

PRESENTS



An Acoustic Evening with
Lyle Lovett & John Hiatt
On Stage Together

A Just Added Event
Tuesday, October 13, 2009 • 8 p.m.
Jackson Hall, Mondavi Center, UC Davis

There will be no intermission.

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The artists and your fellow audience members appreciate silence during the performance. Please be sure that you have switched off cellular phones, watch alarms, and pager signals. Videotaping, photographing, and audio recording are strictly forbidden. Violators are subject to removal.

Blue Dog Jam

Contemporary music featuring local bands, live recordings, and artists heard on NPR.

Saturdays
7:00 to 10:00 pm



Chris Oshiro, HOST



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LYLE LOVETT & JOHN HIATT

by JEFF HUDSON

For guys born in the 1950s, songs associated with cowboys are often part of their earliest childhood experience of music.

This is perhaps true of singer/songwriters John Hiatt (born 1952) and Lyle Lovett (born 1957). It's certainly true of this writer (born 1956)—songs like "The Streets of Laredo" or "Ghost Riders in the Sky" are among the first I learned.

Hiatt, born in the Midwest, moved to Nashville at age 18, and reportedly got a job writing songs for \$25 a week. When one of his songs was recorded by the pop group Three Dog Night and did well on the charts in 1974, Hiatt became a recording artist himself.

Lovett—a Texan who sometimes wears a cowboy hat (and always wears a suit) when posing for album covers—embarked on his recording career in 1987.

Neither is a "singing cowboy" in any strict sense of the term. Lovett's music draws on folk, swing, blues, jazz, and gospel, but is probably closest to country. Hiatt, who is even harder to summarize, likewise draws on a broad spectrum of American sounds (and other things as well).

But don't underestimate the broad influence of that cowboy thing—cowboy shows left television decades ago, but the music has demonstrated remarkable staying power. This was driven home in my own life about a year ago, when I took a group of German exchange students sightseeing in San Francisco. Driving back to Davis, I slipped a CD in the player—including "The Streets of Laredo," sung by Johnny Cash late in life. Suddenly, from the back seat, the German guys (born around 1990) started singing along. They not only recognized the sound, they knew the words.

For Lyle Lovett, try his 2007 album *It's Not Big It's Large*, featuring his Large Band, which reached No. 2 on the country charts.

For John Hiatt, try his 2005 release *Master of Disaster* or his 2008 release *Same Old Man*.

FURTHER LISTENING



Jeff Hudson contributes coverage of the performing arts to Capital Public Radio, the *Davis Enterprise*, and *Sacramento News and Review*.

IF
YOU
CAN
GIVE
A CAN

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LYLE LOVETT

Lyle Lovett is one of the all-time great American singer/songwriters. His voice is unique, but his antecedents are recognizable. In his work two roads come together: the trail blazed by the great Texas storytellers, of whom Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark are the best known; and the crooked highway navigated by sophisticated humorists such as Randy Newman and Tom Waits. Lovett's first gift was to combine these two potent strands of musical DNA into a new genome able to generate songs as brilliant and double-sided as "If I Had A Boat," "God Will," "If I Were the Man You Wanted," "Family Reserve," and "Her First Mistake."

That would be plenty for any composer to base a career on, but Lovett was also capable of both flat-out humor ("That's Right You're Not From Texas," "Here I Am," "Church") and heartbreakers that were poignant without ever descending into sentimentality ("She's Already Made Up Her Mind," "Nobody Knows Me," "The Road to Ensenada"). What emerged was a picture of a smart and complicated man, whose good humor and generosity of spirit were holding back a darker character. Out of such tensions, many artists are born.

A four-time Grammy winner, Lovett has led a remarkable career which includes 13 albums and more than four million records sold. His music is a unique intersection of an array of genres from country and folk to big-band western swing and traditional pop as evidenced by such revered albums as *Lyle Lovett, Pontiac*, *Lyle Lovett and His Large Band*, *The Road to Ensenada*, and *Joshua Judges Ruth*.

It's Not Big It's Large has been one of the most acclaimed efforts of his career. The album contains big, contemporary themes, but it is Lovett's gift to make the deep thoughts slide down like honey. The memorable songs include "I Will Rise Up/Ain't No Cane," the poignant "South Texas Girl," the infectious, and the upbeat "Up in Indiana."

Lovett's stunning new album, *Natural Forces*, is set for an October 20 release on Curb/Lost Highway. Texas is the common theme running throughout *Natural Forces*, but not as the subject matter as much as the songwriters Lovett chose to cover. It boasts four Lovett-penned originals, with seven songs written by Texas songwriters Lovett admires. Lovett recorded *Natural Forces* with his legendary Large Band, and long-time collaborator Billy Williams returns to co-produce.

