



Adult & Children Workshops Bluegrass Jam Sessions and Concerts

by Martha Hills and Don DePoy, Ph.D.



Me and Martha, that is Martha Hills and Don DePoy, love to make music. They draw on historical music forms including blues, jazz, old-time country and bluegrass. Each performance is a fusion of America's acoustic roots music traditions. By blending these traditional sounds with an ear towards the contemporary, Martha and Don create music with a fresh twist that holds the flavor of these rich traditions. Their sound is without question original, yet somehow familiar. The energy and excitement they bring to every song are captivating. There is just an enchanting chemistry between them. As the listeners take a musical journey, there is just something in the natural ebb and flow of their music that grabs and pulls you in. As 2005 inductees into America's Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame, they continue the tradition of keeping music making accessible and alive. Both are active in the music making community and conduct youth and adult workshops on how to be a music maker.



Concerts & Stage Shows

Musical performances include traditional folk tales from many cultures, historical tales, original stories, a bit of outrageous wisdom gained of experience and shameless whoppers about eccentric people and strange animals. Audience sing-alongs, guitar, banjo, autoharp, mountain dulcimer, stand up and a one-string pickin' tub bass are musical highlights. Performances combine music with an educational mission. The audience is lead on an enjoyable journey though music from early settlers into the Westward Expansion through to today's musical expressions. Working in the traditional bluegrass format of banjo, guitar, string bass, the duo draws on material from folk, hillbilly, bluegrass, traditional country and mountain music with a fusion of whatever musical genres that seem to fit effectively. Many of Me & Martha's signature songs explore the universal themes of everyday life in rural America.



Workshops & Seminars & Educational Programs

Martha and Don explore and explain their own folk processes as music makers, their musical instruments and cover topics including music theory, chord progressions, musical arrangements, and the impact of socio/cultural influences on American music. To help illustrate major points, their light-hearted discussions and songs can be played in an open jam session with individual or group instruction available.

*We pick:
Therefore, We Grin*

Music Maker Guide with CD featuring over 100 bluegrass songs & chord progressions

This book is specifically written to help connect the musical dots and get folks making music by ear.. All too often musicians seem to learn individual songs without an understanding as to how all songs are inter-related. Focusing specifically on the bluegrass genre, Don stirs a bit of theory and chords to reveal that most of the songs we play have only 7 common chord progressions. Come to know the progressions and songs take on a different quality. Playing back-up is not like tabulature, a memorization of note-for-note for every song, but is essentially a chord formula that works with multiple songs and different keys. The Music Maker's Guide comes with a CD illustrating the written material and discusses the use of a capo, transposing from one key to another, basic guitar runs, time signatures and tuning. Over 100 songs are provided with chord progressions. (\$24.95)

Music Making Slow Jam (2 to 4 hours)

Slow-jamming is a great way to get everyone playing. These are jams for novices who are often intimidated by the breakneck speed of many (but not all) bluegrass jams. Slow jams allow budding musicians to get their feet wet in a non-threatening, mutually supportive environment. The goal here is to keep the songs at a slow enough pace that every player can play along. Musicians are encouraged to lead songs as the turns move around the circle. However, it is not uncommon to decline and let the next person pick a song for everyone to play. During the jam some comments are offered about tuning, choosing a key for particular songs, jam etiquette, instrumental leads and back-up, singing lead and harmony. Don's Music Maker's Guide has over 100 bluegrass, old-time country and folk songs with chord progressions.



Bluegrass for Parents & Children Workshop (1-hour)

The benefits of music in child development theory is well documented. This workshop provides parents and children an opportunity to integrate music time into a child's daily activities. Martha has developed this workshop to incorporate bluegrass music into a child's life to encourage language development, rhythmic movement, singing, playing instruments, improvising, composing, and listening. This is a great occasion for parents to spend time with their children engaging in a variety of musical activities to strengthen parent/child bonds and improve self-esteem. Music making encourages interaction and self-expression which fosters self-determination allowing for personal growth and development in other areas beyond music and ultimately promotes self-advocacy as well. Written and audio materials are provided.

Roots Music History Workshop (1-hour)

What did people do for entertainment before electricity? Specific programs are designed for grades k-12 and post secondary education. We offer curriculum development and programs for specific topics from music/movement to historical and cultural studies which are designed to actively involve the students. Martha has a background in elementary and early childhood education and loves to work with people of all ages. Don and Martha present ballads collected in Appalachia and other cultural and community heritages that are often passed on through music. They entertain and discuss sources and personal impressions of these song and stories that often deal with day to day living, work or the challenges of true love.

Roots Music History Interactive Lecture (1-hour)

Don's Appalachian musical background and current vocation, as a college professor teaching Music Appreciation, affords the attendees an opportunity to delve into many aspects of American roots musics. Specifically, addressing the historical rise and propagation of the music now referred to as Bluegrass, this interactive discussion brings full-circle the social and economic forces which were instrumental in the development of America's popular musics. Don's doctoral dissertation focused on the articulation between American music and popular culture. This lecture includes the development of music as commodity from the 1850s to present with its contributing roots and branches of ethnic influences.



Music Makers Workshop

(1 to 2-hours)

Don DePoy and Martha Hills are offering workshops which focus on musicians moving beyond the mechanics of their instrument and changing from one chord to another to becoming music makers. Using Don's Music Maker's Guide (see below), the topics and discussions are directed towards beginning/intermediate musicians who desire to move away from tablature/chord charts and begin to make music by ear and develop their own playing style. Topics covered include: the use of common chord progressions (I, IV, V, etc.), transposing from one key to another, use of the capo, a short overview of scales, chord construction, beginning back-up and fundamentals for making music with others.

Appalachian Square & Round Dances

(1-hour)

Don grew up playing and calling traditional Appalachian square and round dances. So if you are ready to get out on the floor, Martha and Don can liven up your social event with some circle mixers and square dancing that will get your guests off their chairs and onto the dance floor. It's a fun way to meet the other people in your party and make lifelong friends. All square and round dance instruction are provided.

Workshops and Jams are fee-based with educational grants and fund-raising options available.

More about Martha Hills and Don DePoy



Martha fell in love with acoustic roots music in the early 1990's and has been playing up-right bass since 2002. Her bass playing provides a solid bottom for Me & Martha's musical excursions. Martha's love of life and her effervescent semblance and infectious smile are delightful as she adds quips and harmony and lead

vocals to the performance. She has devoted her life to helping others and has spent most of her career working in the non-profit sector. Martha and nine siblings grew up in Maine on a farm just outside of Belfast. Her love of music, outdoors and nature are central to her being. And her love for life and the knack for making folks feel right at home make her a delight to be around.



Don is a master musician on several stringed instruments, with an inventiveness that is a rarity, even among the great traditional musicians. In 1957 at age eight, he became a regular member of his father's band, The Mountain Music Makers. As a 5th generation musician originally from Virginia's Shenandoah Val-

ley, he continues to play the music of his Appalachian roots. Don has appeared as a featured performer at the Philadelphia Folk Festival as well as appeared on numerous recordings and performances throughout the United States and abroad. Don holds a Ph.D. in popular culture and American music. His writings include the book, Music Maker's Guide which explains in lay terms the art of playing by ear and features over a hundred bluegrass, country and folk songs with chords.



Martha and Don, beyond being musical buds, are life partners, married to each other and live in Belfast, Maine. During the summer they spend a great deal of their energies chartering and sailing aboard their 1939 46' classic racing yacht ViVA making music at every port of call. In the winter months they make music and enjoy alpine skiing.

Me & Martha

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