

Janita Baker
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Janita Baker has been a performing musician for almost 50 years and is best known for her solo performance on the mountain dulcimer. Through her unique style of fingerpicking she presents her audiences with a wide range of musical experiences including classical, traditional, delta and country blues, ragtime, swing and original instrumental pieces. A gifted story teller, Janita delights her listeners with a warm and personal sharing of her music and introduces to her audience the incredible complexity, variety and beauty of the mountain dulcimer.

With the release of her first album, *Fingerpicking Dulcimer*, she introduced the four equidistant string dulcimer with a variety of classical, traditional, ragtime and blues arrangements. Through her recordings, tablature books and appearances at festivals and workshops across the United States Janita has become well-known as both a consummate teacher and performer. Janita has taught at John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC; Western Carolina University's Dulcimer U!, Cullowhee, NC; Spring Augusta Dulcimer Week, Elkins, WV; the Columbia River Gorge Dulcimer Festival near Portland, OR; Winter Festival of Acoustic Music, Dallas, TX; Swannanoa Dulcimer Week, NC; Kentucky Music Week in Bardstown, KY, the North Georgia Foothills Dulcimer Association Fall Festival at Unicoi Lodge, Helen, GA, and many other venues.

Janita's second recording, *Solace*, features arrangements of contemporary, classical, blues, ragtime and original compositions performed on both the standard and the bass dulcimer. The *Blues and Ragtime for Fretted Dulcimer* CD covers both classical Joplin rags and a variety of ragtime and blues styles including those of Robert Johnson and W. C. Handy. Both *Fingerpicking Dulcimer* and *Blues and Ragtime for Fretted Dulcimer* tablature books have been published by Mel Bay Publications to accompany the recordings.

In addition to the Mel Bay publications, Janita has authored several other books, including *Four String Fingerpicking* and a book of rounds, *Follow Me Merrily*, which she co-authored with Madeline MacNeil. *Home for the Holidays* is a collection of tunes for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hannukah, and her latest release, *Solo Bass Dulcimer* is receiving wide acclaim for highlighting the bass dulcimer as a lead instrument and solo voice.

Janita's latest recording, *Stardust*, showcases a variety of songs including classical, standards of the 30's and 40's, Beatles and traditional Hawaiian slack key arrangements.

Along with her husband Robert, Janita builds Blue Lion dulcimers and guitars. Located near the town of Santa Margarita on the central coast of California, they began the company in 1977 and work full time building instruments which are renowned for their resonance, quality and beauty, and for the exquisite custom inlay work which is Janita's speciality. As a duo, the Bakers have released two recordings: *Walkin' Around Lucky* and their latest, *The Hot Rod Sleigh*, both of which received nominations as Folk Album and Christmas Album of the Year (respectively) from Just Plain Folks, an organization dedicated to independent recording labels.