

POETS & PIONEERS:
The Birth of American Country Music
A Music in Education Program for 5th grade underserved in Sacramento County
AND
Public Concerts in the cities of Sacramento and Folsom

Folsom, CA

October 2017

**BREAKING NEWS: THIRD GENERATION CARTER FAMILY MEMBER
LORRIE CARTER BENNETT AND LONGTIME CARTER SOUND MUSICIAN
RONNIE WILLIAMS JOIN NASHVILLE RECORDING ARTIST AND
SINGER/SONGWRITER, KEVIN MARCY, CARTER TRIBUTE BAND THE
WILDWOOD ROSES, AND A DOZEN SINGERS AND MUSICIANS FOR THIS
GROUND BREAKING CONCERT BY THE CREATOR
OF AMERICAN LEGEND: A TRIBUTE TO JOHNNY CASH'S LIFE IN SONG.**

FROM THE CREATOR WHO BROUGHT YOU AMERICAN LEGEND, LAST YEAR'S SUCCESSFUL BENEFIT CONCERT FOR THE CITY OF FOLSOM'S JOHNNY CASH ART TRAIL, hold onto your hats for the newest groundbreaking concert that brings a unique trio of folks from Nashville and Virginia to Sacramento county for an unprecedented residency just in time to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Cash's Live at Folsom Prison album. Poets & Pioneers takes you on a rollicking country roots journey in celebration of our truly American music with artists from across the United States. Showcasing the Carter Family with a special appearance by third generation member Lorrie Carter Bennett, P&P highlights other legendary musicians who forged careers in the new music form, including Jimmie Rodgers, Leslie Riddle, DeFord Bailey, Hank Williams, and Kitty Wells. Discover why legends Johnny Cash, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and Brad Paisley have continued to celebrate these icons of country. Roots music: rediscovered for a new generation. PRODUCED BY THEATRE VENTURES INTERNATIONAL IN ASSOCIATION WITH SUNNY MITCHELL THEATRE PROJECTS.

FUNDED IN PART BY A GRANT FROM THE SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN ARTS COMMISSION, FREE CONCERTS OF POETS & PIONEERS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE 5TH GRADE UNDERSERVED IN SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT AT THE GUILD THEATRE. LAKESIDE CHURCH IN FOLSOM WILL HOST ADDITIONAL 5TH GRADE UNDERSERVED IN FOLSOM CORDOVA UNIFIED. The Music in Education program will shed light on the diverse roots of American country music and examine country music through the lens of social history. Diverse populations today can relate to and reflect on the sounds that built country music, from the plantation songs and the Dixieland melodies, to the religious music of the poor Southern white population or the Black congregations. A true melting pot of sounds merged to create country music, and the artists of Poets & Pioneers will share those sounds and stories with concertgoers.

Link to tickets for Folsom Concert at Lakeside Church on January 12, 2018: <https://poetsandpioneers2018.eventbrite.com>

Link to tickets for Sacramento Concert at the Crest Theatre on January 14, 2018: <https://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/1578579>

OTHER EVENTS DURING THE CARTER RESIDENCY WILL BE RELEASED AS THEY ARE CONFIRMED.

FEATURED BIOS:

LORRIE CARTER BENNETT (VOCALIST)

Born into the first family of country music, the Carter Family, Lorrie's mother was Anita Carter, whom many regard as the best female singer in the history of music. Her father was Don Davis, well-known steel guitarist, producer and recording industry executive. Her grandmother was Maybelle Carter, responsible for what the world knows as country music, alongside Maybelle's brother-in-law, A.P., and his wife, Sara. Her aunts were Carter Family members Helen Carter Jones and June Carter Cash, both accomplished singers, songwriters and musicians. Her uncle was none other than Johnny Cash. Lorrie's personal and radio show appearances are numerous, including the "Grand Ole Opry," the "Ernest Tubb Midnite Jamboree" and countless nationally broadcast interviews. Lorrie is a regular at the annual Carter Family Memorial Festival, an event held in Hiltons, Virginia to commemorate the Carters' leading role in launching the country music industry. Besides that event, Lorrie has been featured during a week's worth of International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) shows and as a judge and performer for "American Country Star." In addition, Lorrie regularly serves as a consultant for various projects about the Carter Family.

