Lee, Doc, Richard and Merle Watson.



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Meet the artists who will perform at MerleFest 2015



ALBERTI



AVETT BROTHERS

Alberti Flea Circus Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Part magician, storyteller, comedian and all entertainer, Jim Alberti is a third-generation flea circus impresario. After a career in theater, Alberti began itching to revive the flea circus that was once performed by his great uncle and later by his grandfather. He envisioned bringing it to a new generation that had never had never experienced a flea circus. Alberti first took the revived flea circus on the road in the 1980s, and since then has captivated audiences at fairs, festivals and theme parks across the United States and Canada. He's been coming to MerleFest for over two decades.

Avett Brothers Saturday

Formed in 2001 in Charlotte, the Avett Brothers are comprised of brothers Scott

Avett on banjo and Seth Avett on guitar, along with upright bass player Bob Crawford, cellist Joe Kwon, Mike Marsh on drums, Paul Defiglia on keyboard and organ, and Tania Elizabeth on violin. Described as a rootsy amalgam of folk, country, bluegrass, rock and pop — with a jab of punk-style dynamics here and there — the band has released eight studio albums and several EPs, earning critical acclaim including a Grammy nomination and Rolling Stone's 2009 Artist to Watch.

Jim Avett Sunday

In 2008, Jim Avett released his first album on Ramseur Records, "Jim Avett and Family," gospel songs recorded with daughter Bonnie and sons Scott and Seth of The Avett Brothers. In 2010, he returned with "Tribes," seven original songs that speak of love and loss, and in 2012, continued on those themes on "Second Chance," an album that reflects his influences of classic country and early rock 'n' roll. One comes away from a Jim Avett performance with the feeling that this is an honest man sharing his life and his love of music. He's excited to return to MerleFest this year to share his beloved gospel songs.

Baillie and The Boys Friday

Throughout 2015, Baillie and The Boys original members Kathie Baillie, Michael Bonagura and Alan LeBoeuf, will be celebrating over 25 years with RCA Records, writing and recording a dozen of their own Billboard hit songs and numerous hits for other artists. Since then they have continued to write, record and perform their own critically acclaimed and Grammy-nominated acoustic roots music. They're in the studio recording a retrospective

show-casing their unbelievable body of work and released a new Christmas CD in 2014. Kathie's breathtaking voice and live performance, backed by the pristine harmonies and guitar virtuosity of Michael and Alan, fill venues and thrill audiences.

Bandit's Roost Saturday

Bandit's Roost is a new band from Elkin with a wide array of original and fresh sounding material that combines

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backgrounds of the band's songwriters and instrumentalists. It includes David Blackmon (fiddle), R.G. Absher (banjo, guitar), Caroline Noel Beverley (guitar, bass, vocals), Julian Charles (guitar, bass, vocals) and Cory Myers (cajón). Band members share their song and instrumental writing prowess in a wide variety of subjects including historical events, life changing experiences, relationships to various cultures and humankind's stewardship of the Planet Earth.

Banknotes Thursday

Banknotes was formed by a group of Wilkes County musicians who were friends with MerleFest co-founder Bill Young, who passed away in 1992. It includes R.G. Absher, Randy Gambill, Billy Gee, Tony Joines, Mike Palmer, Jeff Pardue, Donnie Story and Wes Tuttle, representing some of the best musical talent in Wilkes.



BANDIT'S ROOST



BANKNOTES

All Banknotes' members have been involved in MerleFest since it began in 1988. Each personally knew Young – a retired banker and virtuoso in the Chet Atkins-style of guitar playing – and participated in various jam sessions at his home in Wilkesboro. Banknotes performs a mixture of Americana music, which includes bluegrass, Celtic, and thumb and finger-style guitar playing.



BANNERMAN

Glenn Bannerman Saturday, Sunday

Glenn Bannerman is known nationwide as a dance caller, teacher and leader. He was born in Hopewell, Va., and has a degree in municipal recreation and a master's degree in Christian education. For 20 years, he was a professor of recreation and outdoor education at the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Va. He retired in 1989 and formed the Bannerman Family Celebration Services, a recreation, folk dance and worship resource. Glenn is on the Folk Heritage Committee in Asheville, which maintains the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival and Shindig on the Green performances.



DEL BARBER

Del Barber Saturday

Del Barber grew up in the Canadian Prairies, and the landscape is as much a part of him as the people he has met along the way. Barber's fourth album, "Prairieography," is born out of a love for his home, its people and their stories. In an effort to take his creative process to new heights, Barber undertook a painstaking approach to achieve an organic sound. The reverb was recorded inside a 150-foot grain silo. Barber sings from the heart about his roots, telling tales from the road, and offering incredibly personal and sincere observations of the world around him. Barber has emerged as one of the next wave in this country's proud tradition of songwriting talent.



BAYOU DIESEL

Bayou Diesel Saturday

Bayou Diesel has been traveling the obscure gig-highways of western North Carolina since 2005. The band has always focused on performing the powerful Cajun, Zydeco and Mardi Gras-style dance music of Louisiana. Featuring the accordion, rubboard, rhythm section and occasional French lyrics, Bayou Diesel has cooked up some tasty jambalaya. In 2008, the Asheville Zydeco Dance Krewe challenged the band to play some authentic sounding Zydeco grooves for their monthly dances. Bayou Diesel's mission is to embody the Zydeco "joi de vivre" of high-energy, community-friendly dance music that all ages can enjoy anywhere. In the spirit of Mardi Gras, the purple, gold and "green" powered Bayou Diesel easily navigates the good time mountain-bayou experience. Let the Good Times Roll!

BearWallow Saturday

BearWallow hails from Mor-

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Artists

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ganton, bringing a unique blend of progressive bluegrass and a little bit of country. The band started nearly 30 years ago with Todd Pons (guitar) and Gary McCurry (banjo) playing coffeehouses and homecoming gigs. They added Malvin Philyaw (bass) six years ago and David Wiseman (mandolin) and George Giddens (fiddle) about five years ago. Wiseman is well known in Eastern bluegrass circles, and Giddens has played regularly in Branson, Mo., for many years. Lead vocalist Todd Pons is a prolific songwriter, composing most of the songs on the group's current CD "Back to the Country." A second CD is in the making and should be available by early 2015. The group plays regularly throughout the Carolinas and has played in Washington, D.C., Virginia and Maryland.

Jesse and Noah Bellamy Friday

Jesse and Noah Bellamy are brothers who have forged their own unique sound and identities, pushing musical boundaries to create their own path. They are fourth generation musicians. Their father and uncle are the well-known Bellamy Brothers,



BEAR WALLOW

ers, and their grandfather, Homer, played professionally at local dances, while his father before him was a fiddler. Raised by their grandparents while their parents toured, the duo was first influenced by their grandparents' love of traditional country music and the popular music of the WWII era. "When we started playing guitar," said Jesse, "we fell in love with blues, jazz and '60s rock. Hanging out at dad's recording sessions led us to develop an appreciation of the recording process as an art form." After years of writing and recording with different record labels and becoming disillusioned with Music Row of Nashville, Jesse and Noah have thrown away the rulebook to forge their own sound. Their third record, "Driven Back," is self-produced and independently released.

Bethel University Bluegrass Band Saturday, Sunday

The Renaissance Bluegrass Band has



BETHEL UNIVERSITY BLUEGRASS BAND

plenty to offer fans of bluegrass music – great picking, soulful vocals, high lonesome harmonies and great song selection – all melded together with drive, energy and enthusiasm. The musicianship of these young pickers is quite noticeable as the band shows imagination and taste in its selection and interpretation of bluegrass music from old songs to new and songs of faith, both traditional and contemporary. In 2012 The Renaissance Bluegrass Band took the stage at the Big Lick Bluegrass Festival in Oakboro. They were invited back to the festival in 2013 as one of the four premier acts. Also in 2013, the group performed at the Dixie Carter Performing Arts Center with bluegrass icon Rhonda Vincent and released its first CD.

Lee Bidgood Friday

An ethnomusicologist and musician,

Lee Bidgood performs and researches in areas ranging from church worship and Czech tramp singing to bluegrass, old time, country and early music. He received his doctorate in critical and comparative studies in music from the University of Virginia. Since then his writing has been published in "The International Country Music Journal," The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, and the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians. An early member of the Steep Canyon Rangers and Big Fat Gap, music has always played a key role in his research and teaching. As part of the faculty in East Tennessee State University's Department of Appalachian Studies, he teaches courses in ethnomusicology, bluegrass, old time and country music history and coaches the ETSU Mandolin Orchestra. With filmmaker an ETSU faculty colleague, Bidgood co-produced "Banjo Romantika" (2013), a documentary film about the banjo and bluegrass music in the Czech Republic. He will present the film at MerleFest 2015.

Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys Friday

Big Sandy is back, having spent the last several months performing on fes-

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tival stages and in sold-out concert venues throughout Europe. The big man of American roots music is elated to be back in the States, touring this fall from the coast of California to the shores of Delaware Bay. Over the last three decades, Big Sandy and His Fly-Rite Boys have kept up a constant cycle of traveling back and forth across the Lower 48, then hopping across the pond to Europe and beyond. They bring with them a brand of American music that has earned them an induction into the Rockabilly Hall of Fame, several national television appearances, guest spots on The Grand Ole Opry and a slew of adoring fans. "I truly love being out on the road, and I feel blessed to have the opportunity to sing my songs all over the world," said Sandy.

Black Cadillacs Friday

The Black Cadillacs are a



BLACK CADILLACS



BLIND BOY PAXTON



BLU-BOP

blues-based indie rock band from Knoxville, Tenn. With members from each of Tennessee's major cities, the state's famous sounds are well represented. Nashville's recent brand of rock 'n' roll revival, Memphis' soul and Knoxville's roots music combine to form an authentic and original sound. First cousins Will Horton (lead vocals, acoustic guitar, harmonica) and Matthew Hyrka (lead guitar) founded the band with lifelong friend and neighbor Philip Anderson (bass guitar). In 2009, the lineup was completed with the additions of John Phillips (rhythm guitar) and Adam Bonomo (drums). Their live set is where this well-orchestrated yet explosive blend comes to

life. The Black Cadillacs are hitting their stride playing over 100 U.S. shows, a 25-date European tour and numerous major TV Network/Motion Picture/Video Game music synchs this past year.

Black Lillies Sunday

The Black Lillies are a band for the ages, not the slick, soulless music that seems to get most of the radio airplay, but rich, rootsy tunes performed with as much heart as technical virtuosity. This commitment to authenticity has earned them accolades from outlets as diverse as Rolling Stone Magazine, which calls them one of "the most buzzworthy new acts in country and Americana," and the Wall

Street Journal, who praised their "rootsy flair ... a winsome hybrid traditional enough to appeal to an Opry crowd and expansive enough to ensnare a broader audience." They have enthralled audiences at festivals ranging from Bonnaroo to Stagecoach, won two Independent Music Awards, and played the Grand Ole Opry more than any other independent band. Their most recent album, "Runaway Freeway Blues," conquered the Billboard Top 200 country charts and dominated Americana radio. And in May 2015, their highly anticipated follow-up album will finally be released.

Blind Boy Paxton Friday, Saturday, Sunday

At first glance he looks like he's

playing the part of a bluesman in a Hollywood movie, dressed with theatrical retro-schtick, with a Derby hat and overalls. The tall, corpulent young man markets himself directly to the segment of the blues community with a great nostalgic hunger for authentic musicians that accurately portray the image of the romanticized 1930s rural minstrel. Amazingly, he's not just the real deal; he may be the most sensational newcomer in the blues in many years. Meet "Blind Boy Jerron Paxton," a songster, busker and itinerant bluesman, the living embodiment of the true blues in the 21st Century. Blind since age 16, the charismatic bluesman hails from a Creole family in Watts, South Central Los Angeles, but his people came from Louisiana. He is a capable multi-instrumentalist who picks banjo and guitar, plays harmonica, piano and other instruments.

