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Montalvo Arts Center Presents...

The 4th Annual Songwriters Festival

Featuring James McMurtry, Buddy Miller, Robin Holcomb, Kelly Joe Phelps, Carrie Rodriguez, Jesse Sykes, Tony Scherr, Etienne De Rocher, Paul Sprawl & Karen Pernick

Sunday, Aug. 26, 2007

Montalvo Arts Center – Garden Theatre 15400 Montalvo Road Saratoga, CA

Doors: 11 a.m. Show: Noon – 8 p.m.

Tickets: \$60/\$45/\$20: Ticket Info: 408.961.5858, www.ticketmaster.com

On Sunday, Aug. 26, **Montalvo Arts Center** will present the 4th Annual Songwriters Festival, an inimitable showcase of select songwriters specializing in a unique brand of storytelling and whose fresh take on the American songbook is bearing quite an abiding impact on mainstream audiences. While performers **James McMurtry, Buddy Miller, Robin Holcomb, Kelly Joe Phelps, Carrie Rodriguez, Jesse Sykes, Tony Scherr, Etienne De Rocher, Paul Sprawl & Karen Pernick** each carry an individual quality of song, their success shares a common thread: meaningful, thought-provoking compositions portrayed in an honest, lived-in and unequivocally American fashion. Please be sure to include this event in your listings and “Critic’s Choices.” Interviews and photos are available upon request.

The festival, which is sponsored by KPIG-FM, aligns 10 celebrated and rising singer-songwriters all on the same stage, a truly rare and exceptional Bay Area event. Renowned producers **Lee Townsend** (Bill Frisell, John Scofield, Loudon Wainwright III) and **Wayne Horvitz** (John Zorn, Bill Frisell, Robin Holcomb) extend their musical expertise in programming this one-of-a-kind South Bay gem.

Lauded artists James McMurtry and Robin Holcomb are among the stellar songwriting lineup. McMurtry’s frank commentary on the fraying social fabric of America evokes a contemplative spirit. *Entertainment Weekly* declared his 2005 hit, “We Can’t Make It Here” the protest song of the decade, acknowledging the stalwart lyricist as one of the most influential songwriters of his generation. *Washington Post* also noted, “As he rhymes with the adeptness of a rapper and the passion of a doomsday evangelist, McMurtry’s insistent diatribe leaves you no alternative but to pay attention.” Brilliant wordsmith Holcomb crafts songs that the *New York Times* has praised as being “staggeringly beautiful,” and *CMJ* has called “remarkable.” *Rolling Stone* commented, “A wordsmith riveted by life’s momentary and private revelations, [Robin Holcomb] is a wise and worldly mystic in the vein of Emily Dickinson, and her jazz-inflected singing is as knowing and supple as her lyrics.”

Emerging artists Jesse Sykes and Carrie Rodriguez also take to the stage at this momentous festival. Sykes is often referred to as a present day female **Johnny Cash**. Her unmistakable signature sound depicts deep alt-country roots and a rock ‘n roll heart. Rising star singer and violinist Rodriguez’s confident songwriting imparts a highly engaging quality to her music, with a distinct affinity and seductiveness to her lyrics. Her latest album has been called, “a stark, beautiful set of pensive songs...” by *Amazon.com*.

Currently on tour with Americana songstress **Lucinda Williams**, Kelly Joe Phelps will lend his champion fretboard work and emotive songs to the festival stage. Townsend says, “Kelly Joe Phelps’ songs are so fluid that you might initially think that they are spontaneously streaming from his consciousness.” Roots-country musician Buddy Miller also appears, and was recently pronounced by former band-mate **Steve Earle** as “the best country singer working today.” **Norah Jones** says of performer Tony Scherr, “he’s one of the best guitar players I’ve ever seen.” Scherr appears on all of Jones’ albums and regularly works with **Willie Nelson, Bill Frisell** and **Sexmob**. Etienne De Rocher is the only Bay Area artist on the bill, a true gem with “one of the sweetest voices around” says the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*. Seattle’s Karen Pernick brings her beautifully sculpted and deceptively simple songs to Montalvo. *Performing Songwriter Magazine* affirms that her “soulful sound winds around your heart like a fog around a lonely mountaintop.” Paul Sprawl rounds out the program with his vagabond persona and talent for concocting evocative stories. Sprawl is currently working with Townsend on their second recording project together.

Montalvo Arts Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to forging long-lasting connections between the arts and the communities they serve through their creation, presentation and education in extraordinary ways and settings. Nestled in the Saratoga hills, Montalvo is amongst such prestigious South Bay venues as the Mountain Winery and Shoreline Amphitheater presenting world-class music in an exquisite environment. With an abundance of acclaimed artists appearing as part of their Summer 2007 series, the 4th Annual Songwriters Festival is set to be an anomalous affair featuring some of today’s most recognized songwriters all performing on a single stage. For more information please visit www.montalvoarts.org.

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