



## *Kim France and The Fretlands*

The idea for Kim France and the Fretlands was conceived at Heathwood House Concerts two years ago. Kim first appeared at Heathwood with Molasses Creek, the band from her summer home of Ocracoke Island. Terri and Brenda expressed a love for the bluegrass songs that Kim brought to the stage, and asked her to come back with an ensemble that could fill an evening with pure bluegrass magic! When Molasses Creek returned to perform this past fall, they made the request again. On May 13, 2017 that request will be met with this all-star cast from North Carolina's High Country!

Kim has played, written and recorded with mandolinist Mark Schimick from her first years as a musician. The two met on Ocracoke in 1999 and have performed side by side in numerous combinations ever since- most notably Boss Hawg and Sassagrass. Andy Eversole was another early musical contact. In '99, Andy was stationed in Greensboro picking a banjo when Mark and Kim stopped in on their way to the mountains. Sam Wharton is the newest "bluegrass buddy" in the Fretland family. Sam came to Ocracoke with Mark in the summer of 2016. The two invited Kim to join them for a gig at the local nightclub. Kim and Sam were introduced on stage just moments before the show, yet harmonies ensued instantly and effortlessly. The fun they had on stage, and singing gospel into the wee hours of the night, made Sam first call on the long roster of pickers that inhabit his hometown of Asheville.



Kim France, bass



Kim France is a bassist and vocalist of epic energy, and sight to behold on stage. She weaves around her fellow musicians and into the mic, waltzing with the bass and always holding down the bottom end. Her dance partner is a '67 doghouse Kay that people like to remind her "is bigger than she is!". Kim spends most of the year in the mountains of Boone, playing double bass for the Johnson City Symphony Orchestra and various chamber groups. She also fronts two jazz projects; The Mercury Dames- a trio of women singing vintage vocal jazz, and the Good Vibes Jazz Trio-a vocal/instrumental combo featuring vibraphone. In the summer, Kim relocates to Ocracoke Island to play with Molasses Creek and The Madame Presidents. Kim got her start playing bluegrass guitar on Ocracoke in the late 90's. She later discovered that upright bass was a natural fit, and has been exploring new musical styles ever since. In her 14 years as a bassist, Kim has lent the low end and her vocal stylings to many of her friends' and colleagues' recordings. She has performed with hip-hop fusion group Turbo Pro Project, rock band The Erasers, big band Swing Set, West African drum & dance ensemble EYA!, bluegrass bands Boss Hawg and Lost Ridge Band, and numerous jazz combinations, just to name a few! The Fretlands is a return to her roots, with some beloved bluegrass friends from her earliest days as a musician.

Mark Schimick, mandolin



Mark Schimick is the nationally renowned mandolin player, singer, and multi-instrumentalist for the Josh Daniel/Mark Schimick Project. He was previously best known for his 12 year stint with Larry Keel and Natural Bridge. Born in Chicago, and raised Western Carolina, Mark was exposed to the music of Appalachia through early visits to family in southwestern Virginia, and radio broadcasts of Stanley Brothers and

Flatt and Scruggs. At 6, Mark pursued formal training in sacred choir singing and classical piano, later playing drums in a variety of contemporary bands. Mark has played the mandolin for 19 years, and become one of the most versatile, fiery pickers on the acoustic music scene. He is an outstanding multi-instrumentalist with a clear, powerful singing voice that ranges from high-lonesome, to motown-soul. Mark has shared the stage with such luminaries as Sam Bush, David Grisman, Colonel Bruce Hampton, Merl Saunders, Tony Rice, Peter Rowan, Vassar Clements, and Jim Lauderdale, and appeared on numerous recordings. His album No Records Spinning was voted in the top 25 Bluegrass releases of 2007 by WNCW of western North Carolina.

Andy Eversole; banjo



Ancient tones rang from the valleys, and traditional tunes drifted from the hills, leaving him hooked beyond recovery. Hundreds of festivals, concerts, and bootlegs later, Eversole's music has become a "creature" of its own. Andy adeptly runs through the most traditional sounding bluegrass; diving old time, folding into jazz, fusing into funk, and melting into time. His music guides the listener through a mystical journey. His songs are creatively crafted gems that deal with life, death, love, moonshine, and moonbeams. Laden with sweet fiddles and haunting banjos, this is where 'Mountain Music Meets the Cosmos'. With a pioneer's spirit, Andy launched his vision to bring peace and community through music with his project Banjo Earth. The concept is a series of albums and movies taking place in countries all over the world. Armed only with the banjo and some recording equipment, he and the team take off for uncharted territory to experience new music and old traditions. China was the first destination on the itinerary, lending itself to a deeply spiritual and musical experience, and only the winds know what adventures await next.

Sam Wharton, guitar



Sam Wharton is a dynamic guitar player. Originally from Alabama he developed his picking chops in the music halls of Telluride, Colorado. He currently makes his home in the mountains of Western North Carolina. He sings lead and harmony vocals on all 3 Songs From The Road Band albums.