For the last few years, Lovett, who is able to conjure musical magic in a variety of settings, has been alternating Large Band tours with acoustic shows teaming him with John Hiatt as well as larger songwriter circles also featuring Hiatt, Guy Clark, and Joe Ely.

Another facet of Lovett's career is acting, and this year saw the filming of his latest effort, a role in Michael Meredith's *The Open Road*. Meredith also directed Lovett in *Three Days of Rain*, but Lovett's longest and best-known cinematic collaboration was with the late, great director Robert Altman. He appeared in four Altman films: *The Player*, *Short Cuts*, *Pret-a-Porter*, and *Cookie's Fortune*; and scored the music for another, *Dr. T and the Women*.

In the end, though, it's music to which Lovett always returns, for it's his own stories and songs that resonate the most. In an acoustic setting with his friend John Hiatt beside him, those stories and songs are sure to come through loud and clear.

JOHN HIATT

Thirty years after the release of his debut album, John Hiatt remains one of America's most respected and influential singer/songwriters. As the *Los Angeles Times* once wrote, "Hiatt writes the funniest sad songs—and the saddest funny songs—of just about anybody alive."

Hiatt earned a Grammy nomination in 2000 for *Crossing Muddy Waters*, and B.B. King and Eric Clapton shared a Grammy for their album *Riding with the King*, whose title track was a Hiatt composition. His songs have been covered by artists as diverse as Bob Dylan, Bonnie Raitt ("Thing Called Love"), Buddy Guy, Emmylou Harris, Ronnie Milsap, Iggy Pop, the Neville Brothers, Rosanne Cash (the #1 country hit "The Way We Make A Broken Heart"), the Jeff Healey Band ("Angel Eyes"), Willie Nelson, Steve Earle, Linda Ronstadt, and even the cartoon bear band of Disney's 2002 film *The Country Bears*.

Born and raised in Indianapolis, Hiatt enjoyed a garage rock youth. After graduating high school, he moved to Nashville and immediately landed a job writing for a music publishing company. Three Dog Night cut his song "Sure as I'm Sittin' Here," which went to the Top 20 in 1974. Epic then signed Hiatt to his own record deal and released his debut, *Hangin' Around the Observatory*, later that year. Following *Overcoats* in 1975, he exited the label and moved to California. Then there were two albums on MCA (*Slug Line*, *Two Bit Monsters*) before a stint on Geffen resulted in three more (*All Of A Sudden*, *Riding with the King*, *Warming Up to the Ice Age*).

With seven solo albums under his belt, his A&M debut, *Bring The Family* (1987), proved to be a landmark release. His rootsy rock-country-blues fusion, performed with guitarist Ry Cooder, bassist Nick Lowe, and drummer Jim Keltner, was Hiatt's first charting effort and he was named Best Male Vocalist in *Rolling Stone's* Critics Poll. Raitt would later cover the album's "Thing Called Love" on her multi-platinum smash *Nick of Time*, and its "Memphis In The Meantime" and "Have A Little Faith in Me," covered by artists from Joe Cocker and Delbert McClinton to Jewel, became fan favorites.

Slow Turning (1988), his first record with his touring band the Goners, and *Stolen Moments* (1990) continued the praise. After the *Bring the Family* line-up partnered in 1992 for an album and tour as Little Village, a solo Hiatt returned for *Perfectly Good Guitar* (1993). The next year, he released his first live album, the tongue-in-cheek titled *Hiatt Comes Alive At Budokan*, before relocating to Capitol Records for *Walk On* (1995) and *Little Head* (1997). His albums since have been independently released: *Crossing Muddy Waters*, *The Tiki Bar is Open* (which reunited him with the Goners after almost 10 years apart), *Beneath This Gruff Exterior* (the first album credited to John Hiatt and the Goners), and *Master of Disaster*, on which Hiatt is backed by roots rockers the North Mississippi Allstars.

Today, Hiatt resides on a 100-acre farm outside of Nashville—and his list of classic songs (which, besides those already mentioned, includes "Tennessee Plates," "Lipstick Sunset," "She Loves The Jerk," and "Drive South") continues to grow. A dedicated following hails each new album and tour even as fellow artists continue to mine a catalog of some of the most astute, wry, and powerful songs in American popular music. On April 22, 2007, John Hiatt was honored with his own star on Nashville's Walk of Fame.