



For Immediate Release

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Concord Conservatory of Music Presents New Courses in American Roots

Beginning this September, CCM is introducing new offerings in American Roots music for both young players and the young at heart. Courses will be tracked for those who are completely new to the instruments or new to the style, and for adults with Bluegrass and Old-Time experience who are looking for a local jam. All are invited to learn more at the American Roots Open House, kicking off the program with an information session, music by the faculty and a jam session on Thursday, September 14, from 7:00 to 9:00 PM at CCM.

Attendees of the open house will be able to meet the new Roots faculty members—fiddle player Bobby Britt, Tony Watt teaching bluegrass, Rich Stillman on banjo, and Ian Goldstein on mandolin—all renowned performers in the Roots community. Instruments will be on hand to try out at the open house, and anyone who would like to jam is invited to join in, just bring your strings instrument.

The new course offerings for beginners include Americana fiddling, bluegrass, banjo, and mandolin. Young folk as young as 8-years-old can join the group classes in fiddling and banjo, and they can also join the weekly jam sessions. Adult-track classes include beginner and intermediate fiddle, a drop-in bluegrass class with a jam, beginner banjo, and mandolin. Beyond banjo, fiddle, and mandolin, anyone on guitar, violin, bass, banjo, or Dobro would fit in the offerings just fine. Anyone that enrolls in a group or lesson in the American Roots genre can also join the Thursday, 8 pm weekly jam for free. Throughout the year, CCM will also offer monthly drop-in jam sessions and workshops to complement the program, focusing on related skills like improvisation, for example.

In CCM's new course offerings, students will pick up songs that are common in the Bluegrass and Roots tradition, learning melodies by ear. "Song-based and aural learning works a whole different part of the brain than reading music off the page," says fiddle player and teacher Bobby Britt. "Learning in this way opens up a whole new world of musical and social possibilities."

Tony Watt, an award-winning Flatpicking guitarist, and mandolinist who will be teaching the bluegrass courses says this is in part because informal jamming is so central: "Jams have a very low bar of experience needed to join but allow musical growth as far as you are willing to push

yourself,” he says. “Ultimately, it is one of the most jam-centric styles of music, and that means it has one of the strongest and most-welcoming communities you can find.”

Indeed, much of the charm of this music is the social aspect: “The Roots tradition really lends itself to an inviting community of people. Beginners and intermediates can play with more advanced players—on a whole range of string instruments—and connect across generations in a way that’s really fun and unlike other genres,” says Kate Yoder, executive director and founder of CCM.

As a musical tradition, American Roots was born out of early folk music, then shaped by the country’s political and cultural evolution through the 20th century. Today it bears the influence of a wide range of musical styles, including early jazz and gospel, folk, bluegrass, Cajun, country, spirituals, and many others, with a come one, come all bent.

For more information about specific offerings, please visit concordconservatory.org/offerings/american-roots, call 978-369-0010, or email info@ConcordConservatory.org.

About CCM

Founded in 2005, the Concord Conservatory of Music is an energetic community of people who are deepening their involvement in music education. Each year, CCM opens its doors to more than 430 students, offering programming for all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. As a non-profit school, CCM serves Concord and the surrounding 15 communities. CCM offers a full curriculum that includes private instruction, group classes, and performance opportunities.

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