

Mountains of Music Homecoming celebrates regional heritage

The Crooked Road, Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, announces plans for the fifth Annual Mountains of Music Homecoming, June 7-15. The Homecoming includes Crooked Road concerts in 20 communities across Southwest Virginia and over 50 cultural events that showcase the vibrancy and appeal of all the communities in the region.

The nine-day long Homecoming represents an opportunity for residents and visitors to explore the region and become immersed in its music, culture, history, cuisine, craft and outdoor recreation experiences. As Crooked Road president Larry Yates describes it, "The Homecoming is a great chance to see Southwest Virginia when everyone puts their finery on display for people to enjoy."

For the fifth Homecoming, The Crooked Road has a stellar lineup of concerts and pre-concert activities that promise many rich experiences for attendees. Led by a bluegrass legend, Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver are featured in an all-gospel concert in a perfect setting - the historic Slate Mt. Church in Meadows of Dan. Lawson's contributions to bluegrass and gospel music are further celebrated with full-bore bluegrass concerts at Southwest Virginia Community College and the Country Cabin in Norton featuring a mini-reunion of former Quicksilver members Jamie Dailey, Russell Moore, Lou Reid and fiddler Jim Van Cleave.

The impact of Bill Monroe, the Father of Bluegrass, is presented in concerts at the Blue Ridge Music Center near Galax and the Harvester Performance Center in Rocky Mount by "The Sons of Bluegrass," a one-time gathering of former members of Bill Monroe's famed Bluegrass Boys. Banjoist Butch Robins, bassist Doug Hutchens, fiddler Billy Baker, and guitarist Tom Ewing helped create bluegrass music traveling and sharing the stage with Monroe over many years. They are joined by Mike Compton on mandolin, whose intimate knowledge of Monroe's distinctive mandolin style makes him the ideal artist to join this tribute to Bill Monroe's legacy.

The Floyd Country Store hosts a lively concert by the Stanley Brothers All Star Band featuring musicians whose music and careers have been molded by the music of Ralph and Carter Stanley. One of the most popular concerts from 2018, the group includes Ralph Stanley II, Junior Sisk, Don Rigsby, Dewey Brown, Tommy Brown, and Randall Hibbitts.

The Damascus Old Mill Inn entertains visitors with a concert by blue-

grass band Balsam Range, the reigning IBMA "Entertainer of the Year." Balsam Range has consistently been one of the most awarded groups in bluegrass since they formed in 2007.

Barely in their teens, fiddler Carson Peters and guitarist Presley Barker have already appeared on stages most artists only dream of - the Grand Ole Opry, NBC TV's Tonight Show and Little Big Shots, MerleFest, and the Country Music Association Awards show. They shared those stages with marquee artists like Ricky Skaggs and Brad Paisley. Carson and Presley each have their own groups but will perform together for the Homecoming in a rare appearance at the McGlothlin Center for the Arts at Emory & Henry College.

Executive director of The Crooked Road, Jack Hinshelwood sums up the Homecoming experience, saying "For lovers of traditional music and interesting places, the Homecoming is a great opportunity for the road trip of a lifetime."

The Crooked Road is known around the world as the nation's birthplace of authentic bluegrass and country music. The unique culture and noted musicians born in this remarkable area of the Appalachians have shaped music and art for generations. The Crooked Road's annual Homecoming lays out an ultimate American road trip where locals and travelers gather and play with the area's most noted and aspiring artists, right in their own backyards. Travelers discover just how this extraordinary music was shaped by the rolling mountains, scenic byways and the patchwork of small towns that embrace good food, warm hospitality and the familiar sounds and voices of people who comprise the families of the Crooked Road.

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