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INSIDE THIS ISSUE!  
Catching Up With Jacob Jolliff,  
Jam Survival Guide and more...



*Oregon Bluegrass Association*  
www.oregonbluegrass.org

# Bluegrass *Express*

## CATCHING UP WITH JACOB JOLLIFF

Interview By Ellie Hakanson

*Jacob Jolliff is a native of Newberg, Oregon. A graduate of the Berklee College of Music in Boston, he's toured with the bands Joy Kills Sorrow and Yonder Mountain String Band. He leads The Jacob Jolliff Band, and lives in New York.*

*Go to [www.jacobjolliff.com](http://www.jacobjolliff.com) and [www.patreon.com/jacobjolliff](http://www.patreon.com/jacobjolliff) for more information.*

**Ellie Hakanson:** *What have you been up to lately? Are you playing a lot right now?*

**Jacob Jolliff:** I'm certainly playing a lot at home in Brooklyn, but obviously not a lot of gigs. I've done a few different things: Some recording, and I played on the soundtrack for a movie. I don't know when it'll come out. Sometime this year, I hope. That was one of the more exciting things I've done, and that was all from home too, just recording myself. That was a cool opportunity, and then a few other sessions, but certainly not very many gigs. Basically, no gigs, for all the obvious reasons.

But I had an encouraging conversation recently with my booking agent, and she thinks we'll get to play some this summer, which would be sooner than I had even hoped for. I was originally hoping for the fall, hoping for September, but she seems to think we might get to go out a little sooner. I'd be super down with that, as long as the whole band is vaccinated by then, which I have high hopes that we will be.

**EH:** *It's weird to have life so dependent on such outside factors right now.*

**JJ:** I've been doing a lot of practicing and pursuing some hobbies for once in my life,

*later, but if you don't mind, I want to ask how you got started playing music and playing bluegrass.*

**JJ:** I met you not too long after I got started, maybe a few years.

**EH:** *I think I was 12.*

**JJ:** I was probably around the same age. I started when I was seven. My dad started me out playing as part of my schoolwork, because I was homeschooled. It was a required thing that I didn't really like that much. But then after just a few months, I started really liking it, and started practicing a lot. It went from the required ten minutes a day to multiple hours practicing every day.

That's how it's been ever since. That was about 25 years ago, which seems like a long time. I started when I was seven, started playing out with my dad when I was nine or so. Then I had a bluegrass gospel group with my dad when I was in middle school and early high school. We played around the Northwest. Those are super fond memories, getting to play all the little bluegrass festivals around Oregon and Washington.

**EH:** *I played a lot of those same festivals.*



Jacob Jolliff

where mostly I have just done music incessantly! But not a lot of gigs. I have plans for several recording projects, but none of those have happened yet either, because of COVID. I've got a lot I want to do as soon as I can.

**EH:** *I'll ask more about specific projects*

*Continued on page 6*

# OBA Membership & Ad Information

## Membership Information

The OBA Board of Directors invites you to join the OBA and to participate in its many activities. Our membership benefits include a subscription to the quarterly Bluegrass Express, frequent mailings about events, and ticket discounts to northwest bluegrass events. Annual membership dues are \$30 for a General Member, \$50 for Supporting Performers, and \$125 for Contributing Business Sponsors, as well as other options. You can join online or complete the application on the back cover and mail your check to:

**Oregon Bluegrass Association**  
P.O. Box 1115  
Portland, OR 97207

## Website

Features include an interactive calendar that allows you to post your own events, excerpts from past issues of the Bluegrass Express, and links for local bands. Come visit us online! Visit the OBA web page today!

[www.oregonbluegrass.org](http://www.oregonbluegrass.org)

## Article and Editorial Submissions

The OBA Board invites you to submit letters, stories, photos and articles to The Bluegrass Express. Published files remain in our archives and art is returned upon request. Please send submissions to:

**Linda Leavitt**  
[Expressnews@oregonbluegrass.org](mailto:Expressnews@oregonbluegrass.org)

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Your Express advertising will reach over 500 households of bluegrass enthusiasts, while helping the OBA to continue publishing this valuable resource. We appreciate your support of the Oregon Bluegrass Association. For information about placing an ad for your music-related business please contact Pat Connell via email at: [obaexpressads@oregonbluegrass.org](mailto:obaexpressads@oregonbluegrass.org).

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Issue	Mailed	Reserved By	Copy Deadline
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Fall (Oct-Dec)	October 1	September 1	September 1

### AD RATES AND DIMENSIONS

Size	Dimension	Cost	2 or more issues
Full Page	7.5 x 9.5	\$150.00	\$130.00
Half Page Horizontal	7.5 x 4.75	\$90.00	\$80.00
Half Page Vertical	3.75 x 9.5	\$90.00	\$80.00
Quarter Page	3.75 x 4.5	\$60.00	\$50.00
Eighth Page	3.75 x 2.25	\$40.00	\$30.00

### WEBSITE RATES AND DIMENSIONS

Size	Dimension	Cost	With Print Ad
Leaderboard	728 x 90 px	\$50.00	\$30.00
Small Square	300 x 250 px	\$45.00	\$25.00

The OBA prefers to receive advertising payment in advance. For one-year contracts, we request payment six months in advance and we will bill for the next six months. Payment may be made online via PayPal at [www.oregonbluegrass.org/bgexpress.php](http://www.oregonbluegrass.org/bgexpress.php) or you may mail a check payable to The Oregon Bluegrass Association, PO Box 1115, Portland, OR 97207.

When submitting an advertisement to the OBA, please be sure the ad is accurate and the file is black and white, 300 dpi and in either PDF, TIFF, or JPEG format. If you have questions about your file please email John Nice-Snowdy at [nicetunz@gmail.com](mailto:nicetunz@gmail.com).

You can also find the OBA on Instagram and Facebook! "Like" our page and keep up to date with bluegrass events.

Founded in 1982, the Oregon Bluegrass Association (OBA) is a volunteer-run, 501(c) (3), non-profit arts organization consisting of individual and band memberships. Based in Portland, Oregon, the OBA has a chapter in Roseburg, and is the umbrella organization for the Chick Rose School of Bluegrass.

The OBA is led by an elected Board of Directors who volunteer for two-year terms. Monthly meetings are open to all members and an Annual Meeting is held for the state-wide and regional members. Financial support for the OBA comes from membership dues, fundraising events, tax-deductible donations, merchandise sales and advertising revenue from the Bluegrass Express, the award-winning member newsletter.

# Table of Contents

July/August/Sept 2021 Volume 41 / Number 3 Newsletter of the Oregon Bluegrass Association [www.oregonbluegrass.org](http://www.oregonbluegrass.org)

## This Issue Features

### Cover Story

Catching Up With Jacob Jolliff ..... 1  
*By Ellie Hakanson*

### Articles

Eddie Huffman Interview ..... 12  
*By Joe Ross*

Racism and Old-Time Music..... 16  
*By Connie Wold*

### Calendars, Lists & Info

OBA Membership and Ad  
Information ..... 2

President's Message..... 4

What's Playing on the Radio..... 4

OBA Annual Meeting Minutes..... 5

Jam Survival Guide ..... 11

Finding Bluegrass in the Time of COVID-19..... 20

OBA Contributing Business Sponsors..... 24

OBA Supporting Performer  
Directory..... 25

Tabs/Notation..... 27  
*By Kaden Hurst*



## **Bluegrass Express**

*Bluegrass Express* is a quarterly newsletter dedicated to informing members of the Oregon Bluegrass Association about local, regional and national bluegrass issues, events and opportunities.

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# President's Message

I'm filling out my second IBMA ballot, and something feels wrong. That's when I realize that I'm lacking one of my principal decision-making tools: I haven't seen any of these artists perform during the last year. None.

