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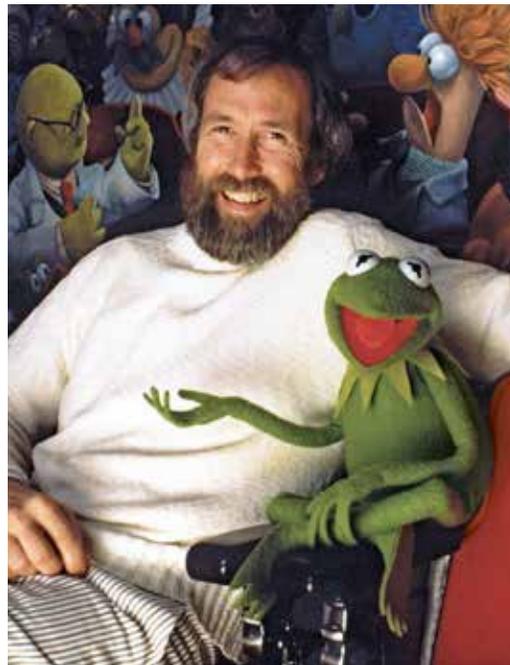
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Jim Henson - Life and Legacy



The world's most famous amphibian, Kermit the Frog, is on display as the star of a new exhibit at the American Banjo Museum. Ribbon cutting for *Jim Henson – Life and Legacy* was held during BANJO FEST 2018 with special guest Heather Henson, daughter of Jim Henson, cutting the red ribbon to open the exhibit. The exhibit remembers Henson the optimistic visionary who created the *Muppets* and positively influenced generations of the young and young at heart. From his boyhood in Mississippi to innovative early television to omnipresence in generation shaping media, Jim Henson lived his mission of “leaving this world a little bit better place for having been here.”

Born in 1936 near Leland, Mississippi, Henson’s artistic propensity was encouraged by his maternal grandmother. After his family moved to Washington, D.C. and nature’s wonders gave way to film, radio, and the modern

marvel called television, with his father’s purchase of a TV set in 1950, Henson knew he had found his calling. Determined to be part of the booming industry, he landed a job as a puppeteer on a Washington morning children’s program. Seeing puppetry as a way to grow along with the new medium, it all came together in 1955 when Henson found almost immediate television success with his first puppet show, *Sam and Friends*.

Naming his creations Muppets (because he liked the sound of the word), Henson’s growing troupe of characters found work in countless innovative television commercials and soon found themselves as guest stars on national network variety shows. In 1963, with Rowlf the Dog emerging as a regular on *The Jimmy Dean Show*, the first Muppet star was born. While the 1960s also saw Henson applying his boundless creativity to experimental films and video techniques, when a new cast of Muppet characters took up residence on

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MISSION

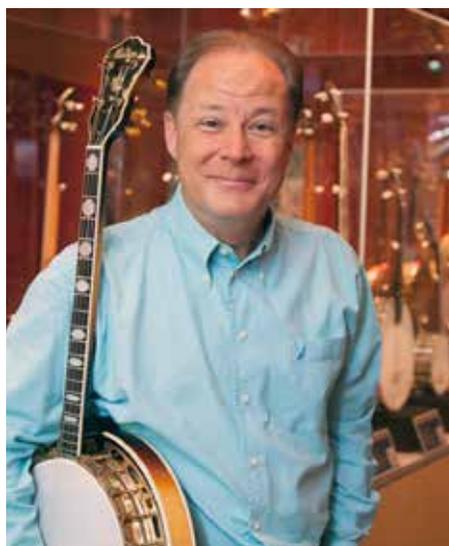
The mission of the American Banjo Museum is to preserve and promote the banjo while expanding appreciation and understanding of its history and music.

