

## Level I - New Player/Beginner Skills with Carol Crocker

Hooray! You have chosen to begin the exciting journey of learning how to play the mountain dulcimer. During our week at Dulcimer U you will be introduced to and become familiar with basic skills for a new or beginner player. Goals for the week are for you to be able to play several simple and familiar dulcimer tunes; and to come away with basic mountain dulcimer playing skills that will allow you continue to play, expand on what you have learned, and add to your repertoire for the mountain dulcimer.

Some topics will include:

- How to hold, tune, and care for your dulcimer
- Basic strumming techniques
- Becoming familiar with basic music reading skills including note values and time signatures
- How to read dulcimer tab and play by ear
- Explore playing basic chords that will help when playing with others (or even in a jam!)
- Explore some left-hand fingering techniques
- Learning about other tunings, DAA, DAC, and DGD
- Come enjoy learning to play the mountain dulcimer in a relaxed and encouraging environment...enjoy the music and enjoy the fellowship with other dulcimer players!
- Contact Carol Crocker [c.crocker0705@gmail.com](mailto:c.crocker0705@gmail.com) if you have any questions regarding this class.

## Level II - Advancing Beginner Skills with Janita Baker

This course is designed for players who have a little bit of experience with the dulcimer and know how to play a few songs but wish to gain more knowledge and a better foundation in playing techniques in order to become a more confident player and to add to their repertoire. If you have only been playing for a short time, or used to play but haven't touched the dulcimer for a few years, we will start by briefly covering the basics

of tuning, left and right-hand techniques for fretting and strumming and caring for your dulcimer.

From there the class will cover the following skills:

- Playing melody and chords for a wide variety of songs including traditional, folk, Celtic and classical melodies
- Playing simple harmonies
- Fingerpicking basics
- Flatpicking basics
- Understanding rhythm and timing and why it matters
- Understanding what makes a chord and how to find alternate chords and fingering positions
- How to play well with others in a dulcimer jam
- Playing by ear
- Playing in a variety of different tunings and keys
- Understanding the modes (it's really simple), modal tunings and your dulcimer's fretboard

The class will work at a pace that is comfortable and encouraging for all the participants; we will enjoy and experience lots of laughter and lots of music. The primary focus of the class is to provide everyone with the techniques and knowledge needed to confidently advance to the next skill level.

If you have questions or need more information about this workshop feel free to email Janita at [2bluelion@gmail.com](mailto:2bluelion@gmail.com).

### **Level III – Lower Intermediate Skills – Jeff Furman**

“Enhancing Your Skills to Improve the Quality Playing of Your Playing” or, “You Can’t Build a House Without a Solid Foundation!” could be the title of this morning class series. You basically know how to play the mountain dulcimer. But, if you want to improve the quality of your playing, you need to make sure your basic skills and techniques are solid. This class will take the time needed to help you understand how

and why to perform these skills, and how to practice them so they become the solid foundation of your playing. Jeff has drawn from his highly-acclaimed classes to put together a week full of concepts, techniques, exercises, and repertoire to help you improve the quality of music you play.

Topics covered during this class will include:

- Right-hand skills (including improving your strum and rhythm; improving the accuracy and clarity of your flatpicking; and an introduction to fingerpicking)
- Left-hand skills (including understanding how to improve your fingering for clear notes; smooth transitions; better sustain to connect notes; improving the accuracy and clarity of hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slides; and improving your familiarity with chords)
- Improving your hearing and listening (we will explore how to play more using your ears and not just your eyes; this will open up a whole new world as you begin to learn how to move beyond playing just frets numbers and notes, so you can play music!)
- And more as time allows!

Bring a capo to all sessions of this class just in case!

Please register early since space is limited and Jeff's classes are always well-attended.

If you have further questions about this class, feel free to contact Jeff at [dlcmr@yahoo.com](mailto:dlcmr@yahoo.com).

## **Level IV Upper Intermediate Skills – Linda Brockinton**

Linda writes: You will need to know basic chords, the names of notes on the dulcimer, how to retune, have an open mind and a desire to advance to the next level of playing to enroll in this class. Please bring a capo, a pick, pencil and highlighters with you to class.