Thanks largely to OBA Radio and our steadfast hosts on KBOO Community Radio's *Music from the True Vine*, I have heard a fair share of the music that was created and recorded in the last twelve months.

If there were moments when the pandemic left me feeling like I was sitting at the bottom of a well, they were few, and were illuminated by flashes of brilliance as the music refused to wither and was remade in livestreams, podcasts, and a variety of previously unimagined hybrids propagated by the IBMA, *Bluegrass Unlimited*, and others.

As summer begins, the *great opening* is finally upon us. Live shows and festivals are on the calendar. Jams and pickers' fests are happening. Strings are being changed, tents aired out, and—if you're like me—the rust scraped off some tunes that haven't been played in a long, long time.

## 2021 Annual Meeting

We held the first—and we hope the last—online OBA annual meeting on Sunday, April 11. Many thanks to those who took the time to join us, and congratulations to the Directors who stood for re-election. We are especially glad to report that Connie Wold has joined us as Volunteer Chair and look forward to resuming live and in-person bluegrass with her leadership.

## The Bluegrass Special

As venues begin to reopen, our Events team has had a watchful eye on bringing back our concert series. The Directors met to consider the possibility, and voted to postpone making the decision to resume a series of indoor concerts until October. We felt that committing to contractual agreements with the current level of uncertainty posed a financial risk for the Association that we weren't prepared to assume. Stay tuned, though—the 2019-20 season was a success and we look forward to presenting artists of regional and national standing as soon as we can safely do so.

## We Need You

The Board is pleased to report that the Association weathered the pandemic financial storm in reasonably good shape. We owe a special debt of gratitude to the Oregon Cultural Trust, with whose help we kept the print version of the *Bluegrass Express* coming to your mailbox every quarter.

But it's true that membership has declined steadily, and we completely understand that with the turbulence of the last year, renewing hasn't been at the top of some folks' list. Many of us join or renew at concerts and festivals, and that hasn't been a choice.

Now the time to restart our programs is here, and those programs are what your dues pay for. Now, more than ever, we need your donations, your support, and your name on our mailing list. On behalf of the entire membership, I offer my profound thanks.

Until we meet again, my wholehearted thanks for your support!

*Chris*  
Chris Knight  
OBA President



Photo By Doug Olmstead

## What's Playing On The Radio

Local Radio Bluegrass and Country Listings

### Everywhere And Free

Oregon Bluegrass Radio  
[www.oregonbluegrass.org](http://www.oregonbluegrass.org)  
Every day, all day

### Albany/Corvallis - KBOO

Broadcast from Portland, can be heard at 100.7 FM. See under Portland, below

### Astoria - KMUN 91.9 FM

Some syndicated programming

503-325-0010

"Cafe Vaquera"

Tuesdays 9-11pm, Bluegrass/Old Timey

Western/Folk with Calamity Jane

CafeVaquera@hotmail.com

"Shady Grove" Saturdays 7-9pm

Regular folk program

Monday thru Friday 10am - noon

with bluegrass included

### Columbia Gorge - KBOO

Broadcast from Portland. Can be heard at

92.7 FM. See under Portland below

### Corvallis - KOAC 550 AM

Syndicated public radio with some bluegrass included in regular programming

541-737-4311

### Eugene - KLCC 89.7 FM

Local broadcast 541-726-2224

Mixed format "Saturday Cafe"

Saturdays 11am - noon

"The Backporch"

9 - 10pm Saturdays

### Eugene - KRVM 91.9 FM

"Routes & Branches" 3 - 5pm Saturdays

"Acoustic Junction" 5 - 7pm Saturdays

"Miles of Bluegrass" 7 - 9pm Mondays

[www.krvm.org](http://www.krvm.org) 541-687-3370

### Pendleton - KWHT 104.5 FM

"Bushels of Bluegrass" 9 - 11pm Sundays

contact Phil Hodgen 541-276-2476

### Portland - KBOO 90.7 FM

"Music from the True Vine"

9am - noon Saturdays

### Santiam Canyon - KYAC 94.9 FM

"Ken 'til 10" 6-10am M-F

Additional Bluegrass Programming

Streaming and Schedule: [www.kyacfm.org](http://www.kyacfm.org)

### Salem - KMUZ 88.5 & 100.7

"Ken 'til 10" 6-8am M-F

Simulcast with KYAC.

[kmuz.org](http://kmuz.org), all bluegrass

# Oregon Bluegrass Association



## **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Membership and Board**

Held Sunday April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 by online Zoom conference

President Chris Knight called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm, and gave all 9 folks a warm welcome. He then thanked the current directors & corporate officers for their service, and Connie Wold for offering her service. After advising how the vote by “chat” worked, the following 2-year term director nominations were then put to a vote, to be tallied by the Secretary at the conclusion of the meeting:

Chris Knight—President, Pat Connell—Vice President, Ron Preston—Secretary,  
Patrick Seafeld—Treasurer, Dave Hausner—Membership, Linda Leavitt—Express,  
Kerry Callahan—Grant Development, and Connie Wold—Volunteer Chair

Treasurer Patrick Seafeld provided the financial report. He advised that we have roughly \$13,500 spread over 6 accounts, and our Southern Oregon chapter has \$1,880 in 2 accounts.

Chris gave special thanks to Tony McCormick; former President, Vice President and webmaster over the last 12 years, and Mimi Dobler; former Volunteer coordinator for the last 2 years. Also thanked were the continuing special OBA assistants; Eric Herman—webmaster, Donna Dunaif—calendar editor, Patrick Connell & Kaden Hurst—OBA Radio, and Nancy Christie & John Snowdy—BG Express.

Secretary Ron Preston provided a brief update of accomplishments and activities for the last 2 years, and advised of a monthly meeting review report that is available for 2019. He will provide a review of last year’s meetings for those interested.

Chris introduced Dave Hausner, who reported we have 175 members, including individual members, advertisers, and bands, plus 42 lifetime memberships, which represents a slight decline from 2020. We have 18 email/ mailing addresses which need correcting. We are developing goals for increasing membership this year.

Chris reported that the OBA Concert Series projects have been put on hold until the end of COVID-19, venue designation, and financial sponsorship can be arranged. We have \$1000 on deposit for Wintergrass 2022. Also, the Waller grant and Candey grant applicants will be taken for board review, and presented at next year’s annual meeting. Donations to these grants can be made through the mail or online with PayPal.

Chris reviewed grants received, and our goals for the year. He advised of the web committee meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month for those interested. There are no plans for our annual pickers’ retreat. We need someone to step up and help sell Express advertising. We need feedback from our members on how we’re doing and improvements needed.

Ron then announced that the vote for the nominated directors was unanimous for all.

Chris closed the meeting at 1:45.

# Catching Up with Jacob Jolliff

Cont. from page 1

**JJ:** I know that a lot of those festivals don't happen anymore. There are still some in Oregon and Washington. That's how I got started; my dad started me.

**EH:** Was it just a lucky coincidence that it was bluegrass you started playing?

**JJ:** It was the music that my dad was into, his first passion. I didn't know a lot of other young people that played bluegrass. But then pretty quickly I met young people throughout the United States who played. I met Alex [Hargreaves] when I was 11 or 12, and we played together a lot, and then lived together for about 6 years in New York. Now he's a couple neighborhoods over. I met a lot of other young folks, including you, who played. That really changed things, knowing there were other kids who played, having peers.

When I went to college in Boston, at Berklee College of Music, a lot of those same people migrated to that area in that year and the year following. It was a fertile scene there; a lot of great bands came out of it. That's when I hooked up with the band Joy Kills Sorrow, which I was in for five or six years before we went on hiatus. That was my first big touring experience, with that group.

**EH:** What about your early mentors? I know there were several people who were really encouraging to you when you were first starting out.

