



Photo by Mac Carbonell

“Bob Carlin has done much to advance traditional banjo. Perhaps more importantly, he has also done much to keep it the same. Within the rather narrow ranges of sonority and texture in the banjo, Carlin is ingenious and sensitive enough to find an expressive medium without overstepping the limitations of the style.”

--Frets Magazine

“We do not have many banjo players on our show because I don’t particularly care for the banjo. But Bob’s come along and gone back to an older style of playing, and done amazing things with it and he makes us want to listen to this instrument again.”

--Garrison Keillor, A Prairie Home Companion

“Bob Carlin is the first in recent times to really make a drop thumb banjo-style fit into a contemporary old-time band style. A fine musician, a good singer with a great voice and creative with his own work.”

--John Hartford

Faithful to timeless Southern Traditions, Bob Carlin has taken the distinctive “clawhammer” banjo style to appreciate audiences worldwide. As a solo performer, and a member of John Hartford’s Stringband, Bob has appeared at countless festivals, clubs, schools and museums. These have included the Philadelphia Folk Festival, Merle Fest, the Telluride Bluegrass Festival and Rockygrass. Various national radio appearances have included NPR’s “Weekend Edition,” “A Prairie Home Companion,” “Mountain Stage” and “The Grand Old Opry.” As a member of the prestigious Virginia and North Carolina Visiting Artist Programs, Carlin presented southern traditional music and the banjo traditions of rural America to audiences in the schools and community.

He has studied both in person and on transcriptions the work of master players from previous generations. Combined with archival research, the result has been over fifty different albums, primarily for Rounder Records, and countless magazine articles and CD notes. Carlin has participated in two grammy-nominated recordings. Through an association with the Blue Ridge Institute at Ferrum College, Bob helped produce the touring museum exhibit and catalog, “The Banjo in Virginia.”

Bob Carlin brings listeners into the performance by encouraging audience participation. The music is entertaining and appeals to audiences of all ages. Bob aims to make each performance a special occasion not only for the audience but also for the artist. “My first goal is that people come away from my performance entertained,” says Carlin. “But very quickly following that, I would like them to feel a love for this kind of music and to appreciate it as much as I do.”



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