

For immediate release
Blue Ridge Music Center
(276) 236-5309

Blues Festival Concert
at the Blue Ridge Music Center

“A Blues Festival with a Hillbilly Opening”

Three legendary Piedmont blues musicians and a local old-time band will be at the Blue Ridge Music Center on July 11, 2009.

Admission to the concert is \$10. Advance tickets are available online at www.blueridgemusiccenter.org or by calling the Blue Ridge Music Center at (276) 236-5309. Children 12 and under are admitted free of charge.

About the artists:

Phil Wiggins is a harmonica player, composer, and singer who grew up in Washington, DC and began his musical career performing with Virginia's famed Piedmont blues masters Archie Edwards, John Jackson, and John Cephas. He toured Europe, Africa, and Latin America with Cephas, and won multiple awards from the Blues Foundation for outstanding recordings. His recordings are on the most respected national blues labels: Smithsonian Folkways, Alligator and Flying Fish.

Wiggins now performs with Rick Franklin, a Piedmont bluesman noted for soulful singing and a guitar finger picking mastery that recalls Blind Blake and Blind Boy Fuller.

Franklin's performing skills and repertoire reflect his interaction with older blues masters, but also his international travels and mastery of other African heritage music: Brazilian Batucada, Samba, Zydeco, and High Life.

Wiggins and Franklin are joined in this performance by beloved West Virginia songster Nat Reese. Born in 1924 in Salem, Virginia, Reese now lives in Princeton, West Virginia, and keeps a rich store of soulful music. He grew up in the coal camps, surrounded by gospel, swing, and blues. A former coal miner, Reese is a consummate performer, focused primarily on the traditional blues and swing music he learned as a boy in the coalfields.

Wiggins, Franklin, and Reese often dip into the repertoire of the black string bands that created a portion of Virginia's heritage music. Black bands also created songs and instrumental skills now used by white old-time mountain bands, so it seemed proper to have an old-time band open this performance.

Since forming in 1999 at the Galax Old Fiddlers' Convention, the Buck Mountain Band has performed at festivals and venues in the region. The band's members also serve as resident musicians at the Blue Ridge Music Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

The Buck Mountain Band features Bob Taylor on fiddle, Sue Taylor on guitar, Dan Peck on banjo, Amy Boucher on guitar and banjo, and Debbie Larson on bass. Larry McPeak adds vocals and plays guitar.

Bob Taylor is related to the 19th century fiddling Tennessee governors, Robert and Alf Taylor, so he brings to the stage a rich appreciation of heritage music, including tunes that hark back to the black string bands.

Concert seating begins at 5:30 p.m. Concert 7 pm. Patrons may wish to bring lawn chairs and blankets. Picnics are permitted, but alcohol is not. Concessions are available. Pets are not permitted in the amphitheater area. Smoking is allowed in designated areas only. In case of inclement weather, concerts will be held indoors in the nearby Fairview Ruritan Club.

The Blue Ridge Music Center, located at milepost 213 on the Blue Ridge Parkway, near the Galax exit. It is operated jointly by the National Park Service and the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA). The Center is open for public visitation from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily through October. Admission to the Center is free.

Upcoming Events at the Blue Ridge Music Center:

Saturday, July 11th - Blues Festival - Phil Wiggins, Rick Franklin, Nat Reese / Buck Mountain Band.....\$10.00
Saturday, July 18th - Robin & Linda Williams/Bobby Patterson & Willard Gayheart.....\$10.00
Saturday, July 25th - Linda Lay and Springfield Exit/New North Carolina Ramblers.....\$10.00
Saturday, August 1 - Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder/Scott Freeman & Friends.....\$20.00
Saturday, August 15th - Carrie Hassler & Hard Rain/Dry Hill Draggers.....\$15.00
Friday, August 21 - Dailey & Vincent / Ashlee Blankenship & Josh Underwood.....\$15.00
Saturday, August 29th - Kenny & Amanda Smith/Bill & Maggie Anderson.....\$10.00
Friday, September 4th - Marty Stuart Band.....\$20.00
Saturday, September 12 - Old-time Rock & Roll with Bill Kirchen/Harris Brothers.....\$15.00

###