

Blaine Sprouse Fiddler

“If You’re Gonna Play In Texas
(You Gotta Have a Fiddle in the Band)”
proclaims Alabama’s hit song.

So who did the supergroup
call upon to fiddle
that memorable chart topper?



...consummate musicianship...

-- Frets Magazine --

...one of the great fiddlers of our time...

-- Bobby Osborne --

“If You’re Gonna Play In Texas (You Gotta Have a Fiddle in the Band)” proclaims the 1984 *Billboard* Hot Country Single #1 song. So who did supergroup Alabama call upon to fiddle the memorable chart topper and the entire *Roll On* album? **Blaine Sprouse.**

Three years later, Joe Wilson tapped the Kenny Baker protégé for the National Council for the Traditional Arts’ genre-blending *Masters of the Folk Violin* tour, in which Sprouse was to fiddle alongside Baker. Sprouse was unable to participate due to unforeseen circumstances; sixteen-year-old Alison Krauss stepped in, paving the way for her historic rise.

Sprouse continued to carve an impressive niche, performing with both *Grand Ole Opry* members and young turks of bluegrass, including many who would pick together regularly at Nashville’s world famous Station Inn: The Dreadful Snakes, The Sidemen, Nashville Jug Band and The Cluster Pluckers, with whom Blaine entertained for former president and vice-president Bill Clinton and Al Gore.

Originally from West Virginia, Blaine Sprouse took the music cue from his father, a clawhammer banjo player who taught Blaine guitar chords at age six. The budding musician soon turned to the fiddle, learning on a glued-together instrument found in a dumpster, plucking tunes for lack of a bow.

By age eleven, Sprouse was playing guitar at local dances, earning enough to buy a ¾-size fiddle and bow. He learned to bow tunes he had previously only picked, working them up for dances. Taking every opportunity to attend regional bluegrass festivals whenever Bill Monroe appeared, Sprouse followed Baker—Monroe’s long time fiddler—“because he was my inspiration. Kenny made the fiddle sound like no one else had.”

Before turning eighteen, Blaine fast-tracked his professional career by joining Jimmy Martin as a Sunny Mountain Boy, touring the United States and Japan. After a move to Nashville, he left Martin to fiddle for Bill Monroe’s son James in the Midnight Ramblers. This close proximity to Baker, when the two Monroe bands played double bills, positioned Blaine for an unanticipated turn of events.

The young fiddler went on to wear a Blue Grass Boy hat for several months, filling in when a hand injury sidelined Baker. He repeated

this role on subsequent occasions. Subbing for Eddie Stubbs, Sprouse later donned a Johnson Mountain Boys hat for their tour of Moscow. Much in demand as sideman and session player, Blaine toured and recorded with a stunning array of legendary bluegrass and country artists, among them, Charlie Louvin, Jim and Jesse and the Virginia Boys, and the Osborne Brothers, often performing on the *Grand Ole Opry* where he had earlier fiddled for Bill and James Monroe.

He joined banjo innovator Butch Robins to found The Bluegrass Band, poised to become “one of the most important acts in bluegrass music,” as Robert K. Oermann noted in reviewing *Another Saturday Night*, the group’s debut album. The ensemble proved short-lived, with Blaine joining the Osbornes and another member, Alan O’Bryant, forming the Nashville Bluegrass Band.

After the release of three critically acclaimed solo recordings, Sprouse produced *Indian Springs*, a twin fiddle album with Kenny Baker on which they exhibit intuitive chemistry.

Sprouse fulfilled a lifelong desire to return to school to complete his education and earn a law degree. But in 2009, music interest resurfaced when his fourth solo recording, *Dogwood Winter*, was re-issued as *Appalachian Mountain Fiddler*.

Also a gifted mandolin and guitar player, Sprouse is at home in bluegrass, blues, swing, jazz and folk. With his return to the stage, Blaine’s heart is answering the fiddler’s call. As he stated in a *Frets Magazine* profile, “Music is my life. I just love to play.”

Fiddle and bow in hand, Blaine Sprouse is back.



