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For immediate release:

Cherryholmes Family Band Brings Bluegrass to Mondavi Center

October 11, 2007; Davis, California—The dynamic, hard-working family bluegrass band known as **Cherryholmes** will bring an evening of fiddling, step dancing, classic country yodeling, close harmony singing, and red-hot picking to the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts at UC Davis** on November 3. The sextet, formed in 1999, is one of the fastest-rising new acts on the bluegrass scene with five well-received albums and an **International Bluegrass Music Association** Entertainer of the Year award to its credit.

The event will begin at 8 pm on Saturday, November 3, in the Mondavi Center's Jackson Hall on the UC Davis campus. Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at MondaviArts.org. The event is presented as part of Mondavi Center's **American Heritage Series**.

Cherryholmes traces its history as a band to April 1999, when the family began playing music together as a way of coping with the death of the family's eldest daughter, Shelly, who died of a cardiac ailment at age 20. Then living in southern California, the family decided to attend a local bluegrass festival as a way of lifting their spirits, and on the way home **Sandy Lee Cherryholmes** and her husband **Jere Cherryholmes** decided to buy instruments for their daughters **Cia Leigh** and **Molly Kate** and sons **B.J.** and **Skip**, without having any idea whether their children had any musical talent.

The children, who were being home-schooled, turned out to be fast learners and natural musicians, and within a few weeks, the family band was playing amusement parks, and winning local talent contests. The success led to bookings at various bluegrass festivals around the west, and within a few years, Cherryholmes had sold the family home and embarked on a vagabond existence of national touring, meeting with success at virtually every stop along the way.

Critical response to the band's live performances has been outstanding. Of one recent festival appearance, the *Edmonton Journal* wrote, "In the space of 50 minutes, the six-piece family band moved some audience members to tears...The group consistently created a string of goose bump- and high-shiver-inducing moments...Working with a set list that included country ballads, gospel songs, yodeling, and other songs that incorporated clogging and beautifully structured instrumental interplay, the clan has all the bases covered and then some."

Jere Cherryholmes, who serves as the group's manager, leader, and emcee, plays bass; his wife Sandy Lee plays mandolin while Cia Leigh plays banjo, B.J. and Molly Kate play fiddle, and Skip plays guitar. All members of Cherryholmes sing, with Cia Leigh drawing special praise for her vocal and songwriting skills, and Skip—who sometimes has used the name Smash—has proved particularly adept at singing in a **Hank Williams**-inspired honky tonk style.

Cherryholmes began recording early in the group's career, self-releasing *Still a Little Rough Around the Edges* in 2001, *Dressed for Success* in 2002, and *Bluegrass Vagabonds* in 2003. Signed to **Ricky Skaggs'** label, the group put out its first commercial release, *Cherryholmes*, in 2005 and saw it debut on the *Billboard* bluegrass chart at number 3 and receive a Grammy Award nomination. The most recent release, *Cherryholmes II: Black and White*, debuted at number 1 on the bluegrass charts.

The Cherryholmes family, now based in Tennessee, credit hard work and an ability to tailor the group's set to suit the tastes of a given audience as the keys to its success. Jere Cherryholmes has noted that the group has a wide variety of material, from surging, up-tempo bluegrass instrumentals to gospel vocal tunes to traditional bluegrass standards from **Bill Monroe** and the **Stanley Brothers** to draw upon, as well as clog dancing and step dancing skills. But much of the success, he has said, is due to the family's emphasis on the virtues of traditional bluegrass.

“People say that bluegrass music has to change or evolve or it will die,” Jere Cherryholmes said. “Well, if you change something from one thing to another it isn't alive anyway. I don't really think it needs to be changed. It just needs new life breathed into it. I feel like maybe I'm offering that with my family.”

“It is always exciting when new artists bring fresh ideas and new energy to traditional art forms such as bluegrass, and we look forward to presenting one of the hottest new bluegrass groups around in Cherryholmes,” said **Don Roth**, the Mondavi Center's executive director.

What: **Cherryholmes**
When: Saturday, November 3 • 8 pm
Where: Jackson Hall
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts
University of California, Davis
Admission: \$42/\$37/\$32 Adults • \$21/\$18.50/\$16 Students & Children
Tickets/Info: 530.754.ARTS (2787)
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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