

## Philadelphia Mummers - Struttin' Their Stuff

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An exciting new exhibit, *Philadelphia Mummers – Struttin' Their Stuff* - is now open at the American Banjo Museum. Showcasing the music, history and flamboyant costumes that have been the trademarks of the Mummers for over 100 years, this unique exhibit brings the spirit of New Year's Day in Philadelphia to America's heartland.

a *String Band* division to the parade in the early 1900s. Dressed in elaborate costumes and playing banjos and saxophones – all while doing the distinctive *Mummer's Strut*, the *String Bands* are the most popular and populated of the five Mummer divisions. While early costumes were homemade,

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*The Mummers Parade* – held in Philadelphia on January 1st each year since 1901 – is recognized as the longest continuously running folk festival in America. Although Mummer roots go back to Greek mythology and English theater of the 1300s, it was the immigration melting pot of Philadelphia, which melded music, masquerade and camaraderie into the city's unique Mummer culture. When Mummer celebrations of the past began including firearms as noisemakers as well as chaotic revelry, the city incorporated the Mummers into their annual New Year's Day parade – and the tradition began.

The banjo's role in the Mummer hierarchy goes back to introduction of





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www.AmericanBanjoMuseum.com

## MISSION

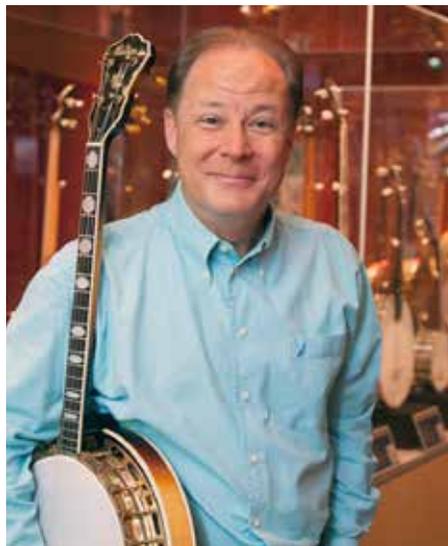
The mission of the American Banjo Museum is to preserve and promote the banjo while expanding appreciation and understanding of its history and music.

## STAFF

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Margie Smith-Robbins, Assistant Administrator  
Janet Raines, Sales & Marketing  
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Ellie Mowery, Administrative Assistant

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## BANJO FOR EVERYONE!

One challenge which faces specialty museums is the engagement of their surrounding community. While banjo players and enthusiasts from around the world know of the American Banjo Museum – often making our museum the destination at the end of a long journey, there are many people in the Oklahoma City area who are simply not aware of our existence. In the museum industry, the buzz word “outreach” describes the action necessary to raise awareness and grow visitorship. To that end, the ABM has been engaging in an ongoing series of community outreach events and promotions aimed at bringing the banjo to everyone. This year has already seen the successful hosting of both our *Mardi Gras* as well as *Americana Fest* celebrations, both of which experienced new highs in interest, attendance and excitement. Our favorite banjo-playing media star, Lucas Ross, continues to introduce the joy of playing the banjo to newcomers with his monthly, sold out, *Pick A Tune With Lucas* classes. In addition, regularly scheduled Bluegrass, Old-Time, Celtic, Four-String Jazz and Ukulele jam sessions bring the museum to life as local musicians and delighted museum visitors all join in on the fun. In addition to

lecture/performances at both the *National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum* and *Sonic Corporation* headquarters (both located in Oklahoma City), I have had the privilege of introducing the American Banjo Museum to new ambassadors at events from Hollywood to New York during the first half of 2018. And, as we gear up to put the spotlight of the banjo world on Oklahoma City during our upcoming BANJO FEST weekend (September 6th – 8th) I can't help but think how lucky we are to becoming known as the center of the banjo universe. Tony Trischka (who will be joining us for this year's BANJO FEST said it best, “We're proud that banjo players now have a home – in Oklahoma City!” As we reach out to them, we're glad the people of Oklahoma City feel the same way about us!

## ABM Membership

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

### Individual Membership

Beth Adams  
Roger K. Burns  
Emil J. Chet Chessari  
Earl Donald Folk  
Karen Lennox  
Chuck Nation  
Angelia Upchurch  
Lana Pincumbe  
Tim W. Sharp  
Glady Zwink

### Couple Membership

Don & Marlene Dempsey  
Roy Hill & Margaret Gage Mackay  
Bill & Nancy Majors  
Bobby M. McBryde  
Charles & Melanie Speer

### Family Membership

Joseph Prezio, M.D.

