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## PRESS RELEASE



### NC Folk Festival Announces Return of “Songs of Hope & Justice” Concert

*Laurelyn Dossett hosts an evening of music focused on social justice and performed by North Carolina’s preeminent singers and songwriters at the Carolina Theatre.*

**Greensboro, N.C., July 19, 2023** — Tickets went on sale today for the NC Folk Festival’s annual presentation of “Songs of Hope & Justice” which will be held on September 6, 2023 at 8pm in the Carolina Theatre. “Songs of Hope & Justice” is a popular pre-festival concert that focuses on themes of freedom and social justice.

Singer/songwriter **Laurelyn Dossett** of Stokes County, NC will host the concert, which will feature songs that shine a light on important social issues—past and present. Performances will include songs from the canon of folk legends such as Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, and Odetta, as well as new and original songs underscoring today’s most pressing social challenges.

Dossett is well known for her own protest songs, including “Vote Against Amendment One” and “My Beloved Enemy,” as well as others on regional topics such as the coal ash spill and the loss of textile jobs. She has brought together an outstanding group of performers to celebrate the role of folk songs—specifically protest songs—in America. Additional performers include:

- **Demeanor, (aka Justin Harrington)** is a banjo player, MC, and producer from Greensboro, North Carolina. He has been playing the banjo for several years, crafting an unconventional fusion of hip-hop and American roots music in an effort to break down the wall separating black Americans with their own ancestral tradition, while celebrating American folk music as an African American art form.
- **Alice Gerrard**, a force in folk music for over 50 years, has been writing songs representing workers and ordinary people throughout her career. A 2015 Grammy nominee for her latest album, *Follow the Music*, Alice is the founder of *The Old-Time Herald*, a publication dedicated to traditional music. She wrote the title track for Rhiannon Giddens's Grammy-winning "*Calling Me Home*" recording. Alice also has several new recording projects in the works.
- **Phil Wiggins** is one of the nation's foremost players of acoustic blues harmonica. A native of Washington, D.C., his playing is rooted in the melodic Piedmont Blues, a gentle and melodic blues style of the mid-Atlantic region. In 2017, was awarded the National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. The award honors national treasures in the American folk arts but also individuals who have dedicated their lives to sharing their craft with others, helping to ensure that their work lives on.
- **Molly McGinn** is a native of Dodge City, Kansas/ Molly is an award-winning multimedia artist, songwriter and musician living in Stokes County. She hosts *The Woodshed Experience*, and past projects include *Postcards from the Swamp*, *Amelia's Mechanics*, and *Wurlitzer Prize*. She is one of Greensboro's favorite performers and songwriters, and organized the *Raise Your Voices* campaign to bring out the *Vote Against North Carolina's Amendment One*.
- **Lalenja Harrington** is a poet and performer who explores the intersection of performance, activism, and education. A graduate of Princeton University, she holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations from UNC Greensboro. She recently starred in "*Lady Day*" at Rhinoleap Theater in Asheboro, NC.
- **DaShawn and Wendy Hickman** are a duo from Mount Airy, N.C. DaShawn is one of today's foremost players of Sacred Steel, a blues-gospel tradition started in the Pentecostal-Holiness churches of the 1930s. Hickman picked up the instrument at the age of five, and in his teens, formed a group with three of his cousins that found fame as *The Allen Boys*, North Carolina's only touring Sacred Steel band. Wendy is a singer, born in Asheboro, NC and now based in Mt. Airy, NC. Wendy was recently featured on "*Lift Your Voice, Bow Your Heads — Bluegrass Music at the Crossroads.*"
- **Riley Baugus** was born and raised near Winston-Salem, North Carolina, started playing banjo at the age of 11, inspired by the traditional Appalachian music that he discovered during weekends spent with his grandparents in the Blue Ridge Mountains. *Billboard* hails Baugus as "Quintessential American old-time music", saying "Baugus' vocals sound like they've been echoing through the Appalachian Mountains for about 150 years." Riley's music was featured in the film "*Cold Mountain*" and on the "*Raising Sands*" album by Alison Krauss and Robert Plant.
- **Chaisaray Schenck** is a drummer and musician from Stanley, NC. Born into a musical family, he began playing the drums at the age of two. Currently based in

Greensboro, Schneck continues to hone his own sound while helping other artists create music.

- **J. Scott Hinkle** is a bassist, multi-instrumentalist and songwriter based in Western NC. He is a Telluride songwriting finalist and will release a new recording, "Always a Bigger Bear" later this year.

Tickets can be purchased at

<https://carolinatheatre.com/event/137601ajqjmjqgpbpdhdsjcpnjtrrcqp/>

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**About the North Carolina Folk Festival:** The North Carolina Folk Festival's mission is to honor, celebrate, and share the meaningful ways communities express their creativity and cultural traditions through music, dance, food, crafts and other folk arts to enhance appreciation of diverse traditions and contribute to community vibrancy and inclusivity. Our signature event, the annual North Carolina Folk Festival, is one of the fastest-growing destination events in the Southeast, attracting people from across the U.S. to downtown Greensboro each September. The festival is a FREE admission, three-day event featuring performing groups representing a diverse array of cultural traditions from around the world on multiple stages, including continuous music and dance performances, a makers marketplace, regional and ethnic foods, festival merchandise and more. The 2022 North Carolina Folk Festival will take place in downtown Greensboro September 8 through 10. Additional information is available at [www.ncfolkfestival.com](http://www.ncfolkfestival.com).