

Memphis Dulcimer & Folk Gathering 2014 Class Descriptions

Except new player level, please be prepared to have a tuner and a capo.

Mountain Dulcimer Lee Cagle - Room 117

Friday - Sessions I and II - New Players I and II will focus on the basic techniques involved in playing, including tuning, strumming patterns and reading tablature. No previous musical experience is necessary. Loaner instruments are available.

Friday - Sessions III - Beginner & up - New Tunes for New Players — It is always fun to play a new tune and to get beyond Twinkle, Twinkle. We will use this time to learn one or two more tunes as time allows.

Friday - Session IV - INT - Songs in Minor Keys - We will learn to play some songs in a minor key and will explore re-tuning your melody string to achieve that minor sound that so many of us are drawn to.

Saturday - Session I - BEG/INT - Playing in DAA - We will look at how playing in one of the original dulcimer tunings can be rewarding, easy and fun. Use variety in your playing and learn some new songs at the same time.

Saturday - Session III - ALL - JAM SURVIVAL with Mike Anderson ROOM 116 - Learn tips from some of the best players on how to get by in a jam.

Mike Anderson - Room 116

Friday - Sessions I - INT - Making it Smooth - Learn to make your playing smooth and graceful.

Friday - Session II - BEG/INT - Clawhammer Dulcimer - This will be exploration of "frailing" the dulcimer. Frailing is a style of strumming usually associated with banjo. On the dulcimer it is an alternative way of pickless strumming. A sense of humor and a good frustration level are encouraged.

Friday - Sessions III - ADV - Bass and Middle String Walks - Like those nifty bass walks guitar players do? Here's a chance to do the same on the mountain dulcimer.

Friday - Sessions IV - ALL - Pocket Instruments - Bones, noseflute, jawharps, whangers, juicers, cow horns, conch horns, didgeridoos, and other stuff. Learn how to play and make this stuff! Learn how to play kazoo, shaker egg, noseflute, jawharp, and make a strong attempt at the bones. Really. Amaze and astound your friends with your new-found skills. This workshop is a lot of fun and will include a bunch of other unique and weird instruments. As Lois says, "Skills just get in they way in this workshop." Skill level: general nuts

Saturday - Session I - INT - Learn 3 songs: Ash Grove, Squirrel Heads and Gravy, Mairi's Wedding

Saturday - Session II - ALL - Spice it up! Tips on how to spice up a tune using hammer-ons, pull-offs, bass walks, chording, and general cheap tricks.

Saturday - Session III - ALL - JAM SURVIVAL with Lee Cagle - Learn tips from some of the best players on how to get by in a jam.

Thomasina Levy - Room 102

Friday - Session I – INT. – Understanding the Capo - Learn how to play the same song in different keys. Some basic music theory will be discussed. Tune to DAd and bring a capo.

Friday - Session II – INT/ADV – Playing a Four String Dulcimer - In this workshop, students will be introduced to playing and chording a four equidistant-stringed mountain dulcimer. Come tuned to DAdd and bring a capo.

Friday - Session III - BEG/INT - Beginning Finger Picking. Put down that pick and let your fingers do the walking. Some basic finger placement and easy beginner finger picking songs will be introduced. Come tuned to DAd.

Friday - Session IV – INT/ADV – Music Improvisation. This is a FUN workshop! Throw away the tab and bring your instrument for an inspiring session of music making in a supportive atmosphere. Improvisation is a moment to moment experience which allows a musician to take a leap from the familiar into the unknown. Improvisational techniques developed by the Music for People curriculum will allow students to explore their own musical possibilities. All instruments and voices welcomed.

Saturday -Session I - BEG/INT - Left Hand Embellishments - Left hand embellishments will help you to “dress up” your music once you are familiar with the basics of playing the mountain dulcimer. Once you get some of these techniques under your belt (or should we say “under your left finger tips”?) you can even make a simple song like Bile Them Cabbage Down sound exciting. Techniques we will explore are: Hammering-On, Pulling-Off, Vibrato, Slides, Harmonics.

Saturday - Session II - INT/ADV. – The Chromatic Dulcimer ~ 1-3-5 Tuning - Expand your horizons by learning a new tuning. This chromatic tuning will allow you to play traditional blues songs and non-traditional dulcimer tunes from the '30s and '40s. Come tuned to DF#A.

Saturday - Session IV - INT - Singing with the Mountain Dulcimer - If you can walk and chew gum at the same time then you can play the mountain dulcimer and sing with it too. In this workshop, we will sing some songs together, discuss some relaxation techniques to get the best out of your playing and singing, talk about chords, finding the right key and learn some new songs. This is for 3 or 4 stringed dulcimers. Come tuned to DAd or DAdd.

Hammered Dulcimer Rick Thum – Room 118

Friday - Session I and Session II - Beginning Hammered Dulcimer - Teaching the basics. Introduction into music theory, note layout, and how they relate to each other on the dulcimer. We will learn to play a tune and how to do simple embellishments. Also explaining proper stick grip, timing, and rhythm and how these can change a tune.

