

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE TRADITIONAL ARTS (NCTA)
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO ATTEND A BENEFIT CONCERT

MASTERS OF AMERICAN MUSIC



FEATURING

JERRY DOUGLAS ✦ AMANDA SHIRES ✦ JASON ISBELL
JAN KNUTSON ✦ GIRI AND UMA PETERS

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

STEVE ABSHIRE AND PHIL WIGGINS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 2018, AT THE HAMILTON
600 14TH STREET, NW, WASHINGTON, C.C. 20005

6:30 P.M. DOORS OPEN
7:30 – 10:00 CONCERT PROGRAM

PLEASE RSVP TO:

ncta2018benefit@ncta-usa.org



Proceeds will support the the National Council for the Traditional Arts' work on behalf of folk and traditional arts and artists across the U.S. and are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.



Celebrating and supporting the work of the National Council for the Traditional Arts, **Masters of American Music** brings together a group of exceptional musicians whose artistry is rooted in the American experience. Featuring **Jerry Douglas**, **Amanda Shires** and **Jason Isbell**, artists that stand at the artistic apex of their respective musical worlds, the concert also introduces some amazing younger musicians: 19-year-old Maryland jazz guitarist **Jan Knutson** and the brother-sister old-time duo, **Giri and Uma Peters** (aged 12 and 10 respectively) joined by special guests D.C. area jazz master **Steve Abshire**, and blues harmonica wizard **Phil Wiggins**.

THE ARTISTS



JERRY DOUGLAS

Jerry Douglas, the evening's musical host, is widely recognized as the greatest innovator on the dobro in the last 50 years—possibly the greatest ever. He's been described as the Jimi Hendrix and the Charlie Parker of acoustic music. The *New York Times* has called him "dobro's matchless contemporary master." He has won 14 Grammy Awards, 3 CMA (Country Music Association) Musician of the Year citations, 27 IBMA honors (International Bluegrass Music Association), and received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts. Though he got his start in bluegrass, Douglas has made an impact in fields ranging from rock 'n roll to jazz, from blues to Celtic, from mainstream country to contemporary classical, world music and beyond.



AMANDA SHIRES

Musician, singer and songwriter Amanda Shires is a native of Lubbock, Texas. She began her musical career at age 15 playing fiddle with the late Bob Wills' venerable band, the Texas Playboys. Since then, she's toured and recorded with John Prine, Billy Joe Shaver, Todd Snider, Justin Townes Earle, Shovels & Rope, and most recently her husband, Jason Isbell. She's an insightful songwriter who is able to impart vivid detail in just a line or two, putting to good use both her Master's in creative writing and advanced degree in western swing. Shires made her Billboard debut with 2016's much-lauded release, *My Piece of Land*. She was named the Americana Music Association's 2017 Emerging Artist of the Year.



JASON ISBELL

Acclaimed singer, songwriter and guitarist Jason Isbell hails from Green Hill, Alabama, not far from Muscle Shoals. After six years with the Drive-By Truckers, he launched a solo career, and subsequently formed The 400 Unit band. Isbell has won six Americana Music Awards and four Grammy Awards, most recently the 2018 Grammys for Best Americana Album and Best American Roots Song. His grandfather and uncle taught him to play the mandolin when he was six, and the family made music together regularly. Isbell started playing in bands in his early teens, and performed at the Grand Ole Opry when he was 16. He emphasizes the importance of his northern Alabama roots. "I definitely don't feel like I would be the musician that I am, or the type of songwriter, had I not come from that particular place."



JAN KNUTSON

Jan Knutson of Berwyn Heights, Maryland, recently turned 19. But the tunes this young musician plays with such virtuosity and subtlety express the history of American vernacular guitar traditions. Knutson's repertoire draws from the Great American Songbook, Gypsy jazz, and jazz's heritage of guitar improvisation. Such is the level of skill he exhibits that one of his mentors, jazz guitarist Frank Vignola, says Knutson "is destined to be one of the next generation's great guitarists." Jan took to music early, trying piano and violin before adding guitar at age 10. His first guitar teacher introduced him to the work of legendary Gypsy jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt. "From that moment on," Knutson says, "I knew I had to play jazz guitar." Joining Jan is another of his teachers, the acknowledged dean of jazz guitar in the D.C. area, **STEVE ABSHIRE**



GIRI AND UMA PETERS

Giri and Uma Peters, ages 12 and 10 respectively, are an Indian-American brother-and-sister duo from Nashville that plays bluegrass and old-time music. Awestruck the first time he saw a mandolin at age 8, Giri was soon learning mandolin and fiddle, mentored by such noted players as fiddler Deanie Richardson. Soon after, his younger sister, Uma, took up the clawhammer banjo. Together they immersed themselves in old-time music, with encouragement and support from the local music community, which happens to include neighbor Jerry Douglas. In 2016, Giri and Uma were featured in the IBMA World of Bluegrass showcase, "Shout and Shine: A Celebration of Diversity in Bluegrass." What's next for these next-generation masters: an EP of more old-time classics alongside originals composed in the tradition.



PHIL WIGGINS

Phil Wiggins of Takoma Park, Maryland, is arguably America's foremost blues harmonica virtuoso, and a master of the unique blues traditions of the Piedmont. He achieved worldwide acclaim over three decades as one half of the premier Piedmont blues duo of Cephas & Wiggins. Blues from the Piedmont, the hilly region between the mountains and the coast that stretches from Georgia to Maryland, is one of the oldest forms of the blues. It draws heavily on earlier fiddle-and-banjo string band music that was equally popular among rural blacks and whites. Although Phil Wiggins' harmonica playing is rooted in the melodic Piedmont or "Tidewater" blues of the Chesapeake region, his mastery of the instrument now transcends stylistic boundaries. In 2017, Phil was awarded an NEA National Heritage Fellowship, the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts.



SPECIAL THANKS TO GENERAL DYNAMICS

Thanks to General Dynamics, lead sponsor of the Masters of American Music Benefit Concert.



ABOUT THE NCTA

The National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the presentation and documentation of folk and traditional arts in the United States. Founded in 1933, it is the nation's oldest folk arts organization. Its programs celebrate and honor deeply rooted cultural expressions - music, dance, crafts, rituals and stories passed on through time in families, communities, tribal, ethnic, regional, religious, and occupational groups. Stressing excellence and authenticity, NCTA presents the nation's finest traditional artists in festivals, tours, international cultural exchanges, workshops, demonstrations and exhibitions, media productions, school programs, and other activities. It works in partnership with communities across America to establish new, sustainable traditional arts events that deliver lasting social, cultural and economic benefits. The NCTA champions the interests of folk and traditional artists and organizations in the arena of public policy.

National Council for the Traditional Arts

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