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Margie Smith-Robbins, Assistant Administrator
Janet Raines, Sales & Marketing
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When I reflect on the progress of the American Banjo Museum since coming onboard as the director in 2004 it is difficult not to be proud. Each year has brought new challenges – many of which have turned into opportunities – which have seen us grow from a small specialty museum in Guthrie into an internationally recognized and respected facility in downtown Oklahoma City. In the early days, people chuckled when I told them where I worked...now they seem to know and appreciate our important mission. We used to talk about possibilities with an air of *impossibility*...now we believe that nothing is impossible. One step at a time we've accomplished milestones which earlier seemed unattainable... Acquiring the 200+ banjos in the Dierk Frerichs collection in 2007; Purchasing, designing and opening our new facility in 2009; Evolving our mission to embrace all types and playing styles of banjos; Developing earlier stand alone Hall of Fame events into our annual BANJO FEST weekend celebration (which continues to grow in stature each year); Establishing new signature events such as Krewe de Banjo Mardi Gras and Americana Fest, and; Engaging international banjo and entertainment personalities

such as Steve Martin, Roy Clark and the Jim Henson Company as museum ambassadors. Each of these accomplishments – and many others – find us constantly raising our own standards while searching for new and exciting programming and events for the future. Mr. Jack Canine's vision for a museum to share the banjo's unique musical connection to American popular culture is coming to fruition and, through the wide-open mindset of a dedicated board of directors coupled with the belief and support of thousands of like minded banjo enthusiasts and players around the world, the American Banjo Museum is proudly coming of age. To those of you who have been with us throughout this journey, please allow me to take this opportunity to offer both our heartfelt gratitude as well as an invitation to share in the pride of accomplishment which has brought us to where we are today.

2019 UPCOMING EVENTS

**Krewe de Banjo
Mardi Gras Party**
March 2, 2019

Americana Fest
June 22, 2019

BANJO FEST
September 5-7, 2019

**SAVE THE DATE
MARK YOUR
CALENDAR**



Jim Henson - Life and Legacy

Continued from page 1

Sesame Street in 1969, his identity as both a puppeteer as well as an icon of children's entertainment were firmly established.

In the mid 1970s, Henson wanted to connect with an adult audience by introducing his Muppets to the literal "who's who" of the entertainment world, the networks were not interested. With the support of British entertainment impresario, Lord Lew Grade, *The Muppet Show* was ultimately produced in England and syndicated to a worldwide audience.



The Banjo Connection

Throughout his career, Jim Henson's lifelong affection for the banjo was obvious. From Kermit's earliest banjo appearance on *Sam and Friends* in the 1950s and 1960s to *The Muppet Show* guest stars such as Roy Clark and Steve Martin to Muppet characters - including *The Country Trio* featuring a Muppet version of himself - Jim Henson presented the music and visual dynamic of the banjo to an international audience in the most entertaining and positive manner imaginable.

It is, however, those magical three minutes and twenty seconds which open 1979's *The Muppet Movie* which will forever connect Jim Henson and Kermit the Frog, with the banjo. As Kermit strums his banjo and whimsically ponders the life questions subtly embedded into the lyrics of *The Rainbow Connection*, he finds the inner voice we all seek, telling us that we can accomplish anything. Far beyond its Academy Award® nomination, the touching sentiment of *The Rainbow Connection* is proof positive of the timeless appeal of Jim Henson's optimistic philosophy.

The Muppets Banjo

In addition to Kermit the Frog, original artwork, rare photographs, pop culture objects and many very personal insights, *Jim Henson - Life and Legacy* will feature a very special banjo as well. One of the most famous banjos of all time, the Muppets Banjo, originally owned and played by British musician Martin Kershaw, has arguably accompanied more stars than any other banjo in history. After playing the banjo at Royal variety shows for Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, the Queen Mother, Prince Charles, Princess Anne and Princess Margaret, Martin Kershaw was engaged to be part of the studio band for *The Muppet Show* which was produced in England from 1976 to 1981. When *Muppet Show* guest star Julie Andrews signed the head of Kershaw's banjo in 1977, a tradition began. During subsequent tapings of *The Muppet Show*, guest stars including Gene Kelly, Roy Rogers, Johnny Cash, Elton John, Diana Ross, Peter Sellers and many more signed the famous banjo until it became



Heather Henson and Johnny Baier, ABM Executive Director

impossible to find even a tiny space to fit another signature. After nearly being destroyed in a fire, the Muppets Banjo was retired and subsequently acquired by Heather Henson, youngest daughter of Jim Henson. After musically mingling on over 7000 recordings with stage and screen legends such as Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, James Cagney, Peggy Lee, Danny Kaye, Fred Astaire and Sammy Davis, Jr., the Muppets Banjo will rest on its laurels at the American Banjo Museum as a truly unique piece of banjo history.

