

Broad Strokes

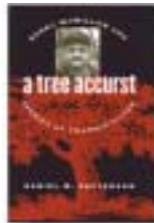
(special performance edition, summer 2004)

Ballads, Storytelling, and Folk Music Slated for 'Sodom' Exhibition

As a part of its **Sodom Laurel Album** exhibition and performance series, art6 is featuring the folk singing, storytelling, and balladry of **North Carolina folk masters Bobby McMillon and Sheila Adams**.



Bobby McMillon
(photograph copyrighted by Tom Rankin)



Bobby McMillon (appearing Friday, May 21, 8:00 pm) hails from Lenoir, North Carolina, and is heir to three different strands of Appalachian tradition. From his father's family in Tennessee he learned primitive Baptist traditions and a host of traditional songs, stories, and customs. As a child, from his mother's people in North Carolina, he heard many tales and old ballads, and even attended school with relatives of Tom Dula (the "Tom Dooley" of the song made famous by the Kingston Trio).

By age 17, McMillon began recording and interviewing relatives and neighbors who knew the music and stories of his extended Appalachian heritage. Now widely known as a singer and musician (playing banjo, guitar, dulcimer, harmonica, and jews harp), McMillon lyrically incorporates traditional mountain idioms into his own distinct music and storytelling. He has performed at **The Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife**, the 1982 Knoxville **World's Fair**, and numerous other festivals, as well as at schools and in film, radio, and television. (background information courtesy freenetpages.com).



Sheila Adams (photograph courtesy The Folk Song Society of Greater Boston)

Sheila Kay Adams (appearing Wednesday, June 2, 8:00 pm) is a dynamic seventh-generation ballad singer, banjo player, storyteller, and Appalachian humorist from Madison County, North Carolina (in fact herself a resident of Sodom Laurel, the tobacco-growing community documented by photographer **Rob Amberg** in art6's current photography exhibition, **Sodom Laurel Album**). The grandniece of **Dellie Norton**, Adams is one of a handful of singers revitalizing the dying family tradition of passing down the stories and songs of the British Isles and her Appalachian heritage. She has recorded three cassettes, written several books, and tours nationally. Adams is also a gifted banjoist; in fact, the **S model** style of banjo is named for her. This particular model began taking shape in her admiration of the earlier, more compact vintage banjos. Adams' requirements and her fond recollections of Tom Staley's **Bay State** banjo were the inspirations for the **S model**. (information courtesy **Cedar Mountain Banjos**). Both performances are \$5.

Additional art6 **Sodom Laurel** events include screenings (Saturday, June 19, 8:00 pm) of the acclaimed films **That High Lonesome Sound** and **The Songcatcher** (both films are free and open to the public). Saturday, June 26, 8:00 pm, it's the **Shockoe Espresso Poets** reading (including art6 members **Wesley Childress**, **Shann Palmer**, and **Jimmy Warner**). A reception will follow. Friday, July 16, 8:00 pm, brings **13 Month Crop**, a slide lecture by documentary photographer **Jesse Adams** (both of these events are free as well). Please join us.



art6 is grateful to artist and founding member **Henrietta Near** (who maintains a studio in North Carolina) for proposing and working tirelessly in support of the **Sodom Laurel** series. Another artist and founding member of art6, **Mitzi Humphrey**, was born in Johnson City in East Tennessee (not too far from Sodom Laurel) and has her own vivid recollections of mountain people, music, and stories, and through extensive genealogical research--an increased knowledge of her own deep roots throughout Appalachia. Many thanks to **Marian Hollowell**, **Doug Hayes**, and the art6 **Performing Arts Series Committee** for their sponsorship and help with these events.

For more info about these and other upcoming art6 events, visit www.art6.org or phone 804.343.1406. To contact the editor of art6 and **Broad Strokes** or to inquire about being a guest writer for **Broad Strokes**, phone **Thomas M. Humphrey** at 804.794.7579. art6 is located at 6 East Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. TMH

