

Wilkes Community College's



MerleFest®

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ON THE CAMPUS OF WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WILKESBORO, NC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MERLEFEST 2013 ANNOUNCES ADDITIONS TO LINEUP

Performers such as American Legacies – The Del McCoury Band and The Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Gov't Mule, Leon Russell, John Cowan, Steep Canyon Rangers, Della Mae and Delta Rae join this year's impressive lineup

WILKESBORO, N.C. (February 18, 2013) —**MerleFest**, presented by Lowe's and slated for **April 25– 28, 2013**, announces several additional performers for the festival's lineup: American Legacies – The Del McCoury Band and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Gov't Mule and Warren Haynes, Leon Russell, John Cowan, Steep Canyon Rangers, Della Mae and Delta Rae.

MerleFest, a four-day event that is an annual homecoming of musicians and music fans, will once again take place on the campus of Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, North Carolina.

The diverse, talented group of musicians listed below are very much in keeping with the late Doc Watson's preference for wanting "traditional plus" performers at MerleFest, playing music steeped in the roots-oriented sounds of the Appalachian region, including bluegrass and old-time music, and expanded to include Americana, country, blues, rock and many other styles:

- **American Legacies – The Del McCoury Band and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band** create a seamless blend of soul-lifting traditional harmonies as the high and lonesome sound of the Appalachians meets the hot and lively jazz of New Orleans. The Preservation Hall Jazz Band represents the best opportunity for music fans the world over to experience the planet's happiest music. The current roster of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band features some of the Crescent City's finest and most exciting musicians. These unforgettable, multi-generational players proudly carry on the traditions passed forward from the most prolific jazz heritage on earth. The Del McCoury Band is a world-class bluegrass



ensemble that performs original and traditional compositions with eloquent harmonies and “ferocious, purebred musicianship” (*USA Today*). With multiple Grammy Awards and nominations, they’re the most honored group in bluegrass history, earning the acclaim of colleagues throughout the music industry. Fresh off a fruitful recording collaboration in 2011, these American Musical Legacies are taking their show on the road.

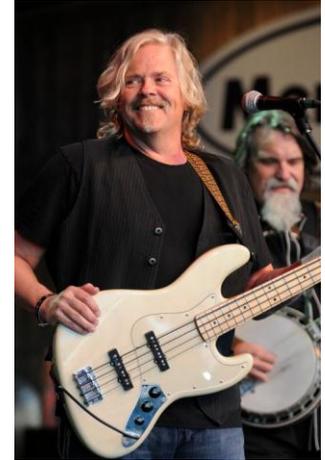
- Legendary musician and songwriter **Leon Russell** has been performing his gospel-infused southern boogie piano rock, blues and country music for over 50 years. Russell led the famous Joe Cocker's ‘Mad Dogs & Englishmen’ tour and performed with George Harrison and Friends at the Concert for Bangladesh. Leon has toured with Delaney & Bonnie and Friends, Edgar Winter, The New Grass Revival, Willie Nelson and Sir Elton John. His songwriting credits include “A Song For You,” “Delta Lady,” “Hummingbird,” “Lady Blue,” “Back To The Island,” “Tight Rope,” and “This Masquerade.” In 2011, Capitol/EMI released a 16-track compilation CD, *The Best of Leon Russell*; that same year, the Tulsa, Oklahoma-born artist was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and given the Award for Recording Excellence.



- While **Gov't Mule** started as a side project, the band has been a favorite of fans and critics alike since they released their self-titled debut project in 1995. With a sound that is influenced by the Allman Brothers but also colored by the soulful, jazzy, improvisational Southern rock grit of the diverse musicians who have performed with Gov't Mule, the group continues to leave its stamp on contemporary music both through touring and recordings. Members of Gov't Mule are Warren Haynes, Matt Abts, Danny Louis and Jorgen Carlsson. As rock's foremost MVP singer-guitarist, **Warren Haynes** has been constantly on the move and in the spotlight for the past two decades. During that time Haynes has maintained his tenure in Gov't Mule, the Allman Brothers Band and the Dead, and performed or cut tunes with a diverse array of musicians including Phil Lesh & Friends, James Hetfield, Bob Dylan, John Lee Hooker, Eric Clapton, Bonnie Raitt, Dave Matthews, Kid Rock and BB King, among many others. His accolades include performing at The White House, Grammy wins and nominations, and ranking No. 23 on *Rolling Stone*'s list of “The 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time.”
- With his distinctive, rock-tinged tenor vocal and heart-thumping electric bass, artist **John Cowan** – a frequent performer at MerleFest over the years – can seemingly perform in any genre, from country, bluegrass and gospel to soul, jazz and rock ‘n’ roll. His ability to move fluidly through multiple styles has set him apart as one of the most loved and admired vocal artists of his generation, not just