Blu-Bop Saturday and Sunday

The music of Béla Fleck and

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Artists

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the Flecktones inspired musicians for a generation and continues to lay the groundwork for a new breed of musical talent as in Blu-Bop. Their particular brand of fusion brought the banjo back into the jazz world and transcended the boundaries of what type of music can be played with jazz instrumentation. Béla Fleck, Victor Wooten, Roy “Futureman” Wooten and others created a new style of music that has been described as “bluegrass jazz fusion,” “funk grass” and a host of other attempts to classify the unclassifiable. The tongue in cheek reference of “Blu-Bop” best describes the music. It’s light-hearted virtuosity with serious leanings toward technicality, soul and brilliance. Comprised of E. Scott Warren (bass), Mike Rosado (drums), Justin Powell (keys), Paul Messinger (harmonica), Myron Koch (saxophones) and long-obsessed Flecktone fan, Hank Smith (banjos), who roped



BLUE HIGHWAY

all these people into it, the band is local to the Triangle area of N.C. and will attempt the very difficult but amazingly fun task of playing this music as accurately as possible.

Blue Highway Saturday

Blue Highway is indisputably one of the most esteemed and influential groups in contemporary bluegrass. The band’s 11 highly-acclaimed albums and compelling live shows give proof to the stellar reviews. With a deep bench of virtuosic songwriters, vocalists and instrumentalists, Blue Highway’s hallmark is an unwavering commitment to the ensemble, the “democracy of the band” that makes Blue Highway a powerhouse. Individually, Jason Burluson (banjo, guitar, mando-



**BLUE RIDGE HERITAGE
CLOGGERS**

lin), Rob Ickes (Dobro), Shawn Lane (mandolin, fiddle, vocals), Tim Stafford (guitar, vocals) and Wayne Taylor (bass, vocals) are masters of their respective roles. Together, they are five gifted artists selflessly merging their talents into a seamlessly brilliant group sound. Rob and Jason turn out the heart-pounding instrumentals, while Shawn, Tim and Wayne give Blue Highway a depth of songwriting talent unprecedented in 60 years of bluegrass bands. Blue Highway has two Grammy nominations, a Dove Award, topped the Bluegrass Unlimited radio charts and won many International Bluegrass Music Association awards.

Blue Ridge Heritage Cloggers Friday and Saturday

Blue Ridge Heritage Cloggers

represent the National Championship Cloggers, All-American Cloggers and Traditional Cloggers. The region’s traditional mountain culture holds true to the heritage of the deep roots and families of this team. Each dancer interprets the music with his or her feet upon execution of square dance figures portraying the Southern Appalachian freestyle clogging. Always performing at Bascom Lamar Lunsford Festival, Shindig on the Green, Smoky Mountain Folk Festival, and Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, this team constantly strives to demonstrate the uniqueness of the popular dance style that began in the mountains of North Carolina. Strong efforts to hold authentic traditional heirlooms of the big and little circle figures in group dancing is displayed with authenticity and personal integrity of each dancer of the Blue Ridge Heritage Cloggers.

Roy Book Binder Thursday, Saturday, Sunday

Roy Book Binder has been described as a guitar pickin’ hill-billy bluesman. Equally at home

with blues and ragtime, “Book” shifts from open tunings to slide arrangements to original compositions with both traditional and self-styled licks. His storytelling emphasis is another characteristic that makes his style unique. Binder was born in New York City in 1941. After high school, he joined the Navy and did a tour of duty in Europe. He bought his first guitar at a military base in Italy. Upon discharge, he returned to New York where he met one of his lifelong friends, Dave Van Ronk. Van Ronk, an incredible guitar player, was a student of the famous blind bluesman, Rev. Gary Davis. Impressed with his friend’s playing, Binder is a veteran guitar instructor.

Laura Boosinger Saturday and Sunday

Laura, an award-winning performer and recording artist, lives in Asheville, N.C., but has the good fortune to work in Madison County, known for its ballad traditions and home to a slew of traditional and bluegrass musicians. Boosinger learned shaped-note singing from

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Artists

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North Carolina Heritage Award winner and singing master Quay Smathers. Her primary focus is the interpretation of traditional music from the Southern Appalachian region. Laura's concerts offer a step back to a simpler time, awakening memories for the old and gently instilling important cultural lessons for the young. Through an introduction to traditional instruments and vocal styles found in the region, from ballads to play-parties, old-time banjo to finger-style autoharp, Laura invites audiences to participate in the richness of the region's musical heritage. Her performances have included the Tennessee Homecoming at The Museum of Appalachia, Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Logan Brill Thursday

In just a few short



LOGAN BRILL



BRUSHY RIDES



**ANDY
BUCKNER**

months since the release of her debut album "Walking Wires," 23-year-old Knoxville native Logan Brill has already proven herself to be one of the most important new artists coming up in Nashville today. With a stunning voice that goes toe to toe with Nashville's finest, the young singer-songwriter opts for grit and authenticity over pristine pop in her song choices, drawing comparisons to Bonnie Raitt, Brandi Carlile and Mary Chapin Carpenter from national press. Outlets like Billboard, CMT Edge, Country Weekly, Pollstar and CMA

Close Up Magazine have already shown their support for her refreshingly authentic sound, imbued with a "bluesy American grit" (Southern Living) that sets her apart as "a far cry from the slick pop country of many of her contemporaries" (The Boot).

Brushy Rides Saturday

On Brushy Rides' debut self-titled EP, Shay Lovette and Locke Griffith meld the sounds of Appalachia with their own blends of home-spun Americana. Born and raised in Wilkesboro, both

men have been equally influenced by the bluegrass and folk music that has echoed over the hills for generations and by legendary songsters like Bob Dylan and Townes Van Zandt. Soon after the EPs release in 2013, Brushy Rides received radio airplay on regional radio stations WNCW and WDVX and was invited to open up for Nora Jane Struthers and the Party Line on a string of North Carolina dates. Until early 2014, Lovette and Griffith had played most of their shows as a duo but have

recently enlisted the talents of Chad Lovette (Shay's younger brother) on the upright bass, John Duncan (Buncombe Turnpike) on the fiddle and Zeb Gambill on the mandolin. These new additions to the band bring an exciting new dynamic to a modern Americana sound.

Andy Buckner Friday

Andy Buckner plays Southern music – Southern rock, outlaw country, rock 'n' roll, blues, bluegrass and more. Born and raised in

the North Carolina mountains, he's from a long line of musicians and started singing in church at age four. He knew he wanted to be a musician after seeing David Holt play with Josh Goforth (Buckner's cousin) and became obsessed with trying out every instrument he could find. By the age of 16, the multi-instrumentalist played bass, banjo, guitar, mandolin, fiddle, Dobro and more. During this time he discovered

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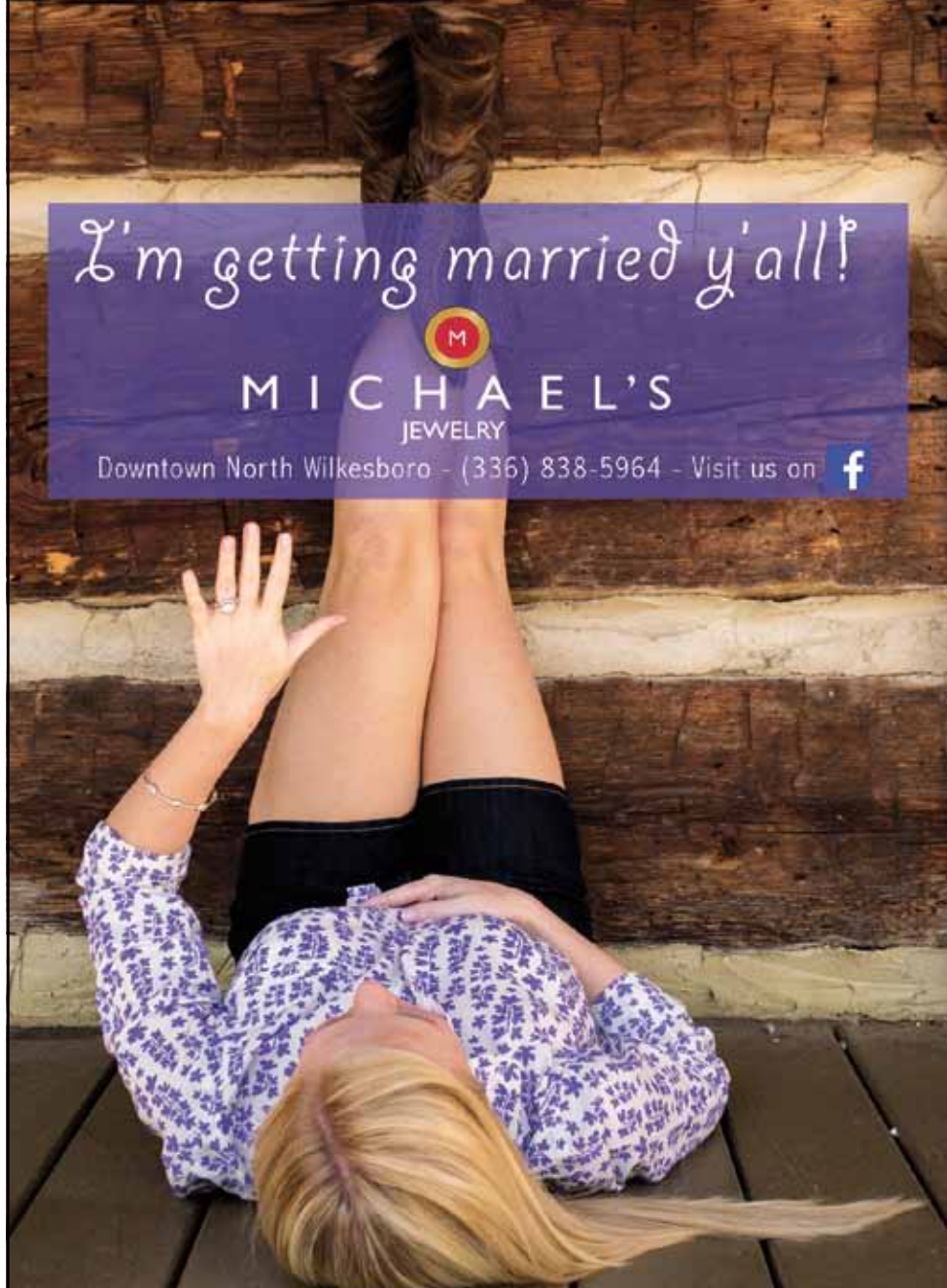
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Artists

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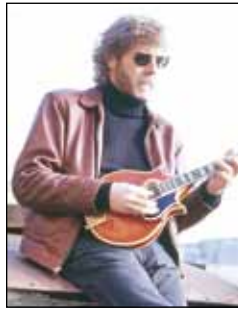
his calling as a songwriter. Andy gained widespread publicity when he and the band Cumberland River landed 13 songs on the hit FX series "Justified." It was then that Andy's career took a huge leap toward success. After graduating from high school he attended East Tennessee State University while establishing an identity as a solo artist.

Sam Bush Band Friday

Grammy Award-winning multi-instrumentalist Sam Bush doesn't seem old enough to be a musical legend. And he's not. But he is. He has been honored by the Americana Music Association and the International Bluegrass Music Association. "It's overwhelming and humbling," Bush says of his lifetime achievement award from the AMA. "It goes along with the title cut of my new album, 'Circles Around Me,' which basically says, 'How in the hell did we get this far?'" In my brain I'm still 17, but I look in the mirror and I'm 57." But honors are not what drive him. "I didn't get into music to win awards," he says. "I love to play and the older I get the more I love it. And I love new things." In the acoustic world, I've been pretty lucky to play with almost every one of my heroes. I've gotten to play with Bill Monroe, Doc Watson and Earl Scruggs; I've been to the mountain," says Bush with a smile. "As long as I'm alive I hope I have the ability to play," says Bush, a two-time cancer treatment survivor. "When the ability to play is taken away, it's humbling. It teaches you a lesson: don't take it for granted."

Chatham County Line Friday

Entering its second decade as an ensemble, Chatham County Line brings a deep reverence for traditional American roots music and timeless bluegrass instrumentation to insightful, poetic original songs that are powerfully contemporary yet rich with the complex resonance of their Southern heritage. Over the course of six studio albums and performances around the world, they have pursued a singular style that is entirely their own, yet connect with audiences from all walks. Dynamic and captivating, Chatham County Line is equally capable of classically hard-driving bluegrass and sparse, haunting ballads. The key to their sound lays in the close collaboration of the band's four members: Dave Wilson (guitar), John Teer (man-



SAM BUSH



CHATHAM COUNTY LINE



COLEMAN



DONNA THE BUFFALO

dolin, fiddle), Chandler Holt (banjo) and Greg Reading (bass). This partnership enriches their latest album "Tightrope," which was forged over a year's worth of intensive rehearsals where they put every element under the microscope.

