



Wentworth
Institute of Technology

September 28, 2015

My name is Christopher Scott Gleason, and I am a full-time Professor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, MA as well as a long-time adjunct instructor in Creative Writing at Harvard University Extension School in Cambridge, MA. I am also a singer/songwriter/multi-instrumentalist who records, performs, and collaborates with several different bands/musicians in the Boston area.

I first met Mark T. Small in May of 2015 at the Spire Center for Performing Arts in Plymouth, MA, where he shared the bill with David Lindley. Lindley is a world-renowned multi-instrumentalist, and one of my favorite musicians of all time. When I arrived that evening, I was hardly expecting to be astonished by the opening act—but that indeed turned out to be the case. I found Mark's guitar playing and singing to be absolutely captivating. He is a superb interpreter of the blues, fluent in many different regional styles (Delta, Piedmont, Texas, Chicago, etc.) but truly unique (and, technically, quite dazzling) in the way that he combines those traditions with other styles and genres of American folk music such as country and Bluegrass. However, I was impressed not only by the soulfulness and dexterity of his technique but by his deep knowledge of American roots music and his obvious passion for sharing that history with the public. A Mark Small performance is not only top-notch entertainment; it's top-notch *education*. Each song that he performs is prefaced with insightful historical / cultural commentary and then vividly illustrated by the accompanying performance.

That evening at the Spire Center, I introduced myself to Mark during intermission, told him a little bit about the History of American Folk Music course that I teach, and, before I could even suggest it myself, Mark had already enthusiastically volunteered to visit my classroom. A month or so later, Mark visited my classroom at Wentworth Institute of Technology and presented a two-hour lecture and musical performance that I am sure will leave a lasting impression upon each and every student who attended that day. Mark was incredibly well prepared for his presentation, arriving early, with a number of instruments, extensive notes, handouts, and a beautifully organized lesson plan that he had tailored to the curriculum for my course. I am very much looking forward to Mark's return to my classroom this fall.

Mark Small is without question a world-class musician and overall one of the nicest human beings anyone could hope to encounter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Christopher Scott Gleason, Ph.D.

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