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





- AMERICAN BANJO MUSEUM HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS
- BANJO FEST CONCERT
- INFORMAL PERFORMANCES
- PARTIES, JAMMING, FUN!

## SEPTEMBER 6-8, 2018

## OKLAHOMA CITY



BÉLA FLECK

Hall of Fame Honoree  
Performing Saturday Only

A three-day celebration of the banjo known as BANJO FEST will again take place in Oklahoma City during the weekend of September 6-8, 2018. With concerts, informal performances, parties, jams, and the American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame Gala – all open to the public - BANJO FEST delights locals while focusing the attention of the banjo world on Oklahoma City.

The BANJO FEST weekend begins with a reception Thursday evening, September 6th at the American Banjo Museum. The evening will feature the grand opening of a new exhibit, *Philadelphia Mummies – Struttin’ Their Stuff*. With live music provided by the Philadelphia Mummies themselves joined by Australia’s Taylor Pfeiffer and two-time Hall of Fame honoree, Tim Allan, the evening’s festivities will also include the presentation of the prestigious *American Banjo Museum Awards of Excellence*.

Banjo players will have a chance to hone their skills during the day

on Friday, September 7th as the *Banjo Newsletter* hosts a five-string banjo workshop hosted by Eddie Collins, Janet Davis, and 2017 Hall of Fame inductee, Tony Trischka at the museum.

The main event takes place on Friday evening, September 7th as the 2018 inductees to the *American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame* are honored at VAST located in the Devon Tower in downtown Oklahoma City. “Each year we strive to bring together and honor banjo’s best of the best from both the past and the present,” said Johnny Baier, executive director, American Banjo Museum. “This year’s Hall of Fame honorees have each displayed lifelong commitments to the banjo and changed the way the world sees and hears America’s instrument.” This formal event is open to the public and will include a reception, dinner and ceremonies honoring the 2018 inductees Bela Fleck, Borgy Borgerson, Eddie Collins, Jim Henson Productions, and the *Banjo Newsletter*.

**BELA FLECK** - Widely acknowledged today as one of the world’s most innovative and technically proficient banjo players, Fleck, like many banjoists of his generation, was inspired by Earl Scruggs’ appearance on the *Beverly Hillbillies*. A serious banjo student from the start, Fleck became firmly grounded in banjo tradition prior to exploring new musical territory with innovative groups such as the *Newgrass Revival* and the *Flecktones*. His solo endeavors have seen him successfully introduce the banjo into genres such as modern jazz and world music, with a certain high point being the 2011 premier of his *Concerto For Banjo* performed with the Nashville Symphony Orchestra.

**BORGY BORGERSON** - Now in his 92nd year, Borgy Borgerson is often referred to as a living entertainment legend in his native Canada. Beginning in the early 1940s, Borgerson was a fixture on the Canadian radio, nightclub

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## BANJO FEST

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and concert scene. The 1970s saw Borgy's peak of success as a headline performer at the EXPO '67 world's fair. From that point forward - leading his own Dixieland jazz bands or delighting audiences with his engaging solo style at Toronto night spots such as *Diamond Lil's*, Borgerson remains an "in demand" banjoist and entertainer.

**EDDIE COLLINS** - A journeyman musician and Detroit celebrity, the impact Eddie Collins' 40 plus year banjo career was felt nationally. Playing at a virtuoso level on both banjo and guitar as the instruments each came of age in the 1920s and 30s, Eddie Collins' career hit high gear when he joined *Art Mooney's Orchestra* in 1948. Touring nationally on the heels of their million selling hit recordings such as *Four Leaf Clover* and *Baby Face*, Collins' years with Art Mooney postured him to return to Detroit a musical hero - an admirable status which he enjoyed until his sudden passing in 1972.

**JIM HENSON** - Through his creation of the Muppets - and the inextricable connection of the banjo with Kermit the Frog, Jim Henson and the modern-day company which carries on his legacy, introduced - and continues to expose - the banjo to a mainstream audience in the most entertaining and positive manner possible. In addition to the inclusion of Kermit's banjo along with other banjo icons such as Roy Clark and Steve Martin on countless memorable episodes of *The Muppet Show*, Kermit's soulful rendition of *The Rainbow Connection* from *The Muppet Movie* has become nothing short of a modern-day banjo anthem.