After a brief illness, Jim Henson was taken from this world suddenly in 1990. His sad passing makes all the more special the magic which happened each time he brought one of his creations to life. As Kermit the Frog spoke, Henson, the man, seemed to disappear. We want to believe in Kermit because he - like Henson - exudes a sincerity and kindness that we'd all like to see in ourselves.

Jim Henson - Life and Legacy was curated by Karen Falk of The Jim Henson Company and appears, in part, by a grant from the Jane Henson Foundation. The exhibit will run through August of 2019.

BANJO FEST 2018



Left to right: Terry Collins accepting the award for his dad Eddie Collins, Historical; Heather Henson accepting the award for her dad Jim Henson, Promotion; Donald Nitchie accepting the award for his dad Hub Nitchie/ Banjo Newsletter, Instruction and Education; and Bela Fleck, Five-String Performance.

BANJO FEST 2018, a three day event September 6, 7, and 8, 2018 was filled with concerts, informal performances, parties, jams and the American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.

BANJO FEST events began with a welcome reception on Thursday, September 6th with attendees enjoying a barbecue meal and live music by the Philadelphia Mumpers, Taylor Pfeiffer, and Tim Allan. Dr. Phil Cartwright, Don Lewis, Lester Cowden and the Austin Banjo Band were honored by receiving American Banjo Museum Awards of Excellence.

Friday began with a special *Banjo Newsletter Workshop* with Eddie Collins presenting *Essentials to Hot Licks*; Janet Davis, *Back-up - What to do when not soloing*; taking your playing to the next level; and Tony Trischka, *Putting it all together - combining the techniques of Earl Scruggs, Don Reno and Bill Keith*.

The American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame ceremonies took place

Friday, September 7th at VAST located at the top of Devon Tower. This formal event was open to the public and included a reception, dinner and the *Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony*. The 2018 inductees were multiple Grammy award winner, Bela Fleck for Five-String Performance; Canadian entertainer Borgy Borgerson for Four-String Performance; founder of the Banjo Newsletter, Hub Nitchie for Instruction and Education;

creator of the Muppets Jim Henson for Promotion; and Detroit celebrity of years past Eddie Collins in the Historical category. Along with the Hall of Fame inductions, the annual Jack Canine Award was presented to the Singleton Family in memory and honor of Sandy and Lila Singleton, long time supporters of the American Banjo Museum.

Saturday afternoon began at the American Banjo Museum with the grand opening of the *Jim Henson - Life and Legacy* exhibit with special guest Heather Henson, daughter of Jim Henson in attendance. Following the ribbon cutting of the *Jim Henson - Life and Legacy* exhibit guests enjoyed performances by David Stephens, Eddie Collins, Johnny Baier, Taylor Pfeiffer, and the Philadelphia Mumpers.

The evening and weekend came to a grand finale with the third annual BANJO FEST Concert at the Hudiburg Chevrolet Center in Midwest City. The BANJO FEST 2018 concert featured four Hall of Fame members, Bela Fleck, John McEuen, Tony Trischka, and Tim Allan. Following the concert, the BANJO FEST weekend was capped off with a post-concert



The Singleton Family recipients of the Jack Canine Award. Left to right: Tim Singleton, Amy Capshaw, and Sandy Singleton.

afterglow party at the American Banjo Museum with pizza, performances, and jam sessions.

The American Banjo Museum would like to thank the following sponsors for their gracious support of this year's BANJO FEST: Paul & Theresa Poirier; Gayle & Devin Tower; Lester & LeeAnn Cowden; The Singleton Family; Alan Tompkins; Roger & Ellie Burns; Phillips Murrah P.C.; BancFirst; PBS Services; Graftec Communications; and the Oklahoma City Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Mark your calendar for next year's BANJO FEST, September 5-7, 2019.



Tony Trischka and Bela Fleck performing during the BANJO FEST concert Saturday evening. Photo Credit: Americana Media Gig Spot

Additional photos from BANJO FEST 2018 can be viewed at www.americanbanjomuseum.com/2018-banjo-fest



Greg Derring and Kermit on the Derring Banjo bus.



Jack Canine, Heather Henson, Doug Parsons and Johnny Baier.



John McEuen performing at BANJO FEST 2018 concert. Photo Credit: Americana Media Gig Spot



The Philadelphia Mimmers performing prior to the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.



Taylor Pfeiffer and Tim Allan.

Better know a board member



John Mumford

Q: Do you play four-string or five-string?

