

PRODUCED BY THEATRE VENTURES INTERNATIONAL

Sunny Mitchell Theatre Projects *presents*

POETS AND PIONEERS

THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN COUNTRY MUSIC



**A MUSIC IN EDUCATION PROGRAM for fifth grade students
including public and educational concerts in the County of Sacramento**

POETS AND PIONEERS

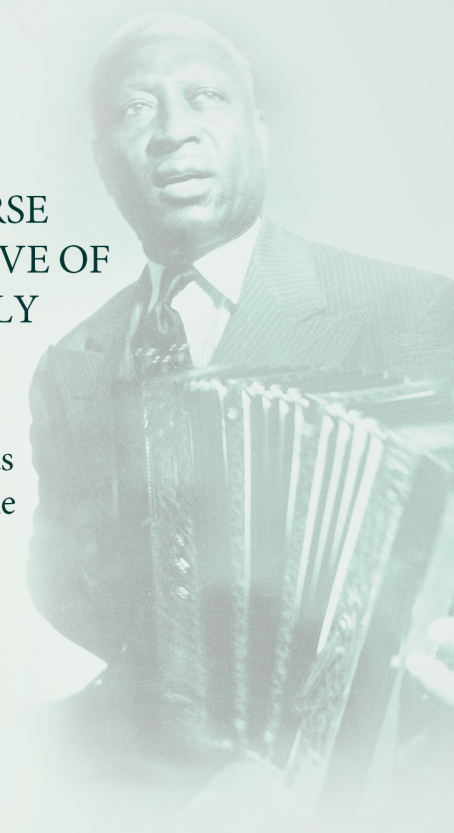
THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN COUNTRY MUSIC

EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC CONCERTS BASED ON THE DIVERSE BEGINNINGS OF COUNTRY MUSIC AS SEEN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE FIRST FAMILY OF COUNTRY MUSIC – THE CARTER FAMILY

Poets and Pioneers showcases the Carters and other musicians who played significant roles in the foundation of our American country music heritage, such as DeFord Bailey (an African American who was the first performer on the Grand Ole Opry), Leslie Riddle (a proficient African American guitarist who traveled with A.P. Carter deep into the Appalachian mountains to seek out and collect music for new audiences), Hank Williams, Jimmie Rodgers, Kitty Wells, and more.

Programs and concerts 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.

Sunny Mitchell Theatre Projects (SMTP) produced by Theatre Ventures International (TVI), through *Poets and Pioneers*, will help dispel the myth that country music is only of pure white, Southern, and rural origins, thus making it relevant and provocative for diverse audiences in the Sacramento area.



SMTP and TVI strongly support exposure to arts and culture through education.

ARTS EDUCATION IS ON THE DECLINE IN OUR COUNTRY.
AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS BELIEVE THAT ARTS PROGRAMS

1. contribute to students' overall academic achievement,
2. encourage students to stay in school longer, and
3. enhance opportunities for success in life outside of school.

According to the University of Southern California's Brain and Creativity Institute, children's brains develop faster with music education, in areas associated with language acquisition and reading skills. California is ranked next to last in reading based on the NAEP 4th grade scores (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1994 1998).

SMTP hopes to aid in boosting reading scores by focusing on 5th grade music education with its latest creative project, *Poets and Pioneers*.

YOUR SPONSORSHIP OF *POETS AND PIONEERS* HELPS SUPPORT:

- Educational concerts for the underserved population in the SCUSD
- Funding for busing students to an educational concert at a larger venue in the city of Sacramento
- Creating educational materials for teachers that gauge how much the students already know about their American country music history roots. These materials will also include narratives that will prepare them for the concert, as well as information on theatre etiquette.

ABOUT THE LEAD ARTISTS



LORRIE CARTER BENNETT

Born into the first family of country music, The Carter Family, Lorrie is the daughter of 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, who alongside Maybelle's brother-in-law, A.P. and his wife, Sara is responsible for what the world knows today, as country music. 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 Tubbs 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 and has appeared in various projects about the Carter Family including "Mother Maybelle's Carter Scratch," and Beth Harrington's documentary about the Carter and Cash families, "The Winding Stream." Ms. Bennett is currently working on her first solo CD.