T. Michael Coleman Friday, Saturday and Sunday

T. Michael grew up playing baseball and singing in church. In college he developed an appreciation of folk music since he was in the vortex of American folk music at Appalachian State University. T. Michael followed his music path a little ways down the road to Deep Gap when he began playing and touring with Doc and Merle Watson. The three toured the world and participated in many recordings that received Grammy nominations and awards. After 15 years, T. Michael began performing and recording with Seldom Scene in Washington, D.C., along with producing and recording various music projects for Doc Watson and others. His interest in video production led him all over the world to places like Rwanda, Kosovo, Russia and South America. T. Michael also began music scoring for documentaries and movies. Recently, T. Michael joined with David Holt and Brian Sutton in Deep River Rising (now called Sutton, Holt and Coleman), traveling the road Doc Watson paved and paying homage to Doc Watson's musical journey.

Donna the Buffalo Thursday, Friday and Saturday

Donna the Buffalo's feel-good, groove-oriented, danceable and often socially-conscious music has held steadfast since 1989. It has roots in old-time fiddle music that evolved into a soulful electric Americana-mix infused with elements of Cajun/zydeco, rock, folk, reggae and country. Donna the Buffalo is known for touring the country, remaining fiercely independent as one of the industry's most diverse roots-music bands and has "earned a reputation as one of the most respected, eclectic and hardest-working acts today," praises Encore. Donna the Buffalo includes Jeb

Puryear (guitar, vocals), Tara Nevins (fiddle, guitar, accordion, scrubboard, vocals), Dave McCracken (keyboard); Kyle Spark (bass); and Mark Raudabaugh (percussion). The band is touring heavily to promote its latest album, "Tonight, Tomorrow and Yesterday," released through Sugar Hill Records. Donna the Buffalo's fervent fan base, self-named The Herd, follows the band with zeal. When asked by the Weekender what new people should look forward to experiencing at a show, Nevins said, "A really friendly, comfortable crowd, and a real community-oriented, positive experience."

Earls of Leicester Friday

The Earls of Leicester is a group of like-minded musicians banding together to recreate the wonderful music of Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys. Led by 13-time Grammy-winner Jerry Douglas, The Earls of Leicester features the talents of some of Nashville's most celebrated musicians, including hit songwriter Shawn Camp (guitar, lead vocals), Tim O'Brien (mandolin), bassist Barry Bales (Douglas' cohort in Alison Krauss & Union Station), fiddler Johnny Warren (son of Paul Warren, legendary fiddle player in Flatt & Scruggs' Foggy Mountain Boys band) and acclaimed banjo player Charlie Cushman. The band plays selections from the era of 1954 to 1965.



EARLS OF LEICESTER

During these years, the band comprised Lester, Earl, Dobro player Josh Graves, fiddler Paul Warren, tenor singer and mandolinist Curly Seckler, and bass player Jake Tullock. The group won a Grammy in 2015 for Best Bluegrass Album. In a relatively short time as a performing group, "The Earls" shows have quickly become the stuff of legend in the roots/acoustic/bluegrass community.

Farmer Jason Friday and Saturday

Farmer Jason is the brainchild of rock music legend Jason Ringenberg of Jason and The Scorchers. An Americana Music Association Lifetime Achievement Award winner, Ringenberg is one of the pioneers of the modern Americana and alt-country genres. In 2002 he created Farmer Jason to educate and entertain children about farm life and the wonders of nature. The character is based on his own farming background and love of the great out-

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doors. Farmer Jason has released four records and a DVD. He has starred in the "It's a Farmer Jason" video program that airs on several PBS stations around the country, earning four Emmy nominations and one Emmy win. Farmer Jason has performed several thousand concerts in venues ranging from rural fairs on the Alaskan tundra to posh European performance halls. The highly acclaimed live show involves sing-alongs, dancing and discussions about nature appreciation, ecology and farm animals.

Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn Thursday

Banjoists Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn have mastered the deceptively intricate art of the duet. Their performances embrace a diversity almost unthinkable - coming from just two banjos and one voice. Washburn's beguiling composing, playing and singing blend with



FLECK AND WASHBURN

Fleck's riveting and virtuosic musicianship to create music both unique yet familiar in texture. Fleck, a 15-time Grammy winner, has collaborated with Chick Corea, Oumou Sangare, Zakir Hussain, Edgar Meyer, Dave Matthews, Earl Scruggs and the entire Cleveland Orchestra for his banjo concert "The Impostor." Washburn's banjo has taken her far beyond the usual old-timey comfort zone, musically and geographically. An alumnus of Uncle Earl, the powerhouse all-female string-band, Abby's adopted second homeland is China. Her music resounds with echoes of Appalachia and the tidal wave of emerging Chinese cultural influence.

Front Country Saturday

Coming out of the Cali-



FRONT COUNTRY

ifornia Bay Area's red-hot roots music scene, Front Country first made waves with a rare double band competition at both the Telluride and Rockygrass music festivals. Following national tours and invites to prestigious events like Wintergrass and IBMA, anticipation has been mounting for their debut full-length album. Wanting to create something that pushed their sound even further, Front Country recruited renowned instrumentalist, composer and songwriter Kai Welch to produce "Sake of the Sound." With Welch at the helm, Front Country was able to unite its many far-reaching musical influences and inspirations and do credit to its electrifying live show. The songs on the new album are sourced from all across the Americana spectrum, but each

cover brings a fresh, new perspective.

Gibson Brothers Saturday

The upstate New York bluegrass group known as The Gibson Brothers is really two talented brothers and father-and-son team that can deliver a close-knit harmony without a hitch. The brothers are writer, banjoist and vocalist Eric Gibson and

writer, guitarist and vocalist Leigh Gibson. The father-and-son team is Junior Barber (Resophonic guitar) and son Mike Barber (acoustic bass). Brothers Leigh and Eric began performing before their teens, playing gospel instrumentals in the local church. They added singing harmonies to their act when they were around 16. They did numbers by artists such as Buck Owens and

Jim & Jesse. Musician Bob Fuller made sure the young brothers were exposed to the music of bluegrass greats like Red Allen, Bill Monroe and Jimmy Martin. In 1994, as a group of four, The Gibson Brothers recorded their debut album, "Underneath a Harvest Moon." The group's music moves from fun and energetic to serious

Continued on Page 14

Thursday, April 23

<p>1. Watson 3:00 p.m.-3:45 p.m. Underhill Rose</p>	<p>2. Cabin 3:45 p.m.-4:15 p.m. Roy Book Binder</p>	<p>9:45 p.m.-10:15 p.m. Logan Brill</p>
<p>4:15 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Scythian</p>	<p>5:00 p.m.-5:05 p.m. Raffle Drawing</p>	<p>7. Pickin' Place 2:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Jammin' at The 'Pickin' Place The Pickin' Place is more than a stage, it's an entire venue devoted to pickin' & grinnin'! Included in The Pickin' Place are the Traditional Jammin' Tent, Bluegrass Jammin' Tent, and Anything Goes Jammin' Tent. Bring your acoustic instruments to this area and jam! Hosted by the Wilkes Acoustic Folk Society.</p>
<p>5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Lee Ann Womack</p>	<p>5:05 p.m.-5:30 p.m. MerleFest Bluegrass Jam Camp with Pete & Joan Wernick</p>	
<p>7:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Béla Fleck and Abigail Washburn</p>	<p>6:30 p.m.-6:55 p.m. The Bill Young Tribute with the Banknotes</p>	
<p>8:30 p.m.-9:45 p.m. Hot Rize with Red Knuckles and The Trailblazers</p>	<p>6:55 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Raffle Drawing</p>	
<p>10:15 p.m.-11:15 p.m. Trampled By Turtles</p>	<p>8:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. The Larry Stephenson Band</p>	

Sunday, April 26

<p>1. Watson 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. The Kruger Brothers Kontras Quartet</p>	<p>1:50 p.m.-1:55 p.m. Silent Auction Winners Announced</p>	<p>Sunday Morning Devotions with Rev. Roy Dobyans of First Baptist Church of Boone. Piano music provided by Jeff Little</p>	<p>The InterACTIVE Theater of Jef</p>	<p>performances by special guests</p>	<p>11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Joe West Unplugged - Traditions from the Southwest with Joe West & The Santa Fe Revue</p>	<p>more than a stage, it's an entire venue devoted to pickin' and grinnin'! Included in The Pickin' Place are the Traditional Jammin' Tent, Bluegrass Jammin' Tent and the Anything Goes Jammin' Tent. Bring your acoustic instrument to this area and jam! Hosted by the Wilkes Acoustic Folk Society</p>	<p>instructor Laurie Brintle-Jarvis for a one hour yoga session.</p>	<p>Blu-Bop</p>
<p>12:45 p.m.-1:45 p.m. Paul Thorn</p>	<p>1:55 p.m.-2:30 p.m. Shannon Whitworth</p>	<p>10:00 a.m.-10:45 a.m. Nashville Bluegrass Band</p>	<p>Noon-12:30 p.m. Bethel University Bluegrass Bands</p>	<p>11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Brandon Whyde & the Devil's Keep</p>	<p>12:45 p.m.-1:30 p.m. The David Mayfield Parade</p>	<p>Noon-1:00 p.m. Learn to Clog - A Willard Watson Tribute with Carol Rifkin, Jeanette Queen, John Fowler and Blind Boy Paxton</p>	<p>11:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m. The David Mayfield Parade</p>	
<p>2:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Robert Earl Keen</p>	<p>3:30 p.m.-3:35 p.m. Raffle Grand Prize Winners Announced</p>	<p>11:00 a.m.-Noon Gospel Hour with Jim Avett and Family</p>	<p>1:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Bethel University Bluegrass Bands</p>	<p>12:45 p.m.-1:30 p.m. The David Mayfield Parade</p>	<p>12:45 p.m.-1:30 p.m. Locust Honey String Band</p>	<p>1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Traditional Mountain Big Circle and Square Dance with The Sheets Family Band and caller Glenn Bannerman</p>	<p>12:15 p.m.-1:30 p.m. The Black Lillies</p>	
<p>4:15 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Dwight Yoakam</p>	<p>3:35 p.m.-4:15 p.m. Brandon Whyde & The Devil's Keep</p>	<p>3:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Alex & Dan Fedoryka</p>	<p>2:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. The InterACTIVE Theater of Jef</p>	<p>2:00 p.m.-2:45 p.m. The Black Lillies</p>	<p>1:45 p.m.-2:30 p.m. African American Traditions with Blind Boy Paxton</p>	<p>2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Steep Canyon Rangers</p>	<p>1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Traditional Mountain Big Circle and Square Dance with The Sheets Family Band and caller Glenn Bannerman</p>	
<p>2. Cabin 12:15 p.m.-12:45 p.m. Jeff Little Trio</p>	<p>5:30 p.m.-5:35 p.m. "Southbound" played by Bill Mathis, Jack Lawrence, T. Michael Coleman</p>	<p>4. Little Pickers 10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m. Alberti Flea Circus</p>	<p>5. Americana 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Sunday Morning Blues hosted by Roy Book Binder with</p>	<p>6. Traditional 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m. Shape Note Singing with Laura Boosinger</p>	<p>7. Pickin' Place 10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Jammin' at The Pickin' Place The Pickin' Place is</p>	<p>8. Dance 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Sunday Morning Yoga - Bring your own mat and join</p>	<p>12. Hillside 10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.</p>	

Artists

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a dash of hobo folk; stir vigorously; and let it simmer 'til the pot bubbles over. Based in Raleigh/Durham, their music draws deep from the well of America's diverse musical heritage. Their high energy shows feature vocal harmonies, boot-stomping rhythms, lively stage banter and honest musicianship. The band, formed in 2005, includes Steve Celestini (vocals, harmonica), Steve Storms (guitar, Dobro, vocals), Bill Spagnardi (vocals, mandolin, percussion), Tom Spagnardi (doghouse bass, vocals) and Joe Spagnardi (guitar, vocals). They have three CDs: "Crackerjack Whistle" (2013), "Dust Bowl Lover" (2009) and "Workin' the Angels for Handouts" (2007).

