

June 18, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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American Piano Masters at the Blue Ridge Music Center

Galax, VA — The Blue Ridge Music Center presents American Piano Masters, a celebration of American piano styles featuring boogie-woogie piano master Daryl Davis and Blue Ridge ivory-tickler Gary Patton on Saturday evening, June 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the Center's outdoor amphitheater at Milepost 213 on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Like other American instruments, the piano takes on regional and ethnic accents. Most often these derive from regional styles of dancing, and in American hands the piano is among the most social of instruments. The two piano masters will demonstrate strikingly different ways to play the piano. Joining Davis and Patton will be guitarists Wayne Henderson and Dempsey Patton.

Admission to the concert is \$15. Advance tickets are available online at www.blueridgemusiccenter.org or by calling the Blue Ridge Music Center at (276) 236-5309. Children under 12 are admitted free of charge.

About the artists

Daryl Davis is an exponent of American boogie-woogie piano style and heir to the legacy of famous players like Pinetop Perkins and Johnnie Johnson. He followed his childhood dream perform with Chuck Berry until it came to fruition. Davis immersed himself in a study of the blues, boogie-woogie, black house and juke joint dancing through visiting musicians, studying archive recordings, performing in nightclubs, dancehalls and other venues until he had mastered the style.

Davis went on to perform with Chuck Berry and succeeded Pinetop Perkins, a founding father of blues/boogie woogie piano, in the piano/vocal slot of the Muddy Waters Legendary Blues Band. Daryl also knew how to be a friend and he is claimed as a godson by both Pinetop Perkins and Johnnie Johnson.

In Daryl Davis' own words: "This is music from a community of great players. Many of them never met, but they knew about each other. I think their creation is a legacy for all Americans."

Gary Patton of Galax, who runs a sand and gravel operation on the New River, carries on a unique piano style from right here in the Blue Ridge Mountains. With roots in nineteenth century parlor music, this style has been around for 100 years or more. It is a bouncy music because it is a

Victorian style, when dancing couples were expected to keep a certain respectful distance. The only safe place to go was up and down.

Gary was a student of the beloved Haywood "Woodie" Blevins, a piano tuner from the Baywood community between Galax and Independence near the New River at the Virginia-North Carolina border. Blevins sometimes put tacks on the hammers of the piano to give it a distinctive metallic sound. Other local players of this rollicking piano style were Hobart Smith, recording pioneer Al Hopkins of The Hill Billies string band and his brother Bill, and Clarice Blackard Shelor. Gary will be performing with his nephew Dempsey Patton on guitar.

Also joining the stage for this extraordinary evening of music will be renowned local guitarist and luthier, Wayne Henderson from Grayson County, Virginia. Henderson's guitar playing has been enjoyed at Carnegie Hall, in three national tours of "Masters of the Steel-String Guitar", and in seven nations in Asia. In 1995, Henderson received a National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowship, our nation's highest honor for traditional artists.

American Piano Masters is back by popular demand and not to be missed!

Concert seating begins at 5:30 p.m. Concert 7pm. 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, is operated for the National Park Service by 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.

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Here's the rest of the summer line-up:

Saturday, June 20—No concert

Saturday, June 27, 7 pm —Piano Showcase Concert! Daryl Davis, Gary Patton with Wayne Henderson on guitar Adults \$10

Saturday, July 4, 7 pm —Holiday Concert
Whitetop Mountain Band / Kentucky Wild Horse Adults \$5

Saturday, July 11, 7 pm —Blues Festival with Phil Wiggins, Rick Franklin & Nat Reese /Buck Mountain Band. Adults \$10

Saturday, July 18, 7 pm —Robin & Linda Williams / Bobby Patterson & Willard Gayheart open. Adults \$10

Saturday, July 25, 7 pm —Linda Lay and Springfield Exit / New North Carolina Ramblers. Adults \$10

Saturday, August 1, 7 pm —Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder / Scott Freeman & Friends. Adults \$20

August 3-8—Galax Old Fiddlers' Convention (no concert)

Saturday, August 15, 7 pm —Carrie Hassler & Hard Rain / Southern Pride. Adults \$15

Friday, August 21, 7 pm —Dailey & Vincent /Ashlee Blankenship & Josh Underwood. Adults \$15

Saturday, August 22—No concert (show moved to Friday)

Saturday, August 29, 7 pm —Kenny and Amanda Smith/Bill and Maggie Anderson. Adults \$10

Friday, Sept. 4, 7 pm —Marty Stuart Band. Adults \$20

Saturday, Sept. 5—No concert (show moved to Friday)

Saturday, Sept. 12, 7 pm —Beach Music
Old-time rock and roll with Bill Kirchen / Harris Brothers. Adults \$15