RONNIE WILLIAMS

Ronnie Williams 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 Williams and The Carter Family Sound have performed frequently in Central Virginia, and have been featured performers on the television show "Song of the Mountains." Ronnie plays the autoharp, guitar and accordion, honoring the "Carter Scratch" style, developed by Mother Maybelle, as she played 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 Johnny Cash. Ronnie travels annually to Bristol, Tenn. and Hiltons, Va. to play at the Carter Family Festival held at the Carter Family Fold, taking time to do TV interviews and question-and-answer sessions with local college students, discussing Mother Maybelle and her famous picking style. He often collaborates with Lorrie Carter Bennett at The Fold, Nashville's Station Inn, The Johnny Cash Museum and the historic Ashland Theater in Ashland, Va. Radio shows have included WSM's "Midnite Jamboree," and WETS's "Studio One."



ZACK SAPUNOR

A veteran of America'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.



THE WILDWOOD ROSES

Versed in stage, song, and dance, The Wildwood Roses offer an authentic homage to The Carter Family and vaudeville legacies under the direction of Sunny Mitchell. Their combined professional credits include countless productions with California Musical Theatre and The Sacramento Ballet and appearances with Shirley Jones, Patrick Cassidy, Natalie Cole, and Dick Clark.

ABOUT THE SMTP CREATIVE TEAM



SUNNY STATON MITCHELL (DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER)

Sunny Mitchell is a choreographer, 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.



LOUIS HUDSON (PRODUCTION/LIGHTING DESIGNER)

An award winning lighting designer, Louis has, in his 28-year career, worked with many of the icons of traditional country music, from Marty Stuart, Kris Kristofferson, and Pam Tillis to Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard. Louis has a unique ability to help artists tell the story in a song, using light to communicate mood and feeling. Most recently, he has been working as lighting director for comedian Gabriel "Fluffy" Iglesias, delighting audiences by making the comic's shows feel as though the WWE met the Food Channel. For SMTP's latest projects, he draws from his years of experience to bring the downhome feel to modern venues.



KEVIN MARCY (LEAD ARTIST/BAND LEADER)

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 returning to the recording studio with a soon-to-be-released acoustic album of original songs.



JEANNE JACOBSON (LEAD ARTIST/MARKETING)

A Los Angeles native, Ms. Jacobson's early professional credits include work with Universal Pictures, Melody Films, the ABC and CBS networks as well as the prestigious American Ballet Theatre. A proud member of Actor's Equity Association, she has been featured in productions by Sacramento Music Circus, Falcon's Eye Theatre, The Sacramento Ballet, and as a lead artist in SMTP's *American Legend: A Tribute to Johnny Cash's Life in Song*. Following her career as a soloist with The Sacramento Ballet, she was invited to hone her skills in professional arts marketing, under Marketing Director Mimi Kent. Jeanne has provided graphic design work and copy for SMTP since its inception as E:motion Dance Ensemble, as well as providing freelance work for arts organizations and artists in the Greater Sacramento and San Francisco/Bay Areas. She is currently on the teaching faculty for several prominent dance studios in the area and is a founding member of the Carter Sister Tribute Band, The Wildwood Roses.

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SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

CARTER FAMILY CIRCLE SPONSOR: \$6000

This sponsorship covers salaries, travel, per diem, and hotel for Lorrie Carter Bennett, Ronnie Williams, and Carter family journalist/photographer, Vicki Langdon.

LOCAL ARTISTS SPONSOR: \$3000

This sponsorship covers salaries for local musicians and vocalists participating in the residency.

TRAVEL SPONSOR: \$2000

This sponsorship covers airfare for our Carter family members and transportation for all artists during the residency.

EDUCATION SPONSOR: \$1000

This sponsorship covers the creation, preparation, and printing of the educational materials for the program that are in alignment with fifth grade national and state standards and guidelines.

SPONSOR A SCHOOL: \$500

This sponsorship allows a school to receive a *Poets and Pioneers* educational concert.

BENEFITS

	\$250	\$500	\$1,000	\$2,500	\$5,000
Acknowledgement of your sponsorship in social media	*	*	*	*	*
Tickets to a <i>Poets and Pioneers</i> concert	*	*	*	*	*
Invitation to a VIP reception before the concert		*	*	*	*
Listed as sponsor in collateral		*	*	*	*
Verbal recognition during curtain speech			*	*	*
Sponsorship listing in lobby			*	*	*
Company logo on educational materials			*	*	*
Company logo on educational and all marketing materials				*	*
Invitation to a working rehearsal					*

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Theatre Ventures International

a 501(c)(3) organization that invests
in producing creative and performing arts



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RAILROAD ASSOCIATION
www.fedshra.org



THE CARTER FAMILY FOLD
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