

Janita Baker
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Janita Baker has been a performing musician for over 35 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 been a featured teacher and performer at John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC; Western Carolina University Dulcimer Week, Cullowhee, NC; Spring Augusta Dulcimer Week, Elkins, WV; Heritage Dulcimer Camp, Kansas City, MO; Winterfest, TX; Swannanoa Dulcimer Week, NC; Summer Solstice Folk Music Festival, CA; and Kentucky Music Week in Bardstown, KY.

Janita's second recording, *Solace*, featured more arrangements of ragtime and blues along with contemporary, classical and original compositions performed on both the standard and the bass dulcimer. Her highly acclaimed solo CD, *Blues and Ragtime for Fretted Dulcimer*, covers both classical Joplin rags and a variety of ragtime and blues styles including those of Robert Johnson and W. C. Handy. In 2002, Mel Bay Publications released the newly revised edition of *Fingerpicking Dulcimer*, complete with six new tunes in tablature and music notation and accompanied by the CD, *Fingerpicking Dulcimer*.

In 2008 she released two new tablature books, *Four String Fingerpicking* and a book of rounds, *Follow Me Merrily*, which she co-authored with Madeline MacNeil.

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.