**JJ:** My dad was my first musical mentor.

**EH:** I know how that goes!

**JJ:** It's a little different when it's your dad; it's not quite the same as when some other older musician who's not related to you will invest time in you. I was fortunate to have a lot of great folks in the Oregon bluegrass scene, like Ken Cartwright,

Louanne Fugal, Clyde and Nicky Clevenger, and a lot of others who are still in the scene. Ken sold me my first really nice mandolin for a great deal, so Ken was definitely an important one. Meeting David Grisman when I was about 11 was a big deal. He's a great mentoring presence for several generations of acoustic musicians. He sent me a bunch of music, a bunch of CDs, and he let me play his Loar mandolin. The day I met him was definitely a life-changing day. Even now, I'm teaching an online mandolin course, and he's going to be a guest instructor for one class, which is amazing. He continues to be supportive. Shortly after meeting him, I met Ronnie McCoury and Chris Thile, and those two were big heroes, and still are.

I've been fortunate that in more recent years, touring with Yonder Mountain, I was able to play with Sam Bush quite a lot, and he's a big hero too, but one I didn't really get to know as well until recently. But every time I saw him when I was playing with Yonder, he was always incredibly encouraging, affirming, just such a supportive dude. I feel fortunate to have gotten to meet and hang out with most of my heroes in some capacity.

One other person that comes to mind is my early mentor, a jazz piano player named Randy Porter, who lives in the Portland area. I took some lessons from him in high school, just music lessons, not piano but jazz theory lessons. He was a big influence for the year or so that I



L-R: Jacob Jolliff, David Grisman & Bill Jolliff

studied with him, and he helped me get into jazz. I still work on a lot of stuff that he talked about. One of the projects I want to do in the next year is a jazz standards record with Randy, out in Oregon. He's

got a great studio that's pretty COVID-safe, because each of the ISO booths has an entrance to the outdoors. You can record without ever being in the same room as anyone else. But we still think it's safer to wait until we're vaccinated, so it'll be a few months, but I'm really looking forward to doing that.

**EH:** I look forward to hearing it—it sounds really cool!

**JJ:** Thank you.

**EH:** You're welcome! So, when it comes to touring, I wanted to ask about your experiences playing with your family, and then how is it different to tour with other people?

**JJ:** My dad and I didn't really tour, but we did play almost every weekend, with a few longer trips peppered in there, and a few flights, which were really exciting when I was a kid. I remember a few gigs we flew to when I was 14 or 15 or so. I loved that. I definitely dreamed of a life where I flew out all the time to play music. I've achieved that life in the last 10 years. But it's not as glorious as it seems. Sometimes it's totally glorious. Other times it's just the worst.

**EH:** Sometimes it's just sleeping on the airport floor.

**JJ:** Exactly. It can be lonesome. But sometimes the best sets come after the most lonesome travel. You have this heroic feeling where you power through, and one of my favorite things to talk about is to recount heroic travel.



L-R: Jacob & Bill Jolliff

# Catching Up with Jacob Jolliff

by

It was really fun to be in a group with my dad, but then as I got into the more angsty teenage years, I didn't want to be in a group with my dad, for all the normal teenage reasons. But we still play a ton of music together when I'm home, and got to play a lot this last year, which was great.

It was "our band," but I was a kid, so it was definitely his band. In every band you have a different role. If you're a sideman, you're a sideman. But even with sideman gigs, sometimes the dynamic can be vastly different in terms of what's expected of you. All my gigs that I've had, from the band with my dad, to Joy Kills Sorrow, to Yonder Mountain, to my own group—it's a different dynamic in each one. I'm really glad I've had all those experiences because I learned a lot from each one.

Each one of them is tough to keep everyone getting along well. Joy Kills Sorrow was run democratically, and that can be the most challenging because everyone wants a say on everything. But it was so much fun and we were all young. Emma Beaton, the vocalist, and I were 18 or 19 when we started in it, and the others were in their early twenties. We got to tour around Europe and had a lot of fun. Then there were also lots of disagreements because we were all young and immature. My experience with Yonder was somewhere in between a sideman and a democratic member, because the rest of the band members were a lot older and were founding members of the group. Then my band, I'm the only "not-sideman" in that group. Each dynamic has its own challenges.

**EH:** *Is it nice to be in charge, finally?*

**JJ:** Honestly, I didn't imagine having my own group until shortly before I started it. I was on the road with Yonder, and I wanted to fabricate an opportunity to tour too, with some of my peers. I put together a tour, and it was a trio at first.

But now I do like being in charge. In the absence of having the money to hire a tour

manager, it's good because I know where this responsibility lies. Basically, all logistical responsibility lies on me, which is fine if I know that's going to be the case. The band does chip in too, but it's not really their responsibility. Musically, I also like being in charge. I wouldn't want it to be the only thing that I do. But it makes you realize your own strengths and weaknesses and your musical tendencies that you need to balance out. The people I hire are all amazing players and I value their opinions. I can't remember if it was Béla Fleck or David Grisman who said "Everyone gets an opinion, nobody gets to vote." If we're going to play the song that night, someone's got to decide how we're going



to do it, how we're going to start it or end it. Each one of those things is an opportunity for disagreement. But the nice thing about having someone in charge is, they say "This is what we're going to do." Then you do it. I like to think that at least I have the presence of mind, or self awareness, that if it didn't work that way, change it. But sometimes just having a decision made is what you need to be able to play a song on stage.

**EH:** *How did you end up joining Yonder Mountain String Band?*

**JJ:** When I was with Joy Kills Sorrow, we played our last gig on May 1, 2014, and we

did our last tour in April, and we'd known we were going on hiatus for a couple of months before that. After we did the last tour in April, I moved to New York City, and I also got the call from Yonder that month. The timing was great because I had a month or two in New York when I didn't know how I was going to make a living, which was a point of stress, living in NYC. I just got really lucky, timing-wise. When they parted ways with the late Jeff Austin, several people, including an old manager of theirs, put my name in the ring and I flew out and recorded some with them. We all got along well.

It was great fun, it was different. A different scene, a different level of touring than I was used to, playing bigger venues and touring on a bus and all of that. It was the perfect gig for me, coming right out of Joy Kills Sorrow, which was a really great band, but we were all struggling money-wise and traveling was crazy. Having a cushy gig was really nice. Then it ran its course. I wasn't a good fit by the end of 2019, and it was time to do something else. But I was really grateful for the gig and it was fun playing with those guys.

**EH:** *I'm wondering what the bluegrass scene is like in New York. It's one of the places I haven't really hung out much yet.*

**JJ:** It's a miserable town to tour through as a bluegrass band, unless you're the most famous bluegrass band or something like that. For a lot of bands, it's not fun to tour in and out. Just getting around the city, especially if you're not used to it, is a pain.

But the scene is great. It's a city a lot of hot pickers will move to for a while, but maybe don't stay forever. Stalwarts of the scene include Tony Trischka, who lives in Jersey, just outside of town. It's amazing to have him around. Michael Daves is an incredible singer and guitar picker and mandolin picker, and he's a fixture of the New York bluegrass scene. Andy Statman, who's one of the greatest mandolinists of all time,

# Catching Up with Jacob Jolliff

lives here, I used to live just a few blocks from him. There are a lot of younger pickers like myself, Alex Hargraves, Mike Robinson. There have been others who lived here for a while, like Dominic Leslie and Mike Barnett, people who have moved to Nashville or other places, but were here for a while, including members of the Punch Brothers, I think Chris Eldridge lived here, and Noam Pikelnny, but they both live in Nashville now. Chris Thile lives here. He's a bluegrass picker, but he's somewhat transcended. Now he's more of a pop star or famous person, but he's here.

