

Press Release

Carter Family Memorial Music Center, Inc.

HILTONS Saturday, July 28th, 2018, at 7:30 p.m., the Carter Family Fold in Hiltons, Virginia, will present a concert of old time music by Larry Sigmon and Martha Spencer – the Unique Sound of the Mountains. Admission to the concert is \$10 for adults, \$2 for children 6 to 11, under age 6 free.

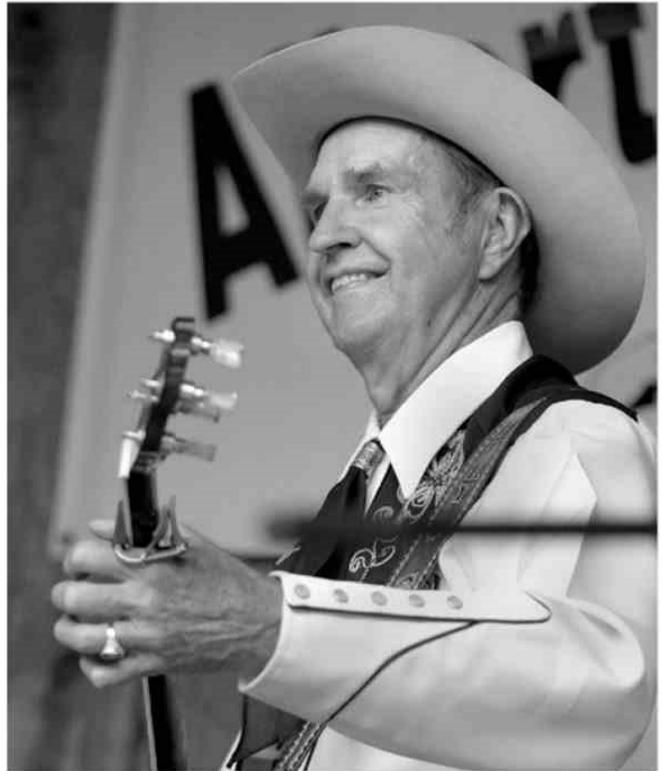
If you ever saw Larry Sigmon and the Unique Sound of the Mountains, you know the sound was unlike anything you ever heard before. Over the course of more than ten albums and several years of performing, Larry Sigmon and his late partner Barbara Poole were one of the best old time groups performing and routinely brought the house down with a variety of fast-paced mountain music tunes fueled by Sigmon's high-speed claw hammer banjo picking and Poole's infectious "heartbeat" bass plucking. While there were several groups out there that could get you onto the dance floor, no old time band could wear out your clogging shoes faster than the Unique Sound of the Mountains.



Both Larry and Barbara played mountain music from childhood, learning the craft from their families while growing up surrounded by the rich musical heritage and scenic beauty of southern Virginia. Larry first learned to play guitar at the age of 15, and he eventually taught himself to play the banjo and breath harp. His father, fiddler Lewis Sigmon, also taught him how to perform classic dance songs in the true raw southern style. As for Barbara, she was playing her stand-up bass as early as age 13 in her brother Jimmy's band. Both musicians spent several years playing in other groups before they first jammed together at a local fiddlers' convention. The more the duo performed together, the more their audiences grew until Larry and Barbara decided to work together long-term, dubbing themselves the Unique Sound of the Mountains. That partnership continued and flourished until Barbara's death in 2008 after battling cancer.



Throughout their partnership, Larry and Barbara endured loss and sickness but they remained dedicated to their music and their fan base and never missed a show. They played alongside Bill Monroe, Ralph Stanley, Jimmy Martin, Grandpa Jones, Mac Wiseman, Jim & Jessie, Porter Wagner, Mike Snider, and Johnny and June Carter Cash. In 2002, Barbara performed with Johnny and June Carter Cash on June's final album, the critically acclaimed *Wildwood Flower*. Larry also had the prestige of taking part in workshops at the Tennessee Banjo Institute, where his skills were cherished by banjo players from across the country. In September 2005, the Unique Sound of the Mountains performed live on the Grand Ole Opry (a life-long dream of Barbara's), leaving their audience screaming for more.



Larry Sigmon and Barbara Poole were truly an American treasure, delighting fans who often drove hundreds of miles just for a chance to dance to their rollicking and unforgettable mountain music. Proud craftsmen who knew hundreds of both classic and obscure musical treasures, they often left audiences wondering how so many sounds can come out of only two people.

After Barbara's death, Larry stopped performing publicly. He and his wife Linda cared for Larry's father during an extended illness. Never able to find anyone who could play quite the way Barbara did, Larry wasn't sure he would play again.

Enter Martha Spencer of the Whitetop Mountain Band. Martha grew up surrounded by music at her Whitetop Mountain home. Her parents are



Emily and (the late) Thornton Spencer of the Whitetop Mountain Band. Martha continues to perform with the Whitetop Mountain Band. Her beautiful mountain voice is unmistakable. There aren't many instruments she doesn't play – guitar, banjo, fiddle, and bass are examples. A world-class dancer, she's truly a born entertainer. Her infectious smile lights up the room, and audiences are spell-bound by her. Martha personifies old

time, mountain music. Her love for what she does is evident and shines through clearly in her performances.

Martha grew up playing on stage at the Carter Family Fold. The Whitetop Mountain Band is one of only two or three bands still playing the Fold today who were there performing 44 years ago when Janette Carter started music shows in the old A.P. Carter Store. At our 2015 annual festival in August, Larry came to jam. When a series of interstate accidents prevented Big Country Bluegrass from taking the stage, Larry and Martha stepped up and brought the house down. The audience reaction was unforgettable. Tears were flowing, and they received at least four standing ovations. Since that time, they have played the Albert Hash Festival and many other shows. The Fold could not be more excited to welcome anyone than we are to welcome Larry and Martha as the Unique Sound of the Mountains.

Don't miss the Unique Sound of the Mountains at the Carter Fold. Having performed at the Fold many times since that 2015 performance as the new Unique Sound of the Mountains – Larry and Martha are truly Carter Fold favorites. No one knows more old time music than Larry Sigmon. Martha Spencer may be as close to that as it gets. It is an honor and a privilege for the Fold to welcome them. Be sure to bring your dancing shoes. It's impossible to sit still when Larry and Martha hit the stage! For more information, check them out on YouTube or on their site at <https://www.facebook.com/uniquestoundofthemountains>.

Carter Family Memorial Music Center is a nonprofit, rural arts organization established to preserve traditional, acoustic mountain music. The center is a family-friendly, drug and alcohol free venue. In addition to the performance area, we maintain the Carter Family Museum and the A.P. Carter birthplace cabin. Both the cabin and the museum are historic landmarks and are open from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and later at performance intermission on Saturdays. For more information on the center, go to our site on the internet – www.carterfamilyfold.org/. Partial program funding for programs is provided by the *Virginia Commission for the Arts* the *National Endowment for the Arts*. marketing and technical assistance are provided by *Virginia Tourism Corporation*. To access recorded information on shows coming up at the Fold, call 276-386-6054. We can be found on Facebook – page Carter Fold – and on Twitter – @carterfoldinfo. To speak to a Fold volunteer staff member, call 276-594-0676. If we don't answer you right away, we'll get back to you in 24 hours.