

Special Exhibit . . . The Banjo World of Steve Martin



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American Banjo Museum's newest exhibit, *The Banjo World of Steve Martin*, provides a look at the musical side of one of America's favorite entertainers. The exhibit, which features banjos from Martin's private collection, opened February 15th.

Best known for films such as *The Jerk*, *The Pink Panther* and, most recently, the animated feature *Home*, as well as numerous written works, Martin has become an American entertainment institution. However, few people are truly familiar with his musical prowess. From his earliest years as an entertainer, Steve Martin has been using his skill as a banjo player as part of his "Wild and Crazy Guy" persona. Recently, his career has returned to its musical roots,

resulting in award winning and critically acclaimed recordings, concerts and theatrical presentations.

"Steve Martin is unquestionably the most influential recent figure in making the banjo not only acceptable, but a welcome and in demand instrument in American popular music culture," said Johnny Baier, executive director of the American Banjo Museum. "His recordings, concerts and televised appearances - including the annual presentation of the Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass, have exposed millions of people to the banjo in the most positive and musical manner possible."

Continued on page 3



9 East Sheridan Ave.
Oklahoma City, OK 73104
405-604-2793
www.AmericanBanjoMuseum.com

MISSION

The mission of the American Banjo Museum is to preserve and promote the music and heritage of America's instrument: the banjo.

STAFF

Johnny Baier, Executive Director
Margie Smith-Robbins, Assistant Administrator
Dustin Pyeatt, Development & Outreach Manager
Janet Raines, Sales & Marketing
Sherril Mitchell, Reception
Ellie Mowery, Administrative Assistant

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By Johnny Baier

What an exciting time for the American Banjo Museum! A blockbuster new exhibit...new staff members...increased attendance...and, educational and community outreach events! Yes, an exciting time indeed...

Our new special exhibit, The Banjo World of Steve Martin, recently opened to immediate and positive response. In addition the increase in attendance the exhibit has sparked (up 60% over February 2015), Mr. Martin's belief in our mission has spread the word of the ABM to his worldwide base of millions of fans. Don't miss the chance to see this very special exhibit which runs through January of 2017.

From our humble staff of previous years, ABM personnel ranks have grown to welcome two new fulltime employees. Dustin Pyeatt will oversee our community outreach and development efforts and Janet Raines (returning to the ABM after a three year absence) will work with

tour groups and other promotions. The impact of these new additions has been almost immediate with a plethora of new events and activities (including a fun and successful Mardi Gras event on February 6th)...welcome Dustin and welcome back Janet!

We've also experienced an uptick in activity with our favorite ambassador, Lucas Ross. An OKC celebrity – and banjo player - Lucas has been taking the banjo to the streets with appearances on behalf of the ABM at Oklahoma City civic events and festivals. Additionally, Lucas has developed an educational program aimed at introducing the banjo to beginners. Titled *Pick A Tune With Lucas*, this 'hands on' program is presented once every month. If the capacity attendance at the inaugural event on February 27th is any indication, this will be a wonderful addition to ABM programming.

It's not too early to make plans to attend the 2016 American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame weekend festivities. Honoring Pat Terry, Jr., J.D. Crowe, George Formby, The Deering Banjo Company, and Alfred Greathouse, this year's induction ceremony will take place on Friday, September 9th at the Skirvin Hilton Hotel in downtown OKC. Save the dates of September 9th and 10th... more exciting American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame weekend details to follow!

The Banjo World of Steve Martin

Continued from page 1

In addition to memorabilia and rare photos, *The Banjo World of Steve Martin* features an exclusive interview where Martin discusses his love for America's instrument, the banjo. "Many of these items have not been seen before by the public. We are honored to present this one-of-a-kind exhibit, which is a 'must see' for anyone who loves music, comedy, movies - and Steve Martin," said Baier.

Since re-emerging on the music scene in 2001, Martin has garnered praise and awards for his music. In 2001, he shared a Grammy award with Earl Scruggs for the re-

lease of Scruggs' iconic *Foggy Mountain Breakdown*. In 2009, Martin released his first all-music album, *The Crow: New Songs for the 5-String Banjo*, also making his first appearance at the Grand Ole Opry later that year. In 2013, Steve Martin teamed with singer/songwriter Edie Brickell on the album, *Love Has Come For You*, earning that year's Grammy Award for Best American Roots Song for the album's title track. The duo released a second collaboration late last year called *So Familiar* and also joined creative forces on the critically acclaimed musical, *Bright Star*, which is set to open on Broadway in March.