**THE BANJO NEWSLETTER** - Founded in 1973 by Hubbard "Hub"

Nitchie, *Banjo Newsletter* covers a wide range of banjo topics, including features on banjo players, banjo techniques (predominantly the three-finger or Scruggs style and the clawhammer playing style), beginning banjo, music theory, banjo set-up and accessories, product and record reviews. Since 1993, BNL has been published by its founder's sons Donald and Spencer, who serve as editor and business manager, respectively. The International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) awarded Hub Nitchie its *Print Media Person of the Year* award in 1992 and *Banjo Newsletter* its *Distinguished Achievement Award* in 2008.

Along with the 2018 Hall of Fame inductions, the evening will include the presentation of the *Jack Canine Award* to the family of Sandy and Lila Singleton. Named after the ABM founder and benefactor, the award is in special memory of Lila Singleton who carried on the Singleton family's belief in and support of the museum's important mission following her husband's passing in 2010. Mrs. Singleton passed away in June of 2018.

Following an evening of jams and socializing activity begins anew on Saturday, September 8th at the American Banjo Museum. Noon will see the grand opening of another new exhibit, *Jim Henson - Life and Legacy*. With members of Henson's family in attendance, visitors that day will be among the first to see this special exhibit which is highlighted by *Kermit the Frog* as well as the one-of-a-kind banjo which was used during production of *The Muppet Show* and is signed by countless show business legends who appeared on the program. Other original treasures and artwork make the *Jim Henson - Life and Legacy* (which runs through August 2019) a must see new attraction in OKC.

The remainder of the afternoon will be rounded out by performances from puppeteer/banjoist David Stephens, ABM executive director Johnny Baier, Australian banjo entertainer extraordinaire Taylor Pfeiffer, and an encore performance by the Philadelphia Mummies.

The performance crown jewel of the weekend takes place on Saturday evening, September 8th when the third annual BANJO FEST concert takes the stage at the Hudiburg Chevrolet Performing Arts Center at Rose State College in Midwest City. Starring 16 time Grammy award winning banjo virtuoso, Bela Fleck; *Nitty Gritty Dirt Band* founder, John McEuen; multi award winning banjo guru, Tony Trischka; and Canadian television personality, Tim Allan, BANJO FEST promises an unforgettable night of music and entertainment from four legendary members of the American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame. Following the concert, the BANJO FEST weekend is capped off with a post-concert afterglow party at the American Banjo Museum beginning at 10 PM.

In addition to the Welcome Reception, Hall of Fame Gala, performances at the Museum, BANJO FEST Concert, and Afterglow Party, attendees will enjoy other informal performances and jamming sessions. Open to the public, BANJO FEST tickets can be purchased by calling the American Banjo Museum at 405-604-2793 or online at [americanbanjomuseum.com](http://americanbanjomuseum.com).

The Holiday Inn Express Bricktown at 101 E Main Street, Oklahoma City, is host hotel for BANJO FEST with a discounted room rate of \$149 when using group code A18. Reservations can be made by calling 405-778-8100 or 800-315-2621.

## Americana Fest 2018



*Side Street Steppers from Tennessee were among the bands that shared the second floor stage with Kyle Dillingham & Horseshoe Road and Shelby Eicher & Cimarron Swing.*



*Americana Fest craft area included making and decorating banjos.*

The American Banjo Museum's third annual *Americana Fest* featured great music, kid's activities and fun for the entire family.

Over 200 people attended the event on June 23rd to enjoy some amazing bands. This year's lineup performing in the event room on the second floor included Oklahoma's own *Kyle Dillingham & Horseshoe Road* and *Shelby Eicher & Cimarron Swing* along with the *Side Street Steppers* from Tennessee, while Bill Bond and

Wayne Cantwell performed on the first floor. Outdoor activities included kid's arts and crafts, summertime treats, and a children's stage hosted by News4's *Rise and Shine* personality Lucas Ross.

Throughout the day drawings were held for door prizes which included passes to the Oklahoma City Zoo, Harn Homestead, and Myriad Gardens Crystal Bridge, as well as a year subscription to *Oklahoma Today*, SONIC gift card, American Banjo Museum t-shirts and a brand

new Deering Goodtime Banjo!

This year's *Americana Fest* was sponsored by the Bricktown Association, BancFirst, Okie Comics, Bricktown Square Parking, KFOR-TV, and SONIC America's Drive-In. This event was also made possible by a generous grant from the Oklahoma Arts Council.