by fans and critics but among fellow musicians as well. Along with fellow New Grass Revival band mates Sam Bush, Courtney Johnson and Curtis Burch, and later Bela Fleck and Pat Flynn, Cowan introduced a new generation of music fans to an explosive, experimental and ultimately, eponymous brand of bluegrass. After New Grass Revival disbanded in 1990, John went on to enjoy success as a solo artist, a session musician and vocalist, and a member of both the John Cowan Band and the Doobie Brothers. These days, John works his own performances into and around the busy schedule of the Doobies. In March of 2012, WSM Radio launched “John Cowan – I Believe To My Soul,” an hour-long radio program that airs monthly and features John interviewing and playing the music of some of the giants and legends of contemporary music.



- The **Steep Canyon Rangers** return to MerleFest fresh from this month’s Grammy win for “Best Bluegrass Album” for 2013. In just ten years, this five-piece band has graduated from stairwell jams at the University of North Carolina to America’s greatest stages, including the Grand Ole Opry and a national tour with Grammy and Emmy winning actor/comedian and banjo player Steve Martin. The four founding Rangers—lead singer/guitarist Woody Platt, mandolinist Mike Guggino, bassist Charles R. Humphrey III and banjo player Graham Sharp—added fiddler Nicky Sanders in 2007. SCR is known for their enthralling, good-timing live shows at venues that run the gamut from bluegrass and Americana festivals to major international music events and rock venues on the jam band circuit.



- **Della Mae** proves again and again the endless possibilities found in the tried-and-true marriage of fiddle, fretboard and voice. The group’s lineup is a who’s-who of promising young pickers: lead singer Celia Woodsmith, guitarist Courtney Hartman, bass player Shelby Means, mandolinist Jenni Lyn Gardner and two-time National Fiddle Champion Kimber Ludiker are all seasoned performers who have won countless contests and shared the stage with the likes of Willie Nelson, Del McCoury, Leon Russell and Laurie Lewis. Though they don’t shy away from showing off their considerable technical talent, Della Mae is at heart a song-driven band with vocals that can tell an entire story in a mere syllable and instruments that play with finesse and vivacity to match. Their 2011 release, *I Built This Heart*, was an impressive debut, a delicate balance between bluegrass grit and singer-songwriter sensitivity. With a new album in the works



– produced by Bryan Sutton and their first label release – it is clear that Della Mae is just getting started. This is the group’s first appearance at MerleFest.

- Also making their MerleFest debut is **Delta Rae**, an American folk rock band formed in Durham, North Carolina. The band consists of three siblings Ian Hölljes (vocals and guitar), Eric Hölljes (vocals, guitar, piano and keys) and Brittany Hölljes (vocals), as well as Elizabeth Hopkins (vocals), Mike McKee (percussion) and Grant Emerson (bass guitar). In the Hölljes household, siblings Ian, Eric and Brittany enjoyed a childhood that was close yet itinerant, carrying them from Durham to the San Francisco Bay area, via Nashville and Marietta, Georgia. Throughout it all, they relished the continuity of great music – their parents’ record collection, rich with James Taylor, Cat Stevens, Fleetwood Mac and Paul Simon. They began as a four-piece ensemble and added McKee and Emerson to the dynamic in 2010. Delta Rae has opened for such musical acts as Edwin McCain and Hanson. The band debuted at Duke University in October 2009 when Ian and Eric were students there.



Tickets for MerleFest 2013 can be purchased at www.merlefest.org or by calling 1-800-343-7857. **An early bird ticket discount is available through March 10, 2013.**

Additional details about this year’s festival lineup and other MerleFest information can also be found at the website.

MerleFest, considered one of the premier music festivals in the country, is an annual homecoming of musicians and music fans held on the campus of Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. MerleFest was founded in 1988 in memory of the late Eddy Merle Watson, son of American music legend Doc Watson who passed away May 29, 2012. MerleFest is a celebration of “traditional plus” music, a unique mix of music based on the traditional, roots-oriented sounds of the Appalachian region, including bluegrass and old-time music, and expanded to include Americana, country, blues, rock and many other styles. The festival hosts over 90 artists, performing on 14 stages during the course of the four-day event. The annual event has become the primary fundraiser for the WCC Endowment Corporation, funding scholarships, capital projects and other educational needs.

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