Plan now to visit the American Banjo Museum to see "The Banjo World of Steve Martin" on display through January 2017



Special Events



Laissez les bons temps rouler!

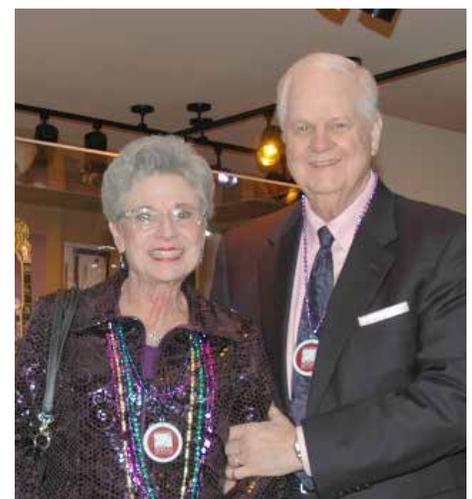
On February 6th, the American Banjo Museum took on the air of Bourbon Street during the Krewe de Banjo Mardi Gras Party.

The celebration, which was held from 6 to 9 p.m. brought nearly 100 guests to the museum to let the good times roll. Guests were adorned with special American Banjo Museum Mardi Gras beads and treated to a southern feast of jambalaya, red beans and rice and Cajun hors d'oeuvres. And,

revelers washed it all down with a refreshing hurricane.

“Congratulations to the American Banjo Museum for hosting a great Mardi Gras event,” said Brenda Granger, Executive Director, Oklahoma Museum Association. “It was a nice evening of wonderful music, delicious food, interesting exhibits and tons of fun. I’m already looking forward to my next visit to the museum!”

The highlight of the evening was a live performance by *Scott Whitfield and the Jazz Cats*, whose New Orleans jazz stylings cast a spell stronger than a voodoo priestess. Whitfield and his Jazz Cats visited the museum from Dallas and lived up to their reputation as the hardest swingin’ New Orleans style jazz band in the southwest.



Special Events

“The band was perfect, flawless,” said Oklahoma City radio personality Keri Evans. “It was like they brought Preservation Hall with them.”

Not only did everyone get to enjoy some good food and some great music, they also received a sneak peek at the new exhibit, *The Banjo World of Steve Martin*. It was an amazing night, worthy of the Crescent City, and, best of all, no alligators!





Lila Singleton . . . a gift of love

By Paul Poirier

An influential decision maker, Sandy Singleton was responsible for locating the American Banjo Museum in Oklahoma City. Sandy's dedication to the American Banjo Museum and his drive and love of all things banjo could always be counted upon to make the right decision and get the job done. As one of the original supporters of the American Banjo Museum, Sandy could take an idea, move it to action and follow it to completion, always with the Museum's interest first and foremost in his mind. With this great man's legacy in mind, the Museum's board room is named in memory of Sandy Singleton.

The Singleton name is a powerful reminder of the hard work and dedication required to make a great museum and advance our mission to preserve, promote and present the banjo. A portrait of Sandy hangs in the Museum's board room as a reminder to our leaders to make decisions for today and future generations with "integrity, fair play and honesty". His gifts of time, talent and treasure were all crucial to the early success of the Museum.

Sandy's wife, Lila Singleton with her family have provided the American Banjo Museum with many gifts to honor the memory of her husband Sandy, always making us think of the future. In the spirit of growing philanthropy, Lila Singleton has issued a challenge to all of us to make significant donations to help fulfill the American Banjo Museum's mission. Lila and her family challenge us to raise \$20,000 each year for five years in new gifts. When we meet this challenge each year Lila and her family will fund their pledge to the Museum. Thank you, Lila and family for your leadership and the opportunity to step up and meet your challenge!

We need you! We need you to help us preserve our heritage as banjo players, spread the word about our wonderful museum and help us meet the challenge of Lila Singleton to insure the future of our American Banjo Museum.

Johnny Baier Brings Banjo History to Life

The American Banjo Museum gives museum goers an immersion into the history of America's instrument, but, within each display case, each instrument has a deeper history. Now, each month, American Banjo Museum Executive Director Johnny Baier is bringing these instruments, their makers and their sound to life with a special historical presentation and performance series.

One Saturday each month, Baier will choose an instrument or maker from the museum's collection and give a lecture on the history behind the instruments and the instrument's makers. Then, he'll play historically significant banjos from that maker.