Mitch Greenhill Friday, Saturday and Sunday

A product of the 1960s Cambridge folk music scene, Mitch recorded two albums for Prestige, now reissued as "Shepherd of the City Blues" (2000). He performed along the East Coast and accompanied Rosalie Sorrels on her seminal album "If I Could Be the Rain." In California he performed in the country-rock band Frontier and in California honky-tonks while working as a studio guitarist and producer. After joining his father, Manny Greenhill, at Folklore Productions, he worked as agent/manager and producer for Doc and Merle Watson, Taj Mahal and others. He and Mayne Smith released "Storm Coming" (1979) and "Back Where We've Never Been" (1985). On Broadway, he composed original music for "An Almost Holy Picture," a dramatic play starring Kevin Bacon. Mitch's latest project is the all-acoustic, all-instrumental trio, String Madness.



MITCH GREENHILL

**Wayne Henderson
Thursday, Friday and Saturday**
Wayne Henderson's top-notch

Continued on Page 18

Saturday, April 25

1. Watson 10:00 a.m.-10:45 a.m. Del Barber	1:16 p.m.-1:45 p.m. Belk Southern Musician Showcase Winner - Christian Lopez Band	2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Mando Mania featuring Tony Williamson, Sam Bush, Mike Compton, James Nash, Andrew Martin and Emory Lester	3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Learn to Clog from the Blue Ridge Heritage Cloggers with Carol Rifkin, Jeanette Queen and John Fowler	3:40 p.m.-4:15 p.m. with Roy Book Binder	12. Hillside 11:00 a.m.-11:45 a.m. Donna the Buffalo
11:15 a.m.-Noon The Spinney Brothers	2:45 p.m.-2:50 p.m. Raffle Drawing	3:30 p.m.-4:15 p.m. Mark Johnson and Emory Lester	2:45 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Arranging a Song for a Small Ensemble with the Kruger Brothers	10:00 a.m.-10:15 a.m. Welcome to the MerleFest Band Competition with judges Bob Hill, Tut Taylor, Si Kahn and Lee Bidgood	11. The Plaza 10:00 a.m.-10:15 a.m.
12:30 p.m.-1:15 p.m. Blue Highway	2:50 p.m.-3:15 p.m. String Madness with Mitch Greenhill	4:30 p.m.-4:31 p.m. Video	3:45 p.m.-5:15 p.m. Acoustic Kids Showcases with Andy May	10:15 a.m.-10:30 a.m. with Bobby Miller and The Virginia Dare Devils	13. Walker Center 11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
1:45 p.m.-2:45 p.m. Doc Watson Guitar Tribute with Jack Lawrence, David Holt,	4:30 p.m.-4:31 p.m. Video	5:00 p.m.-5:05 p.m. Raffle Drawing	5:45 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Life on the road with Lester Flatt, Bill Monroe and the Grand Ole Opry hosted by Blake Williams	10:45 a.m.-11:00 a.m. with Whitewater Ramble	11:15 a.m.-11:30 a.m. with Brushy Rides
T. Michael Coleman and many more	5:05 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Rev. Robert B. Jones	6:15 p.m.-6:20 p.m. Raffle Drawing	9:30 a.m.-9:40 a.m. Welcome to the MerleFest Workshops with Happy Traum	11:45 a.m.-Noon with The Loose Strings Band	1:00 p.m.-1:45 p.m. New Country Rehab
3:15 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Lorraine Jordan & Carolina Road Band	6:20 p.m.-6:45 p.m. Acoustic Kids with Andy May	7:30 p.m.-7:31 p.m. Video	9:45 a.m.-10:30 a.m. Clavgrass Workshop with Mark Johnson & Emory Lester	12:30 p.m.-12:45 p.m. with Time Sawyer	2:15 p.m.-3:15 p.m. Front Country
4:31 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Band Competition Winner	7:31 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Belk Southern Musician Showcase Winner - Down Home Band	8:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. The Gibson Brothers	10:45 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Honey Lester	1:00 p.m.-1:15 p.m. with The Gravy Boys	3:45 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Blue Highway
5:30 p.m.-6:15 p.m. Willie Watson	9:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m. The Honey Dewdrops	9:30 p.m.-11:15 p.m. The Avett Brothers	10:45 a.m.-11:05 a.m. Welcome to the Greatest Acoustic Blues Show on Earth hosted by Roy Book Binder	1:30 p.m.-1:45 p.m. with Sons of the South Bluegrass Band	5:00 p.m.-5:45 p.m. Nashville Bluegrass Band
6:45 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Peter Rowan	1:30 p.m.-2:00 p.m. The Two Man Gentlemen Band	2:00 p.m.-2:50 p.m. The Two Man Gentlemen Band	11:15 a.m.-11:30 a.m. with Veronika Jackson	2:00 p.m.-2:15 p.m. with Mountain Park Old Time Band	11:30 p.m.-Midnight Opening Act for The Midnight Jam featuring The Steel Wheels
8:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. The Gibson Brothers	2:15 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Farmer Jason	3:30 p.m.-4:00 p.m. Moore Brothers Band	12:40 a.m.-1:20 p.m. with Veronika Jackson	2:30 p.m.-2:45 p.m. with BearWallow Bluegrass Band	Midnight-2:30 p.m. The Midnight Jam hosted by The Steel Wheels. Brought to you by The Bluegrass Situation. By Ticket Only
9:30 p.m.-11:15 p.m. The Avett Brothers	3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. David Holt and T. Michael Coleman	4:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. The InterACTive Theater of Jef	11:55 a.m.-12:35 a.m. with Happy Traum	3:00 p.m.-3:15 p.m. with Bandit's Roost	
10:45 a.m.-11:15 a.m. Steve and Ruth Smith	4:45 p.m.-5:45 p.m. Clawhammer and		12:45 a.m.-1:30 a.m. Clavgrass Workshop with Mark Johnson & Emory Lester		
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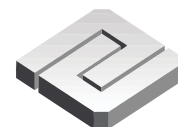
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Artists

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finger-picking has delighted Carnegie Hall, three national tours of Masters of the Steel-String Guitar and seven nations in Asia. Henderson is a luthier of great renown. He is a recipient of a 1995 National Heritage Award, presented by the National Endowment for the Arts. He produces about 20 instruments a year, mostly guitars. Doc Watson, who was a good friend, used to stop at Wayne's shop in Rugby, Va., to pick a few tunes. Doc said of his Henderson mandolin, "That Henderson mandolin is as good as any I've had my hands on. And that's saying a lot, because I've picked up some good ones." Some of Henderson's instruments are intricately decorated but are most respected for their volume, tone and resonance. Blues guitarist John Cephas said that Wayne Henderson "is probably the most masterful guitar maker in this whole United States."

Bob Hill

Thursday, Friday and Saturday

Born in the back of a jukebox, Bob Hill sold his first published song to Ray Charles in 1972. Shortly after, Bob joined Doc and Merle Watson as an original member of Frosty Morn. In 1980, NEMS Records of London,



WAYNE HENDERSON



BOB HILL



DAVID HOLT



HONEY DEWDROPS

England, signed Bob as a solo artist. NEMS renamed him "Fred Hill." Bob has written songs with and for the following artists and has recorded and performed with them as well: Leon Russell, JJ Cale, Jack "Cowboy" Clement, Don Everly, Ray Stevens, Lacy J. Dalton and Rufus & Carla Thomas, just to drop a few names. Fast forward to the present, Bob has released a CD entitled "Keepin' the Wolves Away" on Love Breeze Records. Bob still sleeps in the back of the jukebox.

David Holt

Friday and Saturday

Four-time Grammy Award winner David Holt is a musician, storyteller, historian, television host and entertainer who is dedicated to performing and preserving traditional American music and stories. Holt performed with Doc Watson for 14

years, which he says was the highlight of his long career. Holt found hundreds of old-time mountaineers with a wealth of folk music and stories. There was 100-year-old banjoist Wade Mainer, fiddler Tommy Jarrell and 122-year-old washboard player Susie Brunson as well as Doc Watson, Roy Acuff and Grandpa Jones. In 2002 Doc and David won two Grammys for their classic "Legacy," a three-CD set with interviews, music and a live concert about the inspiring life and music of Doc Watson. During his 30-year career, David has hosted numerous television shows including "Fire On The Mountain," the PBS "Folkways" series, "Great Scenic Railway Journeys" and "David Holt's State of Music." He has performed and recorded with many of his mentors including Doc Watson, Chet Atkins, Bill Monroe and Earl Scruggs. He

can be heard each week on public radio's "Riverwalk Jazz" and seen in the movie "O Brother, Where Art Thou?"

Honey Dewdrops

Saturday

Laura Wortman and Kagey Parrish share more than most couples. As the Honey Dewdrops, they share stages from venues to festivals across North America, stretches of rolling, infinite roadway, and a lot of songs; they share one mic and a hunger to pay attention to what endures. This hunger to explore and document is evident in their 2012 release "Silver Lining," a Top Ten record on national folk and Americana stations. With tight harmonies and a musical ensemble that includes clawhammer banjo, mandolin and guitars, the effect is to leave listeners with only what matters: the heart of the song and clarity over ornamentation. Laura and Kagey make their home in Baltimore, Md., where they wrote and recorded their fourth full-length album, expected for release spring 2015. The set of songs is raw and engaging, with characters and images from kindred people and places. And like their stage performance, these new songs rock and reel, and then they console

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Artists

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you when you come back down.

Honeycutters Friday

The Honeycutters are an original country roots band from Asheville. Since forming in 2007, the group has been playing music that is consistently as catchy as it is heartfelt. Organically grown around the songs of lead singer Amanda Anne Platt, the band has gained an audience that has stretched far beyond their mountain home to include all corners of the United States. Singer/songwriter Amanda Anne Platt's voice has been described as "perfectly unadorned" and "recklessly beautiful." Amanda's song "Little Bird" won second place in the general category at MerleFest's Chris Austin Songwriting contest in 2011. Rounding out The Honeycutter are Tal Taylor (mandolin), Rick Cooper (bass) and Jos Milligan (drums).

Hot Rize with Red Knuckles and the Trailblazers Thursday

It didn't take long after Tim O'Brien, Pete Wernick, Nick Forster and Charles Sawtelle first appeared on stage together in 1978 for the bluegrass music world to realize Hot Rize was something special. Upon retiring as a full-time act in 1990, Hot Rize had distinguished itself as IBMA's very first Entertainer of the Year, a nominee for a bluegrass Grammy, recipient of a four-star album review in Rolling Stone, and a legion of up-and-coming, broad-minded young musicians who toured across four continents. Steeped in bluegrass tradition through long hours listening to the genre's giants, Hot Rize's music was and is equally influenced by the music of Leadbelly and Freddie King, swing, old-time Appalachia and more in ways that mirror the broad sweep of Bill Monroe's influences. When



HONEYCUTTERS



HOT RIZE WITH RED KNUCKLES



JEF



JACKSON

Hot Rize retired, its members went on to distinguished careers of their own. Even so, Hot Rize turned out to be the band that refused to disappear, making occasional reunion appearances. When Sawtelle passed away in 1999, the surviving members brought brilliant guitarist Bryan Sutton on board and carried on with appearances.

InterACTIVE Theater of Jef Friday, Saturday and Sunday

When you run into Jef either on the Little Pickers Stage or roaming throughout the festival, his wacky version of mime and variety arts will be sure to tickle your fancy. He's always excited to entertain the child in all of us. Back in the 1970s and '80s, Jef apprenticed with mimes C.W. Metcalf, Tony Montanaro and Jacques Lecoq. Along the way he also studied period dance and style with William Burdick and clowning with Ezekiel Peterhof. As a soloist and ensemble member, he's opened for the likes of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band and Doc Watson. From 1976 to 1993 Jef was a member of TOUCH, North Carolina's touring mime theater ensemble. From 1993 through 1997, Jef created and performed as Wool E. Bull, the mascot for the Durham Bulls base-ball team.

Veronika Jackson Thursday, Saturday and Sunday

Veronika Jackson started her music career at the age of 10, singing in the school choirs. She was raised in a musical family in St. Petersburg, Fla. In her teens, her love

for acoustic folk and R&B music grew as she followed such artists as Odetta, Dolly Parton, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Joan Baez, Ella Fitzgerald and later Diamond Teeth Mary, a blues performer who inspired many folk artists through her performances at the Florida Folk Festival. Veronika Jackson has taken the acoustic folk guitar and the history of her culture as an African-American woman and has generated her own original, authentic and exciting style of music.