It's not as vast of a bluegrass scene as Nashville, but it's a really strong scene. There's a great Monday night jam session at Mona's, run by Rick Snell. That's a lot of fun during non-COVID times. There's lots of bluegrass around town—probably more than any city other than maybe Nashville, in terms of bluegrass gigs. A lot of them are bar gigs that probably don't pay a whole lot, but there are a lot of gigs relative to most cities. That's for all styles of music, including bluegrass.

**EH:** *What are the projects you're working on now? And what have you been up to during these COVID times?*

**JJ:** Mostly practicing, and trying to stay healthy, exercise, stuff like that. But my group is my main focus. Last year I was planning on touring a lot with my group, and that didn't happen, although we had a couple of really good gigs. But as this year progresses, I'm hoping to tour more with that group, and that probably will be the thing I'm on the road with the most.

I was going to be doing some gigs with Tony Trischka, and I hope to do more with him and Michael Daves. Those are sideman gigs that I get called for. I started a Patreon page. I guess that's a project. I'm going to be doing lots of mandolin arrangements and transcriptions and uploading those, for all the mandolin nerds

who might read this. But my band is my main project.

As I said, there are several other recordings I'm aiming to do. My buddy Grant Gordy is an amazing guitar player, and we're planning on doing a duo record. There's that jazz record I mentioned. I'm hoping to do all of that and also do a new record with my group. But it's all on pause.

**EH:** *You did some recording during lockdown, right?*

**JJ:** Just some sideman stuff, some random sessions, and then the movie.

**EH:** *Can you say what movie it is?*



*Jacob Jolliff, Ronnie McCoury & Sam Bush*

It's not out yet. It's called iMordecai. I hope it's okay for me to mention it. [Editor's note: iMordecai's official release date in the United States was May 1, 2021.] There's not much about it online yet. I've heard it's supposed to be on Netflix when it comes out, but I don't really know. The soundtrack is mostly klezmer music. A friend was leading the klezmer band and asked me to be in it. That's the coolest recording I've done in the last few months. I did live streams, and a lot of teaching and clinics, but I didn't record any full-length records during COVID. I wish I would

have, but it just never seemed possible, really, with wanting to be careful.

**EH:** *What's your favorite place you've ever played?*

**JJ:** There are a lot. The last gig that my group played before COVID was Celtic Connections in Glasgow, Scotland. Have you played there before?

**EH:** *I think we played in Scotland, but we just played one gig in a pub. I've heard it's really cool, though.*

**JJ:** It's a really fun event. I played there twice with Joy Kills Sorrow. This time it was with my band. At the last gig, we were playing with this amazing Celtic group called Flook, in this beautiful thousand-seat hall in Glasgow. We were opening, and doing our one-mic thing in that room was really great. That was way up there among my favorites, and a super-fond memory, especially because it was the last big thing I got to do before COVID.

But then playing Red Rocks with Yonder—we got to do that four or five times. And that's incredible, no denying that. It's a huge venue, with the natural beauty of that spot. Other than that, what comes to mind is getting to play the Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival in Australia. Did you play that?

**EH:** *I did play that, and it was incredible.*

**JJ:** I felt like that was the kind of place you guys might have played too. I loved it. We flew over for just the weekend. It was an incredibly quick trip because, as you know, it's a long trip. We left here on Monday and we got home on Monday. We literally were traveling over half that time because of the long flights and also losing a day. Dorrigo is five or six hours from Sydney. But it was an incredible weekend. The band went over really well and it was just so much fun.

Those are the ones that come to mind. I



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# Catching Up with Jacob Jolliff

Cont. from page 8

know there are others. I've gotten to do a lot of amazing gigs, some of which I can't even believe I got to do. Playing the Telluride Bluegrass Festival is another huge one.

**EH:** *Someday I'll go.*

**JJ:** You've never been to Telluride?

**EH:** *I've played Rocky Grass, but I've never been to Telluride.*

**JJ:** They're equally cool, but it's different, just a little bigger, and the scenery is incredibly dramatic.

**EH:** *It looks magical.*

**JJ:** It really is.

**EH:** *Do you have any advice for young people just starting to play bluegrass?*

**JJ:** I feel like everyone my age, and certainly younger, is trying to figure out how to make a living. This advice is in regard to being a professional musician, not just bluegrass. I have no formula, but I feel like all you can really do is stay in the game. You're going to get lucky once in a while and you're going to be unlucky plenty too, trying to make a living, playing music, but staying in the game is the key. Finding a way to make a living, or not, but keeping your name out there. Get as good as you can be through practicing and your natural talent, and be a chill person to hang out with. Those two factors—being an easy personality to get along with on the road, and then playing your butt off—that's all you can really do.

You just have to wait for the phone to ring after that. And if you keep on getting better and you keep on meeting more and more people who pass your name along, that's the only job security there is for us. Even if you have a really good gig, it might not last forever, as I've experienced. Once that gig disappears, then you're left

with your connections, and the people who already know your name, and people who want to play with you. Even if you're a great picker, you can't be a jerk and expect to get any calls, so you have to be a really nice guy. If you can't hang musically, you're probably also not going to get

you get.

Because there's definitely no formula for it that I know of.

**EH:** *Is there anything else you wanted to mention?*



*The Jacob Jolliff Band (L-R) Alex Hargreaves, Jacob Jolliff, Myles Sloniker, Stash Wyslouch*

that many calls. You just have to just stay in the game. You can't move to a new city, even as a great picker, and just give up in 6 months because you aren't getting a lot of calls, because it takes time—time spent putting your name out there and playing with people, being as easy to work with as possible, and playing as well as possible.

Then you hope that you get a few gigs that maybe make it a little bit more of a romantic and adventurous thing, and I feel like you will, if you stay in the game. I've gotten really lucky with some calls, but then also gone through periods of feeling like, "Can I really make a living playing music?" Then you get the big call the next day, and all of a sudden, your whole mental image of yourself shifts after one phone call. Like "Oh, yeah, I'm a success!" But you didn't do anything differently. You just happened to get this phone call, you were doing the same stuff yesterday, but you perceive yourself differently after you get one big call. It's important to remember there's a lot of chance involved. But the better you are, and the easier to work with, the nicer you are, the more lottery tickets

**JJ:** Just that I have the fondest memories of hanging out in the Oregon bluegrass scene when I was a kid. So "Thank you" to that scene.

**EH:** *Me, too. It was a good place to grow up.*

**JJ:** Totally.

**Ellie Hakanson** is a professional bluegrass fiddle player, teacher, and vocalist living in Portland, Oregon. She toured with Jeff Scroggins and Colorado for five years, and she currently teaches lessons and workshops online, and livestreams weekly at [Facebook.com/elliehakanson](https://www.facebook.com/elliehakanson). You'll also find Ellie at [www.patreon.com/elliehakanson](https://www.patreon.com/elliehakanson).

# Jam Survival Guide

By Keith Billik and Grace van't Hof

Editor's Note:

We're all impatient to go outside and play bluegrass music with others. While y'all get ready to pick-to-beat-the-devil this summer, here is a handy Jam Survival Guide to review, created by the multi-talented Keith Billik (Picky Fingers Banjo Podcast) and Grace van't Hof (banjoist for Chris Jones & the Night Drivers, Sinner Friends, and the Velvet Boys).

Although this guide is tailored to banjo players, the guide mostly applies to all jammers.



# Eddie Huffman Interview

Interview By Joe Ross

*Eddie Huffman is the Director of Operations, International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA)*

I recently caught up with the IBMA's Eddie Huffman, and he shed some light on many of the IBMA's current directions, programs, scholarships and other endeavors. The IBMA has many opportunities for bluegrassers. We also talked about ways that regional bluegrass associations can support the IBMA and vice versa.