A: I play plectrum, five-string and tenor banjo.

Q: When did you start playing banjo?

A: I started playing five-string banjo in high school. I was self-taught and used the Pete Seeger book. It was after college I discovered the Father Mustache clubs and took up the plectrum banjo. I was fortunate enough to be able to take plectrum banjo lessons from "Hall of Famer" Buck Kelly. Some of my early gigs were playing at Shakey's and with The Father's Mustache Banjo Band. I took up the tenor banjo when I started getting students asking me for tenor lessons.

Q: Do you play any other instruments?

A: It was shortly after taking up the five-string banjo I was asked to be in a rock band, so I learned how to play electric guitar and started playing gigs. That lasted for four years. After college I went back to the five-string banjo and started playing plectrum banjo.

About 12 years ago I started playing the ukulele and the Hawaiian steel

guitar. I was asked to lead the Denver Ukulele Orchestra and create arrangements as well. I had only been playing the ukulele for 6 months so I was teaching myself while developing the orchestra. The steel guitar came about while being with the Denver Ukulele Orchestra. These two instruments I play quite a bit now. I've been asked to headline at a few ukulele/music festivals.

I also play in a contemporary group at church where I play mandolin, ukulele, guitar and steel guitar. Over the last 30 years I've played locally with the Mile High Banjos and the Rocky Mountain Banjos.

Q: What's your favorite kind of music?

A: That's difficult to nail down since there are several genres I like. The ones I listen to the most would be classic rock, bluegrass, jazz and Hawaiian music. I also listen to Exotica but some people put that in the category of Hawaiian music.

Q: You also teach. Is there a memorable or funny moment from teaching that you want to share?

A: The most memorable moments are those when you get a beginning student who sticks with it. There are so many that start but give up. When I have women students, it's hard to convince them that if they want to play a fretted instrument they have to cut their fingernails!

Q: Can you tell us about *Jazz Banjo Radio*? What brought you to begin this venue and where can it be found online?

A: *Jazz Banjo Radio* was an Internet radio station on www.live365.com/jazzbanjo that ran for 13 years. It only played music of the four-string banjo; it was on the air 24/7 and heard around the world. The idea was an extension of the Internet

magazine that I published from 2000 to 2009 called *Jazz Banjo Magazine*. Both the magazine and radio station were means to promote the four-string banjo to the general public. The radio station ended in January 2016 when the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) pushed through Internet Radio Royalty Rates that were unreasonable. This put live365.com out of business as well as a lot of other independent radio stations. The magazine ended when the software I used was no longer supported and I couldn't find an alternative.

Q: What made you want to serve on the American Banjo Museum's Board of Directors?

A: Doug Parsons asked me if I would be interested at the All Frets convention in Nashville. I had been a proponent of promoting and preserving the history of the four-string banjo so I saw this as way to continue the work I did with the magazine and radio station.

Q: Where do you see the museum going in the future?

A: For the last 40 years the magazine *Banjo Newsletter* has been the primary voice and publication for the banjo world. Its focus is on five-string banjo and nothing on the four-string banjo. I like the direction the museum is going by bringing all types of banjos, styles and performers to one place. I believe that this will bring a greater appreciation to the instrument and performers. Doug Mattocks used to perform with a tenor, plectrum and five-string banjo. He would carefully explain and demonstrate the differences. He stopped doing this when an audience member asked him why he played all those banjos, "Isn't a banjo just a banjo?" I hope that visitors to the museum will walk away and realize that: "A banjo isn't just a banjo."

Preserving for future generations

Preservation, a big part of the American Banjo Museum's mission. After all, all of the banjos that are on display, or part of the collection are all treated in a manner that will preserve them for future generations to enjoy. But that is only a part of "Preserving" as part of the Museum's mission!

"Preserving" also includes collecting and cataloging stories and photos of banjo players, banjo bands, music instruction books, music compositions, performance video, audio recordings and the history of the banjo from its roots through to present times as told in stories through the eyes of people who play the banjo as well as, throughout the collection of books, and other print historical reference materials.

As daunting a task as this all might seem, this is all part of the "preserving" part of the Museum's mission. The Museum is not just "that building" that houses items to be preserved and displayed, preserving also means compiling and keeping archives for future generations, sorting and cataloging and documenting all the banjos, accessories, stories, not to mention all of the ephemera. We take this part of our mission very seriously; the archives of the ABM are quite large and growing every day as we acquire items that are crucial in moving the preservation part of our mission forward.

