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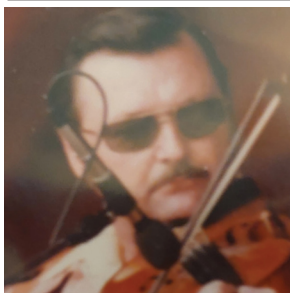
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Aynsley Porchak, teaching the fiddle a few lessons.



# MONROE MANDOLIN CAMP

*Murray Hale lends a Canadian perspective on the Monroe Mandolin Camp*



By Murray Hale

In 2018, the Monroe Mandolin Camp was held at Lake Junaluska Conference Centre in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Don Butterworth and I walked into the Conference Centre Lounge to the sounds of about 35 mandolins, one banjo, one bass, one fiddle, and one or two guitars jamming. I exclaimed OMG!!! Don what is this? I had never, in 43 years of following bluegrass, ever heard such a sound as the rhythmic pulsations of Monroe style tremolo done by 35 mandolins at the same time. It was to me earth altering, foreign and quite a strange experience. I quickly learned that all these people were great mandolin players already, but

were now attempting to learn the original Monroe style by being taught by Mike Compton and a roster of teachers qualified to teach Monroe Style. I had a wonderful week and have returned every year possible since.

This past September I again attended the Mon Man Camp which was held in Abington, Virginia. The Monroe Mandolin Camp, hosted by Heidi and Mike Compton, has been

**Monroe style  
tremolo by  
35 mandolins**

*Above: Murray jamming with Marianne.*

**Note from the Editor**

*It should be remembered that the music of Bill Monroe, originating in the hills of Kentucky, is now widely accepted and appreciated literally around the world. While this article focuses on an American musical event, Canada was ably represented by our President Murray Hale and also actively participating, was Woodstock's own Aynsley Porchak.*

located for at least the past 2 years in the rolling hills of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Eastern Virginia in the town of Abingdon. Voted one of the "Coolest Small Towns in America", Abingdon is located on a well-travelled wilderness route called the Great Road (now Interstate 81) which many pioneers travelled through the Blue Ridge Mtns. on their way to settling the new American frontier. Location can vary year to year, but it appears certain that the 2023 Camp will also

be held at Abingdon, Va. Follow up by checking the web site at: [www.monroemandolincamp.com](http://www.monroemandolincamp.com)

The mission of the Monroe Mandolin Camp, or "Mon Man Camp", is simple...to further the legacy left by the Father of Bluegrass Music, Bill Monroe. Its goals are:

- To preserve the music created and recorded by Bill Monroe;
- To educate contemporary mandolin enthusiasts about the stylistic elements and backbone of this art form;
- To present a curriculum that allows the players to come away with an understanding of the culture that created the music, and the techniques needed to apply this knowledge to their own musical endeavors.

About Mike Compton: Mike grew up in the State of Mississippi and at a very young age began to listen to and love Bluegrass music. As a late teenager he became immersed in Monroe and self admittedly obsessed with reproducing the sound he heard. Mike and his partner Heidi Herzog began the Monroe Mandolin Camp in 2012 to fulfil the Monroe Mandolin Camp mission stated above.

Ten years of successful camps have now passed and this year Doyle Lawson and Butch Robbins, who played with Monroe, both contributed their stamp. Over the years I have seen other greats like Ricky Skaggs, Becky Buller, Byron Berline, Norman and Nancy Blake, drop in and participate. All and all, the bottom line is that this camp is playing an important role in keeping the heart and soul of traditional Monroe styled bluegrass alive and thriving. It has been such a pleasure and blessing to be a part of this camp and kudos go out to Heidi Herzog and Mike Compton for the work they put into it every year.

At the Monroe Mandolin Camp, original, traditional roots bluegrass music is played, taught, jammed, and breathed 24 hours a day. Whether a mandolinist, fiddler, banjo player, rhythm guitar player, vocalist or upright bass time keeper, MMC offers the finest instruction in a fun and inclusive environment. Young learning from the young at heart,

# MONROE MANDOLIN CAMP

**SEPT. 28 - OCT. 2, 2022**

**SOUTHWEST VA HIGHER ED. CTR.**  
**◆ ABINGDON, VIRGINIA ◆**



**MIKE COMPTON**  
**ALAN MUNDE**  
**LAUREN PRICE**  
**DICK BOWDEN**  
**AYNSLEY PORCHAK**  
**KATELYN BUCKLEY**  
**LAURELYN DOSSETT**  
**PAUL DUFF • WILL KIMBLE**  
**JEFF BURKE • JIM WATSON**  
**CARL JONES • CHRIS HENRY**

**DOYLE LAWSON • BUTCH ROBINS**  
**PIG ROAST • SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS • DAILY YOGA**



**MONROEMANDOLINCAMP.COM**



southerners and northerners jamming side-by-side, long time players together with beginners- all coming together to create a dynamic community...and to learn the music created by Bill Monroe.

Of interest to all members is that Canada's own Aynsley Porchak was greatly involved in the Camp by hosting fiddle instruction classes. She also performed with the incredible Alan Munde (Country Gazette) while enjoying a side trip a short drive from Abington, to the Birthplace of Country Music in Bristol, Virginia. Not visible are Katelyn Buckley on bass and Dick Bowden on Guitar.

At Mon Man there are world class instructors, 100 plus classes for all instruments, special presentations, one on one tutorials with the instructor of your choice and daily organized jams led by the instructors. The web site details all that is offered to participants.

Over the years, instructors have included a veritable who's who in bluegrass instrumental virtuosity. Here are just some of past and present instructors who have participated:

**Mandolin:** Mike Compton, David Davis, Alan Bibey, Chris Henry, Caleb Klauder, Lauren Price, Matt Flinner, Sharon Gilchrist and Silas Powell.

**Banjo:** Alan Munde has been a regular instructor for a number of years and other players such as Jeremy Stevens and Bob Black plus Old Time Instructors Carl Jones,

Caleb Klauder and many more have participated over the years.

**Fiddle:** Fiddle instructors have included such masters as Corina Rose Logston, Byron Berline and Canada's own Aynsley Porchak.

**Guitar:** Guitar greats such as Dick Bowden, Mississippi Chris Sharp, Jody Stecher, Raymond Huffmaster, and Robert Montgomery have offered their expertise.

**Bass:** Mark Hembree, Katelyn Buckley, Mike Bub, and others have instructed.

**Vocals:** Jody Stecher, Kathy Kallick, Chris Montgomery, David Davis and Laurelyn Dosset have been some of the vocal instructors at the camp.

So in closing, if you are thinking about getting involved in a total immersion bluegrass instructional camp experience, I heartily recommend from my own past experience, Monroe Mandolin Camp. "Happy people pickin' music".

## Total bluegrass immersion

*Photos courtesy of Heidi Herzog-  
Exec. Dir. Mon Man Camp.*