This is the tool box class. It is designed to give you the tools you need to be able to play whatever you want. We will be using tab throughout the week but you will also be learning how to make your own arrangements. To do that, you have to know what is available to you. There are many more ways to play your tabs than just what's printed on the paper.

Knowledge is power... So I hope you will choose to step out of your comfort zone and be challenged...

Some of the things we will be learning are...

- How to write your own music
- How to arrange that song you picked out
- Knowing what chords you need and where to find them
- How to make chord substitutions that work for you
- How to improve performance playing
- Different styles of playing including strumming, flat picking and finger picking
- How to study the music you want to play so you can play it like the composer wanted.
- Tricks and short cuts for smooth, clean playing
- Transposing a song you want to play in a different key to a key you want to play it in
- Timings, counting, and tunings

I hope to see you in my class this summer. Remember, these classes are designed for learning. if you always stay in your comfort zone, you will never move to the next level. So, spend the next few months repeating to yourself

" I can do whatever I put my mind to". That's half the battle.

My job is to pass on the knowledge I have learned over the years, to explain how and why I do things. Yours is not to be perfectly proficient when you leave campus but only to listen, understand and take home what info interests you to work on over the next year. I promise it will be fun. See you soon!

Linda Brockinton.

Contact Linda at [linda.brockinton@att.net](mailto:linda.brockinton@att.net) if you have questions about this class.

## **Level V Beyond Intermediate Skills with Aaron O'Rourke**

Please read carefully to determine if this class is right for you.

At Level V, you've already been introduced to techniques like hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides, and three finger chords. While there is always room for the refinement of these techniques, the more advanced students tend to face a different challenge – How do you keep getting better when you feel you've hit a plateau and you're stuck there?

This class will give you all the tools you need to get “unstuck” and take your dulcimer playing to the next level.

First, we need to make sure we're physically and mentally ready to play our best. Every day will start with a light warm-up/mini-practice session to get our hands and minds ready to play music.

Next, we'll be exploring licks, improvisation, and methods for playing “off the cuff” with confidence. Every day, you will learn a new way to get away from the tab and insert your own musical ideas with spontaneity. By the end of the week, you will have an understanding of how to improvise a solo and how you can play songs you already know with some exciting twists.

We will conclude each day with a new piece of music. Some of these arrangements will be a fun challenge while reinforcing specific techniques. Others will be quite simple to start with and we'll walk through ways to embellish and arrange the music with your own personal creative stamp.

If you have any questions about this class, feel free to contact Aaron at [dulcimerlessons@gmail.com](mailto:dulcimerlessons@gmail.com).

## **Dulcimer Building – Bob Magowan**

All skill levels welcome – no dulcimer playing skills necessary

One of the most sought after luthiers in the dulcimer community, Bob Magowan comes to Dulcimer U each year from Memphis, Tennessee to teach the dulcimer building class. In his course, participants will build a McSpadden Sweet Song dulcimer. You can do this even if you have never done any woodworking! Bob will guide you through each step of the process and will provide all the forms, tools and materials needed to construct the dulcimer.

This is an excellent opportunity for spouses of mountain dulcimer players or anyone interested in learning the mountain dulcimer construction process. In addition, students will receive the satisfaction from playing an instrument that they personally built. You will end up with a well designed, easy-to-play, great sounding instrument that will give you years of satisfaction.

If time permits Bob will teach the basics of playing the dulcimer for those who have never played. This course will require both the morning and afternoon sessions each day to complete the dulcimer. Due to space limitations and sharing of tools, the class will be limited to the first ten students to enroll. In addition to the class tuition and other expenses, each student will pay a \$200 fee to cover the cost of materials, supplies, tool usage and the forms on which to build the dulcimer. This fee will be paid to the instructor on the first day of class.

If you have any questions regarding this course, Bob can be contacted at [magowandulcimers@comcast.net](mailto:magowandulcimers@comcast.net).

