

2026 String Band Summit, ETSU – Preliminary Schedule as of 2026-1-30

Tuesday – Mountain Made Appalachian Folk Festival – 11am – 10pm; arts, crafts, food, information, and performances by storyteller Adam Booth and musician Amythyst Kiah

Thursday, April 9

Reece Museum, 4:00 pm - “Bluegrass and Religion” - Pete Ward- talk co-sponsored by ETSU Religious Studies

7:00-9:30pm - Maria Muldaur and Friends - The Down Home, 300 W Main St.

Friday, April 10

Reece Museum

9-10:30am

Teaching and Learning String Band Music (90 min)

-Cultural Tourism in the Orchestra Classroom: Why Token Bluegrass Isn’t Enough (Nate Olson, ETSU)

-Overcoming the Barriers to Offering ‘By Ear’ String Ensembles: A Narrative Inquiry of String Teachers’ Experiences (Annie Savage, JMU)

-What Now?" - Managing a College Stringband After the Death of an Advisor - Isaac McCarthy (Ohio State)

10:45am-12:15pm

Individuals and String Band Music (90 min)

-Field Recording as Participatory Musicking: The Case of Bill Smedley - Esther M. Ellis (UNG)

-Listening to the Haleys (Richard Will, UVA)

-Not Just a Good Ole Boys Club: Studying the Personal, Performance, and Professional Roles of Women in Bluegrass (Lydia Hamby, ETSU)

12:15-1:15pm - Roundtable / working Session: String Bands in String/Higher Education (lunch, Marketplace cafeteria, Culp Center) Led by TBA

1:30-3:00pm

Historical String Band Music (90 min)

-An Early American Bowed String Band?: New England viols “in Consort” (Loren Ludwig)

- “Rich-R-Tone Records: Documenting the 'Oldest Bluegrass Label' in the World" (Ted Olson, ETSU)
- Banjos and Pedal Steels: Analyzing Jerry Garcia's Bluegrass Roots (Joti Rockwell, Pomona)

3:15-4:30pm

“Shifting Currents: Tributaries of Post-Secondary Research on Old-Time and Bluegrass Music” - 90 minutes

-In Crooked Cardinal Directions: Mapping Music and Caves of the Cumberland Plateau (Jenny Hesoun, IU)

-Authenticating Americana in Japanese Bluegrass and Old-Time Imaginaries (Donald Bradley, IU)

-Against Sportization, or Toward A Tension-Arousal Paradigm for Old-Time Music (Rob McCormac, IU)

4:45-5:45pm

Keynote Session (Sav Sankaran, Unspoken Tradition)

5:45-7:00pm – DINNER Culp Center, etc.

7:00-8:30pm - ATMA Ensemble - ETSU Martin Center, Recital Hall

7:30-9:30pm - Intimate Evening with Maria Muldaur, ETSU Reece Museum

Saturday, April 11, 2026 – location TBA

9:00 - 9:45am - Workshop: Strings and Rhythm with ATMA Ensemble (VR Venkataraman and group)

10:00-10:45am - Workshop: Bass. Entrepreneurship in music business. Innovation vs ideas (Gary Upton)

11:00-11:45am - “Small Conferences”, Festivals, Gatherings, Summits, and Hangs: The Meeting Spaces of String Band Music” - Holly Riley (MTSU) Mark Dillon (GTCC)

12:15 – 1:15 – Lunch Discussion “Serving musical communities” Led by Chris Witulski (Bowling Green State University)

1:30-2:00pm – Lecture/Performance: “Unfreezing the Archive: Performance, Accessibility, and Old-Time Field Recordings” (Rob McCormac, Ella Jordan)

2:15 – 3:15 - Roundtable - Religion and Bluegrass

Pete Ward (Durham)

Lee Bidgood (ETSU)

Fred Bartenstein (University of Dayton)

Jennifer Adler (ETSU)

Laura Bryant (St. John's Episcopal, Johnson City, TN)

3:30-4:00pm Fusing Bluegrass/Old-Time with Other Genres of Music - Rusty Rooster Stringband (UNG) [or have this in another venue]

Afternoon evening band performances in other venues, TBA:

Student Ensemble Showcase

MTSU String Band

Hardin Valley Thunder - Pellissippi State string band

FSU Old Time Ensemble, Directed by Aisha Ivey

UT Appalachian Strings

ETSU Global String Band

Other ETSU bands?

Main stage performance and square dance, details TBA.

Late night jam / afterparty TBA.

Sunday, April 12

9:15 – 10:15am – String Band Music and Religion - Saint John's Episcopal Church

10:25am-12:15pm – String-band-infused service - Saint John's Episcopal Church

TBD – lunch and sendoff