



June 10-13, 2009



February 23, 2009

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Seedtime on the Cumberland Announces Music Lineup for 2009**

WHITESBURG, KY: Seedtime on the Cumberland 2009, the 23rd annual celebration presented by Appalshop, will take place June 10 through 13 on the Appalshop festival grounds in downtown Whitesburg. Musical performances will include **John McCutcheon, Ginny Hawker, Kay Justice & Tracy Schwarz, Ras Alan, Wayne Henderson, Jeni & Billy, Sparky & Rhonda Rucker, Roger Cooper, Turbo Pro Project, Jim & Ada McCown with Paul Smith, The Elleville String Band, Brett Ratliff, Paula Larke, Lee Sexton, Rich & the Poor Folks, and The Cowan Creek Pick and Bow All-Stars.**

Seedtime will also offer film screenings, picking contests, gallery exhibits, Singing on the Mountain, literary readings, a Youth Bored concert, nature hikes, craft and food vendors, and the Carcassonne square dance. All events on Wednesday and Thursday will be free to the public, as will all festival activities before 3pm on Friday and Saturday. Admission to Saturday night's square dance at 9:30pm will also be free to the public.

Seedtime tickets will be available for \$10 per day or \$15 for the weekend, with discounts available for advance purchases, students, seniors, and groups. Advance tickets sales will begin April 1 from the Seedtime website and at area businesses.

In celebration of Appalshop's 40th anniversary, during 2009 and 2010 Seedtime will feature performances by artists from throughout the history of June Appal Recordings, Appalshop's record label.

Even before graduating summa cum laude from Minnesota's St. John's University, **John McCutcheon** "headed for the hills," forgoing a college lecture hall for the classroom of the eastern Kentucky coal camps, union halls, country churches, and square dance halls. His apprenticeship to many of the legendary figures of Appalachian music embedded a love of not

only home-made music, but a sense of community and rootedness. The result is music, whether traditional or from his huge catalog of original songs, with the profound mark of place, family, and strength. In the words of Johnny Cash, “The most impressive instrumentalist I’ve ever heard.” John first solo album, *Wind the Shakes the Barley*, appeared on June Appal, as did *From Heaven to Earth* by Wry Straw, John’s band with Rick Kirby and Tommy Bledsoe.

**Jimmy McCown** is a traditional fiddler, banjo player, and singer from Eastern Kentucky who has delighted audiences from Kentucky to Australia. Jimmy springs from a family with deep musical roots with generations of fiddlers, banjo players, and singers. Jimmy, his wife **Ada McCown**, and their children performed as the popular bluegrass band the Outdoor Plumbing Company and have recorded five albums including *Moonshine Mountain* on Rebel Records. These days, Ada and Jimmy are playing old time tunes and harmony singing and have taught and performed at festivals around the world. They appear on the June Appal recording, *All Join Hands*. **Paul Smith** hails from Hardy in Pike County, Kentucky. Paul learned fiddle from his neighbor, the legendary Owen “Snake” Chapman at a young age and began playing square dances when he was 16. In 1958 Paul, Snake, and Burt Hatfield began performing together as the ‘Pike County Ramblers.’

Drawing from traditional country, Appalachian, old-time, country blues, bluegrass and folk music to create their original songs, **Jeni & Billy** have crafted a unique sound that is truly their own. Jeni comes by her mournful, lonesome voice honestly. Born in the coalfields of Southwest Virginia, her singing has been compared to that of Mother Maybelle Carter and Hazel Dickens. Billy comes to the duo with a long history of music-making. He has been everywhere from Germany to the Grand Ole Opry playing his guitar and singing. He has leant his talents to the shows of many folk luminaries including Oscar Brand, Christine Lavin, and Tom Paxton, as well as producing and touring with Debi Smith.

**Wayne Henderson's** top-notch finger-picking is a source of great pleasure and pride to his friends, family, and neighbors in Grayson County, Virginia; his guitar playing has also been enjoyed at Carnegie Hall, in three national tours of "Masters of the Steel-String Guitar", and in seven nations in Asia. In addition to his reputation as a guitarist, Henderson is a luthier of great renown. He is a recipient of a 1995 National Heritage Award presented by the National Endowment for the Arts. He produces about 20 instruments a year, mostly guitars, and is the

subject of Appalshop's new documentary **From Wood to Singing Guitar**, which will premier before his performance on Thursday night.

**The Elkville String Band**, from Wilkes County, North Carolina, performs traditional country roots music, playing mostly older songs, but also some newer compositions from band members Drake Walsh and Jeff Michael. The band consists of Drake Walsh (fiddle and mandolin), Herb Key (guitar and singing), Bill Williams (harmony singing and bass), and Jeff Michael (banjo, fiddle, mandolin, guitar, and singing).

**Lee Sexton** is a master of the drop-thumb banjo and has played square dances for three generations. Members of both his father's and mother's families were musicians; the late Roscoe Holcomb of Leatherwood Creek was his cousin, Morgan Sexton his uncle. One of the few deeply traditional artists still actively touring and performing, Lee has been a mainstay of community events in Letcher County, Kentucky since the 1950s, releasing his *Whoa Mule* album on June Appal Recordings.

