

The Blue Ridge Music Center  
700 Foothills Road  
Galax, VA 24333  
Milepost 213, Blue Ridge Parkway

Oct 6, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Blue Ridge Music Center Presents:  
Round Peak – A Musical Phenomenon in the Blue Ridge and Around the World

Host: Paul Brown and the Toast String Stretchers  
Galax, VA – The Blue Ridge Music Center will feature a showcase on Round Peak music on Sunday, October 18 at 2pm. Participating musicians include: Paul Brown, Terri McMurray, Verlen Clifton, Ginger Sykes Bode and Frank Bode all of whom perform in The Toast String Stretchers. Admission: Free  
Round peak music is an old-time music style that originated in northwestern Surry County, North Carolina and spread around the globe. At this Fall Heritage Series event Verlen Clifton, the last living practitioner who actually grew up in Round Peak, will play music and tell first-person stories taking us back to the 1930s when he learned to play.

Paul Brown's voice is heard around the world most mornings on National Public Radio's Morning Edition. He edits and produces this influential Washington-based program as well as being an on-air host. Internationally respected as a newsman, he has also produced some of NPR's finest cultural features and is famous for the quality of his writing. Largely self-educated, Brown once worked in a Galax furniture factory before becoming a newsman on WPAQ radio in Mt. Airy, WFDD and PR affiliate in Winston-Salem.

Brown, along with the other members of the Toast String Stretchers, will play music and talk about how round peak music became known outside of the local community. This outcome was triggered primarily by the "folk boom" and other factors. Music collectors, enthusiasts and folklorists, many of them already aware of the Grayson and Carroll County, VA traditions, came into the area in the 1960s and discovered something amazingly intense and powerful. Word began to spread the word far beyond Surry County and southwestern Virginia. Additionally, recordings played on local radio stations inspired young people looking for something different to start coming to area fiddlers' conventions. Awareness of the Round Peak tradition exploded and worldwide enthusiasm continues to the present day.

Even though most of the early practitioners are gone, the tradition exists locally because younger musicians have kept it going. This showcase will be a rare opportunity to see and hear musicians from the round peak region and others who have learned and helped to keep the tradition share their knowledge of the history of Round Peak music up to the present day.

The Blue Ridge Music Center is located at milepost 213 on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Fall showcases and films take place in the Music Center's indoor theater which seats 90 people. Phone or email reservations are recommended. Drop-ins are welcome to remaining seats available. (276) 236-5309 x112  
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Mid-day mountain music also continues at the Blue Ridge Music Center with volunteer, resident musicians performing traditional music Sundays through Fridays (and some Saturdays) in the breezeway of the visitor center through to November 1, 2009. Performance times vary so call (276) 236-5309 for info. Admission to mid-day mountain music is free.

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