## **Caregiving and Comfort using the Mountain Dulcimer – An Introduction: Playing In Healthcare and Other Special Settings – Lorinda Jones**

Suitable for Skill Level III & Up

Prerequisites for this class include:

An audition recording, audio or video, to be submitted to the instructor in advance of registration. Submissions can be in the form of MP3 audio files, MP4, AVI or MOV video formats and delivered by way of e-mail attachment or link to YouTube, Vimeo, etc. The recording should demonstrate your ability to play on an acceptable level in order to participate in the class. Please contact the instructor if you have any questions about the class or audition requirements. [lorinda@lorindajones.com](mailto:lorinda@lorindajones.com).

This class is all about finding your “dulcimer muse” in a way that serves others through the sharing of your music. Do you enjoy playing your dulcimer for others? Do the varied certification and degree programs in this field of study prevent you from finding a comfortable place to share your dulcimer? Do you want to discover how YOU can use your dulcimer skills in your community in an appropriate way that may benefit others? If so, this is the course for YOU!

Lorinda Jones, a Board Certified, Music Therapist has designed a wonderfully crafted curriculum to help participants learn about the varied training programs currently in existence in the music and healthcare field, discuss ethics and guidelines when playing for others in a variety of settings, examine why we choose the music we play, and work on performance skills and how to improve your music performance skills. PLUS, these new ideas will be put to practice in an off-campus field trip to a nearby pre-approved healthcare facility! This week long morning course does not offer a degree or program certification, but it will serve as an opportunity to learn and decide which, if any, continued training or education in this field is right for you.

Please bring a variety of music that you currently like and feel comfortable playing for others. (A binder of music appropriate for this class will be offered and reviewed with the option to purchase from the instructor.) Other recommended items for the class and field trip are: a music stand (or dulcimer music stand) and a portable chair or stool for playing in a remote place.

Past participants from this class use their dulcimer in a variety of settings that include:

- Playing for yoga classes

- Playing as a volunteer musician at a general hospital
- Playing the dulcimer as part of the library story hour
- Teaching others to play in a senior living center and performing for other seniors
- Performing on a regular basis in a senior residential center

## **FROM PLAYER TO TEACHER: Best Practices of Mountain Dulcimer Instruction: YEAR ONE – Judy House**

Appropriate for Level IV & V skill players

\*There are three prerequisites to enrolling in this course. Two online evaluations must be passed with at least 85% mastery - one on Music Theory and the other in Tablature Reading and Writing. A recorded performance of the potential candidate playing a dulcimer piece must be submitted as well. Submissions can be in the form of MP3 audio files, MP4, AVI or MOV video formats and delivered by way of e-mail attachment or link to YouTube, Vimeo, etc. Contact Larry Conger at [dulcimerican@gmail.com](mailto:dulcimerican@gmail.com) for further information.

Let's say that you have the opportunity to introduce the mountain dulcimer to a group of beginners. Where do you start? How do you go about it? What skills do you need to include first? How do you reach the students? Do you need a plan?

The focus of this course will be on effectively teaching the rank beginner.

Some of the topics include:

- Basic teaching and learning principles
- Learning preferences and styles
- Writing behavioral objectives
- Putting together plans of instruction
- Teaching techniques appropriate for beginning students
- Selecting and/or designing developmental activities for your students
- Developing support materials for your classes
- Setting a good example of playing techniques for your students

- Promoting yourself as a teacher of the mountain dulcimer

Once you've had this class you will be more confident in leading a dulcimer group or working with your club. This class will give you the tools to help you develop your ability to teach and be more effective in communicating dulcimer skills to others in a more organized and sequential manner. Year One is the core class for those interested in teaching the mountain dulcimer. (Participants must also successfully complete Year Two in order to receive a certificate from the Continuing Education Department at Western Carolina University.)

The inclusion of required electives will ensure that you receive a basic working knowledge of music theory, tablature reading/writing, constructing a lesson plan, mastering strumming techniques, explaining rhythms, leading a jam, and developing comfort with performing. Participants will also observe master teachers in actual teaching settings.

This class will be taught by Judy House with input from some of our other experienced workshop leaders. Judy has spent over 40 years teaching numerous subjects to students of all ages and mentoring teachers as well. Geared toward Level IV players and up, this class is not about improving your playing skills, but about how to teach beginning playing skills successfully to others! Join Judy to learn how to be an effective planner and teacher of beginning dulcimer so your students become successful players who will ultimately come to know and understand your love for the mountain dulcimer as well.