The first lecture and performance, held on March 12th, focused on the story of Gibson banjos. Jimmy Overton of Enid, OK, posted on the American

Banjo Museum Facebook page after the March lecture, "Boy was I surprised by the level of knowledge and the passion Mr. Baier has for what he does. Thank you...not only worth the price of admission, but also the drive from Enid. I'll be coming back for future events until I wear my welcome out."

The next historical presentation and performance will cover Bacon & Day and is scheduled for 3 pm, April 9th. A lecture and performance on Vega of Boston is scheduled for 3 pm, May 7th. See the schedule of events on page 12 for a complete listing of events and performances at the American Banjo Museum.

For information on future performances and events, check out the American Banjo Museum's Facebook page. Or, email us at events@americanbanjomuseum.com to be



added to our email list. See page 12 for a complete listing of April-June events and performances.

ABM Launches New Education Series



The American Banjo Museum recently launched a new education series, *Learn to Pick a Tune with Lucas*, where people who have never touched a banjo can learn to play a song in one easy lesson.

Banjo player and local television personality Lucas Ross guides students as they learn to play a song on a five-string banjo.

"There's nothing like seeing a person's face the first time they strum a banjo,"

said Ross. "These people come in and have never picked up the banjo and leave having played some chords and part of a song...it's really fun to witness."

Class sizes are kept small and reserved for those that have never played a banjo before. Reservations are required. The next class will be held at 2 pm, Saturday, April 23rd, and another class is scheduled at 11:30 am, Saturday, May 14th here at the American Banjo Museum.

Added Ross, "our first class of banjo beginners was exactly that, first class! I'm looking forward to the next group!"

For information, or, to reserve your spot, email us at events@americanbanjomuseum.com or, call (405) 604-2793.

Banjos around town...

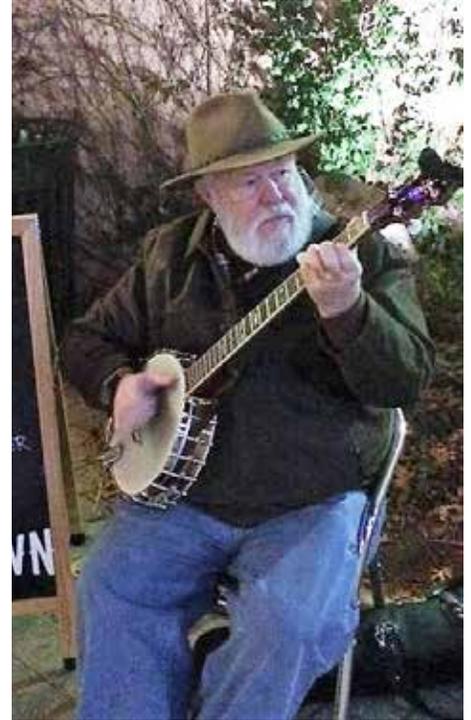
The American Banjo Museum (ABM) isn't confined to four walls, we also reach out into the community to bring the music and history of the banjo to the public.

In December, we took part in Downtown OKC Inc.'s annual event, *Downtown in December*. Museum Volunteer Musicians Bill Bond and Lucas Ross entertained crowds in Bricktown during the free Bricktown Canal rides that were offered every Thursday through Sunday from Thanksgiving until Christmas.

Each year the Bricktown Canal draws more than 25,000 people

during this month-long holiday celebration. Last year, Southern Living Magazine named *Downtown in December* one of the best holiday events in the American south.

In January, the American Banjo Museum came to the rescue of the Bricktown Rotary Club when their scheduled speaker dropped out at the last minute. That night, ABM Development and Outreach Manager, Dustin Pyeatt, showed up, PowerPoint in hand, ready to talk about everything coming up at the American Banjo Museum, even walking away with some new volunteers.



Bill Bond (above) and Lucas Ross (below) entertained everyone as they enjoyed free time on the Bricktown Canal during *Downtown in December*.





The Okie Dokies performing during lunch hour in The Underground as part of "Art Moves." Seated L-R: Richard McKee, Lester Cowden Jr., Deana Rotramel, Margie Smith-Robbins, Jack Murphy.

Also in January, the American Banjo Museum participated in *Art Moves*, a program sponsored by the Oklahoma City Arts Council.

