

Blue Sage Band - Biographies

Mike Iverson:

Raised in Layton, Utah, Mike purchased his first guitar and began playing music during his first year of High School (1975). By the time he had graduated, he was learning to play the banjo and had formed his first folk/rock trio. While still in high school, Mike began researching and performing old time cowboy and pioneer songs. This obsession with songs "native" to the west soon made Mike a popular performer at events such as the Festival of the American West where he performed for over twenty five years.

Known locally as the inspiration behind Blue Sage, Mike Iverson is now known worldwide for his contributions advancing the art of clawhammer banjo. This unusual banjo technique is now going through a renaissance as players everywhere are starting to realize its potential. Mike is one of the leading figures in this movement and has received worldwide accolades as an arranger, instructor, author, and as the creator of one of the world's most popular clawhammer banjo websites.

Over the years, Mike has taught private lessons, recorded as a studio musician, competed in (and won) music competitions, been part owner in a music store, and has performed throughout the western states; his music has been featured in movies, television series, and a PBS documentary.

Although he considers himself to be a folk singer, Mike is widely regarded as one of the finest clawhammer style banjo players and has conducted instrumental workshops on guitar, mandolin, banjo, and improvisation (music theory).

Mike is interested in many styles of music and has now been performing professionally for over twenty five years.

Shauna Iverson:

A native of Layton, Utah, Shauna has been playing the bass fiddle for about fifteen years. After transferring her cello technique over to this much larger instrument, Shauna began getting invitations to play in other bands. She began her stage career as part of an all women folk band known as the "Ripe Tomatoes". Mike eventually talked her into joining Blue Sage.

Shauna's bass technique is powerful. It's Shauna's strong, driving bass lines that enable the trio to achieve a fullness of sound comparable with much larger ensembles.

Mike feels himself to be very lucky to have Shauna in the band: "What more could a folk singer dream of than to share his music with someone who, for the past quarter century, has been his dearest friend and constant companion." Shauna and Mike recently celebrated their 26th wedding anniversary.

Heather Blaisdell:

Mike and Shauna's daughter, Heather Iverson Blaisdell, began playing the violin at the age of five. By the age of fifteen she began working on the fiddle music of America and the British Isles.

Although Heather has dedicated herself to studying traditional fiddle styles, she grew up listening to the fiddling of Ryan Shupe and Rob Ricks (they both played in early versions of Blue Sage). As Ryan and Rob are two of the best improvising fiddlers anywhere, some of their influence couldn't help but rub off on Heather. This combination of fiddle influences has given Heather the perfect set of skills to bring to the Blue Sage Band

Rob Ricks:

Rob Ricks grew up with a fiddle in his hands. As part of a musical family, Rob spent much of his early childhood on stage. While still in his teens, Rob became one of the founding members of the Utah based bluegrass band 'String Fever'. Rob eventually took over the fiddle spot in Blue Sage before leaving Utah to complete his MBA at Yale.

Now that Rob is back in Utah, Blue Sage is fortunate to have one of the most dynamic and exciting fiddlers the west has ever produced.