

# Workshop Descriptions

## Bill Collins Workshops

### **"Bagpipe Tuning" for Dulcimer** — Part 2 Low A, A, D; *Novice and up*

Tuning your bass string down to low A gives you the closest thing to a bagpipe that you can get on a dulcimer. Using the two lower strings as octave drones and playing tunes in A Mixolydian produce an exciting sound. In this workshop, we'll explore more tunes that work great in this tuning. We'll review improvising and ornamenting in this tuning, and pick a simple tune to try playing by ear.

### **Shaker Music for Dulcimer** — DAD; capo required; *Novice and up*

This is a repertoire workshop designed to introduce the music of the Shakers, whose musical legacy consists of perhaps 10,000 tunes. Many of the tunes are quite lovely in their simplicity, and share a spiritual, contemplative quality. After a brief introduction to the background of the music and some performance suggestions, we'll work on as many tunes as time permits. Possible selections include: "Mother Ann's Song," "Now, My Dear Companions," "Lovely Love," "Living Souls Let's Be Marching," "Love is Little," "My Carnal Life I Will Lay Down," and "Come, Life, Shaker Life."

### **Old Tunes in New Ways** — DAD; capo required; *Intermediate and up*

Rethinking a familiar tune can be a great exercise in arranging and in stretching your artistic imagination. A new approach can also bring surprising freshness to and musical life to old warhorses in your repertoire. As examples, this workshop will include "Cripple Creek" as a slow air, "Whiskey Before Breakfast" in a minor mode, "Soldier's Joy" as a jig, and "Old Joe Clark" as a waltz

### **Less Is More: Noter-Style Dulcimer** — DAD or DAA; *All Levels*

Noter-style playing is not widely in vogue at the present. It's an approach that's sometimes regarded as "primitive," but it's very challenging and can be extremely satisfying. Given its historical importance and its critical association with the instrument, noting is a technique with which every dulcimer player should gain some familiarity. This workshop shows you the basics of the two main traditions of noting and introduces what may be a new approach to some old familiar tunes, as well as encourages fresh appreciation for diatonic fretting. Bring a noter if you have one; if not, one will be provided.

## **Bill Collins Workshops, *continued***

### **Tunes I Learned from David** — DAD; capo required; *Intermediate*

David Schnauffer (1952-2006) was the premier player of the mountain dulcimer and a wonderful instructor. The selections in this workshop (the “Other” Shady Grove, Cluck Old Hen, Scarborough Fair, Maiden’s Prayer) are some of the great tunes David taught in classes I attended with him in the 1990s. We’ll learn the tunes and a bit about this inspiring dulcimer hero.

### **Interpretation, Expression, and Embellishment** — DAD; *Intermediate*

We’ll take one lovely slow air (“Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms”) and explore numerous expressive musical options so that each participant can discover his or her own voice in the piece. The class will learn techniques for enriching the basic melody, enhancing the harmonic background, and making the dulcimer truly “sing” the tune.

### **Airs from the Shetland Islands: The Music of Tom Anderson**

*DAD; Intermediate to Advanced*

Tom Anderson (1910-1991), revered in the Shetlands for tirelessly preserving the region’s traditional fiddle music and for teaching it to generations of young players, was also a prolific composer of exquisite melodies. This workshop presents some of his loveliest and most haunting tunes.

## **Butch Ross Workshops**

### **The 5 Pitfalls in Contemporary Dulcimer Arranging** — DAD; *Intermediate and up*

More and more people are adapting contemporary tunes for the Mountain Dulcimer. And I think that’s great, learn the common pitfalls to watch for as you do, and how to work around them. Capo required.

### **Playing With Pick And Fingers; *Intermediate and up***

Switch from finger picking to strumming (and back again) using the fingers of your right hand. Additionally, we’ll learn a fun and simple technique for embellishment and surprising syncopations.

## **Butch Ross Workshops, *continued***

### **Jam Session Survival Guide** — DAD; *Beginner and up*

Jamming with other people is probably the best way you can learn tunes and become a better player. But it can be intimidating for a new player to put their feet in the water. Come learn three simple things that will allow you to participate in jam sessions—regardless of level—and make you feel like you belong there.

### **Just Five Notes**; *Advanced beginner and up*

These five basic notes appear in almost every song. Use this as a starting point for learning new music, playing along in jams, and quickly picking up classic tunes.

### **High-Performance Dulcimer**; *Advanced*

I always say, “There are three ways to do everything on a dulcimer.” But in this class, we will focus on the most efficient way to strum, fret, and hold the dulcimer. Moreover, we will learn how to determine which methods and techniques work best for you.

### **The Big Myth Of Chord-Melody Arrangements**; *Intermediate and up*

...is that they’re hard. Learn how to transform simple melodies into complete musical arrangements with ease. It’s easier than you might imagine with the right techniques, and there’s a secret to achieving success. Join us and discover the tricks of the trade.

### **Reverse Slant Chords**; *Advanced*

We all know what I call “thumb-leading” chords (the L-shape, Slant and extended slant shapes), what about their opposites? These chords, in addition to being closer in voicing to standard piano chords (root-third-fifth) sound better and are more versatile than their well-worn cousins. Shorter scale dulcimer recommended.

### **Ukulele 101**; *Beginner*

Have a ukulele hanging around you’ve always wanted to play...bring it along....invite your friends for this class that will leave you playing a song or two.

**Please note:** *If this is the only workshop you will attend, the registration fee is waived. You will need to register for the Gathering and check the registration box for the ukulele workshop, but do not pay the registration fee. Then pay Butch the \$15 workshop fee as the workshop is starting.*