

A journey to the origins, artists and techniques of American craft

CRAFT IN AMERICA

CRAFT IN AMERICA: MUSIC

ARTISTS' BIOS

Friday, November 20, 2015 at 10:00pm* on PBS



Four generations of luthiers preserve the Hawaiian heritage craft of making extraordinary ukuleles at **Kamaka Hawaii, Inc.** (Honolulu, HI). World renowned for their outstanding tonal characteristics, these instruments are collected and played by the finest ukulele musicians in the world including ukulele virtuoso **Jake Shimabukuro**. At the age of four, Jake started playing the ukulele, quickly developing a unique fast and complex finger style. In 2006, his version of “While My Guitar Gently Weeps” went viral on YouTube. He travels the world year-round performing at sold out concerts and his albums have won high praise and top music awards.

www.kamakaukulele.com

www.jakeshimabukuro.com



Now in their 30th year of inventing, designing and hand-crafting custom brass instruments and mouthpieces, the **David G. Monette Corporation** (Portland, OR) has developed a holistic philosophy taking into account the player, the instrument, the performance space and the audience as a complete communication system. Monette’s revolutionary “constant-pitch-center” mouthpiece allows the trumpet to be played from soft to loud without the pitch changing as in traditional instruments and Monette’s state-of-the-art, no-tension alignment creates an instrument so easy to play, it’s like breathing. These instruments are coveted by world renowned musicians like Wynton Marsalis, Charles Schlueter, Maynard Ferguson and jazz great **Scotty Barnhart**. Barnhart is a trumpeter, composer, educator, author, and after 20 years with The Count Basie Orchestra, was named its Director.

www.monette.net

www.scottyarnhart.com



Five-string Bluegrass banjos like those made by **Stelling Banjo Works** (Afton, VA) are designed for power and clarity of sound. Geoff Stelling has spent the past 40 years perfecting his banjos from the wedge-fitted pot assembly up to the pivot-pin tailpiece. The sound of a banjo is unique, he explains, it’s a percussive sound like “a drum with strings vibrating on it.” For renowned composer/musician **Tony Ellis** (Circleville, OH) who comes out of Bluegrass and Old Time music, a Stelling banjo is his choice. Named a “Pioneer of Bluegrass Music” by the International Bluegrass Music Museum, his experimental compositions have paired the banjo with the harp, pump organ and slide guitar.

www.stellingbanjo.com

www.tonyellisbanjo.com



In the 17th century, slaves transported from Africa to America began making early banjos based on indigenous African instruments. The banjo has since developed into a versatile instrument used in many styles of music: Bluegrass, Dixieland, Country, and Classical. Among the great banjo builders in the U.S. is **James Hartel** of Hartel Banjos, (Franklin, NY) maker of authentic minstrel banjos based on designs from 19th century American minstrelsy. Of the many musicians skilled at this instrument is the gifted Grammy-winner **Rhiannon Giddens**, African American folk music interpreter and revivalist, recently featured in a performance at the White House with a newly released solo album *Tomorrow is My Turn*.

www.minstrelbanjo.com

www.rhiannongiddens.com

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Joseph Pereira, Principal Timpanist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic since 2007, composer and teacher, has appeared in some of the world's greatest orchestras and can be heard on numerous recordings and soundtracks to major motion pictures. Working closely with timpani mallet maker **Jason Ginter** of JGpercussion, together they create a broad range of timpani sounds and colors for the complex, expressive music performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

www.jpereiramusic.com

www.jgpercussion.com



Joan Baez, musician and political activist, often performs with only a guitar to accompany her clear strong voice, her Martin guitar. Since the landmark 1959 Newport Folk Festival, Baez has been at the forefront of and witness to significant social changes in the history of this country. Her favorite guitar is a C.F. Martin vintage 0-45, made by the **Martin Guitar Company** (Nazareth, PA), which for 6 generations since the 1830s, has been family run, continuously producing acoustic instruments preferred by world-class musicians.

www.joanbaez.com

www.martinguitar.com

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Photos courtesy of Mark Markley, C.F. Martin Archives/Greg Solomacha, Stephen Butler.

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Additional images of all the artists' work are available at:

PBS Pressroom: pressroom.pbs.org/Programs/c/CRAFT-IN-AMERICA/701-Music.aspx

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