## **What is the difference between the IBMA, IBMA Trust Fund, and IBMA Foundation?**

They're three separate sister organizations with different missions, boards, and staff. The International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) is a non-profit music association that connects, educates, and empowers bluegrass professionals and enthusiasts, honoring tradition and encouraging innovation in the bluegrass community worldwide. The IBMA's board elects board members of the other two entities. The IBMA Trust Fund assists those in the bluegrass community in times of emergency need. The IBMA Foundation is focused on the future. It supports programs and initiatives fostering the growth of bluegrass music through charitable giving.

## **How has the pandemic changed how IBMA connects, educates, and empowers bluegrassers?**

We felt an urgent need to fulfill our mission and serve our community. Because it was such a difficult time, the bluegrass community really needed a "World of Bluegrass" event to get together and celebrate, as well as what it meant to everyone financially. We had to navigate from a large in-person event and street festival. We went through a total re-brand to think about the message we're trying to send and what's more consistent and cohesive across the entire event, because we have a conference, showcases, awards, and a festival. Having had "World of Bluegrass" as the brand since the late 1980s, it elevated to the top because people already knew it, and it truly is a world of bluegrass and

international in scope. That brand checked off multiple boxes so we just added "Virtual" in front of "World of Bluegrass." It was like trying to find that flashlight in the basement when the power goes out. Remember the quote from Earl Weaver – "It's what you learn after you know it all that counts."

## **Has the pendulum swung a little more towards encouraging innovation, while still honoring tradition?**

Absolutely! We created a six-day "Virtual World of Bluegrass" event with 120 individual events. We didn't know if the rocket was going to launch until we hit that button on Monday, then we kept launching each booster rocket. Our community reacted so positively. They were starved to get together, share and learn from each other. Our World of Bluegrass emphasizes the deep connection of the Bluegrass community.

## **How did the IBMA's Virtual World of Bluegrass turn out last fall?**

It took place Sept 28-Oct 3, 2020 and was very well received around the globe from those who took part in the 80 hours of online content presented during the event. The total number of attendees — or, unique individual participants — for the week was estimated at 101,636, with a total number of 189,325 views across multiple channels, including the IBMA's official event platform, IBMA social media (Facebook and YouTube), and outlets (web, app, Roku, and other OTT) provided by official media partner, WRAL.

## **What were some of the event highlights?**

IBMA presented a total of 124 events, including performances, award shows, professional development sessions, constituency meetings, and more. Performances included sets by 50 artists as part of IBMA Bluegrass Live! and 30 artists as part of IBMA Bluegrass Ramble. The IBMA Business Conference included 39 sessions and

88 speakers. The virtual exhibit hall included 76 vendors, and was made possible by the contributions of 33 event sponsors as well as grants.

## **What were some of the challenges faced in organizing such an event of that magnitude during a pandemic?**

We had to figure out the platform, what to charge, based on our best guess, and then rely on the community to bring the important aspects forward, hoping the community was going to dial in. We used the Ryman Auditorium stage to weave that in.

## **Were your fundraising goals met?**

IBMA met fundraising goals for the organization and IBMA's Trust Fund during the event. PNC Bank, the presenting sponsor of IBMA Bluegrass Live! boosted its support for the IBMA and bluegrass artists experiencing financial hardship due to pandemic-related issues by matching the first \$50,000 in donations. While donations continue to come in, the current total received stands at more than \$86,100, or over \$136,100 when including PNC's matching donation. Our generous supporters demonstrated how the bluegrass family sticks together with passion and resilience.

## **What is the IBMA Trust Fund, and how is it helping bluegrass professionals in need? Does IBMA also have a separate COVID Relief Fund?**

The Trust Fund offers financial assistance to bluegrass music professionals in time of emergency need. The Trust Fund Board of Trustees has recently set aside up to \$150,000 of current assets for COVID-19 crisis assistance and established an account specifically for COVID-19 relief. Any funds donated to this new account will be added to the existing funds being committed.

# Eddie Huffman Interview

## What is the IBMA Foundation?

The IBMA Foundation was created by IBMA in 2007 with a bequest from the Richard Barnhart estate. Mr. Barnhart was a musician from northern Virginia who loved bluegrass and wanted to support educational programs for children. Since the beginning, our goal has been to support bluegrass-music-related educational, literary, artistic and historic preservation activities. In our early years, we produced *Discover Bluegrass*, an educational video that has been used in thousands of classrooms and libraries around the world. We've hosted dozens of teacher workshops and artist trainings. We created a bluegrass lesson plan competition and provided a network for leaders of after-school bluegrass programs. IBMA Foundation's **project grants**, which now total \$14,000 a year, support bluegrass-related initiatives throughout the world. *Apply by December 1*. They're usually about \$1,000-2,000 and support bluegrass-related programs or events in the area of arts & culture, education, literary projects, or history preservation. The Foundation also funds **mini-grants** (\$300), which help schools to hire bluegrass bands for school programs. *Mini-grants may be applied for throughout the year.*

## How about other grant programs available?

The **Neil Rosenberg Bluegrass Scholar Award** is an annual cash award, presented to the developing academic scholar who presents the best paper accepted by a juried academic conference on an aspect of bluegrass music. It recognizes excellence in academic research. The recipient will receive a \$500 honorarium plus admission to the next IBMA Business Conference and Awards Show. "Developing academic scholars" are defined as graduate students in MA or PhD programs and recent PhDs (within five years of degree completion). The **Arnold Shultz Fund** supports initiatives to encourage participation by people of color in bluegrass music. That fund was named after the talented African-American guitarist and fiddler who influenced the development of bluegrass music. *The*

*next application deadline will be December 1.*

## Tell us more about The Arnold Shultz Fund and how it supports increased participation of people of color in bluegrass music.

That fund was established in 2020 by the IBMA Foundation. To date, \$32,000 has been raised. In March, the Foundation awarded \$12,050 in its first round of Arnold Shultz Fund grants to eight programs and individuals in Alaska, Arizona, California, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. IBMA is pleased to offer a proactive, helping hand to individuals who come from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in the bluegrass community. Bluegrass music belongs to everyone. The 2021 Arnold Shultz Fund grant recipients include:

- BASEArizona and Jam Pak Band, BanJam 2021; Chandler, AZ
- Bluegrass Pride and Decolonizing the Music Room, "Juneteenth: A Rainbow Revival"; San Francisco, CA and Fort Worth, TX
- Dancing with the Spirit, Bluegrass Song Videos & Curriculum for Alaskan Village Schools; Fairbanks, AK
- Nokosee Fields, recording project; Lafayette, LA
- Louisville Folk School, "Black Voices in Kentucky Music History"; Louisville, KY
- NorthStar Church of the Arts, "Country Soul Songbook"; Durham, NC
- Stephen Wang, guitar lessons; Los Gatos, CA
- Tray Wellington, audio and visual gear upgrade; Johnson City, TN

## What are some of the scholarships available?

The **Sally Ann Forrester College Scholarship** is a \$1,000 scholarship awarded to a female bluegrass musician. To date, that program has seen \$21,000 donated to it. *Application deadline is May 1*. The **Rick Lang Music Songwriter Scholarship** is a \$2,000 award to a student majoring in a subject related to songwriting. *Deadline to apply is June 1*. The **IBMA Bluegrass College Scholarship** grants one \$1,000 scholarship to a student who is studying bluegrass music or a related major on the college level. For the fall 2021 semester, the *deadline to apply is June 1*. The Foundation has raised \$18,000 and is working toward raising an initial goal of \$20,000 to endow this scholarship into the future.

## What else has The IBMA Foundation done in recent times?

During IBMA's World of Bluegrass week, the Foundation presents a college bluegrass band showcase, a bluegrass college educators' luncheon, and a bluegrass college information session for prospective students and their parents. They also facilitate academic research-related seminars. The IBMA Foundation, Inc. is a tax-exempt, tax-deductible organization with headquarters in Nashville and a satellite office in Burlington, North Carolina. The IBMA Foundation is governed by thirteen volunteers appointed by the International Bluegrass Music Association and staffed by a part-time executive director. They're very grateful to their donors who support the IBMA Foundation and other initiatives, especially during the COVID pandemic. Their generosity has made it possible to award grants to many deserving musicians and program organizers.