Johnnyswim Saturday

At first listen, it's easy to understand why "A Prairie Home Companion" declared Abner Ramirez and Amanda Sudano Ramirez are "21st Century troubadours." As Johnnyswim, they embody the tradition of the well-traveled singer-songwriter while cultivating a modern style that's their own. With just a guitar and the scintillating contrast of their voices, the duo holds audiences spellbound. The son of immigrants who fled Cuba for the Southeast, Abner had moved to Nashville to study and pursue music while Amanda's family settled in Nashville after moving between Los Angeles and the Northeast. Both inherited strong musical influences from parents and both were driven to chart their own paths. Abner attempted a solo career with a record label and Amanda recorded in New York. And then they met each other in 2005.

Mark Johnson Friday and Saturday

Mark Johnson learned his trade from Jay

Unger while living in New York. Mark didn't know that Jay was a highly accomplished fiddler who also tinkered with the clawhammer style of banjo. It was in the early 1970s that Mark learned from this consummate fiddler the basic technique of clawhammer banjo. He also learned the three-finger style of bluegrass picking as his familiarity with the instrument unfolded. Mark moved to Crystal River, Fla., in 1981, where, by chance, he met the Rice brothers: Larry, Tony, Ronnie and Wyatt. His manner for style and creativity in composition and performance was forever changed after establishing a relationship with the Rice brothers.

Rev. Robert Jones Sr. Saturday and Sunday

The Rev. Robert Jones Sr. is an inspirational storyteller and musician celebrating the history, humor and power of American roots music. His deep love for traditional African-American and American traditional music is shared in live performances that interweave timeless stories with original and traditional songs. For more than 25 years, Jones has entertained and educated audiences of all ages. At the heart of his message is the belief that our cultural diversity tells a story that we should celebrate, not just tolerate. Jones, a Baptist minister, lives in Detroit and performs throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe. An award-winning multi-instrumentalist, he is accomplished at guitar, harmonica, mandolin, banjo and fiddle.

Lorraine Jordan and Carolina Road Saturday

Lorraine Jordan & Carolina Road's distinct sound and old-time flair can be attributed to the bluegrass-rich area of North Carolina from which they hail and borrow their name. As the founding member and bandleader, Lorraine Jordan's showmanship and chemistry with the audience makes the group one

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Artists

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of the most popular bands among bluegrass fans today. The band is comprised of Lorraine Jordan (mandolin, tenor vocals), Tommy Long (baritone vocals, guitar), Josh Goforth (fiddle), Ben Green (banjo) and Jason Moore (bass). The band earned a reputation as one of the hardest working in bluegrass, averaging 60 bluegrass festivals in the U.S. and Canada annually along with headlining the Bluegrass Cruise and hosting the Canadian Bluegrass Awards, Christmas in the Smokies Bluegrass Festival and Bluegrass in Cherokee.

Robert Earl Keen Sunday

Now three decades since the release of his debut album, with well over a dozen other records to his name and thousands of shows under his belt, Robert Earl Keen has blazed a peer-, critic- and fan-lauded trail that's earned him pioneer – and living legend – status in the Americana music world. Inducted into the Texas Heritage Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2012, Keen has built a reputation as one of the nation's finest musical storytellers. Keen manages to strike an unusual balance between sensitive story-portraits and raucous bar-room fun in his creations. These two song types in Keen's output were unified by a mordant sense of humor that strongly influenced the early practitioners of what would become known as alternative country music. Keen, the son of an oil executive father and an attorney mother, is a native of Houston.

Kruger Brothers Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Born and raised in Europe, brothers Jens and Uwe Kruger started singing and playing instruments at a very young age. Growing up in a musically-influenced family, they were exposed to a diverse mix of music. The brothers were performing regularly by the time they were 11 and 12 years old, and they began their professional career in 1979. Joel Landsberg, a New York City native who also had a very extensive musical upbringing, joined the



**REV. ROBERT
JONES SR.**



**ROBERT
EARL KEEN**



KRUGER BROTHERS

brothers in the early '90s, together establishing The Kruger Brothers' incomparable sound. Since a formal introduction to American audiences in 1997, their remarkable facility with their instruments and unique take on the American music have made The Kruger Brothers a fixture in the world of acoustic music."

Jim Lauderdale Friday and Saturday

Jim Lauderdale is a two-time Grammy Award-winning musician and one of the most respected artists in the bluegrass, country and Americana music communities. Jim's music has been featured on the ABC hit show "Nashville," and he had several tracks on the soundtrack of the successful film "Pure Country." Lauderdale has always stayed true to his North Carolina roots but is influenced from the experience of his travels. He has helped pave the way of the current Americana movement writing, and recording songs that cross genres from country, pop, roots, rock, folk and bluegrass. Lauderdale won his first Grammy Award in 2002 with Dr. Ralph Stanley for "Lost in the Lonesome Pines" and then for "The Bluegrass Diaries" in 2007. As a performer Jim is credited with production, writing and collaborating on over two dozen albums.

Jack Lawrence Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday

Jack Lawrence has been called a "flatpicking powerhouse." His recordings and performances combine exciting, high-spirited and innovative guitar solos with tasteful phrasing in his own inventive style. Well known as Doc Watson's partner since the early 1980s, Jack's inspired playing and smooth vocals provide listeners with performances that span musical traditions. Jack grew up in Charlotte,

and his musical odyssey began at age 10 when his father took a job as sound engineer for a local music hall. From these early experiences, Jack developed his own talents and found his major influences to be Doc Watson, Clarence White and Django Reinhardt. Jack's talents are featured on many of Doc's recordings including the Grammy winner "On Praying Ground." The solo project "About Time," released in 1997, showcases Jack's amazing guitar style and rich, warm vocals. In 2001 he assembled some of the friends he most admires for an exciting recording project.

Emory Lester Friday and Saturday

Emory Lester is one of this day's foremost exponents of the acoustic mandolin. The power and attack of his mandolin playing are unmatched, and his sound is infectious. His landmark recording projects "Pale Rider," "The Emory Lester Set," and "Cruisin' the 8" have placed him among the elite mandolinists of our time. His latest solo recording titled "At Dusk" showcases Emory's musical creativity and skill as a mandolinist and multi-instrumentalist. Emory has undeniably inspired and influenced many of today's current wave of modern day mandolinists, pointing the way with his clean, clear, fast and efficient mandolin technique.

Jeff Little Trio Thursday, Friday and Sunday

With few exceptions, the piano does not play a prominent part in Appalachian music and is rarely the lead instrument. But Jeff Little is an exception – and a remarkable one. His distinctive style is breathtaking in its speed, precision and clarity. Little is from Boone, so it's not surprising that he began playing piano at age 5. His family ran Little's Music Store, where musicians fre-



**JIM
LAUDERDALE**



JACK LAWRENCE

quently dropped by to play a tune. Among those was Doc Watson, a neighbor and close family friend whose music helped shape Jeff's unique piano style. A professional musician since age 14, Jeff is con-

versant with old-time, country, bluegrass, rockabilly and blues.

Local Boys Thursday and Friday

The Local Boys is a band that has been waiting for the appellation "Americana," as "bluegrass" just doesn't cover the material it does. While all members of The Local Boys have deep roots in traditional music, they also have a love for the musical styles that influenced and evolved from old-time country and bluegrass. The band

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is fairly standard in its acoustic instrumental arrangement: guitar, bass, banjo, Dobro and mandolin. Where it differs is that it has four superb lead vocalists that also sing harmonies: John Akin, Aaron Soots, Eric Childers and Tommy Rape. This gives them an unparalleled ability to find the perfect combination of voices. If you like bluegrass, you'll like The Local Boys.

Locust Honey String Band Saturday and Sunday

Born in Georgia, singer and fiddler Chloe Edmonstone channels generations of women in her original songs, writing odes to jilted lovers, hard drinkers, and independent souls that can walk hand in hand with the old-time mountain songs that have been carefully selected for Locust Honey's new album, "Never Let Me Cross Your Mind." The new album showcases the dynamic partnership of Edmonstone and renowned old-time musician guitarist/singer Meredith Watson, the core of Locust Honey. The two carefully crafted the arrangements and harmonies and sang so closely that they could be siblings.

Loose Strings Band Saturday

The Loose Strings Band comprises a group of young women ranging in age from 17 to 21. They are all from Southwest Virginia and have been together for about 10 years. They enjoy playing at festivals, weddings, benefits and churches. Three of the band members are now in college, and two are seniors in high school. Despite their busy schedules, they find the time for their music passion. They enjoy playing bluegrass, gospel and country music and are known for their tight vocal harmonies. As a highlight in their young career, they had the honor to work with Sammy Shelor, the banjoist and leader of the Lonesome River Band. He was the band's producer and wonderful mentor on their last two CDs, "The Next Chapter" and "Everlasting Faith."

Doug MacLeod Saturday and Sunday

Doug MacLeod is the winner of the 2014 Blues Music Awards for Acoustic Artist of the Year and Acoustic Album of the Year ("There's A Time") and the 2013 Blues Blast Music Award for Male Artist of the Year. He is a singer-songwriter in the American tradition. He is a traveling artist who writes and sings original songs that are based on his own life and experiences. He learned from the old masters, lived the music, survived the



LOCUST HONEY STRING BAND

life, and carries forward a valuable tradition. MacLeod is known for his superb songwriting, guitar wizardry, warm soulful vocals, wit and unforgettable live performances. At the heart of this is his knack for storytelling. As a youth he overcame abuse and a crippling stutter by turning to music. While he developed his rich, soulful singing style, MacLeod also worked out a unique, unorthodox and powerfully rhythmic acoustic guitar style.

Marshall Tucker Band Friday

In the early fall of 1973, The Marshall Tucker Band was still a young and hungry group of musicians out to prove themselves every time they hit the stage. Their debut album had already spawned numerous hits. The collective talents of The Marshall Tucker Band over the next four decades has made the band legendary with its definitive blend of rock, rhythm & blues, jazz, country and gospel. MTB's new vinyl "Greatest Hits" release is a time capsule from that period. Still led today by founding member and lead singer Doug Gray, the band represents a time and place in music that will never be duplicated. Gray is quick to credit the band's current dynamic members with carrying on the timeless essence of The Marshall Tucker Band sound. Current members include the highly respected drummer B.B. Borden, a former member of both Mother's Finest and The Outlaws; multi-instrumentalist Marcus Henderson of Macon, Ga., plays flute, saxophone and keyboards in addition to lead and background vocals; and Pat Elwood on bass guitar and Rick Willis on lead guitar and vocals, both of Spartanburg, S.C., are disciples of the Caldwell Brothers. Acclaimed lead guitarist and vocalist Chris Hicks recently rejoined the band after a two-year absence.

Andy May Friday and Saturday

In a career spanning five decades and three regions of the nation, Andy May makes remarkable music that can be exuberant, thoughtful, funny or bittersweet. His originality and optimism combined with his love and respect for America's musical roots shine through his work. Mix the eclecticism of Bob Dylan, the mellowness of Don Williams, and the fire of Bill Monroe and you

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might come close to a description of Andy's music. He has been called a "troubadour of life," an "Americana music pioneer," a "master of traditional American music styles" and an "upbeat roots rocker."

David Mayfield Parade Sunday

David Mayfield grew up playing bass and touring with his family's bluegrass band. As a teenager he established himself as a hot picker, collecting national awards for his dexterity on guitar and mandolin. His knack for colorful performances was evident as a backing player in his sister Jessica Lea Mayfield's band, including its appearance on "The Late Show with David Letterman." He oozed personality on stage – a trait that makes him a natural frontman. He brought his skills and personality when he joined the bluegrass outfit Cadillac Sky and took the band into a new realm, playing sold out shows with British folk revivalists Mumford



MARSHALL TUCKER BAND

and Sons.

Del McCoury Band Friday

For over 50 years, Del McCoury's music has defined authenticity for hard core bluegrass fans as well as a growing number of new fans to the genre. McCoury is a living link to the days when bluegrass was made only in hillbilly honkytonks, schoolhouse shows and on the stage of the "Grand Ole Opry," yet also a commandingly vital presence today. He got his first taste of the limelight when he joined Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys in early 1963; the Father of Bluegrass moved McCoury from the banjo to guitar, made him his lead singer, and gave him a lifetime's worth of bluegrass tutelage. Flash-forward to the 1990s and The Del McCoury Band is on top of the



DEL McCOURY BAND

bluegrass world. The Del McCoury Band has shown unprecedented stability, with but a single change in membership in 20 years; nine IBMA Entertainer of the Year trophies, their namesake earned membership in the cast of the legendary "Grand Ole Opry" in 2003.