Part of our future dreams is to put the archives online for all to view and use as a research tool. Although this is still just a dream, it is something we hope to achieve when funding and technology become available to make this possible. None of this happens by accident, it is the result

of work accomplished by dedicated Board of Directors and mission-oriented Museum employees whose work is funded by Museum members and donors, in other words, YOU! We can't do this work without the support from donors like you. So, let me say thank you for your past support, and I hope you will continue to support our efforts, it means so much to our ability to continue on our mission and "Preserve" our shared banjo history.

As a member of the ABM you have access to the archives by contacting the Museum Staff with any requests you might have.

*Paul Poirier,
ABM Board of Directors*

ABM Membership

The American Banjo Museum wishes to recognize and thank new members and those that have renewed their membership the third quarter of 2018.

Individual Membership

Ellie Burns
Ken Lee
Nancy Mielke
Stephen Penny
Marla Sporrer
David Wilson

Couple Membership

Russ & Pauline Miller
Denny & Kathy Overstreet
Tom & Elaine Purvis

To become a member, gift a membership, or upgrade your current membership call 405-604-2793 or visit www.americanbanjomuseum.com.

Letter on BANJO FEST

What a great Weekend we had!! I just wanted to thank the staff for a great event.

My birthday was Friday and my wife bought us tickets to all the events over the weekend, (including the workshops and after party).

I especially enjoyed the pleasant and patient nature of Eddie Collins and the music theory he brings to amateur banjo musicians like me.

It was obvious that every event was planned with great amount of attention to detail. My brother and I had a great time jamming with Lucas Ross Saturday night after the concert and that just put a cap on a great weekend. I look forward to joining your membership and hope to be more involved with your organization in the future.
--- David King

Facebook comments

I am a music fan but never much interest in the banjo. This museum changed my opinions. The displays are set up to encourage knowledge while the banjos themselves are amazing. Margie and the staff are wonderful. A definite 'must see' for visitors and if you live in the area & haven't been here, shame on you, you're really missing out! -- Billie Parker

My family went to the museum today and all of us were impressed. Put together very well and classy. The employees and volunteers were very knowledgeable and helpful with all our questions. Highly recommended. -- Mike Adams



9 East Sheridan Avenue
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Upcoming Events...

October

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1 PM **Old Style Open Jam**

Join other Old Style players for an Open Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1 PM **Performance**

Wayne Cantwell will perform traditional music of the open prairie on banjo, fiddle, and mountain dulcimer. Performance is free with museum admission.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2 PM **Pick-A-Tune with Lucas Ross**

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!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1 PM **Celtic Open Jam**

Join other players for an Open Celtic Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

November

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1 PM **Four-String Open Jam**

Join other Four-String players for an Open Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2 PM **Banjo Farm**

A family friendly music, puppet, banjo, bee variety show that will take you on a musical journey to the Banjo Farm - the only place where the INSTRUMENTS get to play. Under 16 free, adults half-price.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1 PM **Performance**

Wayne Cantwell will perform traditional music of the open prairie on banjo, fiddle, and mountain dulcimer. Performance is free with museum admission.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2 PM **Pick-A-Tune with Lucas Ross**

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!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1 PM **Celtic Open Jam**

Join other players for an Open Celtic Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

December

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1 PM **Bluegrass Open Jam**

Join other Bluegrass players for an Open Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1 PM **Guided Tour**

Join ABM Executive Director, Johnny Baier, for a guided tour of the American Banjo Museum. While this special tour includes everything a typical museum visitor experiences, Baier's focus on special treasures as well as behind the scenes access will provide a truly unique perspective to our one-of-a-kind facility.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1 PM **Candy Cane Christmas Concert**

An afternoon of holiday music, candy canes, Santa, and lots of fun! Join in and sing along as Johnny Baier, Executive Director of the American Banjo Museum performs holiday favorites! Plus, a visit from the North Pole as Santa Claus visits. Admission is FREE when you bring a new unwrapped toy to support the Red Andrews Christmas Dinner.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2 PM **Pick-A-Tune with Lucas Ross**

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!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1 PM **Celtic Open Jam**

Join other players for an Open Celtic Jam Session. Free admission when you bring an instrument and participate.