Contact Judy at [judyhouse@mindspring.com](mailto:judyhouse@mindspring.com) if you have questions regarding this class. Scholarship money is available for this class to qualified applicants. Please see the scholarship page for details.

If you are interested in receiving certification for this course from Dulcimer U and Western Carolina University, please review the course requirements.

## **FROM PLAYER TO TEACHER: Best Practices of Mountain Dulcimer Instruction: YEAR TWO – Joe Collins**

Appropriate for Level IV & V skill players

**Prerequisite:** successful completion of Year One curriculum. Students must also submit a lesson plan at least two weeks prior to the start of Dulcimer U as described at the end of the Year One coursework.

The Year Two curriculum is limited to only those participants who have successfully completed the Year One course. The instructor, Joe Collins, is the originator of the idea of a teacher certification course at WCU and began the curriculum writing process which has evolved with the input of other respected dulcimer educators. The result is a unique quality course, perfect for the seasoned educator as well as the novice, and the only one of its kind in the nation.

The major addition to this year's curriculum is the creation and implementation of an original lesson plan written by the Year Two candidate. Required electives in Year Two ensure a basic working knowledge in analyzing dulcimer techniques, developing your musical ear, modal theory, and mountain dulcimer history/traditions.

Year Two candidates will also participate as peer tutors for beginning participants at Dulcimer U and help lead "Turtle" and "Inchworm" jamming sessions.

For questions about this class, contact Joe at [dulciman@bellsouth.net](mailto:dulciman@bellsouth.net).

## **Dulcimer Sampler with Elaine Conger, Larry Conger, Gary Sager and Jim Miller**

Appropriate for levels III, IV and V

This class is designed for those who may not be interested in studying basic skills or specialized topics with one instructor for the entire week. The course will offer a sampling of different subjects throughout the week, taught by the instructors listed above.

While you may not be playing your dulcimer in class every day, you will walk away with a broad knowledge of things you would not have learned in the other classes. As with

the other morning classes, you will attend this class for the entire week. You will not have the option of picking and choosing which of the following topics you want to attend.

**Care and Feeding of Your Dulcimer with Gary Sager.** Gary will address topics such as choosing a quality instrument, proper storage and maintenance, the impact of humidity on an instrument, changing strings, different types of strings available, using straps, adding frets, different dulcimer voicings, and more as time allows.

**Dulcimer History with Jim Miller.** The class will be introduced to the country's most knowledgeable dulcimer historian, Ralph Lee Smith, through a special video filmed at Dulcimer U several years ago. Jim will also talk about the dulcimer's European "cousins" and guide the class in a historical journey of the dulcimer throughout the Appalachians. The class will culminate with a field trip to the Mountain Heritage Center on campus where a private showing of their antique dulcimers has been arranged.

**Create Your Own Home Video with Larry Conger.** This class will teach you how to make your own video using smartphones, webcams and other recording devices, for use with Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo. In the process, topics such as obtaining the best sound, proper lighting, camera positioning, etc., will be demonstrated. The last half of the class will be "hands on" with students actually recording their own video. The morning will then culminate with a discussion on how to upload your video to the various online platforms.

**Ensemble Playing with Elaine Conger** will focus on techniques for playing with a group. During the class, participants will learn an ensemble piece for the purpose of recording their own CD during Jim Miller's Home Audio Recording component (see below). The ensemble arrangement will utilize various members of the dulcimer family (i.e., standard, bass, baritone, etc.). Once you have registered for this class, you will be contacted via e-mail to determine which part you are willing/able to play and a tab will be e-mailed to you in advance so that you can begin learning your part. It is preferable that you bring a dulcimer that has a built in pickup; however, any dulcimer is acceptable.

**Home Audio Recording with Jim Miller.** Participants will learn the basics of recording, overdubbing, editing, and mixing a song using a ZOOM HD16 hard drive recorder. The recording will involve the ensemble piece for the week that is being taught by Elaine Conger, with each part recorded on a separate track. Then, class participants will burn a CD of the recording to take home with them. The class will also take a look at several different recording devices available for home recording.