RONNIE WILLIAMS (MUSICIAN)

Ronnie Williams and the Carter Family Sound have been performing in and around the Central Virginia region for the past 25 years. Though some of the group's members have changed over time, Ronnie has been playing and singing Carter Family music since 1975. Ronnie became close friends of country music legend Mother Maybelle Carter around 1969. Soon after, the friendship extended to the rest of the famous family: Mother Maybelle's daughters, Helen, June and Anita; and Janette Carter (daughter of A.P. and Sara Carter) and her children, Rita and Dale. Ronnie plays the autoharp, guitar and accordion, honoring the "Carter Scratch" style of playing guitar and autoharp. It was Mother Maybelle who created the Carter Scratch style out of the necessity to play lead and rhythm parts at the same time. During Ronnie's career, he has shared the stage at one time or another with all of the Carters as well as "adopted Carter" and June's husband, Johnny Cash. Each year Ronnie travels to Bristol, Tenn. and Hiltons, Va. to play at the Carter Family Festival held at the Carter Family Fold. He performs three to four times annually at The Fold, taking time to do TV interviews and question-and-answer sessions with local college students, discussing Mother Maybelle and her famous picking style. Ronnie is joined each year at the Carter Family Festival by Lorrie Carter Bennett, daughter of Anita. Besides The Fold, among the many venues Ronnie and Lorrie have played are Nashville's Station Inn, The Johnny Cash Museum and the historic Ashland Theater in Ashland, Va. Radio shows include Nashville's "Midnite Jamboree" broadcast on WSM, as well as "Studio One" originating from Johnson City, Tenn.'s WETS studio. The two have appeared several times on Bristol's "Pickin' Porch" show and in 2016 performed at "Concert at the Caves" in Pennsylvania.

VICKI LANGDON (FREELANCE JOURNALIST AND CARTER FAMILY CHRONICLER)

A member of the Advisory Board for the Carter Family Memorial Music Center in Hiltons, Va., Vicki is often involved in projects relating to the music of the Carter Family and Johnny Cash. Vicki's photos were featured in the 2005 and 2015 Johnny Cash calendars published by Brown Trout, in the "Johnny Cash Reads the New Testament" CD box set published by Thomas Nelson and in the comprehensive Anita Carter CD box set issued by Bear Family Records in Germany. In 2012, Universal Music featured Vicki's photos in a limited "Icon" collector's edition Johnny Cash CD/book set. Vicki photographed Helen and Anita Carter for each of their last CD covers -- "The Helen Carter Collection" and "Yesterday" (Anita). Vicki was a consultant for the

Carter Family exhibit added to Nashville's Johnny Cash Museum in 2016 and is a photographic contributor to Florentine Films' upcoming multi-part "Country Music" series for PBS. A Texas native, Vicki Langdon was graduated in 1982 from East Texas State University (now Texas A&M -- Commerce), earning a bachelor's degree (with Academic Distinction) in journalism. Having served as a radio station news director, newspaper staff writer, and school district public information director, Vicki now spends her time as a freelance writer and photographer, splitting her time between North Texas and Middle Tennessee. Vicki's writing and photography awards include ones from the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, Texas Classroom Teachers Association, Texas State Teachers Association, Texas Press Women, North and East Texas Press Association and the Press Club of Galveston County (Texas).

SUNNY STATON MITCHELL (DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER)

Sunny Mitchell is a choreographer, vocalist, instructor, and entertainment developer. Her career has included many principal and solo roles during her tenure with the Sacramento Ballet and California Musical Theatre. Sunny (SFHS '94) holds a BFA, specialization in choreography, from UC Irvine and an MA in Education from CSUS. Other titles include Adjunct Dance Professor (Folsom Lake College and CSUS), Assistant Choreographer for Sacramento Music Circus, Choreographer for CMT Junior Company and other Academy instruction, and a number of titles in education with the Sacramento Ballet. Other affiliations include Theatre Ventures International, under the guidance of Dennis Nahat, Stephens College in Missouri, Musical Theatre Intensive Sacramento, SMAC, Sacramento Shakespeare Festival, Leighton Dance Project, and various fundraisers and fashion shows. Sunny is a proud member of Actor's Equity and the founding director of Sunny Mitchell Theatre Projects (SMTP), a platform for developing theatrical works that are alive, creative, and imaginative. Her most recent endeavor, directing and performing in a large music concert, entitled American Legend, brought together over 20 artists from across the state of California in a benefit for Folsom's own Johnny Cash Art Trail, and garnered her the City of Folsom's 2016 Arts Achievement Award. Her vocal group, a Carter Sisters tribute band The Wildwood Roses, most recently had the honor of performing at the city of Folsom's Grand Opening of the second phase of the Johnny Cash Art Trail.