## Tell us more about your list of on-line resources for bluegrass musicians.

The IBMA webpage has many links to help the community get more information on the CARES Act, COVID-19, healthcare organizations, resources for traveling, emergency aid resources, existing revenue streams, and alternative revenue streams, plus additional articles and resources.

# Eddie Huffman Interview

## **Has the streaming calendar been well received as a useful tool for the bluegrass community?**

The online Concert Calendar had on-line concerts, workshops, and webinars. However, IBMA is no longer updating this calendar. The "Past Events" that are listed might inspire others. Artists are now promoting their own events, through various means. Please remember they're providing these online concerts, workshops and webinars because their live events (and income from them) have been cancelled. Please consider donating to the artists and organizations.

## **What were some highlights of the January 2021 IBMA Awards Show?**

The 31st Annual IBMA Bluegrass Music Awards presented by Count On Me NC was aired on Circle TV and affiliated platforms on January 18, 2021. Taped at the Ryman Auditorium with additional performances and presentations from across the U.S., the show originally aired during IBMA Virtual World of Bluegrass. The first-ever virtual format was met with critical acclaim and has been viewed by a record number of bluegrass fans. The show highlighted accomplishments of beloved bluegrass legends and trailblazers, and also served as another way for music fans to engage with and enjoy an unforgettable night of music from the comfort of their own homes.

## **Sounds like a great partnership with Circle TV?**

Yes, in conjunction with the Awards Show, Circle TV hosted a night of bluegrass programming including two Grand Ole Opry shows with Ricky Skaggs and Dailey & Vincent and also Old Crow Medicine Show, Billy Strings, and Molly Tuttle, as well as an episode of Opry Docs on Bill Monroe.

## **I understand that Paul Schiminger retired on May 31.**

Yes, IBMA Board Chair Ben Surratt assembled a search committee and engaged an

executive search firm to assist in finding a new Executive Director. When Paul was selected as IBMA's Executive Director in 2015, the organization was in a time of transition. He hit the ground running, and brought much-needed systemic change to many areas. The organization has flourished under Paul's leadership. He's been a steady hand at the helm. His commitment to our music is strong. IBMA will benefit from his expertise in many ways in the years to come. Though Paul will be retiring from our organization, I don't expect to see him disappear from bluegrass. We thank him the tremendous work he's done for IBMA, the IBMA Trust Fund, and the IBMA Foundation.

## **What are the key items he's most proud of during his nearly six-year tenure as IBMA's executive director?**

His team's accomplishments included converting the IBMA to a 501(c)(3) organization. They created greater awareness for IBMA's Trust Fund and Foundation for potential recipients and donors. They increased awareness of, and programming for, greater diversity and inclusion in bluegrass music. They worked with the city of Raleigh, North Carolina to improve and build on IBMA World of Bluegrass. The team improved IBMA's visibility and communication through greater online reach, a new website, new e-newsletter, new membership portal, and more cohesive branding for all events during IBMA World of Bluegrass. They quickly adapted to COVID-19 by creating an online resource page and streaming calendar for the bluegrass community, mobilized the IBMA Trust Fund to help those in need during the crisis, and moved the full IBMA World of Bluegrass event onto a virtual platform for the first time.

## **I understand that Pat Morris has been selected as IBMA's new Executive Director.**

Yes, Pat started May 24 and will be based at the IBMA office in Nashville. He brings two decades of association, international, and finance leadership experience to

the position. He served as CEO of ACA International, President & CEO of the Association for Corporate Growth, and the Executive Director of the Washington DC-based InterNational Committee for Information Technology Standards. He's a former Marine officer, worked in the U.S. Senate, and was selected for the prestigious Presidential Management Fellowship Program. Morris holds a B.S. degree from Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Va. and an M.P.A. from the University of Kentucky. Growing up in Virginia, Pat became a lifelong fan of bluegrass while working at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg and watching the daily performances of the Wahoo Revue, Jim Lauderdale, and the late Gene Wooten. That inspired him to learn the guitar, and his love of bluegrass followed him around the globe as he pursued his career as an association executive.

## **What are some of IBMA's goals and plans for the next 5 years?**

IBMA plans to return to Raleigh, NC for IBMA World of Bluegrass Sept. 28-Oct. 2, 2021. The new Executive Director and team will face challenges, but we're confident they'll build upon the IBMA's successes and strengthen and move the association forward for even greater future success.

*Joe Ross, from Roseburg, Oregon, picks mandolin with the Umpqua Valley Bluegrass Band. He can be reached at rossjoe@hotmail.com.*



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# Racism and Old Time Music

Report by Connie Wold on a Panel Presentation  
Portland Old-Time Music Gathering, January 18, 2021

*I'd love to share some highlights and take-aways from a panel presentation on "Racism and Old Time Music" given by Tatiana Hargreaves and Jake Blount at the 2021 Portland Old Time Music Gathering. Any error/omissions are my own, as I am working from my event notes.*

I've been learning, playing, and singing bluegrass and old-time music for four years. It's hard to express how much I love doing this, in this generous community that I have found. I've been struggling to reconcile my love of this music, and its origins in colonialism, conquest and chattel slavery, with my determination to work alongside others to eliminate, rather than perpetuate, racism. Born and raised in Oregon, I have also been deepening my understanding of our history of genocide and white supremacy, and its operative legal tools, such as the black exclusion laws during our Provisional and Territorial periods, our racist state constitution of 1857, and our 1862 law prohibiting mixed marriages, which also created a regressive tax for black, Hawaiian and "Mulatto" people which, if and when unpaid, was a mechanism for the state to press the people subject to it into service, maintaining state roads for 50 cents per day. There were also the Federal 1790 Naturalization Act, restricting citizenship to "any alien, being a free white person"; the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, prohibiting immigration of Chinese laborers; and the Page Act of 1875, banning Chinese women from immigrating to the US, and so many more. I have found the Oregon Historical Society's Winter 2019, Special Edition, "White Supremacy & Resistance," to be a great starting point for learning and reckoning with this history, and the racism, bias, inequities and "othering" which persist in Oregon today. Attending Tatiana and Jake's presentation was a fantastic step on my journey.

Tatiana and Jake met studying ethnomusicology in college. Tatiana grew up playing Texas-style fiddle, now plays Appalachian fiddle, and has an interest in old-time music. She noted that, as a "white Jewish kid" from Corvallis, she became concerned about appropriation. Jake described himself as having a "reverse origin" story: Being black from birth, then realizing his connection to old-time music later. He has

been playing this music for four years.

Jake noted that the story begins on slave ships, not in the Continental United States; it involves the interface between enslaved peoples and European immigrants, but not

**African peoples had histories of playing fiddles, or gourd banjos. Once living on their new continent, black people started playing the fiddle right away.**

as commonly thought. Captured Africans were forced to dance during the middle passage, on ships, so that they wouldn't either die or jump off. This music originates in a mix of African and European dances and instruments. People were being taken from a variety of African areas, so there are many layers of first cultural contacts. Folks were bought and sold, based on their expertise, such as cattle herding, or rice farming, or based on European-heritage peoples' biases about African peoples' intellectual or physical abilities. For example, Ibo (Igbo) folks were viewed as "too large" and thus kept from doing serving work in the houses of white owners; Fulani people, who had Islamic heritage, were believed to be "more intelligent" and thus were often put to work in the owners' homes. Certain African peoples had histories of playing fiddles, or gourd banjos. Once living on their new continent, black people started

playing the fiddle right away.

