

On August 24, 2015, GRAMMY Museum® Mississippi and the Bologna Performing Arts Center co-presented an education program and concert with the Band of Legends – a group that features the studio musicians who toured and recorded with Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Willie Nelson and more. The band included Norbert Putnam, James Burton, Gene Chrisman and Bobby Wood with Andy Childs on vocals. Curriculum materials were created exclusively for this education program and were distributed to teachers to use in their 4th, 9th and 11th grade classes with the themes being Mississippi social studies, history, and visual and performing arts.

## ARTIST BIOS

Alabama native **Norbert Putnam** made history as a part of the original Muscle Shoals rhythm section. After moving to Nashville, Putnam quickly became a part of a loose group of younger musicians who were the first call for the growing number of rock, folk and R&B recordings being made in Nashville. He was the bassist in recording session supergroup Area Code 615 of Nashville. He began recording with Elvis Presley in 1970. Also that year, he opened Quadrafonic Studio along with David Briggs which later became a recording destination for well-known artists from Neil Young and Joe Walsh to Dan Fogelberg and Michael Jackson. He also produced albums for Jimmy Buffett, Riders of the Purple Sage, Donovan, Pousette Dart Band, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Eric Anderson, The Flying Burrito Brothers, John Hiatt and many, many more.

Keyboardist, recording artist, songwriter and publisher **Bobby Wood** was born in New Albany, Mississippi. In the early 1960s, Wood moved to Memphis and began working as a studio musician and recording artist in Memphis at Sam Phillips's recording studio and had a record released on the Sun label. He was also an artist for Joy Records and later MGM. From 1967 to 1971, Wood was a member of the group known as the 827 Thomas Street Band (Reggie Young, Gene Chrisman, Bobby Emmons, Tommy Cogbill and Mike Leech) that recorded 122 chart records and 22 Number 1 hits in four different charts (R&B, Pop, Country, Jazz). Among the many hits that the 827 Thomas Street Band (later called the Memphis Boys) recorded are Elvis Presley's "Suspicious Minds," "In the Ghetto," and "Kentucky Rain," Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline," Willie Nelson's "Always on My Mind," Billy Swan's "I Can Help," Dusty Springfield's "Son of a Preacher Man," and B.J. Thomas' "Hooked on a Feeling." Bobby Wood has played on records that have received more than 200 million sales to date, including over 130 million with Garth Brooks. The 827 Thomas Street Band, now known as the Memphis Boys, were inducted into the International Musicians Hall of Fame in 2007.

**James Burton** began playing guitar professionally as a teenager in his hometown of Shreveport, Louisiana. At age fourteen, he performed with musicians like George Jones, Jimmy and Johnny, Billy Walker and Johnny Horton. Burton played on a session with Merle Haggard and Buck Owens in Bakersfield, California, and he helped create the "Bakersfield sound" with them. In 1968, Burton was nominated for the Country Music Award for Best Lead Guitar, but it would take 10 years and 7 nominations before he finally won the award for Best Guitar Player. In 1968, Burton received a call from Elvis Presley to be on his "Comeback" television special, but at the time, he was working with Frank Sinatra and was unavailable. When Elvis called James back in 1969 to put up a band for his Las Vegas engagement, he was there and remained with Elvis until his untimely death in 1977. In 1972, Gram Parsons contacted Burton to do an album. It was at these sessions that he met Emmylou Harris. Parsons died the next year, and in 1975 Emmylou Harris released the album *Pieces of the Sky*. Harris carefully scheduled her tour for the album around Elvis Presley's tour so she could have James Burton and Glen D. Hardin touring with her. Burton's work has been included on over 350 albums. In 2001, he was inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame as part of the Wrecking Crew in 2007. He was awarded a GRAMMY® in 2009 for Best Country Instrumental Performance together with Vince Gill, Steve Wariner, Redd Volkaert, Albert Lee, John Jorgenson, and Brent Mason for the Brad Paisley track "Cluster Pluck." Also in 2009, he was inducted into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame by Rolling Stones' Keith Richards.

**Andy Childs** was born in Memphis, Tennessee and began performing music professionally as a teenager. After studying music business at the University of Memphis, Childs spent ten years touring and song-writing, eventually landing a recording contract with RCA Records in Nashville. Three singles recorded at RCA managed chart success, and the accompanying music videos received frequent airplay on CMT, TNN, GAC, MUCH Music (Canada), and CMT Europe, including "Simple Life" which reached the #1 spot on Billboard's country music video chart. After three years with RCA, Andy Childs signed on as a staff songwriter for EMI Music, and then Windswept Music. With four other veteran musicians, Andy formed the band Sixwire, and the guys were immediately signed to Warner Brothers Records. Sixwire's Warner release debuted in the Top 30, and featured two hit singles and music videos. After a couple of years touring with Lonestar, SheDaisy, Tim McGraw, Sara Evans, and many others, Sixwire ventured into television work. Over the years, Childs has performed in all 50 states and more than a dozen other countries. His television experience includes appearances on all of the major networks, many cable networks, and dozens of syndicated shows in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and Japan. In Nashville, Tennessee, Andy Childs is managing partner and CEO of VERITABLE MUSIC - an independent music publishing and production company. As a songwriter, his songs have been recorded by country artists Chris Cagle, Blackhawk, Canadian Juno Award-winner George Canyon, International pop star Cliff Richard and many other artists in the US, Canada, and Europe.

Drummer **Gene Chrisman** was born in Memphis, Tennessee. Chrisman began work as a session musician at Echo and Phillips Recording Studios in Memphis, TN and he toured the United States with Jerry Lee Lewis. He also played on the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, CA and appeared on Dick Clark's American Bandstand in Philadelphia, PA. In the six years that Chrisman worked full-time at American Sound Studio in Memphis, they had 122 chart records with artists such as: Purify Brothers, Sandy Posey, Brenda Lee, Dusty Springfield, Dionne Warwick, Neil Diamond, King Curtis, Elvis Presley, Bobby Womack, Arthur Conley, Arthur Alexander, B. J. Thomas, Merilee Rush, Aretha Franklin, Buddy Greco, Ronnie Milsap, Wilson Pickett, Roy Hamilton, and many, many more. Chrisman moved to Nashville in 1971 and up to present day, has recorded with Willie Nelson, Don McLean, Kenny Rogers and Dottie West, George Strait, Julie Andrews, Oak Ridge Boys, Loretta Lynn, Jerry Reed, Roy Orbison, Reba McEntire, Merle Haggard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Box Car Willie and more. He has appeared on television shows for the Nashville Network including: "Great Legends of Country Music", "New Country", "New Faces", "That Nashville Music" and "A Tribute to Country Music Songwriters." He has also contributed to movie soundtracks for Frequency, Blackhawk Down, Lilo and Stitch, Intolerable Cruelty, Pulp Fiction, Honeymoon in Vegas, Fred Claus, Change of Habit, Kermit's Swamp Years, The Game Plan, Sweet Dreams and more. In 2007, Chrisman was inducted into the Musicians Hall of Fame in Nashville, Tennessee. He was awarded a GRAMMY® Hall of Fame Certificate in 2009 at Elvis Week in Memphis, Tennessee for Elvis' Recording of "Suspicious Minds."