

RESPONSES

... In addition to being an accomplished singer-songwriter, Andy May has tremendous respect among traditional musicians nationwide. Traditional country, blues, and bluegrass music are the heart and soul of Tennessee's cultural identity. Andy has developed a program that pulls in some of the most talented musicians from this heritage. All of these musicians are highly requested set musicians in the studios on Music Row or are regulars from the Grand Ole Opry, including Curtis McPeake, banjo player for the late bluegrass legend Bill Monroe. Andy's group is devoted to the preservation of American traditional music. In fact, the materials presented in his performances work well with the PBS documentary series American Roots Music, which includes online resources, study guides, and lesson plans (<http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic>).

—Hayden Roberts, Tennessee Arts Commission
Arts in Education Director

His music and songs are simple and meaningful; his manner is easygoing and conversational. He not only shares his music with students, but also the creative process through which songs are written and instruments are mastered. —Joan Gardner, Cultural Organization of the Arts, RI

That the entire student body gave your presentation full and enthusiastic attention for a full hour is a tribute to you, ...your program of music, and your sensitivity to the context of an assembly of over 900 early adolescents. —John Burruto, Principal, Amherst Regional Junior High School, MA

Your ability to communicate with the children and adapt your program to the response of the audience and the different age levels ...was most impressive. —Sue Norland, Canton Creative Arts Council, Canton, CT

...It was wonderful to see kids getting such high-quality exposure to bluegrass music in a school context. ... It's heartening to see a school program skillfully validating and interpreting traditional acoustic music for youngsters who too often get very different, negative and class-stereotyped messages about their region's vernacular music in educational settings. Those kids got "inoculated" ...through a live performance of bluegrass standards played by top-flight professionals, and your experience in arts ed residencies framed the music for them very nicely. I have no doubt that they all went away informed and inspired, and that the program afforded a formative, significant cultural experience for many of them.

I thoroughly endorse and encourage your continued work in this area, and I think you're uniquely situated to help implement future programming of this sort. Every school should be lucky enough to benefit from it.

—Robert Cogswell, Tennessee Arts Commission
Folklife Program Director

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Andy May

In the Schools



OFFERING:

2 *The Bluegrass Show*

—with Andy May and the Bluegrass Band

2 *The Roots of Bluegrass Music*

—music appreciation and history

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Educator, Instructor and Mentor

For nearly forty years, Andy has been a professional musician and educator. He has an easygoing, common sense approach to teaching that is rooted in his background in developmental learning and his interest in creative problem solving. He believes that within each person there lies the possibility of positive creative expression. He creates a supportive learning environment and gives young people access to the tools they need to explore their creative paths.

At every level, Andy's originality and optimism, and his love and respect for our musical roots, shine through. He has performed thousands of shows, taught hundreds of people to play guitar or mandolin, and instructed extensively in the areas of performance and visual art.

In addition to private instruction, Andy has developed and led a variety of educational workshops through the years, including his *Acoustic Kids* educational program for the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, KS and the *Kids' Showcase* for MerleFest in Wilkesboro, NC, two of the major music festivals in North America. These non-competitive educational programs provide youngsters with performance opportunities and instructional workshops. The workshops cover various aspects of music and professional musicianship, informing youngsters and their families about the realities of life as a professional musician, and focusing on topics such as performance skills and lifestyle.

Underlying his in-the-field teaching experience is Andy's own education: he graduated magna cum laude from the University of Massachusetts with a degree in Art Education.

ANDY'S NOTES

OFFERINGS

The Bluegrass Show— with Andy May and the Bluegrass Band

Musician and educator Andy May appears with some of Nashville's finest bluegrass musicians to bring a top-notch, fun and musically enriching show to Tennessee's schools. This program offers students and teachers the opportunity to join Andy in exploring the songs, instruments and history of this wonderful style of American music that was actually born here in Tennessee. In the context of a show rich in vocal harmonies and instrumental wizardry, Andy provides an underlying theme of encouragement that supports youngsters in making positive creative choices in their lives.

The Roots of Bluegrass Music— music appreciation and history

Bluegrass is one of the truly American musical styles, incorporating a wealth of influences from many musical traditions. In this presentation, Andy narrates an audio journey through the archives of early recordings of American country music. He discusses the impact of technological advances on American music and traces the development and birth of bluegrass, providing recorded examples of the musical influences that Bill Monroe, "the Father of Blue Grass Music," brought together to create the style.

In THE BLUEGRASS SHOW, I talk about the history of the music, and about the instruments. Guitar and mandolin have been my friends since I was very young, and I share my excitement about playing music. I talk about how one learns to play an instrument—about practice, determination, and the desire to learn—and about how that becomes mastery. We also cover band dynamics: how people use their social, as well as musical, skills in a band.

In THE ROOTS OF BLUEGRASS, I discuss how the development of audio recording and radio—technologies we take for granted today—impacted people's lives and affected the development of American country music. I play recordings made as early as the 1920s of musicians such as the Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers, the Skillet Lickers, the Delmore Brothers, the Golden Gate Quartet, and many others whose influence can be heard in bluegrass. I end with several cuts of classic bluegrass by Bill Monroe and his quintessential Blue Grass Boys band of 1946.

I particularly enjoy presenting shows to schools and other groups of children because it allows me to combine my training as an art educator with my experience as a professional musician. My shows offer an alternative to what the mainstream media sources often present to kids. I tell kids what being a musician is really like. I demonstrate that they can make music that is personal and accessible, and that music belongs to them.