Art Moves is an initiative that provides free art events in downtown Oklahoma City each workday from Noon to 1p.m. Events include everything from artist demonstrations to musical performances and take place in various downtown locations.

The *Okie Dokie Banjo Band* brought their energy and fun to the museum's inaugural performance in the Art Moves program. The *Okie Dokies* performed in the concourse of downtown Oklahoma City's Underground, a busy underground thoroughfare.

The American Banjo Museum is scheduled to participate in Art Moves May 18th and June 30th.

On March 5th, Lucas Ross again represented the American Banjo Museum as he played and posed for photos with fans at *First Friday Art Walk* in Oklahoma City's historic Paseo Arts District.

If you would like to schedule a speaker from the American Banjo Museum to talk with your group in the Oklahoma City metro area, please call (405) 604-2793, or, email us at events@americanbanjomuseum.com.

→ SAVE THE DATE ←

AMERICAN BANJO MUSEUM HALL OF FAME

September 8, 9, & 10th

Membership in the American Banjo Museum

The American Banjo Museum wishes to recognize and thank its current members.

The American Banjo Museum places a high value on insuring the longevity of its collections as well as the facility housing them. Your support is critical to insuring our shared legacy is preserved for future generations.

To become a member, gift a membership, or upgrade your current membership call 405-604-2793 or email info@americanbanjomuseum.com.

Individual Membership

Beth Adams
Nita Kaye Adams
Michael Baldwin
Robert Bicknaver
Timothy M. Bryan
Gim Burton
Jimmy Campbell
Emil J. Chessari
Raymond J. Cisneros
Frank Clark
Diana Daugherty
DiMarci Guitars/Dan DiMarco
George (Pete) Donaldson
Martin Elliott
Joe Ferris
Roy Hill
Ron Hinkle
Dr. John Huntsberger
Clancy Leverenz
Madeline Lombardi
Sandra J. Mayfield
Robert P. Miccoly, Sr.
Nancy Mielke
Bruce Miner
Ellie Mowery
John Mumford
Dick Neuman
Phyllis Parsons
Garry F. Peterson
Lana H. Pincumbe
Brownie Plaster
Lawrence H. Rutan
J.T. Scruggs
Randy Shumard
Margie Smith-Robbins
Jack W. Snyder
Richard Velazquez
John Vonk
George T. Webster
Marlene R. White
Glady V. Zwink

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Suzanne & Richard Burg, M.D.
Allan Pinkston & Doris Clark
Donald L. & Marlene Dempsey
Ray & Alice Jaworski
Bill & Nancy Majors
Russ & Diane Morton
Bill & Marilyn North
Denny & Kathy Overstreet
Mr. & Mrs. George Peabody
Catherine Quinlan
Roderick & Carol Tillman
David & Ellen Weibel

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Thomas Dargan
Robert C. Duncan
Charles Lichtigman
Jill L. Picciano
Joseph A. Prezio, M.D.
Kasey Torres
Gerald Williams

Lifetime Membership

William Anspach, Jr., M.D.
Jim Aronis
Richard Berger
Jack Canine
Amy Singleton Capshaw
Gary Capshaw
James D. & Carol G. Carey
Lester & LeeAnn Cowden
Marjorie Gornall
George V. & Catherine M. Goudreault
Marsha Graf
Roger Hale
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Warren Kilmer
Phil & Barbara Kuhl
David E. Lambourne
John A. Leeper

Nancy Leipold
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Bryan Malis
Michael Mason
Dr. Ronald W. McLawhon
Jack Murphy
Brian Newsom
Dr. Gilbert O'Gawa
Glenn Parks
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Dr. Robert Ringrose
Larry & Liz Schafer
Jacquelyn Singleton
Janet Honeycutt Singleton
Mrs. Lila Singleton
Sandy Harland Singleton
Tim Singleton
Donald F. Stevison
Thomas Straus
Darryl Q. Tower
Devin Tower
Gayle Tower
Robert A. Werner

At the time of publication every attempt was made to insure the accuracy of this list. Please let us know if we made any unintentional error so we can correct it.

Looking for a unique venue for your next event or meeting?

The American Banjo Museum is pleased to make its facility available to individuals and group events to be held on museum premises. With 16,000 square feet of modern and elegant exhibit galleries, the American Banjo Museum is an attractive option for hosting unique special events, receptions, and meetings. All facility rental options include guest access to Museum galleries and exhibits.

