

Hammer Dulcimer Rendezvous 2024
Suggestions & Feedback, Followed by “Save the Dates!”
What went well? What could be improved?

1- Facilities — That was a close call, with the insurance and contractor hassles regarding Morgan Hall – but we survived...

If anyone knows of any corporations, endowments or wealthy individuals looking to help out the Hull Foundation and Learning Center, they’d love to get a grant to build a couple of class rooms on the property. (Not to be too self-interested, but a couple quiet classrooms would be great for our event – getting workshops away from kitchen noise would be a lovely thing!)

Also, if you’d just like to make a tax deductible donation on your own, their website is:

<http://hullflc.org>

• Comments

2- Size of Event — Up until 2019 we had larger events. In 2022 we made the choice to limit the size of the event. 2023 year we did the same, keeping it to roughly 30 registrants verses the “before times” 50. So at our peak (Saturday Concert and Dinner/Raffle) counting players, guests and instructors we had 44 people. (In the old days we got upwards of 75, which made that Saturday meal pretty dang crowded!)

This year we capped it at 36, which felt about right, in terms of room in workshops and at meals, concerts, etc.

Given the smaller group we’re able to do three workshops as opposed to the before-times 5. This means we don’t have to cram a group into the office, and Hull Park staff gets to keep working on Thursday and Friday.

• Comments

3- Workshops / Instructors –

For the Intermediate/Advanced groups we continued with the Dots & Solids concept. It wasn't 100% either way, of course, but there was a clear "lean." Was the option helpful? Should we continue with the "leaning"?

Do you have constructive feedback that we could provide to our instructors?

-- Anonymously, of course, except in my case.

(I can take it, though, with no hard feelings, so let me know any ways I might be more helpful, as well.)

- **Katie Moritz**

- **Dan Landrum**

- **Simon Chrisman**

- **Carl Thor**

- **Jim Wells**

- **Mick Doherty**

4- Special Sessions/Panel Discussions/Demo — We had Simon volunteer to lead two Ear Training sessions in the Picnic Shelter. (I only made it to the second one, where folks were kinda tuckered, so we just sang a lot of songs!)

What Special Sessions/Panels/Discussion Topics from past years, if any, would you like to see revisited?

What Special Sessions/Panels/Discussion Topics would you like to see introduced?

5- Jams -- Jim Wells volunteered to lead and a jam on Saturday night in the Dorm Lobby for the N/I group.

Many thanks to Katie, Dan, Carl, Simon, Jim, who pitched in on the jam sessions. (Also a shout out to Mike Pompa, who picked up the bass for hours at a time, as well as fiddlin' along!)

Did you participate in jams?

• Comments

6- Meals – Chef Chris Botcheos has retired, and Matt Bendel did a good job charging into the breach for us. I understand some of our “special diet” folks got to work training him :)

It is uncertain whether Matt will be up for cooking for us again, as the chef gig at Hull Park is not a full time gig, and he has a family to support.

Chris came through on his promise from last year: “Even if I don’t cook for you next year, I’ll bring some smoked salmon for the raffle.”

We are not sure what the chef situation will be next year. Options might be to have the event catered by an outside firm, which would likely cost more, or maybe to bring in our own kitchen team, which opens up another can of worms, but could be worth looking into. We hope to know more by the New Year.

After so many years of being well cared for, I'd hate to go back to the early days when we cooked our own food – plus, that cuts into music time...

General meal comments – (*Other than the eggplant that needed another half hour in the oven – we all know about that, as does Matt!*) --

Specialty diet thoughts/comments –

7- Performances/Open Mic —

Debbie Lutzky Allen, having been “volunteered”, did a fine job running the Open Stage on Friday night. Her pre-show stage managing was a revelation and most entertaining, as well!

Comments/Suggestions?

8- Schedule – Let me know what you thought about the schedule, the length of sessions, the amount of free time, types of activities, etc.

9- Likes/changes/additions –

What was the one thing you liked the most?

What one thing would you change or add?

What would you tell someone who was thinking about coming to a (hopeful, we are) 2025 HD ‘Vous’?

10 - Future instructors --

Which instructor(s) would you like to see at future Rendezvous?

11 - Save the Dates!– May 15-18, 2025 are reserved at Hull Park.

I'll be sending out an “Early Registration” form sometime after high summer with the “potentially non-refundable” \$50 deposit to save a spot.

It helps to get enough commitments early, so we can rest assured we'll have enough folks to make the ‘Vous happen.

At that point, if you're sure you're “in” I'll accept a \$50 “hold my spot” deposit for the first 36 Registrants. If you are committed to coming and can save the dates in your calendar, this would save your spot prior to the “full payment” Registration period, which since Covid has been in January or February. Then, when we get around to the official Registration, your \$50 is credited towards the final bill.

If on the other hand, you've taken up the bassoon and decided that tuned percussion is not as refined, or have simply made other plans, you instantly become a patron of the Vous, and we let folks know another spot has opened up. Of course, if you let me know early enough that your plans have changed, you'd get your loot back, as early on we don't worry so much.

Finally, just a note about the potential “Waiting List” – this really only works a few months in advance. If we get late cancellations, our experience is that folks on the waiting list have already made plans for May; it's most useful in January and February.

And that's all I've got, for now!

Thanks again,

Mick

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