Friday - Session III - ALL - Embellishments - We can sample simple embellishments all the way up to more complicated embellishments, utilizing various scales and rhythms. Rhythms as well as notes form various styles of embellishments. One embellishment builds on another. We will learn when, where, and how to use them.

Friday - Session IV – BEG/INT – Hammer Techniques - Some Basic Rolls and Tips - There are many styles of Hammers and many styles of holding them. Some have proven better than others. What works, and why. Some drills to better your hammer control. Some rolls to better your playing technique.

Saturday- Session I - INT/ADV - Chord Theory and Substitutions - Learn why certain chords are used in a song. The simple formula to find them. Learn what chords can be replaced with other chords and how to find these replacement chords. I will show you a simple way to find these chords on your dulcimer. Students should know how to play chords.

Saturday - Session II – INT - Chording and Rhythm Playing - Learn how to form the chords on a dulcimer. Learn to know what chords to play and when to play them. How to find major and minor chords and how they relate to the key being played. We will learn a tune and how to back it up with chords. We will also explore the relationship of chords to embellishments.

Saturday Session III - INT - Ensemble Playing - We will explore what techniques are needed to play effectively in an ensemble. How to back up the other players in a way that makes you all look good. How to set and follow tempo. How to hear trade offs of leads, signals used on stage(communicating with the others). Harmonies and playing off of each other. Vocals, set design, and any other topic about playing out in a band.

Jess Dickinson - Room 115

Friday - Sessions I & II - INT - FILL IN THE BLANKS. In this class, we will cover a few of my favorite tips, tricks, and secrets, for playing interesting tunes. Then, we will cover all of the students' questions about anything related to hammered dulcimer. Every student should come with at least one "how do you do that" question. We will concentrate on learning to play "I'll Fly Away."

Friday - Session III - INT - IRISH RUNS AND CAPS - In this class, we will learn different and interesting ways to play the last measure of lines, A-parts, B-parts, and tunes, to give them that "Irish" or "fiddle" sound. We will concentrate on "Whiskey Before Breakfast," "Arkansas Traveler," and "Mississippi Sawyer."

Friday - Session IV - BEG - LET'S PLAY SOME TUNES! In this class, beginner students will learn to play simple versions of "Southwind" and "Soldier's Joy."

Saturday - Session I - BEG - EASY PEASY BASIC SKILLS. Absolute beginner students will learn hammered dulcimer language (bridges, courses, marked courses, the valley, A part, B part, etc.) and the very basic skills that are necessary to quickly move to the next level of play. Includes proper hammer grip, easy tuning and set-up, basic hammering techniques, playing simple vamps, and the anatomy of the hammered dulcimer. Students will learn to play the A part of "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee."

Saturday - Session II - BEG - SIMPLE BOXES AND ARPEGGIOS - Students will learn to play major and minor box chords and diamond cords, and to use these box chords to play simple arpeggio patterns for tunes in 3/4 time and 4/4 time. Students will see how these patterns work in tunes like "Southwind" (3/4 time) and "Soldier's Joy" (4/4 time).

Saturday - Session III - ALL - Jam tips for hammered dulcimer with Agene.

Agene Parsons - Room 105

Friday - Sessions I & II - ADV - Chromatically Speaking - Learn how to find and use your chromatic notes in tunes. We will find patterns of how the chromatic notes can be found on your dulcimer. Then we will learn to play excerpts from several different tunes. Following this we will play those same excerpts in different keys while learning how changing keys influences the location of the chromatic patterns.

Friday - Session III - BEG/INT - Finding Third Harmonies - This class will include learning the patterns for harmonies "in the box" for several keys, and being able to easily apply the harmonies to some simple tunes. We will learn to move these tunes from one key to another. We will then explore several ways to create variations in using these same harmonies to embellish the tune.

Friday - Session IV - INT/ADV - Playing Bluegrass - Add a Bluegrass tune to your repertoire as we learn "TN Blues". Also learn some characteristics of playing in Bluegrass jams as opposed to Old Time jams. Learn to listen for bluegrass "licks" by other instruments, such as fiddle and mandolin, in recorded tunes to get ideas for applying those licks to the HD.

Saturday - Session I - INT - Ragtime - Add a ragtime tune to your repertoire and make your rhythm swing. Ragtime tunes require some reaching for notes as you swing through the music. In this class we will learn "Bill Bailey".

Saturday - Session II - INT/ADV - Waltz in A - In this class we'll learn to play the beautiful "Rose of Sharon Waltz" in the key of A. This waltz is a favorite among fiddlers. Most of this tune in the upper octave will be played on the left side of the treble bridge. The lower octave moves to the right side of the treble bridge and the bass bridge. There are several "accidentals" in this tune, so you will use almost your whole dulcimer to play both octaves. Enjoy the challenges!

Saturday - Session III - Jam tips for hammered dulcimer with Jess in Room 115.

Vendor Area

Saturday - Session I - Autoharp with KEVAN BARLEY - all levels

Saturday - Session II - Bohdran with DOUG FELT - all levels

If you are interested in trying one of the variety classes but do not have an instrument, please let us know and we will try to find one for you to borrow during the class.