

## **Yonder Bios**

### **LaNelle Davis**

LaNelle's path to playing traditional music first passed through the world of traditional dance. In the 1980s, LaNelle called numerous square dances throughout NC and toured extensively with both The Apple Chill and Cane Creek Cloggers.

It wasn't until friends left a bass at her house in 1988 that she began to hear how clogging & bass playing involved the same percussive & driving rhythm she so loved. LaNelle has since toured and recorded with old-time band, Big Medicine, and played in trios and duos with NC bluegrass legend, Tommy Edwards, until his passing in 2021. Retired from 30 years with Durham County Social Services, she now splits her time between playing music and making mosaic murals and sculptures.

### **David O'Brien**

David began playing the mandolin in high school when classmates began jamming on the weekends inspired by the music of a Washington, DC area band called The Seldom Scene. His interest in acoustic music was piqued by the sounds of David Grisman, Tony Rice and the new jazzy tunes being played by these artists, as well as being influenced by the records of Norman Blake and Bill Keith.

As a college student, David continued his pursuit of string music attending fiddler's conventions, and concerts in and around North Carolina. He also did a stint with the Green Grass Cloggers, (home team), which allowed him to travel up the eastern seaboard attending festivals and to be continuously being exposed to great music and live performances. Today he continues to attend festivals and jam sessions and to dabble in mandolin collecting.

### **Billy Willis**

After piano, trumpet and classical music training in bands and choruses, Billy picked up his grandfather's guitar at age 17. By the time he entered Engineering School at NC State in 1972, he was earning money to live at school playing in coffee houses and bars around Raleigh and could often be found in the Cameron Village Underground at the Pier or Cafe DejaVu. An introduction to banjo player Stan Brown quickly evolved into a bluegrass band called the Wahoo Revue who recorded and played bluegrass festivals along the east coast.

In graduate school and after Billy played with Patchwork, which included banjo player and radio host Tim Woodall, for nearly 20 years. He often served as a studio musician in the local studios and joined a R&B/Top 40 band called the Shades in the early 80s as lead guitar.