Jason Lee McKinney Band Friday

Jason Lee McKinney is a two-time nationally-signed recording artist, powerhouse vocalist and songwriter. McKinney and his band are fresh off a dominating performance at the 2014 Independent Country Music Association Awards held in his home state of Tennessee. The Jason Lee McKinney Band snagged four awards including Overall Artist of the Year, Best Americana/Folk Artist, Song of the Year and Album of the Year.

His business resume matches most high-ranking executives.

Bobby Miller and The Virginia Dare Devils Saturday

Making innovative and original music is an ever elusive goal in this day and age. The Virginia Dare Devils' mission to do just that is well underway. From their beginnings a year ago in the acoustic music hotbed of Asheville, this group of Americana veterans embarked on an organic musical journey rooted in traditional melody and tone layered with improvisational solos and textured rhythms reminiscent of psychedelic jams of the '60s, while tipping the cap to '30s swing bands. Add gritty arrangements, plus big family-style vocals and you have the real thing. Members are Bobby Miller (mandolin, lead vocals), Griff Martin (guitar, vocals), Bill Cardine (Dobro), Billy Gilmore (banjo), Tim Gardner (fiddle) and Rick Cooper (upright bass).

Mipso Friday

Americana's jailbreak from

sleepy town squares and the scratchier bands of the AM dial has been a welcome development in American music. And the renegade traditionalists of Mipso — Jacob Sharp (mandolin), Joseph Terrell (guitar) and Wood Robinson (double bass) — are doing their part to take three-part harmony and Appalachian influences into new territory. The three North Carolina songwriters have wandered off the path blazed by Earl Scruggs and Doc Watson to find a new clearing for their Southern string band sound. In the process, they've kicked up a fuss.

Bill Mize Friday and Saturday

Guitarist Bill Mize, a son of Tennessee, is a fitting representative of his state's rich musical heritage. His critically-lauded fingerstyle compositions are fluid and intricate, and their delivery masterful. One suspects an influential teacher, and one would be right. "I received most of my musical education from a cheap Zenith radio," says Mize, who

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as a child drifted off to sleep to the decidedly non-sleepy lullabies emanating from Nashville's WLAC and WSM and Knoxville's WNOX. Mize is a past winner of the National Fingerstyle Guitar Competition at The Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, Kan. And he received a Grammy Award for his collaboration with musician and storyteller David Holt on the recording "Stellaluna."

Moore Brothers Band Friday and Saturday

Most folks are taken aback when they first see 16-year-old Jacob (mandolin, banjo, fiddle), 20-year-old Daniel (bass) and 11-year-old Isaac (guitar) of Hickory. Don't let their fresh faces fool you; this trio means business. Together, they weave a musical tapestry that honors tradition and welcomes modern progress, melding a love of tone and harmonies with a fiery stage energy that wins over even the most jaded listeners.



MIPSO

Cahalen Morrison and Eli West Saturday

If we want to know what makes music timeless, perhaps we should look to things that truly are timeless, like the windswept, scoured face of a rock bluff in arid New Mexico or a rain-drenched, foliage-choked nurse log in a Pacific Northwest forest. To understand the music of American roots duo Cahalen Morrison and Eli West, perhaps the best way is to look to nature. After all, it was the natural vistas of Tierra Amerilla in northern New Mexico, and Seattle, Wash., that first inspired these young roots musicians.

Mountain Park Old Time Band Saturday

Mountain Park Old Time Band



MTN. PARK OLD TIME BAND

was formed seven years ago as a group of friends who happened to enjoy old-time music who got together to have a good time. Members of the band include Roger Stamper (fiddle, vocal), Dr. Mark Handy (banjo, vocal), Johnny Gentry (guitar, Dobro), C.T. Janney (washboard, flatfoot dancer) and Nancy Gentry (bass). The band has played at Bristol Rhythm and Roots for the past three years, the Carter Fold several times a year, the Alleghany Jubilee the second Saturday of every month, and Live at the Rex several times a year. They have been featured on "All Things Considered" on NPR for playing at the second longest radio show in the country on WPAQ.

Nashville Bluegrass Band Saturday and Sunday

With two Grammy Award-winning albums and two Entertainer of the Year honors from the

International Bluegrass Music Association, four-time IBMA Vocal Group of the Year Nashville Bluegrass Band is no stranger to acclaim from critics and fans alike. The band's members are sought-after, first-call studio musicians, known for a superior level of creativity and a commitment to traditional music styles. Collectively and singularly, the band members have virtually defined the modern bluegrass sound. Three original members are still in the group – Alan O'Bryant (banjo), Pat Enright (guitar) and Mike Compton (mandolin), though Compton left for 12 years. Award-winning fiddler Stuart Duncan joined the band in 1985. Bass player Andy Todd, came on board in 2005. In 2002, Pat Enright became one of the voices of the Soggy Bottom Boys in the movie "O Brother, Where Art Thou?" Alan O'Bryant, Mike Compton and Stuart Duncan appeared on the film's Platinum soundtrack.

New Country Rehab Saturday

New Country Rehab cuts through the clutter of watered-down musical imitations with a modern, high-voltage, alt-country sound. Invited by both the Americana Music Association and International Bluegrass Music Association to showcase in 2014, New Country Rehab proves that combining sharp innovation and a deep respect and knowledge of timeless musical themes and motifs pays off. Spearheaded by John Showman (lead singer, fiddle), who is joined by Roman Tome (drums, backing vocals), the Toronto-based collective is "poised to be the next big thing in Canadian music," (Tom Power, CBC Radio).

North Mississippi Allstars Friday

North Mississippi Allstars, formed in 1996, is the product of a special time for modern Mississippi country blues. Brothers Luther and Cody Dickinson soaked up the music of their father, Mem-

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phic legend Jim Dickinson, and absorbed the North Mississippi legacy while playing and shaking it down in the juke joints with their blues ancestors. R.L. Burnside, Junior Kimbrough, Otha Turner and their musical families were at their peak, making classic records and touring the world. Eventually, Luther (guitar, vocals) and Cody (drums, vocals) formed the North Mississippi Allstars and pioneered their own brand of blues-infused rock.

The Ragbirds Friday and Saturday

Led by dynamic, energetic front woman and multi-instrumentalist Erin Zindle, The Ragbirds utilize an arsenal of instruments from around the world. The Ragbirds are a fusion of folk rock and pop hooks over danceable world rhythms stirred with a Celtic fiddler's bow. Surrounding Zindle's earthy-sweet voice is the whirlwind of guitarist T.J. Zindle and dynamic bass-



**NORTH MISSISSIPPI
ALLSTARS**

ist Brian Crist, spinning over the world-beat grooves of drummer Loren Kranz and percussionist Randall Moore. The Ragbirds were formed in 2005 with the release of "Yes Nearby." World-travel themed "Wanderlove" (2007) was Homegrown Music Network's No. 1 selling album in the fall of 2008.

Carol Rifkin & Friends (Jeanette Queen, John Fowler) Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Carol Rifkin is a nationally-known artist who has performed with Tommy Jarrell and Doc and Merle Watson. She is an award-winning musician (guitar, fiddle), dancer, journalist, public radio host ("This Old Porch") and singer. Carol emcees events like Asheville's annual Mountain Dance and Folk



RAGBIRDS

Festival, hosts MerleFest's Dance Stage, narrated a documentary short from Western Carolina University about the region's traditional music history and studies weekly under fiddler Arvil Freeman. She is a co-founder of the Lake Eden Arts Festival. Carol is joined by friends Jeanette Queen and John Fowler at MerleFest.

William Ritter and Sarah Ogletree Friday

Traditional musician and songwriter William Ritter began performing with fiancé Sarah Ogletree in 2011. Both are accomplished fiddle players with a love for ballad and harmony singing. William, a native of Bakersville, plays banjo, fiddle, guitar and other "stringed things." Sarah Ogletree was raised



CAROL RIFKIN

in Jackson County and has been playing the fiddle and singing since she was a young girl. Joining the duo on bass and guitar is William's longtime music partner, Andrew Payseur of Iron Station.

Bruce Robison and Kelly Willis Friday

"Our Year," the latest release of Bruce Robison and Kelly Willis, elevates them closer to the lofty territory once occupied by Johnny 'n' June and George 'n' Tammy. They fell in love while harmonizing together the night they met at an Austin, Texas, party, and they still haven't lost the thrill of making that sweet, singular sound, though it took them until 2013 to release their first officially-billed joint effort, "Cheater's Game," which was well received. After that, they created "Our Year," a collection of formidable originals to well-honed covers. Willis' singing career began at 17.

Peter Rowan Friday and Saturday

A chameleon of musical genres,

Peter Rowan's original songwriting is the driving force of his musical diversity. The legendary bluegrass singer-songwriter and Grammy Award winner has been performing since 1963, and today he is still making waves in the music world. A solo Peter Rowan performance is one for the true music lover. Peter Rowan's bluegrass career started as a Blue Grass Boy in 1964. By Bill Monroe's own admission, Peter sounded a lot like him. When the two harmonized together, they were said to have reached "heavenly heights." Monroe and Rowan co-wrote what has already become a bluegrass standard, "Walls of Time."

Scythian Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Infusing energy and passion of Ukrainian heritage with Celtic and bluegrass traditions, Scythian (sith-ee-yin) "reinvented folk rock in America," according to iHeartRadio's Arroe Collins. Ed Helms' website "The Bluegrass

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Situation" calls Scythian's recent album "Jump at the Sun" a "shine-fueled, fiddle-flying hoedown." Nashville's Music City Roots show says "[Scythian is] what happens when rock star charisma meets Celtic dervish fiddling." Hailing from Washington, D.C., Scythian, which recently toured Ireland, merges classical prowess with thunderous energy to a barn-dance rock concert experience.

Sheets Family Band Friday and Sunday

The Sheets Family Band, an old-time string band from western North Carolina, features Randy Sheets (banjo), Kelly Sheets Snider (fiddle) and Deborah Jean Sheets (guitar). Celebrated for harmonizing and energetic instrumentals, they embody the values of homemade and home-grown music and lifestyle. Their old-time mountain style takes inspiration from the music of the Appalachian Mountains and beyond. You'll hear a variety of lively fiddle tunes, gospel songs, ballads and a few drinking songs, too.

Sigmon Stringers Thursday and Friday

The Sigmon Stringers, a three-generation



SCYTHIAN

bluegrass band from Newton, has something to offer all ages. Their ages range from 13 to 82 years. The original band members, Clinton Sigmon, his two sons Randy and Mark, and lifelong friend Ray Barger, have been performing together since the early '70s. Randy's daughter Anna plays banjo, and Mark's kids, Beau, Mollie and Maggie, complete the band. Beau is on lead guitar and mandolin, Mollie plays mandolin and sings and Maggie fiddles and assists with vocals.

Kiran Singh Sirah Friday

Kiran Singh Sirah, executive director of the International Storytelling Center in Jonesborough, Tenn., is an artist, curator and teacher. His career encompasses award-winning national and international arts, as well as cultural and human rights programs in the U.K. The workshop that Sirah presents at MerleFest will explore the role of storytelling in what he describes as one of the greatest conflict prevention tools that

we can use to foster and establish global peaceful communities and how we might use new storytelling forms to help establish a conflict-free world.

Steve and Ruth Smith Thursday and Saturday

Musical duo Steve and Ruth Smith, from North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, play a distinctive blend of Appalachian Americana music with Celtic roots, featuring hammered and Appalachian mountain dulcimer, old-time banjo and guitar. They were named Americana Instrumental Group of the Year at the 2013 Appalachian Cultural Music Association Awards. In 2014, the Smiths were inducted into the National Traditional Country Music Association's America's Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame.

Joe Smothers Thursday, Friday, Saturday

Joe is a native of North Carolina now in Georgia. While attending Appalachian State, he met three other musicians and formed Fried Chicken and Watermelon. His band had did a show with Doc and Merle Watson, and Merle took a liking to this group of musicians. Joe joined Merle's band, Frosty Morn, to record and play shows with Doc. Joe also joined Jack Lawrence to form the duo Smothers and Lawrence for a recording

project and tour. Joe is now a guitar instructor and solo performer. One of his songs won a writing award in 2007 at the prestigious Kansas Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield.

