

Where did March go? It's already time for another Denver Folklore Center newsletter! This month we share our conversation with Friend of the Folklore Center, Demi Demitro from The Velveteers. Then meet one of our newest instrument specialists, Austin Jewell. And read about Chuck Ogsbury, founder of OME Banjos, his career as a builder and the return of ODE Banjos! See our Staff Picks guitar demo video and it's another story about the instrument that got away (sorta), from former store manager, Jeff Jaros. All this and more!

Photo of Harry Tuft (1980s) - Source: Denver Post/Getty Images



Friends of the Denver Folklore Center: The Velveteers' Demi Demitro

Demi Demitro, singer/guitarist for the Boulder, Colorado-born rock trio The Velveteers, is currently on tour (with bandmates Baby Pottersmith and Jonny Fig) and took the time to give us a glimpse into her life and music.

Growing up, Demi practiced guitar up to nine hours a day. She, Pottersmith and Fig formed The Velveteers in 2014 and developed a reputation for their raw, energetic performances. Music superstar Dan Auerbach (from The Black Keys) saw videos of their shows and “instantly dug them ... they just sound so powerful.” He liked their sound so much he invited them to his studio in Nashville.

In October 2021, the Colorado band released their first album *Nightmare Daydream*, with Auerbach producing.

"Hearing their music is what made me want to play guitar and start a rock band. I also love Grace Potter, PJ Harvey, St. Vincent, Deap Vally and Lana Del Rey."

Demi says she wanted to become a musician because it made her feel empowered. “When I started making music it finally felt like I found the one thing that brought me to life. There was no feeling as beautiful as being in the moment of creating music. It sounds silly, but when I started writing music I felt like I became more connected and in tune with the world around me. I started noticing little beautiful things that otherwise I never really cared about before.”

Read more about Demi [HERE](#) and see The Velveteers performing

Influences

Demi remembers “a local band from Boulder called Rose Hill Drive that had a really big impact on me ever since I can remember.

at the Fox Theatre in Boulder on April 15th and at the Aggie Theater in Fort Collins on April 16th. Get more information and tickets [HERE](#).



Staff Picks: Taylor 612ce 12-Fret Guitar

Comfort and panache ring out from this fantastic Grand Concert from Taylor Guitars. The 612ce 12-fret features just that, a 12-fret to the body neck, as well as a Sitka spruce top, flamed maple back and sides, Venetian cutaway, Expression II pickup, V-Class bracing and a Taylor hard shell case. Watch and listen [HERE](#) as Austin from the Denver Folklore Center shows off what this great little guitar can do! And learn more about this guitar [HERE](#).



Jeff Jaros and The One that Got Away

Former store manager Jeff Jaros has this story about an instrument that got away ... from someone else:

A lady came into the Denver Folklore Center (when Harry Tuft owned the store) with a beautiful mandolin – a Vega cylinder back. I'd never seen one before. It was quite ornate with inlay, etc. And my eyes just lit up! And sure enough she was in the market to sell it along with another more mundane mandolin. I was giving Harry the puppy-dog eyes – “Can I have it?! C'mon! Please?!” She wanted to sell them outright.

I told Harry I was very interested in the Vega, so we put our heads together and made her an offer. She was shopping it around town and said if it's the winning offer she'd get back to us. We were the winning offer! The fun part was there was a very well-respected repair guy (who shall remain nameless) who worked just up the street and at the Olde Town Pickin' Parlor. Two weeks after I got that mandolin, he mentioned to me that he met a lady who was selling a beautiful mandolin and that he really wanted it. The owner of the Pickin' Parlor put in an offer but it wasn't accepted. I was smiling while he was telling me and when he finished his story I said, “Well, if you ever want to play it some time, I'll bring it over and you can play it for a few minutes.”

Harry was always so generous. That's one reason I have a number of very nice instruments. He wanted his staff to have the joys of some of those classic

instruments. I've always found that a wise kind of managerial style. You can do a little bit of paying it forward. I think the world of Harry for many reasons and that's just one of them.

Read more stories of the one that got away [HERE](#).



Staff Spotlight: Austin Jewell

Arkansas native, Austin Jewell began working at the Denver Folklore Center in October 2021. He

Austin is a self-taught musician, guitar being his main instrument and the one he feels most accomplished

grew up in Little Rock and attended school in Fayetteville, where he fell in love with the music scene and began playing shows there with a friend from high school. "I loved it so much I stayed there for the first thirty-two years of my life." He moved to Denver about nine months ago with his girlfriend and their dog (an eleven-year-old black lab, Ranger), then a few months ago they adopted a puppy, Stevie – "we are a two-dog household."

Austin's exposure to music was heavily influenced by his parents. "My dad listened to a lot of '90s alt-rock and classic rock, and my mom listened to all kinds of music. She tried to expose my sister and me to different genres of music. One day it was Al Di Meola, then she'd put on Alicia Keys, always something different."