**Roger Cooper** is one of only a handful of Lewis County, Kentucky fiddlers of his generation to grow up performing the region's distinctive style of local fiddling. Raised in an area of great fiddlers, Roger began his musical career at age 12 playing guitar behind Joe Stamper on Vanceburg's WKKS radio station. Over the years he has learned from many great notable Kentucky fiddlers like Buddy Thomas, George Hawkins, Jimmy Wheeler, and Bob Prater and has taken his regional style of fiddle playing across the country, performing at the Festival of American Fiddle Tunes in Port Townsend, Washington and at Lincoln Center in New York City. Roger appears on the June Appal recording, *All Join Hands*.

Fusion is the key word to the **Turbo Pro Project**. A heavy rhythm backdrop is punctuated by keyboard notes and heavy metal banjo. Turbo has an electric Deering banjo and his fluid playing makes "Cluck Old Hen" sound supercharged on chicken fuel. The melody is played simply and then all the other instruments are layered on top of the banjo until the whole tune vibrates with rhythm. Adrian "Turbo" Trbovich was a member of Laura Love's Harper Ferry Band at Wintergrass, and his adroit banjo playing helped contribute to the band's vibrant sound. Other band members include Chris "DJ Pro" Prear who manages the turntables, Aaron Soots "the Rhythm Machine" on guitar, Kenn Smith on bass, Milton "DJ Deacon" Cockerham on beats and turntables, and Ryan "RnB" Barber on keyboards.

**Sparky and Rhonda Rucker** perform throughout the U.S. as well as overseas, singing songs and telling stories from the American folk tradition. Sparky Rucker has been performing over forty years and is internationally recognized as a leading folklorist, musician, historian, storyteller, and author. He accompanies himself with fingerstyle picking and bottleneck blues guitar, banjo, and spoons. Rhonda Rucker is an accomplished harmonica, piano, banjo, and bones player, and also adds vocal harmonies to their songs. June Appal released Sparky's *Cold and Lonesome on a Train* album.

**Ginny Hawker and Tracy Schwarz** have been singing together for 16 years, and their strong, soul-stirring singing makes you feel their devotion to the place from which their music springs. As they wrap their songs in stories of the people and the places of the music, audiences are transported to another time when life was more real and families were held close. Their harmonies are hair-raising and representative of the finest American traditional music. Ginny Hawker and Kay Justice recorded two projects for June Appal Recordings, *Come All Ye Tenderhearted* and *Signs and Wonders*. Tracy has been a member of the renowned New Lost City Ramblers since 1963 in addition to fronting the Tracy Schwarz Cajun Trio and his work with Ginny. **Kay Justice** has been performing mountain ballads, bluegrass, gospel, and shape note hymns her whole life. In 1986 at the Augusta Heritage Workshops in Elkins, West Virginia, she began a collaboration with Ginny that continues to bear fruit on recordings and in concert.

**Paula Larke** is a dramatist, writer, musician, and, in her own words, a "story-teller / gatherer". For over 25-years, Paula has performed nationally, primarily in the South and Northwest, presenting chants, songs, and spirituals from Tuskegee, Alabama; the Georgia Sea Islands; the Blue Ridge and Appalachian mountains; and the Piedmont Plateau region of North Carolina. She tells and gathers tales, as well, from many cultures. She uses her stories and songs to illustrate Biblical and universally spiritual principles. Her work covers much territory: addiction recovery, school bullying and violence, racism, heritage, and, always, grace in healing.

**Ras Alan's** blend of traditional mountain music, original lyrics, and reggae heartbeat is fun, emotional, and socially responsible. Influenced by classic reggae, bluegrass, old time, Southern gospel, jazz, African drumming, and a respectful portion of Rastafarian spirituality, Ras Alan's music is full of life, and the reggae rhythm is extremely danceable. Establishing the term

“Reggabilly” in 1991, Ras Alan's songs are true stories inspired locally and applicable worldwide, rooted in Southern Appalachian tradition and consciously moving forward.

June Appal Recordings artist **Brett Ratliff** was raised by a coal miner and teacher in Van Lear, Kentucky and grew up with a love for the mountains, its people, and its culture. As a youngster, Brett starting singing in church and sang along to recordings of Loretta Lynn and Hank Williams. As a teenager he began playing guitar for bluegrass bands. But when Brett met musical father and son Jamie and Jesse Wells he became hooked on the moving, emotionally charged mountain music of his home. Since then, Brett has learned banjo tunes and ballads from some of the masters of old time music, like knock-down banjo player George Gibson of Knott County or Pike County fiddle and banjo player Paul David Smith. His June Appal solo debut, *Cold Icy Mountain*, appeared last June.

**Rich and the Poor Folks** was formed in the summer of 2006 when a group of friends got together with a common goal – to showcase the music of eastern Kentucky and southwestern Virginia, but to do so in a traditional string band setting. With so many of the jewels of Appalachia being fiddlers, Rich and the Poor Folks take the tunes of Old Time giants such as Art Stamper, Snake Chapman, Ed Haley, Luther Strong and John Morgan Salyer and put banjo, bass and guitar behind them to kick it up as only a string band can.

The **Cowan Creek Pick and Bow All-Stars** are a youth ensemble bringing together students from Appalshop’s Traditional Music Program and the Cowan Creek Community Center in Letcher County. The All-Stars embody the spirit of the newest generation of Appalachian musicians – students who have decided to take up the pick and bow. Their performance resume includes a concert for the Kentucky House of Representatives on February 5, 2008.

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION: Media may request artist photographs and press credentials from Mark Kidd (mark@appalshop.org) or Art Menius (art@appalshop.org).