Sons of the South Bluegrass Band Saturday

Sons of the South performs traditional bluegrass as well as original materials. In 2014, the band won first place at the Yadkin County Fiddler's Convention, claimed fourth place at the Galax Fiddler's Convention, and performed at IBMA's 2014 Wide Open Bluegrass Street Festival. The band was founded in the 1950s with Avery Aiken (banjo) and Luther Souther (guitar). It was reestablished in the 1980s with Tommy Killian (fiddle, vocals), Luther Souther (bass, vocals), Gary Isenhour (guitar, vocals) and Gary Souther, son of Luther Souther. Gary has opened for the Country Gentlemen, Bobby Hicks, Blue Highway and the Jeanette Williams Band. Connor Lambert (mandolin, vocals) has played mandolin for nearly 40 years. He traveled and played music with his father, the late Garland Lambert.

The South Carolina Broadcasters Friday, Saturday and Sunday

The South Carolina Broadcasters are dog-

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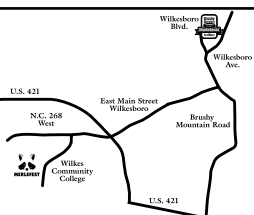
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matic about the deeply traditional style of music they present. David Sheppard (guitar), Ivy Sheppard (fiddle, banjo, guitar) and Sarah Osborne (banjo, guitar) all provide vocals to create distinctive harmonies. Drawing their inspiration from the Carter Family and early country duos, The Broadcasters aim to keep the roots of American traditional music alive. From fiddle tunes to gospel favorites to originals you'll swear you know, The Broadcasters' performance will take you back in time while making traditional music feel right at home in the 21st Century.

The Spinney Brothers Friday and Saturday

Comprised of Allan Spinney, Rick Spinney, Gary Dalrymple and Terry Poirier, The Spinney Brothers are from the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia and debuted in 1992, showcasing a tight brother duet vocal style that was immediately recognized for its energetic and distinctive sound. The cornerstone of their musical identity is their thorough understanding of traditional, Southern-flavored bluegrass music. The first generation bluegrass legends have been an important musical influence, yet the brothers' music is



STEEP CANYON RANGERS

equally shaped by their personal lives and rural heritage.

The Steel Wheels Saturday

The Steel Wheels are renowned for their raw energy and chemistry on stage, where they cluster tightly around a single microphone to adorn Trent Wagler's unmistakable tenor with bell-clear four-part harmonies complemented by Eric Brubaker's fiddle, Brian Dickel's upright bass and Jay Lapp on the mandolin and guitars. The band's own brand of acoustic Americana roots music reflects styles of the past yet boldly embodies the strength of powerful original songwriting. The Steel Wheels are selling out venues from coast to coast and appearing at many of the top festivals in the U.S.

Steep Canyon Rangers Sunday

The Steep Canyon Rangers are living, picking proof that bluegrass music can adapt to its times without losing its history and that artistry plus dedication can launch a major career. In just over 10 years (a short spell in bluegrass), this five-piece band has graduated from stairwell jams at the University of North Carolina to America's greatest stages, including the Grand Ole Opry and a national tour with Grammy and Emmy-winning actor/comedian and banjo player Steve Martin. The Rangers won a Grammy in 2013 for Best Bluegrass Album for "Nobody Knows You." The four founding Rangers – Woody Platt (lead vocals, guitar), Mike Guggino (mandolin), Charles R. Humphrey III (bass) and Graham Sharp (banjo) – added fiddler Nicky Sanders in 2007.

Larry Stephenson Band Thursday

Highly regarded as one of bluegrass music's finest high lead and tenor vocalists, Larry Stephenson has been a headliner for over 20 years. He was on the mandolin at age five, cutting his first record at age 13. Stephenson has been a touring bluegrass musician since he played with his dad beginning in the mid '70s. He started The Larry Stephenson

Band in 1989. Since moving to Nashville in 1992, the band has toured widely, recorded frequently, nurturing its own sound, based on Larry's crystal clear, easily recognizable tenor voice, while providing a musical home for some of the finest sidemen in contemporary bluegrass history. Many appearances on the Grand Ole Opry and RFDTV have made the band a fan favorite all across the U.S. and Canada. Signature songs in Larry Stephenson's vast catalog include "Patches," "Yes, I See God," "Clinch Mountain Mystery," "Many Hills of Time," "The Knoxville Girl," "The Knoxville Boy," "The Pretty Blue Dress" and "The Violet and the Rose." In 1996, Stephenson was made a member of the Virginia Country Music Hall of Fame by the Virginia Folk Music Association.

Stray Birds Friday

The Stray Birds have been flying high since the 2012 release of their critically-acclaimed self-titled album. Three years, hundreds of gigs and thousands of highway miles later, the genre-melding acoustic trio just made its Yep Roc Records debut. Known for songwriting, instrumental virtuosity and three-part harmony singing, their most cohesive and ambitious album to date,

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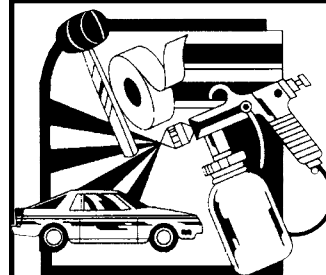
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Artists

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"Best Medicine," was released in October. Multi-instrumentalists and vocalists Maya de Vitry, Oliver Craven and Charlie Muench hail from Lancaster, Pa. All three are classically-trained musicians who've been making music of all kinds since childhood.

String Madness Friday and Saturday

Three hot instrumentalists pool their talents to form String Madness, playing all-instrumental, all-acoustic music from Bach to Bebop. The players are Mitch Greenhill, Bob Applebaum and Peter Spelman. Mitch Greenhill has appeared at MerleFest for many years. He served as Doc and Merle Watson's manager, record producer and blues sidekick. Bob Applebaum's 40-plus years of professional experience in stage, recording, television and film include work with Belá Fleck, Pete Wernick, Stewart Duncan, Richard Greene and Mason Williams. Peter Spelman's extensive history



STRAY BIRDS

as soloist and band leader includes stints in both northern and southern California.

Bryan Sutton Friday

Bryan Sutton is one of the most sought-after acoustic guitarists on the planet. Born in Asheville. Sutton grew up in a musical family and was immersed in the rich heritage of Western North Carolina music. Bryan started playing guitar at the age of eight. By high school graduation, he was immersed in bluegrass, jazz and rock 'n' roll, playing in an array of bands and making his first recordings. He added mandolin, banjo and fiddle skills to his already considerable guitar abilities. He seemed to come out of nowhere in 1995 as a member of Ricky Skaggs' Kentucky Thunder band, playing



THORN

on two Grammy Award-winning records. After Skaggs, Bryan went on to build a career as a top studio guitarist in Nashville.

Sutton, Holt and Coleman Friday and Saturday

Grammy Award winners Bryan Sutton, David Holt and T. Michael Coleman explore the rich musical traditions of North Carolina. Each has been inspired by and performed with Doc Watson. Their latest CD, "Ready for the Times," captures this vibrant legacy with impeccable musicianship and singing. "Doc was a huge influence on all of us. We are following his lead in performing a wide range of songs and tunes that reach out and grab people. We are not trying to recreate the past. We are playing music for today," said Holt, who accompanied Doc for



STRING MADNESS

14 years. "We want to sound like western North Carolina," added Sutton. "It's not bluegrass, it's not old-time, it's mountain music, and it's ours. It has a unique kind of bounce." Said Coleman. In addition to being considered one of the best modern flatpickers, Bryan Sutton has enjoyed a successful career as a first call session musician. For the last 40 years, David Holt has learned traditional music from Southern mountaineers.

Paul Thorn Sunday

Tupelo's Paul Thorn is the son of a Mississippi Pentecostal preacher; gospel music was in his blood from birth and has remained a lifelong passion. Thorn released his debut album, "Hammer and Nail," in 1997, followed by 1999's "Ain't Love Strange." A formidable guitarist, Thorn decided to showcase his guitar skills on "Mission Temple Fire Works Stand." His 2004 "Are You with Me?" used a more stripped-down style of production and R&B-based grooves. After a four-year break from recording, though still touring the U.S. and

Europe, Thorn returned with 2008's "A Long Way from Tupelo." In 2010 he released "Pimps and Preachers," and followed it in 2012 with his first all-covers collection, "What the Hell Is Goin' On?" and "Too Blessed to Be Stressed," in 2014.

Time Sawyer Saturday

Time Sawyer from the Elkin area is interested in "real people and real songs" and that's just what the listener finds in their music. Time Sawyer blends a grassroots feel with heart-felt lyrics to put on a high-energy show. The folk rock band's name reflects the pull between the past and the future. Sam Tayloe (lead vocals) and Kurt Layell (lead guitar) recorded an acoustic EP together in 2009, but the addition in 2010 of Houston Norris (banjo) and Clay Stirewalt (drums) allowed them to create a richer sound. Time Sawyer's first album, "Time for a Change," placed on WNCW's list of Top 20 Regional Albums of 2011. Its follow-up is "The Maroon Album."

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Artists

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ToneBlazers

Thursday and Friday

ToneBlazers' repertoire is an Americana mix of their own original material. The ToneBlazers' have released two albums: "Red Clay Roots" and "Gold Rush Town." Jack Lawrence (guitar, vocals) is a guitar powerhouse. Jack has played with Carl Story, the 1970s "newgrass" movement bands New Deal String Band and Bluegrass Alliance, and in 1983 Jack accepted a job with Doc Watson, touring and recording with the master for over 25 years. Jim Ashton (pedal steel guitar, banjo) is the ultimate utility-man among the songwriting circuit. Jim's silk-sound pedal steel guitar, fusion-brained banjo and original compositions are all stout. Billy Gee (bass, vocals) is the consummate bassist. He has rocked with Bo Diddley and toured with bluegrass legend Charlie Waller as a member of the Country Gentlemen. Dale Meyer (electric/acoustic/resonator guitars, vocals) fronts the band.

Trampled By Turtles

Thursday

Progressive bluegrass band Trampled By Turtles is from Duluth, Minn., where frontman Dave Simonett formed the group in 2003. Simonett had lost most of his music gear, thanks to a group of car thieves. Left with no more than an acoustic guitar, he pieced together a new band, taking inspiration from bluegrass, folk and other genres that didn't rely on amplification. New to bluegrass music, Simonett filled his lineup with other genre new-comers, including fiddler Ryan Young, bassist Tim Saxhaug, mandolinist Erik Berry and banjoist Dave Carroll. Trampled By Turtles' first album, "Songs from a Ghost Town" (2004), stood out for its contemporary sound in a genre steeped in tradition. "Blue Sky and the Devil" (2005) and "Trouble" (2007) explored a similar sound. The band's fourth release, "Duluth," received the full support of the bluegrass community. "Duluth" peaked at No. 8 on the Billboard bluegrass chart. "Palomino" (2010) was met with an even greater response, debuting at the top of the bluegrass chart and remaining in the Top 10 for more than a year.

Happy Traum

Friday, Saturday and Sunday

Happy Traum began playing guitar and five-string banjo as a teenager and was an active participant in the legendary Greenwich Village folk scene of the 1950s and '60s. Happy first appeared on record at a historic session in 1963 when a group of young folk musicians, including Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs,



TRAMPLED BY TURTLES

Pete Seeger, Peter LaFarge and The Freedom Singers gathered in Folkways Records' studio for an album called "Broadside, Vol. 1."

Two Man Gentlemen Band

Saturday

Irreverent songwriters, expert instrumentalists and consummate showmen, The Two Man Gentlemen Band has developed a reputation as a must-see live act on the roots and retro music circuits. A hot swing duo in the tradition of the great Slim & Slam, The Gents have obvious affection for the sounds and styles of the '20s and '30s. But, they're no period piece. The decidedly contemporary feel of their lyrics and the breakneck pace at which they attack many of their tunes creates a thoroughly modern ruckus.

Underhill Rose

Thursday

Underhill Rose has put its talents to work to become synonymous with beautiful music, charming personalities and, recently, increased momentum. With Eleanor playing her distinctive clawhammer banjo style along with harmonica, Molly Rose on guitar, and Salley plucking the upright bass, the trio has carved out a place in the Americana scene. Eleanor's salty blues-inspired voice and Molly's soaring range lead the group in tandem with Salley's country twang to create three-part harmony that is real and inspired. Molly Rose and Eleanor Underhill's musical partnership is the result of a chance meeting at Warren Wilson College. Molly Rose's beautiful voice resonated with Eleanor, and the two started performing together. Underhill Rose formed in 2009, and the addition of Salley Williamson two years later created the trio.