But when I started on my own musical journey, I was playing mainly acoustic guitar, so I was liking lead-driven lines on acoustic guitar instead of the normal cowboy chords. I listened to musicians like Jack Johnson and Dave Matthews, because they would do a combo of the two. Then, as I've grown and after teaching, I've had to learn a bunch of different genres. I found myself bouncing around. But coincidentally, before I started working at the DFC, I fell down a folk

in. "A friend of mine in high school taught me what tabs were and I thought, I can teach myself this. And that's how I spent every afternoon – just playing guitar." He also plays piano, bass, and "can fake my way around a banjo, mandolin and uke." He also taught music for four years in Fayetteville – piano, guitar, bass and ukulele.

When he moved to Denver, his girlfriend (Helen) worked with a young man whose mom had worked at the Denver Folklore Center years ago. He said we had to visit the store because it's a great place and his mom had worked there. "Where we were living was only a couple blocks away, so we walked over and thought 'this is awesome'! I talked to Ian (store employee) and walked out and thought it would be a cool place to work. A few months later I saw they were looking for someone to work there and I started working in the store in October 2021."

Austin has learned so much since he began working at the DFC. "I thought I knew something about music and was quickly shown that I know nothing. And the amount of things I've learned about the instruments and their history and the love that people have for the instruments has blown my mind! I've been working in music for ten years, I was trying to be a rock star in Arkansas, but never really understanding the quality of

and bluegrass rabbit hole and that's only gotten stronger.

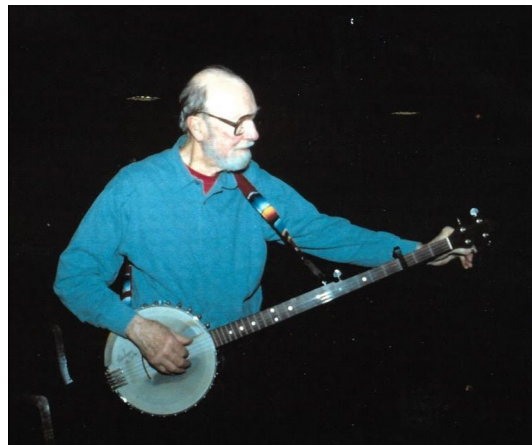
instruments and what went into making them."

Be sure to say "hi" to Austin the next time you're in the store.



What People Are Saying About Us

Great selection of instruments and accessories. Knowledgeable and friendly staff. Good books for learning too! May not be cheaper than online sellers, but definitely a gem of a shop that is well worth supporting. Luthier in the shop is really great. Prices are fair. The luthier also makes custom guitars. They have one of the guitars he made, a hollow body electric, behind the counter and it is beautiful. – D.S.



Meet the Builders: Chuck Ogsbury, OME Banjos

Chuck Ogsbury, founder and builder of OME Banjos, started out musically playing guitar. "A poor teacher and a poor guitar ended my first attempt." It

wasn't until he moved to Colorado in 1956 that he really got into playing music. He "came across a fellow frailing an open-back five-string banjo - I'd never seen that done before. It was hard to tell how he was getting all those notes out of that banjo. His name was Darius 'Diz' Darwin, a relative of Charles Darwin." It was his friendship with Diz and another banjo player (Al Camp) that got Chuck playing the banjo.

He considers himself first and foremost a designer and builder. "That is what I really love to do. Building musical instruments is especially rewarding because of the music involved. Designing with sound adds another dimension that I have a special interest in. The banjo in particular is such a wonderful instrument to work with. Its construction allows for so many possibilities - just about anything goes."

KEEP READING



Baby Taylor Guitars - Authentic, Small, Affordable

Perfectly sized for small hands, the Baby Taylor makes a great first guitar for a young learner—but its full sound and portable size also make it a great travel

guitar for anyone who wants to keep practicing on the road.

Built with solid tops and comfortable, easy-playing necks, the Baby Taylor is all about making it fun and simple to enjoy acoustic sound and build your skills as a musician. And with options for built-in electronics and included gig bags, these guitars have everything you need to get going.

Visit the store and see our selection of Baby Taylors or see them online at [BT1](#), [BT1E](#) and [BTTe-Koa](#).



Denver Folklore Center Co-Owner Saul Rosenthal has some thoughts on the growing trend of buying online versus in-store.

To state the obvious, the internet has dramatically changed the way we shop. During the last two years I've made far more online than in-person purchases, to the detriment of smaller retail stores like ours. For a good number of months

during the pandemic that was really the only viable option as brick-and-mortar stores were closed or restricting access and people were reticent to leave home and interact with others whose health status they didn't know or trust.

Industry experts are reporting that many more people each year are using the internet to purchase instruments and other music-related tools. Some manufacturers are even abandoning the retail channel entirely and selling directly to consumers. Companies like Sweetwater, Musician's Friend and Amazon are capturing ever increasing proportions of the instrument buying public.

So why look for your next guitar, mandolin or banjo at a local store when it is so convenient to just order it online? Since I've done both over the years I can testify that the in-person experience far outweighs the convenience of online shopping.

[READ MORE](#)

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