



Walton Arts Center

Performance Guide



Still on the Hill: *Treasures of the Ozarks*

Photo Credit: Still on the Hill

Celebrate Arkansas history with the award-winning duo, Still on the Hill. Recognized as Ambassadors of the Ozarks in their national and international travels, musicians Donna and Kelly Mulhollan enchant audiences with story-songs that document the modest, close-to-the-land life ways that continue throughout the Ozarks. Showcasing a collection of unusual handmade instruments and photo quilts, Treasures of the Ozarks documents the stories of people who have shaped the culture of our hill region.

Ideas for Curriculum Connections:

Arkansas Learning Standards: Fine Arts Standards
Music: P.6.5.3; CRA.SL.1; R.7.5.3, R.7.6.3, R.7.7.3, R.7.8.3; R.8.6.1; R.8.5.1, R.8.6.1; R.8.7.1, R.8.8.1; R.9.5.1, R.9.6.1, R.9.7.1, R.9.8.1; CN.10.6.1, CN.10.7.1, CN.10.8.1; Cn.11.6.1, CN.11.7.1, CN.11.8.1, CN.11.6.2, CN.11.7.2, CN.11.8.2; P.6.MA.2; R.9.MA.1. Music Appreciation: P.4.MA.1; P.5.MA.1; P.6.MA.2; R.7.MA.3; R.9.MA.1, CN.11.MA.3, CN.11.MA.4



Guitars made by Ed Stilley. Photo Credit: Rare Visions and Roadside Revelations

Ozark Settlers

Europeans began to settle the Ozarks shortly after the arrival of early explorers. Each new group helped define the cultural characteristics of the area. Immigration between 1820 and 1880 was part of the general westward movement, a larger migratory process taking place in America. In the late nineteenth century, people from other countries began to move into Arkansas.

The first wave of Scottish and Irish immigrants to the United States settled the mountainous backwoods of Appalachian Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia, as well as the Piedmont region of the Carolinas. With the expansion of the cotton economy in 1818, many of these families scrambled to claim lands in the Southwest in the hopes of attaining fortune that “King Cotton” promised. Thousands of settlers of Scotch-Irish heritage migrated to the Arkansas territory; often seeking out land similar to their places of habitation back east, they gravitated predominantly toward the Ozark Mountains. They brought fiddles and other portable musical instruments with them. This is important musically because they started the roots of bluegrass music.

Early European and Euro-American impressions of Arkansas often drew upon folk traditions. Stories about the state’s remarkable fruitfulness, for example, incorporated elements from similar boasts in Europe. Ozark singers supplemented old narrative folksongs from the British Isles with more recent songs from Britain and Ireland; with indigenous ballads that told stories of Robin

Hood-like outlaws, Civil War battles, railroad disasters and other American themes; and with sacred and secular folk lyrics that did not tell stories but rather convey moods or emotions.

Folk Music

Folk music has a long tradition in Arkansas. Folk songs are often shared from person to person for generations before being written down. Folk song collectors play an important part preserving traditional music. Handmade instruments are valued in folk music. Families pass their craft and skills along to other family or community members. Think of songs you remember your family singing then write or speak the lyrics.

Still on the Hill

Donna & Kelly Mulhollan, artists known as Toucan Jam and Still on the Hill, live in Fayetteville. They are singersongwriters, and utilize a host of traditional instruments – including mandolin, banjo, fiddle, guitar, harmonica as well as other unique “found” or handmade instruments like a mule’s jaw bone, the musical saw, washboard and tenor uke – to create musical color, texture and rhythm. They study the Ozark roots music of bluegrass, folk and mountain music and share traditional songs with audiences throughout the state and region. These songs compel people to stop and listen, to pause in their busy lives and think about the courageous, resourceful people of the Ozarks in a way that is engaging and relevant.

Learning Activities

Ed Stilley's Instruments

Ed Stilley's art is inseparable from his hardscrabble life in the Ozarks, where resourcefulness and self-reliance have long been essential to survival. Born in 1930 near his Hogscald homestead in Northwest Arkansas, Stilley married his wife, Eliza, in 1959. Together, they supported their five children through farming, hunting, and odd jobs. In 1979, during a time of great stress, Stilley prayed and received a vision that led to his devotion to making instruments and giving them away.

Ed Stilley's imaginative guitars are a form of folk art. Often, folk artists create

utilitarian objects that display a high level of craftsmanship or embellishment. The work is created using traditional forms and complements existing social values rather than challenging them. Today's folk artists are often self-taught. Like Ed Stilley's, their work is often developed in small communities removed from influences of outsiders.

Learning Activity

Songwriters Donna and Kelly Mulhollan wrote about Ed Stilley's life and creations in lyrics. They received instruments hand made by Ed Stilley and continue to perform the songs they have written about him

accompanied by the instruments.

- Create something you feel is worth keeping and expresses something that you think is important. Give your creation to someone else.
- Write a narration about Ed Stilley or his home in Hogscald Hollow. > Write poetry or lyrics about something you hope will have a positive impact on others.
- Create a visual essay - using techniques of collage, woodworking or recycled objects that tells the story of Ed Stilley. Include a theme statement in the visual essay, as Ed did when he carved, "True Faith, True Light. . ." on the instruments.



Granny Henderson and dog Bobbie. Photo Credit: Bob Linder

Granny Henderson

The lyrics in the song, Granny Henderson, pay tribute to Eva "Granny" Henderson, a hardy Ozarker who homesteaded 160 acres of land near Sneed Creek for 80 years. The story about Granny Henderson is told from her point of view, and describes her daily routine, her surroundings along Sneed Creek and her attachment to the place she has called home most of her life. When we hear the song we can imagine the character more fully because of the information implied in the lyrics.

Write About

Ask the students to write a short biography about one of the oldest members of their family. Interview the person. Learn more about the facts of the person's life. Write a short biography of the person using the language and images shared by the person. Start with simple questions and ask your own to help you learn more.

- When and where were you born?
- What do you remember about your home and family?
- What interested you about your town, region or country?
- What are the sounds you remember growing up?
- What do you enjoy doing?
- What is one of your favorite things?
- What do you feel most proud of?
- What are your hopes and dreams for your loved ones?



Photo credit: Still on the Hill

Reflect and Assess

Ask the following questions. Record the group's answers on the board and discuss

- What did you notice about *Treasures of the Ozarks*
- What do you know now about people and music in the Ozarks that you did not know before?
- What did you like most about the live music performance? Singing? Music? Instruments?
- Were you able to hear each instrument?
- How was each instrument different from the others?
- What elements of music, storytelling, and performance were used by the artists?
- How did the elements work together to create an overall experience?
- How did the performers communicate with each other on stage?

Learn More Online

Official website of Still on the Hill

stillonthehill.com/

Julia Butterfly Hill

juliabutterflyhill.com

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Learning & Engagement

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