

Cuz's Corner

By Dennis Frost

Today, as I am writing this article, I'm reminded of why I live in the Carolinas – it's springtime in the Piedmont! Days like this always get me to thinking of how fortunate we are to have such a variety of music festivals in our little part of the world. In addition to Merle-Fest, there are several that I am especially upbeat about this year. LEAF, happening May 11-13, has its usual stellar lineup of eclectic music from around the globe, but this year I'm especially excited. For all you lovers of the folk music passed down from the traditions of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and others, the **Arlo Guthrie Family Legacy Tour** will be making a stop in Black Mountain, presenting not only the music, but also the stories and history behind the music. In addition to Arlo and family, other performers include the **Be Good Tanyas, Malcomb Holcombe, The Duhks, The Carolina Chocolate Drops, Chatham County Line, Rising Appalachia**, and some good old Louisiana music from **Rosie Ledet and The Zydeco Playboys**. (www.theleaf.com)

A few years ago, I found a jewel of a festival in the highlands of Virginia. Not only is Grayson Highlands State Park one of my all-time favorite camping and hiking spots, but it also hosts the Wayne Henderson Festival, which takes place every year on the third Saturday of June. This year's lineup, in addition to Wayne Henderson and an array of stellar old time musicians from this rich area, includes **Doc and Richard Watson and Bobby Ingano**, a legendary Hawaiian slack key guitar player. For you old time and bluegrass guitarists, don't forget the annual Wayne Henderson Guitar Contest where

the winner receives a treasured Wayne Henderson guitar. I guess it's time to start practicing! (www.waynehenderson.org)

Right across the holler from Grayson Highlands State Park is a festival I missed last year. But, unless the creek rises, I will not miss it this year! I'm referring to the 2nd Annual Ollabelle Reed Homecoming Festival, which takes place August 17-19 in beautiful Lansing, North Carolina, headlined this year by none other than Tim O'Brien. Although the schedule is incomplete at this time, last year's performers included **Ollabelle, Mike Seeger, Si Kahn and Kathy Fink**. (www.ollabellefest.com)

If you are tired of the huge festival scene with its massive crowds and prefer smaller festivals that are steeped in the traditions and history of the music, both the Wayne Henderson Festival and the Ollabelle Homecoming just might be for you. Although a larger festival, I feel LEAF maintains its family atmosphere exceptionally well! Most of you jamaholics know all about Fiddler's Grove (May 25-27) and Mt. Airy (June 2-3), but if you have a favorite, undiscovered festival, please share with the group!

I guess my musical highlight this month was getting to hear the music of **Rising Appalachia** at the last CFS house concert and then having the opportunity to share their music with a larger audience at WGWG. (www.risingappalachia.com) Leah, Chloe, and Forrest are prime examples of musicians that are taking the traditions to a new audience and it was a pleasure to get to know these fine folks – they are musical gypsies in the purest sense in the age of so much commercialism! By the way, if you get

the chance, I would recommend that you check out a house concert at some point in time. I love them because they are more than just concerts, they are gatherings of musical community, and it's a homey respite from the road for the weary musician. The other thing I like about the house concert is the fact that, typically, all of your admission goes directly to the artists. That in mind, please be sure to call and cancel your reservations if you cannot attend a house concert so someone else can take your place – an empty seat is, say, \$15 out of the musician's pocket.

My recorded pick for the month is the new **Waterloo, Tennessee** CD from **Uncle Earl**. My favorite all-girl old time band has put together a collection of traditionals and originals that are as beautifully played and sung as anything I've heard in a while. Although this CD is more eclectic than their first, there is no doubt that old time string band music remains near and dear to their hearts. Be sure to check them out at Merle-Fest! (www.unclearl.net) Another pick for the month comes from **Hot Club of Cowtown** alumna Elana James. Her self-titled disc takes us on tour of American fiddle styles all on one disc, with a few jazz standards for good measure. This album not only has great playing, but Elana also has a great voice - what more can you ask for? (www.elanajames.com)

That's about it for this month, so have a great spring and be sure to support live music! If there are any shows or CDs you want to share with our community, be sure to let me know.

Cuz

Share your favorites with Cuz at either 704-532-8846 or dcmfrost@mindspring.com.