Jake recommended a seminal book from 1977, "Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War," by Dena J. Epstein. Tatiana recommended a collection of scholars' essays since then, "Banjo Roots and Branches" (2018) edited by Robert B. Winans. [Author's note: The panelists mentioned that Rhiannon Giddens has researched the origins of the fiddle as an Arabic and then a Southern European instrument; my recent internet search found mention of the three-stringed rebec (Central/West Asia, 10th century CE, which was played under the chin); the rabab, a two-stringed upright instrument associated with the Muslim conquest in Spain; and many other "bowed lutes" from North to West Africa, dating to the pre-Islamic period. From my perusal of "Banjo Roots and Branches": The banjo's story starts in Mesopotamia, 4,000 years ago, arriving in West Africa in the 9th century CE. According to two of these scholars, the banjo shares design elements and playing techniques with about 80 "plucked spine lutes." Other scholars describe how the gourd banjo further evolved via the transatlantic slave trade in the Caribbean, to a flat, fretless fingerboard, with wooden tuning pegs, and a different attachment between the neck and the gourd body. Another author believes these features may have been created in Africa by Luso-Africans, who are of mixed Portuguese and African ancestry.]

Tatiana described the banjo or banza being played in 1678 in Martinique. It was first played on this continent in the Chesapeake Bay region. Jake mentioned the area as having a mix of African, European, and Indigenous enslaved peoples. [Author's note: This is the area where in 1619, Dutch traders first brought African people to this continent. Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement, mainly centered on agriculture; tobacco planters employed English emigrants through indentured servitude, and African people, some initially also



# Racism and Old Time Music

*through indenture, but ultimately through chattel slavery.*] Editor Winans reviewed over 12,000 runaway slave posters from the 18th century, finding references to 761 black musicians, over 88% of whom played the violin or fiddle. About 8% were described as playing the banjo. Black string bands were common throughout the slavery period and beyond.

To understand how old-time music crossed over into white culture, Jake recommended a 2013 book by Eric Lott: "Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy & the American Working Class During Slavery." He noted that as black folks moved out of rural areas and into cities, the electric guitar became dominant; however, many first-generation blues guitar players learned the banjo from their grandparents. As black churches became the organizing place for the black community, playing the banjo and fiddle became suppressed, as it was felt that these instruments were "sinful." The exception to this was in New Orleans, where the banjo was played in church, because the guitar wasn't loud enough. "Love & Theft" recounts how old-time music crossed over into white culture through blackface minstrelsy, which started during slavery times in the urban North, in the 1830's; it involved white people putting water or petroleum jelly and burnt cork on their skin, and performing 3-part shows with skits, dances and music, acting out racist caricatures of black people, performed for white audiences. Jake said that blackface minstrelsy became a global phenomenon on the level of rock 'n' roll. There were lots of touring companies, including into Europe, and many of the performers were influenced by anti-abolitionists. It was the largest-scale first dissemination of old-time music to white communities.

Tatiana noted that the content and repertoire of blackface minstrelsy is still common today within old-time music. In response to a question from the audience about what to do about this, she said that we should ask ourselves, "What are we

saying when we play this tune?" Some tunes should be left behind. Some songs depict violence against black bodies, such as Turkey in the Straw, Angeline Baker and I've Been Working on the Railroad. Tatiana said that the responsibility of white people is that what they teach, and what they play, should be intentional.

Next Jake and Tatiana talked about the

**As black churches became the organizing place for the black community, playing the banjo and fiddle became suppressed, as it was felt that these instruments were "sinful."**

recording industry, which, with the advent of radio and profit, became the next big expansion of old-time music. Many of the early folklorists had a white supremacist agenda; they sought to portray a so-called Anglo-Saxon tradition only. They excluded and racially stereotyped music into being either black or white. If played by white musicians, it was called "hillbilly music." If it was from the black community, it was called "race music," and made into "race records." The industry did this to market separately to black and white audiences, because the white men in charge of the industry were screening musicians' appearances and sound, to enforce their racist stereotypes. There were early bands with black fiddlers along with white musicians; more than one of these, although recorded with

a black fiddler, showed a picture in its promotional materials of a "random white dude," rather than the black musician on the recording. Therefore, black musicians were excluded from white records, and when on these records, they were erased. As a result, the genres became more and more separated and contained within these product lines. This is how the public was trained. Due to the early folklorists' notions of "purity" and "white racial preservation," early music festivals, while purporting to "preserve traditional music from commercial influence," were in fact segregating and curating the music racially, based on their ideas. Later, in the 1930s and 1940s, Alan Lomax and others were looking for "pure" genres as well. In reality, blues and string band repertoires coexisted as related genres. Therefore, folklorists either selected, or perhaps black string band musicians only performed for them, what the musicians thought these folklore recorders wanted to hear.

Jake mentioned that Alan Lomax made field recordings of black musicians Murphy Gribble, John Lusk and Albert York, who played banjo, fiddle and guitar, respectively, playing square dances; he noted that Lomax didn't want to hear other music. Later folklorists recorded blues music as well, because that's what black folks were playing in their own communities. Butch Cage, a black string band musician who played with Willie B. Thomas, grew up with fife and drums, blues, and square dance music, which illustrates how arbitrary the genre labels were; in addition, not all blues and not all square dance music are the same. Jake noted that certain string band traditions were kept better within the black community. Jake suspects that black musicians were willing to play (more) music for John Wesley Work, III, than they were for a white folklorist. *[Author's note: J.W. Work, III, was an eminent black scholar, composer, choral director and musicologist.]*

Jake said not to play "Dixie" by David Decatur Emmett, as it became the anthem of the Southern Confederacy. He highly

# Racism and Old Time Music

recommended a film called “Rumble: How Indians Rocked the World,” to learn of the native roots of American popular music. Jake cautioned us to be aware of stereotypes such as “rhythm is African” and “melody is European,” which are untrue. He talked to elders in North Carolina who remembered a Cherokee fiddler named Manco Sneed; he also mentioned the Metis people, who played what Jake described as an Indian version of string music. [Author’s note: *The Metis people are descendants of marriages of Woodland Cree, Ojibway, Sauleaux, Mi’kmaq and Menominee, with French Canadian and/or British settlers.*] Jake cautioned against stereotyping drumming as being solely native; the reality is that lots of drumming happened in lots of places; because listeners thought they heard indigenous rhythms, that’s how it was labeled. In response to a question about the British Isles and its connection to this music, Jake said that it is a myth that old-time music grew from European songs with black rhythms and instruments. He noted that he didn’t talk about the British Isles during this panel, because he was discussing the period 1-2 centuries earlier, before the Scots and Irish arrived. When Tatiana was asked about the influence of Arabian and Portuguese slavers, she deferred to a book, “Cuba and Its Music,” by Ned Sublette.

When asked how to learn a song’s roots, Tatiana said to look at Google and learn from those who know. In terms of what to do with that knowledge, she said to just stop playing it. There are lots of good tunes

out there. Mistakes will be made. Jake agreed: “Jingle Bells” was a minstrel tune. He treats it like an infectious agent: isolate it, don’t spread it. Study it if you must, but don’t play it. He gave another example of understanding the context and impact of what you play: If you play the tune “Whistling Rufus” in a bar in the South, you are signaling to the black people in the audience that they had better get out right away, or you’re gonna kick their ass. He noted that blackface minstrelsy continued into the 1970s. Jake urged us to think about the broader impact of our actions: Old-time music came directly from racism, so to hew to the “tradition” is racist. It was a box built to keep black people out. For example, he said try adding drums to a jam, and you will be told it’s “too ethnic”; as for “don’t bring spoons to a bluegrass jam,” Jake said that spoons came from black jug band music. Tatiana added that romanticizing older black music, and “shit-talking” modern black music like hip-hop, is also a form of racism.