For more information call 405-604-2793 or email events@AmericanBanjoMuseum.com



ABM goes to the Dawgs

Thom Pallozola and David Henry settled into their spots on the stage at the American Banjo Museum. And, as they started to strum their tenor ukulele's, and Henry began singing in his soft tones, the stress of the week began to melt away from everyone listening.

Pallozola and Henry, who hail from St. Louis, MO, are the duo that make up *The Flea Bitten Dawgs*.

The Dawgs were the featured performers during *Mutts & Music*, a special live music event that was held from 7 to 9 p.m., Friday, Jan. 29th at the American Banjo Museum.

Mutts & Music was a collaboration between the American Banjo Museum and Best Friends of Pets. Best Friends of Pets is an Oklahoma City-based non-profit

that helps lower income families spay, neuter and tag their pets.

"We were so happy that the American Banjo Museum reached out to us," said Kim Schlittler, executive director, Best Friends of Pets. "It was a great evening with some great music."

The Flea Bitten Dawgs were so popular, they even came back and played at the museum the next day.

"It's important, not just to be part of the world banjo community, but our local community as well," said Dustin Pyeatt, outreach and development manager, American Banjo Museum. "This event was a great way to raise awareness about the pet overpopulation problem in Oklahoma City, and, introduce new people to the American Banjo Museum."

RedGrass String Band brings Okie Bluegrass to the ABM

With mandolin, guitar and, of course, banjo, the *RedGrass String Band* filled the American Banjo Museum with music during their March 26th performance.

From 3-5 pm the *RedGrass String Band* entertained the crowd with a mixture of bluegrass, country, classic rock and some great Oklahoma-centric original songs.

"These guys represent all the bands out there on the front lines playing in bars, dance halls and county fairs who are keeping banjo music alive," said Dustin Pyeatt, outreach & development manager, American Banjo Museum.



"What a great place," wrote Rick Fowble of the *RedGrass String Band* on the band's Facebook page. "If you get a chance you check that museum out. That is a cool place."

Judging from the crowd's reaction, and their demand for an encore, the *RedGrass String Band* was a hit!

Upcoming Events

April

SATURDAY, APRIL 9, 3 PM

Historical Presentation & Performance - Bacon & Day-DAY

Learn the history behind a selected banjo maker in the museum's collection. Then hear American Banjo Museum's Executive Director, Johnny Baier play a historically significant instrument from that maker. Performance included with paid museum admission.

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 3-5 PM

Performance

An afternoon of traditional and historical folk music and song as the **Scissortail Band** take the stage at the American Banjo Museum. Performance included with paid museum admission.

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2 PM

Education

For those that have never played the banjo and wanted to try, come "Learn to Pick A Tune with Lucas". Limited seating, **by reservation only!** contact events@AmericanBanjoMuseum.com

May

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 3 PM

Historical Presentation & Performance - Vega of Boston

Learn the history behind a selected banjo maker in the museum's collection. Then hear American Banjo Museum's Executive Director, Johnny Baier play a historically significant instrument from that maker. Performance included with paid museum admission.

SATURDAY, MAY 14, 11:30 AM

Education

For those that have never played the banjo and wanted to try, come "Learn to Pick A Tune with Lucas". Limited seating, **by reservation only!** contact events@AmericanBanjoMuseum.com

American Banjo Museum

Americana Fest

Saturday - June 18, 2016

11am-5pm



Entertainment

- ★ Side Street Steppers ★
- ★ Willow Way ★
- ★ Bread & Butter ★

Enjoy a day of food, fun, & entertainment for one low price.

Adults \$10 / Under 15 free w/accompanying adult

Fun for the entire family!

SATURDAY, MAY 14, 3:30 PM

Performance/Tribute to Steve Martin

Lucas Ross takes the stage at the American Banjo Museum and gives tribute to Steve Martin as he plays songs highlighting Steve's early career and touching on his comedy roots.

June

SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 3 PM

Historical Presentation & Performance - The Gibson Story

Learn the history behind a selected banjo maker in the museum's collection. Then hear American Banjo Museum's Executive Director, Johnny Baier play a historically significant instrument from

that maker. Performance included with paid museum admission.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2 PM

Education

For those that have never played the banjo and wanted to try, come "Learn to Pick A Tune with Lucas". Limited seating, **by reservation only!** contact events@AmericanBanjoMuseum.com

Sign up for the American Banjo Museum eNewsletter by emailing events@americanbanjomuseum.com and putting eNewsletter in the subject line

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