Unspoken Tradition

Friday

Unspoken Tradition makes sure that its music honors the creators of heritage music, grows within tradition by adding an original approach, and maintains its role as something for people who are united through the love of great music. The band started in Cherryville, hometown



THE WAYBACKS

of founding members Lee Shuford (dobro, vocals), Audie McGinnis (guitar, vocals) and Zane McGinnis (banjo). They came together for picking sessions at the home of Jack Bingham and soon were playing locally and building a following. In 2012, Matt Warren (upright bass, vocals), Ty Gilpin (mandolin, vocals) and Tim Gardner (fiddle, vocals) joined the band. With a repertoire of original bluegrass, traditional bluegrass and creative covers, the band opens itself to an even wider audience and brings passionate energy to the stage.

Willie Watson

Sunday

Folk singer and multi-instrumentalist (guitar, banjo, harmonica) Willie Watson can be murderous, bawdy or lustful, sometimes in the course of a single song, with a sly sense of humor that cuts to the quick. He counters a masterful bravado with the tragic fragility of one who has been wounded. Born in Watkins Glen, N.Y., Watson discovered North Carolina Appalachian fiddle and banjo players Tommy Jarrell and Fred Cockerham. He was an original member of Old Crow Medicine Show, which specializes in traditional American string band sound.

The Waybacks

Friday and Saturday

The Waybacks draw freely from the old school and the old world, but The Waybacks are no throwback. They've been erroneously pigeonholed as a bluegrass band and celebrated as purveyors of "acoustic mayhem." They're living proof that, in music anyway, evolution and intelligent design are entirely compatible. "The whole spirit of improvisation – that's always been the cornerstone of this band for me," says founding singer, songwriter and guitarist James Nash. Besides Nash, The Waybacks include drummer Chuck Hamilton, bass player Joe Kyle Jr. and the newest member, fiddler and mandolinist Warren Hood. The Waybacks host the hugely popular Hillside Album Hour at MerleFest each year.

Charles Welch

Saturday and Sunday

Charles Welch is a longtime friend, neigh-



UNDERHILL ROSE



WILLIE WATSON

bor and picking pal of the Watson family. He has been a frequent guest at the homes of Richard and Doc and RosaLee and often went on the road with either or both of them, sharing their love of blues and mountain music. We welcome Charles as a special guest at MerleFest.

Pete and Joan Wernick

Thursday and Friday

Also known as Dr. Banjo and Nurse Banjo, Pete and Joan are MerleFest regulars going back to Pete's appearances with Hot Rize in the early years of the festival. The duo specializes in down-home harmonies. Joan's unique and soulful singing is set off by Pete's masterful banjo work. As a band organizer, performer and songwriter, he catalyzed the groundbreaking progressive band Country Cooking, Hot Rize and his ongoing experimental project Pete Wernick & Flexigrass. Additionally, Pete is well known for his bestselling instruction books, videos and workshops. Singer-guitarist Joan has hosted a bluegrass radio show on KGNU in Boulder, Colo., since 1978.

Joe West & The Santa Fe Revue

Friday, Saturday and Sunday

After an early career in the New York theater scene, Joe moved to Austin, Texas, and formed a group called Joe West and the Sinners. In 1999 Joe's first self-released CD, "Jamie Was a Boozer," received extensive indie radio play across the country and in Europe. Joe began to tour the U.S. and Europe, sharing the stage with the likes of Arlo Guthrie and the Violent Femmes. At the turn of the century, Joe returned to his hometown of Santa Fe where he led several different bands and musical projects most notably The Santa Fe All Stars. In 2005 Joe's CD, "The Human Cannonball," reached No. 2 in the European Freeform Americana Radio Charts.

Ted White

Friday and Saturday

Ted White is a bluegrass bass player, dance caller and storyteller from Henderson County. Stepping into that role for the Whitewater Bluegrass Company, White makes a central musical contribution and adds to the band's

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Artists

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performances with storytelling, Opry-style comedy and dance-calling. Among the kinds of dances he can call, White lists the big mountain circle, Western swing, contra and old-time. In addition to being the recipient, with his bandmates, of a North Carolina Arts Council grant and the Pfaff Cup from Warren Wilson College, White's work as a musician, caller, storyteller and humorist has given him opportunities to perform at Warren Wilson College, the Mountain Heritage Center and the Carter Family Fold.

Whitewater Ramble Saturday

Described as high-octane Rocky Mountain dancegrass, Whitewater Ramble uses a simple recipe to craft its sound: start with bluegrass instrumentation, add drums and finish with a boundary-less approach to grassing-up everything from disco house grooves to roots to Americana. Whitewater Ramble is Patrick Sites (mandolin,



TED WHITE



WHITewater RAMBLE



BRANDON WHYDE



SHANNON WHITWORTH

vocals), Patrick Latella (acoustic guitar, vocals), Howard Montgomery (upright bass, vocals), Zebulon Bowles (fiddle, vocals) and Jack Watson (drums). Whitewater Ramble's second studio release, "Roots & Groove," showcases the band's growth as songwriters and musicians. Produced by Tim Carbone of Railroad Earth, the album features an array of special guests such as Infamous Stringdusters' Andy Hall (Dobro), Leftover Salmon's Andy Thorn (banjo), Grammy Award winner John Macy (pedal steel) and Bill McKay (piano).

Shannon Whitworth Sunday

Banjo-wielding songstress Shannon Whitworth has attracted international attention with her

passionate presence and talent. Whitworth's style found its first showcase in her 2007 solo debut, "No Expectations." Her 2009 critically-acclaimed "Water Bound" garnered Whitworth praise. She has performed at the Philadelphia Folk Festival, Nashville's Ryman Auditorium and elsewhere. Whitworth's latest release is "High Tide." A Gibson SG joins Whitworth's quiver of acoustic guitar, banjo and ukelele, and for the first time, the band is her own. "High Tide" calls upon the people who know her music best, from producer Seth Kauffman to bassist Bill Reynolds.

Brandon Whyde & The Devil's Keep Sunday

Music was a young Brandon

Whyde's saving grace when his father was killed by a drunk driver. Discovering poets like Bob Dylan soon introduced a new world to him. Whyde picked up a guitar and never looked back. During a side-stage performance at an Indianapolis amphitheater, a featured performer's guitarist liked what he heard from Whyde and invited him to his home to record demos. A year later those recordings found their way to Josh Kelley, who also liked them enough to invite Whyde to record with him. "He's like Bob Dylan and Tom Waits got stuck in a blender and out came Brandon Whyde," Kelley says. Whyde projects a soul-searing exorcism with both an impassioned and roughhewn voice that breaks and melts. The Devil's Keep is Chris Weller (upright bass) and Benji Bal-

lard (drums).

Blake Williams Friday, Saturday, Sunday

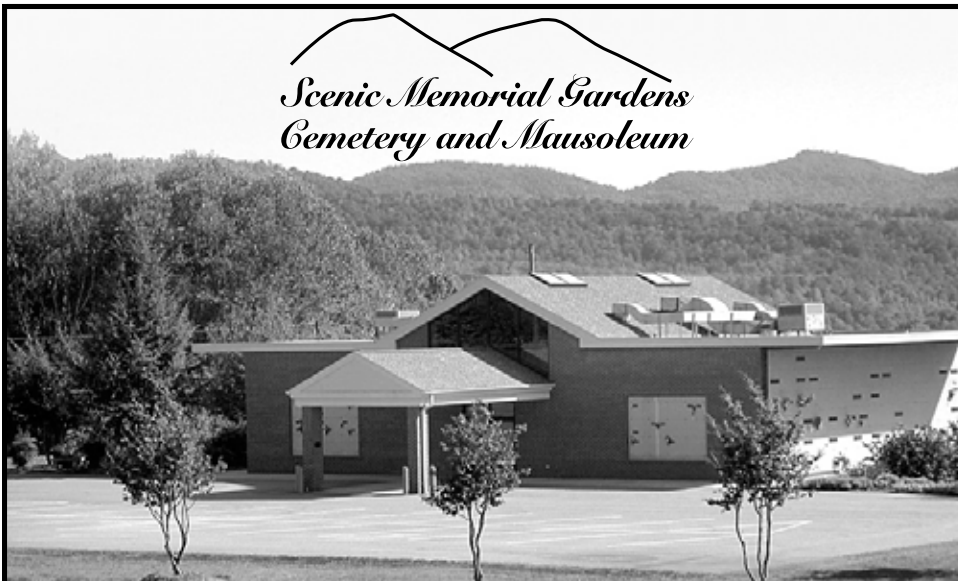
An accomplished multi-instrumentalist, Blake Williams toured with Bobby Smith & The Boys from Shiloh fresh out of high school, played banjo for Lester Flatt and the Nashville Grass until Lester's death in 1979, and played with Bill Monroe for 10 years. In 1991, Blake was hired to play bass with Hee Haw star, comedian and Grand Ole Opry member Mike Snider. He has played at Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and the Lincoln Center. Blake recorded two albums with Lester Flatt and six albums with Bill Monroe. One of them, "Southern Flavor," won the first Grammy for Bluegrass Album of The Year. He recorded three solo projects, performed on projects by Patty Loveless and Vince Gill and performed regularly on the Grand Ole Opry for over 23 years.

Tony Williamson Saturday

Mandolin virtuoso Tony William-

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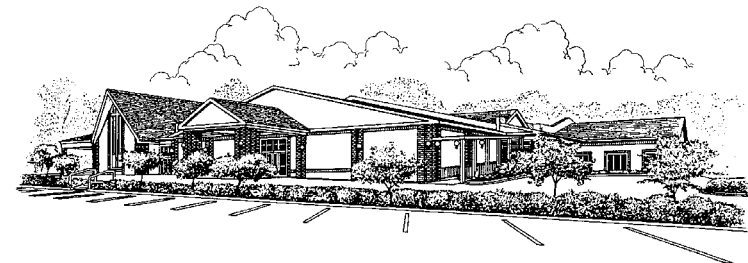
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Artists

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son has dazzled audiences far and wide for many years, performing around the globe on stage and in the studio with Alison Krauss, Earl Scruggs, Tony Rice, Vassar Clements, David Grisman, Sam Bush, Mike Marshall, Ricky Skaggs, Jerry Douglas, Don Stiernberg and Robin and Linda Williams of "Prairie Home Companion" fame. He has also received awards and nominations from many national music organizations and has even performed for Luciano Pavarotti. A native of rural Piedmont North Carolina, Tony began playing music around 1957. With Tony on mandolin and his brother Gary on banjo, they became child sensations and by 1969 had won first place in the coveted World Championship in Union Grove. Tony received an Indie nomination in Southern gospel music for his album "Let Us Cross Over the River."

Lee Ann Womack Thursday

Lee Ann Womack is an American country music singer/songwriter best known for her old-fashioned country songs. After several years as a professional songwriter, Womack became one of the breakout contemporary country stars of 1997 with her eponymous debut album, which reached the Top 10 on the country chart. "A Season for Romance" was released before the year's end. In early 2003, Womack earned two Grammys: for Best Female Country Vocal Performance for "Something Worth Leaving Behind" and Best Vocal Collaboration (Country) for her duet with Willie Nelson on "Mendocino County Line." "Call Me Crazy," Womack's sixth studio album, debuted at four on the Billboard country charts. She sang with Alan Jackson on his 2010 cover of Johnny Cash's "Ring of Fire" and in 2014 signed with Sugar Hill Records, which released "The Way I'm Livin' (2014)," recorded almost completely live. Whether the vintage country of Hayes Carll's "Chances Are," the scalding gospel of Mindy Smith's "All the Saints" or the tortured linger of love in Buddy Miller's "Don't Listen to the Wind,"



LEE ANN WOMACK



DWIGHT YOAKUM

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Dwight Yoakam Sunday

Few entertainers have attained the iconic status of Dwight Yoakam. Perhaps that is because so few have consistently and repeatedly met the high standard of excellence Yoakam delivers no matter what his endeavor. Yoakam's latest album, "3 Pears," exemplifies his ability to incorporate multiple, competing influences into a piece of cohesive art. It balances his country core with a fiercely independent embrace of rock, Americana, pop and soul. Kentucky-born, Ohio-raised Yoakam has sold more than 25 million albums worldwide, placing him in an elite cadre of global superstars. Yet sales have never compromised his musical integrity; he brings a knowing, glorious edge to his delivery and stands, in a world

of artifice and flash, as a beacon of authenticity. He has 12 gold albums and nine platinum or multi-platinum albums, including the triple-platinum "This Time." Five of those albums have topped Billboard's Country Albums chart with another 14 landing in the Top 10. More than 30 singles have charted, with 22 going Top 20. He has two Grammys and 21 nominations.

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