

About The World's Longest-Running Cigar Box Guitar Festival

Huntsville, Alabama is home to the world's longest-running Cigar Box Guitar Festival, organized by The Cigar Box Guitar Store, the only brick-and-mortar store of its kind in the world. It is held annually on the grounds of Lowe Mill Arts & Entertainment, a historic textile mill that is the largest privately-owned artists community in the U.S. with over 200 juried artists in 160 studios.

Since its inception in 2004, The Cigar Box Guitar Festival has drawn over 62,000 spectators. The festival is proud to be entering its 19th year of sharing cigar box guitar music with the greater Huntsville community, as well as visitors from throughout the Southeast, for its next Festival scheduled for June 2-3, 2023.

The 18th Annual Festival, held June 3-4, 2022, was a free, family-friendly event featuring eight musical acts and served as a fundraiser for music education in local public schools. Festival expenses were covered by sponsor dollars, while a team of 20 volunteers dedicated their time to the event's preparations, and day-of activities. An estimated 2,300 people experienced some portion of the Festival in person, while more than 300,000 were exposed to the event promotion and sponsor information in through print and broadcast media, social media/online and at in-person venues throughout North Alabama. The event raised \$2,000 for the Microwave Dave Music Education Foundation and Arts Huntsville's North Alabama Arts Education Collaborative. [Watch a video recap of the 2022 event here.](#)

Because cigar box guitars are traditionally made out of cigar boxes and other discarded materials, the Festival features a wide array of children's activities focusing on a recycled music theme. Activities will include stations for children to make instruments out of recycled and upcycled materials early in the day. Later in the day, Alabama Public Television personality, magician and cigar box guitar musician Steve Trash and the Cigar Box Serenaders from New Orleans lead the children who have made instruments in the Junior Junk Jam performance on stage.

Studios and restaurants throughout Lowe Mill participate in the Festival offering special meals, art and music-themed activities. Among the studios at Lowe Mill is The Cigar Box Guitar Store. Founded in 2010 by John and Pat Nickel, it is the only brick-and-mortar cigar box guitar store in the world. Jeff and Tara Mello are the store's current owners and it is their mission to build community within a diverse group through the experience of sharing music. They offer free lessons every Saturday from Noon-2:00pm with loaner cigar box guitars available to anyone who wants to participate. "There's no obligation to buy," explained Tara. "We just want to share the joy of how easy it is to make music on a cigar box guitar."

Generous corporate and individual sponsors, as well as volunteers, help keep this festival free and open to everyone. It is the sponsors, donors and volunteers that enable the event organizers to further their goals of sharing the uniqueness of the cigar box guitar, promoting Huntsville's wide range of community arts events; and raise funds for music education in local schools.

For sponsor and vendor opportunities or media inquiries, please contact Tara Mello at 805-587-8690 or cbguitarstore@gmail.com.

www.CigarBoxGuitarFestival.com