

Instructor Bios (Alphabetical Order):

[Cathy Fink](#) – Artistic Director - GRAMMY Award Winner, Cathy has won the John Lennon Songwriting Contest, International Songwriting Competition, Mid-Atlantic Songwriting Contest and has recorded 48 albums in her 48 year career, mostly with partner Marcy Marxer. Influenced by folks like Tom Paxton, Alice Gerrard, Pete Seeger and Ola Belle Reed, she writes what she wants in whatever style suits her from bluegrass to swing and from folk to rock. Her songs have been featured on NPR as commentaries and have helped propel the SHOUT AND SHINE diversity movement in the bluegrass world. She has been nominated for 12 consecutive GRAMMY Awards and her two GRAMMY's say "Artist, Engineer, Producer", but the title she likes best is "Social Music Conductor." www.cathymarcy.com

[Alice Gerrard](#) - IBMA Lifetime Achievement Honoree, GRAMMY nominee and eclectic songwriter, Alice has mixed and matched her love of traditional Appalachian music with songwriting for over fifty years. Her duo with Hazel Dickens brought her to bluegrass notoriety, but her songwriting has been as eclectic as the many causes she cares about. Alice toured with Ola Belle Reed on the Southern Folk Cultural Revival tours and appeared together on many festivals and concerts. She is the subject of the new documentary, "You Gave Me A Song."

[Claire Lynch](#) - Long recognized and praised as a creative force in acoustic music, Claire Lynch is a pioneer who has continually pushed the boundaries of the Bluegrass genre. Her career has been decorated with many accolades including three GRAMMY nominations, eight International Bluegrass Music Association awards and the prestigious United States Artists Walker Fellowship. The song "Dear Sister", co-written with Louisa Branscomb, won the 2014 [International Bluegrass Music Association](#) award for Song of the Year. Her eleven albums are full of inspired songwriting. On her "North by South" album, Claire pays tribute to some of her favorite Canadian songwriters. <https://www.clairelynch.com/>

[Crys Matthews](#) - A prolific lyricist, Matthews blends Americana, folk, jazz, blues, bluegrass and funk into a bold, complex performance steeped in traditional melodies punctuated by honest, original lyrics. Her two 2017 releases, a full-length album called *The Imagineers*, a selection of thoughtful songs about love and life, and an EP called "Battle Hymn for an Army of Lovers", which tackles social justice themes, helped earn Matthews high praise like that from *The Bluegrass Situation* as well as the title of 2017 NewSong Music and Performance Competition grand prize winner. A well loved Kickstarter campaign helped her record the March 2021 new album, "Changemakers." <http://crysmatthews.com/>

[Tom Paxton](#) - GRAMMY Lifetime Achievement Award Winner, Paxton has been an integral part of the songwriting and folk music community since the early 60's Greenwich Village scene, and continues to be a primary influence on today's "New Folk" performers. Tom has a daily songwriting practice and continues to tour, most recently with songwriters Jon Vezner and Don Henry, writing songs together. A few of his famous songs include "The Last Thing on My Mind", "Ramblin' Boy", "Whose Garden Was This?" and "The Marvelous Toy." <https://www.tompaxton.com/>

[Mark Simos](#), professor in Songwriting at Berklee College of Music (Boston), is an acclaimed songwriter, tune composer, guitarist, accompanist, teacher and author. More than 150 of Mark's songs and instrumentals have been recorded by prominent artists and bands, from roots and bluegrass artists such as Alison Krauss and Union Station, Ricky Skaggs, Del McCoury, and Laurie Lewis, to Australian rock icon Jimmy Barnes. At Berklee, Mark has created innovative curriculum in the process aspects of songwriting, as reflected in his two books for Berklee Press: *Songwriting Strategies: A 360° Approach* (2014), and *Songwriting in Practice: Notebooks, Journals, Logs, Lists* (2018).

<https://www.devachan.com>

Joe Troop is a multi-instrumentalist and singer-songwriter from Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He's also the founder of the GRAMMY-nominated string band, Che Apalache, based in Buenos Aires. As a solo artist, Troop composes wry and well-traveled acoustic music, sung in English, Spanish and Japanese. He wrenches old-time music into the world of contemporary global politics, creating a space for sympathy, solidarity, and a little humor. (In April, Troop released a COVID-19 single titled, "A Plea to the US Government to Fully Fund the Postal Service," which was [lauded by John Nichols of *The Nation*](#).) Jaunty, rhythmic, and tale-spinning, Troop plays fingerpicking mountain music for a progressive rural America. <https://joetroop.com/>

Jon Weisberger, recipient of the IBMA's first Songwriter of the Year Award, is a prolific songwriter with more bluegrass "cuts" by other artists than just about anyone. He toured for sixteen years as bass player and songwriter with Chris Jones and the Night Drivers and is now entirely focused on his songwriting, publishing and album producing career.