Program availability

Performance: solo, duet, ensembles (concerts, social events)

Instruction: individual, school programs, workshops, residencies & camps

Recording sessions & soundtracks (film and television)

Professional memberships

American Association of Musicians

Nashville Association of Musicians

National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences



Selected credits

Solo recordings

Blaine Sprouse (Rounder)
Summertime (Rounder)
Brilliancy (Rounder)
Appalachian Mountain Fiddler
(Cumberland, originally titled Dogwood Winter)



Duet recordings/videos

Kenny Baker & Blaine Sprouse
Indian Springs (Rounder)
Kenny Baker & Blaine Sprouse
Two Fiddles, No Waiting (Central Sun)

Group recordings

The Bluegrass Band
Another Saturday Night
Shine Hallelujah Shine, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2
The Dreadful Snakes Snakes Alive

The Cluster Pluckers
The Cluster Pluckers
Just Pluck It
Unplucked
Old Time Gospel Favorites
A Cluster Plucker Christmas Album

The All-Night Gang Bluegrass From Nashville

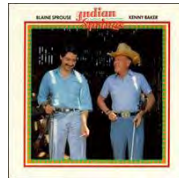
Mark Howard/Jerry Douglas/Blaine Sprouse
Mandolins & Friends

Sideman/session recordings

Alabama Roll On
Kenny Baker
Farmyard Swing
Frost on the Pumpkin
Spider Bit the Baby
Cotton Baggin' 2000

Bob Black
Ladies on the Steamboat
Ginger Boatwright
Fertile Ground
SipSey

Glen Campbell Letter Home
Mike Compton & David Grier
Climbing the Walls
Hazel Dickens
Few Old Memories
By the Sweat of My Brow
It's Hard to Tell the Singer from the Song
Béla Fleck Places
Mike Henderson Country Music Made Me Do It
Carl Jackson Songs of the South
Jim & Jesse
The Jim & Jesse Story
Today
Alisa Jones Hammered Dulcimer Hymns
Charlie Louvin & Jim & Jesse
Jim & Jesse and Charlie Louvin



ebsprouse@gmail.com

Jimmy Martin
Greatest Bluegrass Hits
Raymond W. McLain
A Place of My Own
Jesse McReynolds
Jesse's Guitar Pickin' Showcase
D.L. Menard Cajun Saturday Night
Liz Meyer Womanly Arts
Bill Monroe Body and Soul
Nashville Bluegrass Band My Native Home
Nitty Gritty Dirt Band Plain Dirt Fashion
Osborne Brothers
Bluegrass Collection
Some Things I Want to Sing About
Once More. Vols. I and II
Osborne Brothers & Mac Wiseman
The Essential Bluegrass Album
Butch Robins The Fifth Child
Songs of the Louvin Brothers (various artists)
John Starling Waitin' on a Southern Train
Mel Tillis Old Patches
Pam Tillis
Shake the Sugartree
Homeward Looking Angel
Randy Travis Storms of Life
Rick Trevino Looking for the Light
Tony Trischka Hill Country
Rhonda Vincent
My Blue Tears
A Dream Come True
Whitstein Brothers
Trouble Ain't Nothin' But the Blues
Robin & Linda Williams Close As We Can Get



Soundtrack

Eat the Peach (1986, directed by Peter Ormrod)

International tours

including USIA tours & major festivals
Africa: The Congo, Camaroon, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, Zaire
Bangladesh
Japan
Europe: Denmark, England (Wembley Country Music Festival), France (Marlboro Country Music Festival), Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway (Norsk Country Treff), Sweden, Switzerland
Middle East/Persian Gulf: Oman, Qatar, Tunisia
Moscow (International Folk Festival)

Television

Austin City Limits
Grand Ole Opry Live
Mountain Stage
Nashville Now w/ Ralph Emery
New Country
Onstage



Blaine Sprouse
<http://blainesprousemusic.com>
ebsprouse@gmail.com
805-218-5980

Quotes & Comments about Fiddler Blaine Sprouse

“...consummate musicianship...”

— *Frets Magazine*, *Blaine Sprouse* review

“Blaine isn’t just a fiddler. He’s a performer with a natural gift for stage presence and personality. He’s a professional.”

— Butch Robins

Frets Magazine, “Blaine Sprouse. Pick of the Bluegrass Fiddle Crop”

“Blaine Sprouse is unquestionably one of the very finest of the younger generation of bluegrass fiddlers in the country today.”

— *The Dreadful Snakes* liner notes

“...listening to this selection of tunes played in such a brilliant fashion, you will know why I think Blaine Sprouse is one of the great fiddlers of our time.”

— Bobby Osborne, *Blaine Sprouse* liner notes

“...Sprouse remains the heir apparent to bluegrass fiddle maestro Kenny Baker, always playing exactly the right thing at the right time with a natural flow as smooth as pulling silk ribbon off a spool.”