KEVIN MARCY (LEAD ARTIST)

Born into a musical family, Mr. Marcy attended PCPA in Southern California before he started playing music with his brothers. After forming the Marcy Brothers band, Kevin and his brothers secured two major label record deals, yielding a top 40 song and three #1 videos, among other honors. Touring with the Marcy Brothers, he opened for Johnny and June Carter Cash, Waylon Jennings, George Strait, Merle Haggard, Charlie Rich, Alabama, and Alan Jackson, to name a few! Kevin is also a songwriter, writing for three major publishing companies in Nashville. Recently, "364 Days to Go" was cut by Brad Paisley for Paisley's Christmas album. After touring as Brad Paisley's sound technician, Kevin took a short break from performing and songwriting to spend time with family. SMTP's American Legend marked his return to the stage. He is also releasing an acoustic album of original songs soon.

THE WILDWOOD ROSES (CARTER SISTERS TRIBUTE BAND)

Under the direction of Sunny Mitchell and including members Danielle Hansen, Jodi Galloway and Jeanne Marie Jacobson, their combined professional credits include hundreds of productions with California Musical Theatre, The Sacramento Ballet, Simi Valley Performing Arts Center and appearances with Shirley Jones, Patrick Cassidy, Natalie Cole, and Dick Clark. They have collaborated with Cash tribute bands across California including The Walking Phoenixes, The Johnny Cash Tribute Show - Featuring James Garner, The Cash Prophets, and have most recently been featured in *American Legend: A Tribute to Johnny Cash's Life in Song*.

ZACK SAPUNOR (BASSIST)

A veteran of American's roots music scene, Zack has performed with Wayne Hancock's band, San Antonio's Jim Cullum Jazz Band, leads his own ensemble "Hot City" and has performed in Million Dollar Quartet for Norwegian Cruise Lines. Mr. Sapunor is a six time SAMMIE award nominee and a playwright with half a dozen production credits to his name.

TODD MORGAN (VOCALIST/MUSICIAN)

As a performer, artist, and musician, Todd Morgan wears many hats. He is an accomplished singer, pianist, drummer, songwriter, bandleader, and producer. He also has the ability to be a true showman at any appropriate opportunity. The music that he creates with his band, Todd Morgan & the Emblems, has been described in many different ways. With a healthy mix of modern pop/rock, soul, blues, funk disco, hot jazz, country and todd's first love, early rock 'n' roll, there is truly something in his music to please and excite audiences. Todd is currently in LA recording his first major album.

GIORGI KHOKHOBASHVILI (VIOLIN)

Giorgi has been a part of Sacramento music scene since moving from the country of Georgia in 2005. He has played with local symphonies, theater companies and a wide variety of bands. His interests span everything from Gypsy Jazz to Celtic music and Bluegrass to Rock. He enjoys playing and teaching the violin.

POETS & PIONEERS roster of artists include:

Lorrie Carter Bennett

Claire Alano

Cory Coppin

Kale Coppin

Jadi Galloway

Jeanne Marie Jacobson

Dalton Johnson

Giorgi Khokhobashvili

Kevin Marcy

Sunny Mitchell

Todd Morgan

Zack Sapunor

AND

Ronnie Williams

(MORE ARTISTS WILL BE ANNOUNCED AS THEY ARE CONFIRMED)

This performance is suitable for all ages.

**CONTACT SUNNY MITCHELL
AT WILDWOODROSES@GMAIL.COM or [916-759-9133](tel:916-759-9133) FOR
MORE INFORMATION ON THIS BLOCKBUSTER PROJECT!**