Thanks to the many volunteers that made *Americana Fest* a success.



*Summertime treats were enjoyed by all in the outdoor courtyard.*



*Jeff Howard (center left) giving instructions during one of the four ukulele workshops.*

## Better know a board member



Lester Cowden

**Q: Four-string or five-string?**

A: I play (at) a four-string tenor banjo, also, the ukulele and recently learning to play a five-string banjo. I only know one five-string song, Cripple Creek.

**Q: When did you start playing?**

A: My start into the banjo world was in 1994 but more about that later.

**Q: You play with a group called the Okie Dokies. How did you get started playing with this group and how long have you been with the group?**

A: Since 1994. This group was originally formed by Brady Hunt in probably 1993. Anyway, we were twenty-two or so strong then. Our players came from all over to play and practice. They came from as far away as Wayne to Enid, Oklahoma. There were doctors, tradesmen, business people and even a county judge. Unfortunately, there are only three original players left still playing with us. We are currently eight to ten strong depending how many show up.

**Q: What is your favorite kind of music?**

A: Really, anything from classical to jazz but probably American music of all kinds from 1800 to 1950 and Dixieland style. I never gave

the banjo much thought since I played the piano and guitar. Then one fateful evening in late May it came to pass there was an event in Guthrie, Oklahoma that was later known to me as the *Guthrie Jazz Banjo Festival*. Having nothing much else to do at that time, I wandered up to Guthrie and took in one of the shows. Transfixed is not a strong enough sentiment to describe my emotional state. It was like, "Where have I been?" That was Friday. Came back and soaked up all Saturday performances. Back again on Sunday for more. By Sunday evening the players had moved to the street. It was late in the evening; the sun had set but there was a small group playing outside the Pollard Inn. So, I sat on the curb and just listened. Players would leave while others joined and so it went for the rest of the evening. Eventually one said let's go home so, they packed up their banjos except one who wouldn't quit. The others unpacked the banjos, joined back in and played until they couldn't stand it anymore, that was about 10 pm. All agreed on one last song, *Good Night Sweetheart*. It was played, the instruments were packed away for the last time and suddenly it was over. The streets were empty. A gentle warm breeze blew a rolled-up piece of paper down the street, silence....

I called Brady Hunt the organizer of the event the next day. He said get a banjo and come to practice and I have been playing ever since. The festival continued to be produced for several years under the tutelage of Brady Hunt with myself, Margie Smith-Robbins, who is still with the Museum, and others plus a troop of volunteers. Brady eventually left, so I took up the festival until the Museum moved to Bricktown in Downtown Oklahoma City. It was the end of an era. Sadly, the festival was no more.

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

A: I have been on the board since its inception and was one of the museum's founders. The National Four-String Hall of Fame Museum was founded by Brady Hunt and Jack Canine, principal benefactor of the Museum. I served a stint as president and am currently serving as vice president. The name was eventually changed to the American Banjo Museum and all banjos were embraced including both four and five-string instruments.

**Q: What's your favorite kind of music?**

A: Banjo music, of course!

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

A: The museum must continue its course of collecting and displaying these magnificent instruments to the public. Our education into the roots and history of the banjo should be expanded. It is essential that we continue to change with the times and keep the banjo front and center for all to see, play and appreciate. Hence, the installation of the learning lounge. The facility needs to expand and have available a much larger stage and concert hall.

**Q: What is the one thing you would like everyone to know about the American Banjo Museum?**

A: This is a living, breathing instrument with a 400-year history. This is truly an American Musical Instrument now played all over the world. While in Barcelona, Spain, LeeAnn and I stumbled across some men playing Dixieland Jazz in the street, each player came from a different country. This first-class Museum houses a more than significant number of original, one of a kind, banjos which represents a historical chain of years for all to see and appreciate.

## Does my donation really make a difference?

I was thinking back on my first visit to the American Banjo Museum, I fell in love almost immediately. The Banjos are everywhere, the history, the music, the performers all displayed with accuracy and precision to tell the complete story of the banjo.

Just think of how far we have come in just a few short years:

- From Humble beginnings on a second floor in Guthrie, OK to downtown Oklahoma City
- From a Four-String Banjo Museum to a “Banjo” museum preserving all styles of banjo.
- Rebranded the Hall of Fame, and its award, to be a coveted national award, recognizing the best of the best in the banjo world.
- An unmatched and ever-growing collection of banjos and ephemera to tell our story.
- New interactive exhibits including the Banjo Players Directory and the Learning Lounge.
- Regular performances in the Museum of all styles of banjo music.
- Public education events, community outreach events, fabulous public concerts.