— *Frets Magazine*, *The Bluegrass Band: Another Saturday Night* review

“...Blaine’s the most promising young fiddle player in the country. No matter what type of music he’s playing, he always plays with graceful taste....”

— Kenny Baker, *Blaine Sprouse* liner notes

“Yeah, he’s one fellow I would really like to talk about...Blaine Sprouse.

Blaine is a fine good feller and he’s a wonderful fiddler.

He’s come a long ways with his fiddle and he’s really fine and I’m for him a hundred per cent.”

— Bill Monroe

Blaine Sprouse: Brilliancy back cover quote

BLAINE SPROUSE PROGRAM AVAILABILITY

Performances: Concerts and Social Events

--Concerts

Blaine is available for solo performance or ensemble work, duets and larger. He is equally at ease in small clubs and intimate house concerts as he is in large auditoriums and amphitheatres.

--Social Events (*weddings, corporate affairs, private parties, life-cycle events*)

Whether it's music to set the mood for that special occasion or to liven up corporate events, Blaine can tailor a program to meet your needs.

Sessions and Soundtracks

Blaine has done extensive studio work for a diverse roster of artists. For a selected list, please refer to his online discography. He welcomes the opportunity to do film and television soundtracks or music for commercials.

Instruction and Workshops

--Available for one-on-one lessons or for small group (*class*) sessions, **all levels**: novice, intermediate, advanced.

--*Workshops*. Interactive lectures and hands-on instruction in various fiddle styles including bluegrass, old time, country and western swing. Discussions about the history and development of fiddle styles. Focus on technique. Q&A encouraged. Students should have at least a beginner's skill level.

--*School programs*.

Pre-school through high school (lecture / demonstration / interactive)

College (lecture / demonstration / performance)

Lectures may cover: history of traditional fiddle tunes and their integration into American musical culture; tunes and styles as they were adapted from Scottish, Irish and other roots and incorporated into bluegrass; development of traditional fiddle music as influenced by other musical genres, such as Blues, Cajun, Cape Breton, Jazz and Big Band and; variations in styles as fiddle music became an integral part of Bluegrass music; non-bluegrass fiddle styles, i.e. Cajun, Western Swing, Jazz, Blues, Acoustic Swing, Folk, Rock and Country genres. Discussion of such iconic and influential artists as Stephane Grappelli, Joe Venuti, Vassar Clements, Benny Martin, Stuff Smith, Johnny Gimble, Bob Wills, Jean-Luc Ponty, Tommy Jackson, Buddy Spicher, Bobby Hicks and Kenny Baker.

--*Residencies and camps*.

Extended-stay programs (2-7 days) targeting intensive, hands-on instruction.

SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS (INDIVIDUAL, WORKSHOPS, RESIDENCIES)

OLD TIME FIDDLE BASICS

- * Simple old time tunes
- * The basic shuffle
- * Playing two strings at once
- * Sample tunes:
 - "Angelina Baker"
 - "Turkey in the Straw"
 - "Get Along Home Cindy"
 - "Old Joe Clark"

CONTINUING OLD TIME

- * Advanced bowing patterns
- * Open tunings
- * Recognizing chord changes
- * Sample tunes:
 - "Cluck Old Hen"
 - "Black Mountain Rag"
 - "Bonaparte's Retreat"
 - "Midnight on the Water"

BLUEGRASS BASICS

- * Constructing a bluegrass fiddle solo
- * Bluegrass fiddle styles
- * How to play in a bluegrass band
- * Harmony and "double stops"
- * Sample tunes:
 - "Blue Moon of Kentucky"
 - "Can't You Hear Me Callin'"
 - "Little Georgia Rose"

CONTINUING BLUEGRASS

- * Double shuffle bowing
- * Second and third positions
- * Sample tunes:
 - "Orange Blossom Special"
 - "Back-up and Push"
 - "Big Mon"
 - "Gold Rush"

COUNTRY BASICS

- * Constructing a country fiddle solo
- * Country fiddle styles
- * How to play in a country band
- * Harmony & "double stops" in a country band setting
- * Sample tunes:
 - "Alabama Jubilee"
 - "Please Release Me"
 - "Together Again"

CONTINUING COUNTRY

- * Distinctive attributes of country styles
- * Performing in a country band
- * Sample tunes:
 - "Faded Love"
 - "Take Me Back to Tulsa"
 - "Panhandle Rag"
 - "Crazy Arms"