Tatiana posted links for the attendees to some of the scholarship that she and Jake discussed. Jake noted that it is important to be mindful of your positionality relative to the tune or the song. For example, because “Rock, Salt and Nails” is a man singing a song that’s all about violence against women, since that song amplifies violence against women, he will never play it. Tatiana urged us to look beyond the music itself, and also look at current events in the communities and the neighborhoods.

I am so glad and grateful that I attended Tatiana and Jake’s panel. Again, as I am relying on my notes (with additional research, as noted parenthetically above) I am no longer “waiting” to learn more about old-time and bluegrass music, and its roots in our nation’s earliest settler-colonizer period, up through the Civil War, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, the exodus to the cities, etc. I am excited to relate to it more truly, and not as a nostalgic fantasy. I am hopeful to progress from here, tune by tune, and song by song, so that my personal and public engagement with this music will be a force for connection and liberation, rather than exploitation, separation, exclusion or domination.

*Connie Wold is the Volunteer Coordinator for the Oregon Bluegrass Association.*

*The presentation on which this article is based is available, as of June 2021, on YouTube at*

*<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AuNW2bt9zA>, titled “Jake Blount and Tatiana Hargreaves:*

*An Introduction to Race and Racism in Old Time Music.”*

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*Compiled by Nancy Christie*

Oregon and Washington bluegrass fans have been finding ways to gather safely for jamming. All times are Pacific (U.S. west coast). Confirm before you go! Venues follow state COVID-19 guidelines.

Jam organizers in Oregon/SW Washington: Update your jam information for Oct-Nov-Dec 2021 to [expressnews@oregonbluegrass.org](mailto:expressnews@oregonbluegrass.org).

**Sundays, Portland, Oregon:** 2:00-5:00 p.m., Portland Sunday Afternoon bluegrass jam, outdoors, weather permitting. Wilshire Park, NE 33rd and Skidmore, Portland, Oregon. Murray Nunn, [munn7515@gmail.com](mailto:munn7515@gmail.com).

**Sundays (3<sup>rd</sup>), Roseburg, Oregon:** 1:00-4:30 p.m., Sutherlin Senior Center, 202 E. Central Ave., Sutherlin, OR 97479. All-levels bluegrass jam. Liz Crain, [lizcrain42@gmail.com](mailto:lizcrain42@gmail.com), 541-679-0553.

**Tuesdays, Vancouver, Washington:** 6:00 p.m., Intermediate-advanced acoustic bluegrass jam. Doomsday Brewing Safe House, 1919 Main St., Vancouver. Updates at Facebook group: *Vancouver Washington Area Bluegrass Jam*.

**Wednesdays, Beaverton, Oregon (formerly Round Table Pizza Jam):** 6:00 p.m., Garages Satellite Pub jam, 4810 SW Western (outdoors, white tent behind Bi-mart), Beaverton, Oregon. Jane Gallagher, [janeromfo5@gmail.com](mailto:janeromfo5@gmail.com). *The Garages requires vaccination identification at the door for those who want to be mask-free. Those without identification will be required to wear masks and it will be strictly enforced. This is in alignment with State of Oregon and Washington County advisories.*

**Thursdays (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>), Medford, Oregon** 7:00-9:00 p.m., Wild River Pizza & Brewery, 2684 North Pacific Hwy, Medford. John Nice (805) 748-6648, [nicetunz@gmail.com](mailto:nicetunz@gmail.com)



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*Karen, Fred, Barbara and Richard  
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# OBA Supporting Performer Directory

OBA supporting memberships are \$50 per year. This includes a listing and link on the OBA website and a brief (approx 35 word) band listing in the supporting performer directory.

## **Ash Creek**

Ash Creek explores the frontiers between bluegrass, folk, and traditional country music. Gene Alger plays banjo; Larry Ullman plays bass; Tim Howell plays guitar; Clayton Knight plays mandolin and fiddle. We all share lead and harmony vocals.

**Booking@eclecticacoustica.com**  
<https://eclecticacoustica.squarespace.com/>  
**Facebook: @ashcreekbluegrass ash-creek-bluegrass**  
**Clayton 503-358-0658**

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**Pam Young**  
[pywaterfalls@yahoo.com](mailto:pywaterfalls@yahoo.com)  
[corralcreekbluegrass.com](http://corralcreekbluegrass.com)  
**For bookings please call 503-319-5672**

## **Steve Blanchard**

Steve Blanchard is well known as an acoustic flatpicker guitarist, singer and songwriter with a career spanning over four decades. His musical style includes bluegrass, cowboy/western, folk, and Americana. No matter what the style or venue, you're sure to feel Steve's love and passion for his music.

**www.SteveBlanchardMusic.com**  
**503-730-0005**  
**Steve@SteveBlanchardMusic.com**

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**Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fire-andstoneband/>**  
**Email: [victor.reuther@gmail.com](mailto:victor.reuther@gmail.com)**  
**Telephone: (707) 832-9262**

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The Jamblers play a blend of bluegrass, folk, classic rock, alt-indie and more, and jumble 'em all into our stringband style. We feature tight, bold harmonies and tons o' fun! Some call it "Americana." We call it "Music," the kind everyone enjoys.

**www.jamblers.com**  
**www.facebook.com/jamblers**  
**Gene Greer, [info@jamblers.com](mailto:info@jamblers.com)**  
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**www.phoenixrisingband.org**  
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**Patrick Connell**  
[patnellconrick@gmail.com](mailto:patnellconrick@gmail.com)

## **Lost Creek Bluegrass Band**

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**Charlie Williamson**  
[charliew3@nwlink.com](mailto:charliew3@nwlink.com)

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The Rogue Bluegrass Band is: Paul Hirschmann, guitar, dobro and vocals; Ed Hersherberger, banjo and vocals; Deb Smith-Hirschmann, bass and vocals; and Don Tolan, mandolin and vocals. An entertaining four-piece acoustic bluegrass group, featuring harmony vocals and foot-stomping fiddle tunes.

### ***Rogue Bluegrass Band***

Contact Don at

[RogueBluegrassBand@yahoo.com](mailto:RogueBluegrassBand@yahoo.com)

## ***Rowdy Mountain***

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971-347-6050

[rowdymountain@gmail.com](mailto:rowdymountain@gmail.com)

## ***Scratchdog Stringband***

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Steve Eggers

[eggers-stephen@gmail.com](mailto:eggers-stephen@gmail.com)

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[www.SlipshodMusic.net](http://www.SlipshodMusic.net)

Steve Blanchard, 503-730-0005

[Steve@SteveBlanchardMusic.com](mailto:Steve@SteveBlanchardMusic.com)

Matt Snook, 541-805-5133

[BohemianBanjo@gmail.com](mailto:BohemianBanjo@gmail.com)

## ***Sunfish Duo***

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Daniel Fish

[djoefish@gmail.com](mailto:djoefish@gmail.com)

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Timothy Jenkins

[tjenkins@uoregon.edu](mailto:tjenkins@uoregon.edu)

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[www.truenorthband.com](http://www.truenorthband.com)

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Pat Connell

[whistlinrufus@comcast.net](mailto:whistlinrufus@comcast.net)

971-207-5933

# Whippersnapper

By Kaden Hurst

Mandolin Tab

4/4

A

4

D D# E A E

1. A

9

A D D# A

2.

14

D D# E A

1. A 2. A

Kaden Hurst currently works as a music teacher and performer based out of Portland, Oregon. He is a co-director of Taborgrass and the mandolinist in Never Come Down bluegrass band. His interests include the intermingling of folk and art musics, juggling, and the unreasonably compelling nature of fiddle tunes.

You can hear “Whippersnapper” on the new recording by Never Come Down, “Better Late Than Never.”

<https://kadenhurst.com/about/>

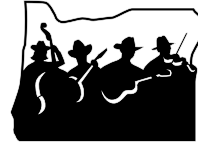
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