...and we are far from finished!

How is all this possible? It is only possible because of the generosity of donors. Donors who see the Museum as the best way to tell the story of the banjo, preserve the banjo’s history, present the banjo’s music, educate the public about the banjo, tell the stories of banjo players and give the folks an opportunity to play the banjo. Yes, YOU have made that happen. Donors who have followed the lead of Jack Canine, and have made the deep commitment, to support this important work of insuring the future success of the American Banjo Museum.

So to you, our supporters, I say thank you, because without you none of this is possible! Your donations allow us to continue this important work for the benefit of people today, for the next generation and beyond. Our work is far from finished.

I hope you will join me in continuing to support the American Banjo Museum in every way you can and to spread the word to other lovers of the banjo that we need your help to continue on our mission. Does your donation make a difference? **It makes all the difference!**

*Paul Poirier,  
ABM Board of Directors*

## Philadelphia Mummers *Continued from page 1*

a modern Mummer *String Band* spends between \$30,000 and \$80,000 annually for themed costumes designed to be more elaborate and breathtaking than the year before.

*Philadelphia Mummers – Struttin’ Their Stuff* includes many of those dazzling and colorful costumes ranging from sequin bejeweled clowns and jesters to a kid friendly and sparkling version of Frankenstein. Pairing costumes with rare vintage photos, an interesting Mummer history and a video salute to Mummers through the years, the exhibit celebrates

a one-of-a-kind American musical tradition.

The American Banjo Museum is pleased to have partnered with Christian Vincent Lawlor – a longtime member of Philadelphia’s *Fralinger String Band* – in bringing this special chapter of banjo history to Oklahoma City. ABM executive director, Johnny Baier, comments, “As Mardi Gras is to New Orleans, the Mummers Parade is to Philadelphia. We are very excited to have this chance to share the music, fun and eye candy which are the Mummers with our museum visitors.”

*Philadelphia Mummers – Struttin’ Their Stuff* – runs through April of 2019





9 East Sheridan Avenue  
Oklahoma City, OK 73104



Register today...**BANJO FEST...September 6-8, 2018**

## Upcoming Events...

### July

#### **SATURDAY, JULY 7, 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 in the Jam Session.

#### **SATURDAY, JULY 21, 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!

### August

#### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, 1 PM** **Bluegrass Open Jam**

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

#### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 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!

#### **SATURDAY, AUGUST 25, 1 PM** **Celtic Open Jam**

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

### September

#### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1 PM** **Ukulele Open Jam**

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

#### **THURS-SAT, SEPTEMBER 6-8** **BANJO FEST - Open to the Public**

#### **Thursday, September 6th, 6 PM** **Welcome Reception & BBQ - \$30**

American Banjo Museum - Live music by the Philadelphia Mummies, Taylor Pfeiffer and Tim Allan; Exhibit opening - Philadelphia Mummies - Struttin' Their Stuff; jamming and presentation of the American Banjo Museum "Awards of Excellence".

#### **Friday, September 7th, 9 AM-2 PM** **Banjo Newsletter Workshop - \$60** American Banjo Museum with Eddie Collins, Janet Davis, and Tony Trischka

#### **Friday, September 7th, 6 PM** **American Banjo Museum Hall of Fame Induction Ceremonies - \$60** Devon Tower OKC - ABM Hall of Fame

Induction Ceremony honoring Bela Fleck, Borge Borgerson, Hub Nitchie/Banjo Newsletter, Jim Henson and Eddie Collins.

#### **Saturday, September 8th, Noon - 4 PM** **Exhibit Opening & Informal Performances - Museum Admission**

American Banjo Museum - Exhibit opening - Jim Henson - Life and Legacy; Informal performances by David Stephens, Johnny Baier, Taylor Pfeiffer and the Philadelphia Mummies

#### **Saturday, September 8th, 7 PM** **BANJO FEST - \$35** Hudiburg Chevrolet Performing Arts Theater, Midwest City - Bela Fleck, John McEuen, Tony Trischka and Tim Allan

#### **Saturday, September 8th, 10 PM** **Post Concert Afterglow Party - \$25** American Banjo Museum

#### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 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!

#### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1 PM** **Celtic Open Jam**

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